



Hummin

Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society

October/November 2007 Vol. XXIX No. 5

Audubon Chapter Buys Carbon Offsets

By Evi Meyer

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society is working to offset the global warming effects of its members' nature-related activities. Using one of the many available "carbon footprint" calculators, the chapter estimated the climate impact caused by its members' activities to be about 140 tons of CO₂ per year. This calculation was based on parameters such as membership, number and type of vehicles used, as well as estimations on the number of nature travelers and active birders. The activities taken into account were all nature-related and included bird walks, meetings, classes, counts, councils, conventions, birding trips and eco-tours.

A carbon footprint is a measure of the amount of CO₂ emitted through combustion of fossil fuels. Anytime we drive or fly somewhere, a trail of greenhouse gases (mostly CO₂) is emitted and causes a carbon footprint. This in turn contributes to global warming and all of its dire consequences.

Carbon offsetting is the act of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by paying for emission-reductions elsewhere. A wide variety of offset methods are in use. Initially tree planting was a mainstay of carbon

offsetting, but recently renewable energy and energy conservation offsets have gained popularity. The market of carbon-offset providers is growing rapidly, and many of them provide easy ways to calculate personal carbon footprints caused by travel (airplane or car) or by just running an average American household.

After careful consideration of various carbon-offset providers, the chapter decided to buy offsets from an organization called Carbonfund.org. This organization is a leader in the fight against global warming with its climate change education and outreach to the public as well as its affordable carbon offset programs. As part of its portfolio, Carbonfund.org offers reforestation programs that are independently certified by the Environmental Resources Trust (ERT). One project of particular interest for Audubon is the reforestation of Sequoia National Forest. In 2002 the McNally fire burned more than 150,000 acres of this beautiful forest, which provided habitat for California spotted owls and Northern goshawks. Without active tree plantings, the burnt area is estimated to take 200 to 500 years to return to a full forest. The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon

chapter decided to invest in this project to offset its own carbon footprint, but also to help speed up the restoration of important bird habitat.

At the cost of less than \$6 per ton of emitted CO₂, the Audubon chapter's expense to offset its carbon footprint amounts to approximately \$800 per year. This money is well spent because it contributes to the fight against global warming as well as to the restoration of habitat.

The Audubon chapter also hopes that its offset contribution could serve as a stepping-stone for people to start thinking about personal CO₂ mitigations by purchasing carbon offsets privately. Nobody's life can be zero-emission, but purchasing offsets is a good way to balance those personal global warming emissions that can't be avoided. There are many reputable offset providers offering their services online in a very user-friendly way. Look for future articles in *Hummin'* describing some of these providers and their programs ranging from methane conversions on family farms to wind turbines, solar power and reforestations in more detail. We all breathe the same air. So let's keep it clean!

President's Column

All the news that fits...

By Martin Byhower



As I write this column, I realize that I can hardly wait to receive the copy of *Hummin'* in which it will appear ... the one you are reading right now! No, not because I expect to engage in any self-congratulatory pleasure in

the rediscovery of any witty profundities or inspired insights in this column.

Do this now: Check out the boxes (probably on pages other than the one on which this column appears) and you may note some new names, or old names in new places, among the PV/Audubon Board, committees, and notably, newsletter editor position. At our annual planning meeting in August, I was thrilled that so many qualified and dedicated folks stepped up to the plate in order to help make my tenure as sole chapter president a great deal easier and hopefully as productive as those of my predecessors. With help like this, I can hardly screw things up, and I wish I had the space here to thank each individual. One auspicious place to start is with our new (as of this issue) newsletter editor: Chris Boyd.

When just-retired editor Mike Weber, whose work you and I have been enjoying since 2001, told the board of his intentions to move on after a long tenure, I was dismayed (OK, I even sort of freaked out). As editor of our newsletter, Mike (and Jess Morton before him) played an essential role in making our chapter truly stand out among the many groups working toward similar goals. The importance of a good newsletter cannot be overstated; it is the glue that holds us together, establishes our identity, informs our actions and much more. Who could fill the shoes of these journalistic Titans?

It is funny to me that at first I didn't even think to ask my friend Chris Boyd about the job. As editor of the *Palos Verdes Peninsula News*, he has consistently, accurately and conscientiously covered local environmental issues, to the extent that our chapter presented him with our Audubon Environmental

Journalism Award at last year's ceremony! More recently, Chris received a certificate of excellence from the California Newspaper Publishers Association for columns relating to Ken Malloy-Harbor Regional Park and other local issues. Somewhere along the line, I found out that he and I shared an interest in birding (not to mention astronomy, beer and other important pastimes). I started introducing him to PV/South Bay Audubon. At some point I invited him to consider becoming a member of the chapter board, but he politely explained to me that doing so could be perceived by some in the area as setting the stage for potential conflicts of interest with his profession (i.e., paying) job, in which he must report on local issues, however controversial, in a fair and balanced (in the non-Fox News co-opted sense) fashion.

I knew Chris was/is a very busy man, but I didn't anticipate the preceding response, because if there is one thing I can say about Chris, he views the world from an objective and independent perspective. Think of anyone who offers you provocative conversation in which you are stimulated to think, and you are probably thinking of someone with whom you don't always see eye to eye on every issue. This is the case with Chris and me (though I dare say, we converge on environmental issues more than, say, our tastes in beer or music.) Then I had a revelation. Why not at least take a shot and ask Chris to help us by doing the thing he does best? I could bribe him with the possibility of finding him some life birds (which I did — the bribe at least — we are still negotiating the terms). After some deliberation, Chris agreed to the deal, to my tremendous joy and relief, and to all of our good fortunes! (And to be honest, I don't think my adherence to the bribe is a deal breaker, nor was it even a consideration.)

Look for Chris to put his individual stamp on our excellent but ever-improving chapter newsletter over time. I can't wait to see where we, and *Hummin'*, will go next! Welcome, Chris, and all the other remarkable new (and returning, in new roles) board and committee members, and thanks!

Conservation Corner

Our endangered ocean — how to preserve it

By Lillian Light



Since recent reports on the ocean's health have been more and more alarming, the 14th Public Forum sponsored by the Environmental Priorities Network will focus on the state of crisis that our ocean faces, and how we can help

to restore this ravaged ecosystem. On the evening of Thursday, Nov. 8, our local citizens will have the opportunity to hear two outstanding speakers discuss the ongoing decline of our oceans and coasts, and how to protect these wild and special places from pollution, overfishing and coastal development. This event at the Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Drive in Rancho Palos Verdes, will start at 6 p.m. with a reception featuring finger foods, snacks and drinks, as well as tables staffed by local environmental groups.

The outstanding program will start at 7 p.m. Our first distinguished speaker, Mark Gold, has been executive director of Heal the Bay for 13 years. This much-admired environmental group has long been dedicated to making Southern California coastal waters and watersheds safe, healthy and clean. Mark created Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card, and has authored or co-authored numerous California coastal protection, water quality and environmental education bills. Mark is currently the vice chair of the National Estuary Program's Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, and sits on many other environmental and water quality boards, including the California Ocean Science Trust. He has been inducted into the UCLA School of Public Health Hall of Fame and is the recipient of the James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award.

Our second speaker, Michael Weber, is now program officer with the Resources Law Group based in Sacramento. He is overseeing and advising about programs on oceans, coasts and fisheries, including the California Coastal Marine Initiative and the Sustainable Fisheries Fund. Formerly, he served as an advisor to the California Fish and Game Commission working to implement the state's Marine Life Management Act. Before that he worked at the Center for Marine

Conservation in Washington, D.C., where he also was special assistant to the director of the National Marine Fisheries Service in the U.S. Department of Commerce. Books written or co-authored by Weber include: "Briefing Book for the Marine Fisheries of Southern California" (1997), "Fish, Markets, and Fishermen: The Economics of Overfishing" (1999), "From Abundance to Scarcity: A History of U.S. Marine Fisheries Policy" (2002) and "The Wealth of Oceans" (2005). The last two books examine the effects of humans on the ocean environment.

Recent assessments of the ocean's health have made commonplace the phrase "catastrophic collapse," referring to the global loss of sea life and ecosystems. Our most knowledgeable speakers will help us to understand what needs to be done to protect marine wildlife and habitat, reduce pollution and strengthen fisheries. Many of us were very alarmed to read the following in an article in the Nov. 3, 2006, *L.A. Times*:

"The world will run out of seafood by 2048 if steep declines in marine species occur at current rates." Fourteen marine scientists from five countries (including the United States) conducted a four-year study of catch data and fisheries collapses, and concluded that 29 percent of all fished species had collapsed by 2003 (the last year these data were available). They project a 61-percent collapse by 2025, and a 100-percent collapse by 2048, unless immediate corrective measures are taken.

The authors of this report state that, "Overfishing is almost certainly the most important factor, but marine habitat destruction, pollution and climate change may also contribute." As wetlands, reefs and the animals that filter pollutants disappear, water quality is worsening, and fish kills, toxic algal blooms, invasive exotic species, beach closures and coastal floods are increasing. Since we have used the world's oceans as dumping grounds for sewage, industrial chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, disposable plastics and radioactive wastes, we have pushed our ocean systems to the brink of collapse.

A separate report by the United Nations Environ-

See Ocean, Page 7

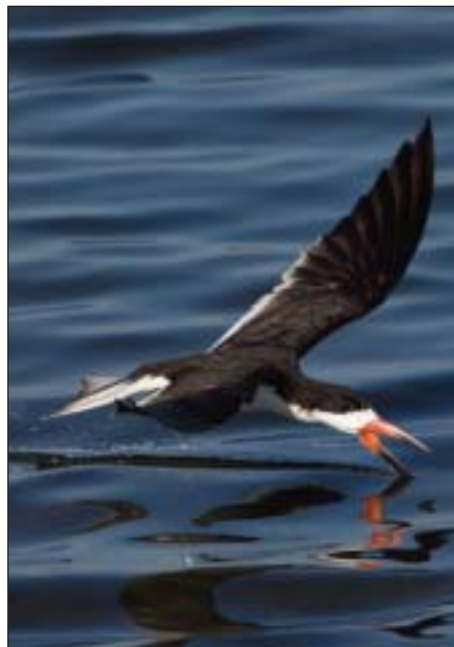
Birds of the Peninsula

July and August 2007

By Kevin Larson

We could not produce an encore during July to the exhilarating string of rarities recorded from late May through June, but birding excitement was on the upswing by August. The last of the spring migrants came in the forms of a Western Wood-Pewee and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on 4 July. Turning to fall migration, adult shorebirds — the most numerous of which are Western Sandpipers — were seen in lower than usual numbers at the Los Angeles River during July, but shorebird counts increased dramatically by mid-August when many juveniles arrived. The rare-but-regular shorebirds such as Semipalmated and Baird's sandpipers were found in good numbers. A Ruff appearing at the end of August was a nice shorebird find. Sooty Shearwaters were scarcer than usual this summer off our coast and were usually outnumbered by the few Pink-footed Shearwaters. Black-vented Shearwaters were arriving in large numbers by early August. Storm-petrels made the best showing in several years. Common Murres, unusual in summer, were frequently seen. Fall migrant land birds were trickling in after late July and increasing in number by late August with no notable early fallouts. A Chestnut-sided Warbler in mid-August and a Prairie Warbler at the end of the month were exceptional.

The weather during July and August was generally mild. Heat and humidity pushed their way out to the coast a number of times from late July through the end of August due to strengthening high pressure over the Great Basin, but good doses of onshore flow and marine layer clouds periodically brought relief from these incursions. Very small amounts of precipitation



Black skimmer

Photo by Jess Morton

recorded at LAX 22-23 July, and isolated showers and thunderstorms over the region during the early morning hours of 30 August were effects of this summer's relatively weak monsoonal flow. The exhausted remnant of Hurricane Dean brought light showers to our area on 26 August; after making landfall

on the Yucatan Peninsula several days earlier, this system crossed Mexico and worked its way up the Pacific Coast.

A very worn and faded Brant was summering at the Los Angeles River (LAR) in Long Beach 11 Jul-25 Aug (many observers). A male American Wigeon appeared at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (BFM) on 28 Jul and was still present on 3 Sep (Kevin Larson-KL). Several Cinnamon Teals nested successfully in this summer's lush vegetation at LAR north of Willow St. Northern Pintail sightings included single females at Del Rey Lagoon on 10 Jul (Richard Barth-RB) and at LAR north of Willow Street on 15 Aug (KL). Summering Surf Scoters in the area included more than 20 near the Ballona Creek mouth, and a few in the Los Angeles Harbor.

Three species of storm-petrels were seen from Point Vicente (PtV) this summer. Small numbers of Black Storm-Petrels were recorded on several dates. A few Ashy Storm-Petrels were within easy telescope range on 19 Aug and 26 Aug (KL). Two Least Storm-Petrels heading north on 14 Jul were early; other sightings from PtV included five on 9 Aug, four on 20 Aug and four on 26 Aug (KL). A feeding flock of 100+ storm-petrels well off PtV on 9 Aug appeared to be comprised mostly of Ashys, and a more distant flock of 300+ birds on 20 Aug was too far off to iden-

tify (KL). A Cattle Egret flying south along LAR in Long Beach on 27 Jul was the only report (KL). The first White-faced Ibis sighting at LAR in Long Beach on 22 Aug came more than a month later than expected in recent years; three were there on 24 Aug (RB). A male Northern Harrier in second-year plumage in the Ballona Wetland area was likely a returnee from last winter; present from 3 Aug on, it arrived early (Jonathan Coffin, photo). A Virginia Rail at LAR north of Willow Street on 29 Jul was a notably early migrant (Jon Fisher).

A juvenile Spotted Sandpiper just north of the Willow Street crossing at LAR on 13 Jul was unusually early and probably the product of a nesting in the region (RB). Solitary Sandpipers at LAR in Long Beach 27-28 Jul (Andrew Lee) and in Paramount 28-30 Jul (RB) were adults; individuals at LAR in Long Beach 11-18 Aug (RB) and 26 Aug (Mike San Miguel) were probably juveniles. A color-banded Ruddy Turnstone along Ballona Creek on 9 Aug 2007 (Roy van de Hoek), and on 24 Jul and 7 Aug 2005 (KL) was banded in the Colville River Delta area in northwestern Alaska on 28 May 2002. Sightings of adult Red Knots included up to two on the beach south of Ballona Creek 10-15 Jul (RB, Bob Shanman) and two at LAR north of Willow Street 22-24 Jul (Martin Byhower). I estimate a total of 12 juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers was found at LAR in Long Beach and Paramount 4 Aug-3 Sep, allowing for the fact that some sightings are

of the same individuals that have moved to different stretches along the river (RB, KL, Andrew Lee, Sandy Koonce); the highest single-day count was five on 18 Aug (KL). Compiled sightings of juvenile Baird's Sandpipers at LAR may have involved up to 12 individuals 9-29 Aug; high single-day totals of four were recorded on 14 Aug and 18 Aug (RB, KL, Andrew Lee). A juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper



Loggerhead shrike

Photo by Jess Morton

at LAR in Long Beach on 30 Aug was the first of the year (John Kelly). A juvenile female **Ruff** at LAR in Long Beach on 30 Aug was the shorebird find of the period (Karen Gilbert, Jeff Boyd).

Up to three immature Bonaparte's Gulls at LAR in Long Beach and Paramount lingered through 15 Jul (RB); an immature along Ballona Creek near the 90 freeway 15 Jul-23 Aug was evidently attempting to overwinter (KL, Don Sterba). A 3-year-old Herring Gull at LAR in Paramount

13-30 Jul was a very rare summer record (KL). A rare inland sighting of an Elegant Tern occurred at LAR south of Wardlow Road on 11 Jul (RB). Tom Ryan reported excellent breeding success at the Venice Beach Least Tern colony this year; the nearly 550 nests producing 400-450 fledglings were the most ever observed. Probably the same Black Tern was seen on three dates in the vicinity of the Ballona Creek mouth 28 Jul-15 Aug (KL, Barbara Johnson, Dan Cooper). A Black Skimmer at LAR south of Wardlow Road on 17 Jul was inland, where rare (RB). Unusual at this time of year, a total of 14 Common Murres were recorded at PtV 3 Jun-4 Aug (KL). A late Rhinoceros Auklet was seen from PtV on 4 Jul (KL). Dan Cooper spotted a White-winged Dove at BFM on 12 Aug. An adult male Inca Dove at Harbor Park (HP) on 21 Jul may have been a genuine vagrant; its pristine plumage gave no indication of it being an escaped cage bird (KL). A Burrowing Owl roosting in a cavity of a shipping container at the edge of the Mattell property in El Segundo 9-13 Jul was evidently an early migrant (Chris Sesto); this species is believed to have been extirpated as a breeding resident in our area for about a decade.

Apparently a very late spring straggler, a Western Wood-Pewee at DeForest Park (DP) on 4 Jul was outside of its normal range of timing (KL). However, you can just about mark your calendar for the arrival of the first fall migrant Western Wood-Pewee locally; dur-

Birds, from Page 5

ing this five-year period, it has been recorded three times on 20 Aug, once on 19 Aug and this year at DP on 18 Aug (KL). A Hammond's Flycatcher at White Point Nature Preserve on 20 Aug (David Moody) was extremely early, but not without precedent — one was at Sand Dune Park on 22 Aug 2000 (John Ivanov). A juvenile Say's Phoebe was along LAR near the railroad bridge south of Del Amo Boulevard in late July, where a pair has nested in the previous two years (RB). A young juvenile Western Kingbird in the southeastern section of the Playa Vista area on 22 Jul was at a location where breeding has been confirmed in recent years (KL). The timing of a Loggerhead Shrike sighting in the vicinity of Trump National Golf Club on 4 Jul coincided with that of our earliest fall migrants (Martin Byhower). Single migrant Bell's Vireos were at Madrona Marsh 15-16 Aug (Tracy Drake, photo), and at DP on 16 Aug (Karen Gilbert, Jeff Boyd). An early Cassin's Vireo was at DP 9-18 Aug (Jeff Boyd) and another was at the South Coast Botanic Garden on 17 Aug (KL). A migrant or dispersing Hutton's Vireo was at DP 17 Jul-1 Sep (Jeff Boyd).

The only Bank Swallow report was of one along LAR in Paramount on 1 Aug (RB). A singing Swainson's Thrush in the north end willows of HP on 1 Jul was at a location where this species has bred; it was not detected on later visits (KL). The Wrentit first discovered along the north side of Ballona Creek west of Culver Blvd. on 4

Mar (KL) was still singing on 28 Aug (Jonathan Coffin). A well-described **Chestnut-sided Warbler** with mostly retained breeding plumage at Madrona Marsh on **16 Aug** was astonishingly early (Tracy Drake). About the ninth record for this article's coverage area, a **Prairie Warbler** at DP 30 Aug-1 Sep was outstanding (Jeff Boyd). A Yellow-breasted Chat was singing at HP 1-21 Jul (KL). Single Lark Sparrows at HP on 25 Aug and at the PV Landfill on 26 Aug were the



Rose-breasted grosbeak

Photo by Laurie Szogas

first noted this fall (KL). A very late male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Laurie Szogas' feeder in RPV on 4 Jul; her photos proved it was not the same bird seen there on 28 May. Unrecorded as a breeder at HP in many years, a pair of Blue Grosbeaks was feeding fledglings in the recently burned area southeast of the dam on 21 Jul (KL). A migrant Yellow-headed Blackbird at LAR in Long Beach on 18 Aug was the only report (KL). A male Purple Finch in upper George F

Canyon in Rolling Hills on 21 Jul was a very unusual summer record (Martin Byhower).

Following are the earliest dates on which these fall migrants were noted in 2007: Green-winged Teal—**10 Aug** BFM (KL); adult Semipalmated Plover—15 Jul LAR Long Beach (RB); juvenile Lesser Yellowlegs—29 Jul LAR Long Beach (KL); Surfbird—5 Jul Playa del Rey (Barbara Johnson); juvenile Western Sandpiper—29 Jul LAR Long Beach (KL); adult Long-billed Dowitcher—8 Jul LAR Long Beach (KL); juvenile Wilson's Phalarope—18 Jul LAR Long Beach (Mike San Miguel); juvenile California Gull—22 Jul LAR Paramount (RB); Townsend's Warbler—17 Aug DP (Karen Gilbert); Chipping Sparrow—14 Aug DP (KL); Savannah Sparrow (northern/interior migratory race)—8 Jul LAR Long Beach (KL).

Thanks to all who reported sightings during the period. Please send your sightings to me at cbirdr@ca.rr.com for the Palos Verdes/South Bay and vicinity, including areas east to the L.A. River, north to about the 105 freeway and along the coast up to Marina del Rey.

Acronyms in Birds of the Peninsula

BFM: Ballona Freshwater Marsh
 DP: DeForest Park
 HP: Harbor Park
 KL: Kevin Larson
 LAR: Los Angeles River
 PtV: Point Vicente
 RB: Richard Barth

Ocean, from Page 5

mental Program stated that there are at least 200 oxygen-starved “dead zones” in the world’s seas, areas that are highly toxic to fish and to other marine organisms. They are caused by excessive runoff of pesticides, fertilizers, sewage and other land-based pollutants. Other serious problems were reported by Greenpeace researchers in the central Pacific Ocean. They took samples from a swarm of floating plastic that stretched across an area the size of Texas. Suspended in a stagnant vortex of currents, the plastic came primarily from mainland consumers in Asia and in North America.

Increasing emissions of carbon dioxide are changing the temperature and the composition of our oceans. Oceans already are one degree warmer, and the temperature is expected to rise, negatively impacting some marine species. The extra greenhouse gases absorbed by the ocean are changed into carbonic acid, making it more acidic. This threatens the destruction of coral reefs and plankton, the tiny animals that are the foundation of the marine food chain.

Our oceans are home to more than 97 percent of all life on Earth. They help to control climate, provide more oxygen than rainforests (they provide 70 percent of the oxygen that humans breathe), shelter countless animal species, provide food to many millions of the Earth’s inhabitants and are critical to the survival of life on our planet. Can we prevent our living ocean from becoming a dead sea? Our program will give us the information we need to understand what is happening to our oceans, and what actions we can take to protect them.

Perhaps we could support the effort to establish marine protected areas (MPAs) along the coast. Since 1990, marine scientists have recommended that 20 percent of the oceans be set aside as “no take” zones — protected marine wilderness areas where no fishing, dumping or drilling would take place. Far less than 1 percent is now protected, but studies of these areas are finding them highly effective engines of biodiversity. California has a law that calls for a statewide network of MPAs. We need to support Michael Weber’s efforts to get this law implemented. How can we best take care of our own Santa Monica Bay?

All interested members of the community are invited to attend. Co-sponsors of this event are the South Coast Interfaith Council and the Unitarian So-

cial Justice Committee. A donation of \$5 is requested, but no one will be turned away. To arrange for a table at the event or for more information, please contact Lillian Light at (310) 545-1384 or at lklight@verizon.net.

YES! Starts 13th Year

Audubon YES!, our chapter’s youth environmental service program, has begun its 13th year, offering a wide array of community service projects for high school students and others. Through the program, participants earn credits toward the Audubon YES! Award, which acknowledges each individual’s dedication to environmental betterment, and is useful on college and scholarship applications. Through the years, more than 250 YES! Awards have been earned.

This year, our chapter will award YES! credits for projects at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, Gardena Willows, Harbor Park, Madrona Marsh, White Point and other locations around the South Bay. Credits will also be awarded for work on school campuses, principally for habitat restoration and recycling. Credits are also given for student leadership and individual projects.

Chadwick, Environmental Charter High School, Mira Costa, Peninsula High, Palos Verdes High, South High and Vistamar are some of the schools we expect to see most active with Audubon YES! this year. However, students from other schools throughout the region are urged to participate. Adults, either educators or parents, can volunteer to help with the YES! program, too, by serving as coordinators with schools not listed above.

For more information about the YES! program, please see our website at www.audubonyes.org, or call Jess Morton at (310) 832-5601. An Info Sheet, which describes the program, and a Time Sheet, for recording service hours, are both available for download from the site. An Honor Roll lists all students who have earned the YES! Award.

Your Backyard Habitat



By Dr. Connie Vadheim,
CSUDH

California fuchsia *Epilobium canum*

Late summer through early fall is the “resting period” for many Southern California native plants. Contrarily, a few hardy natives not only grow, but also bloom in fall — often profusely. California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*; formerly *Zauschneria californica*) is a fine example of our interesting fall-blooming native plants. Most such plants play an important role in supporting native pollinators, and *Epilobium canum* is no exception.

California fuchsia is a classic hummingbird-pollinated plant. Its bright orange-red tubular flowers attract hummingbirds to the nectar produced at the base of the fused petals. Because the plant’s male and female parts extend beyond the petals, hummingbirds unwittingly collect and deposit pollen in the process of sipping nectar. It is interesting to note that California fuchsia blooms in fall, corresponding to the migration of Allen’s, rufous and other hummingbirds. This and other fall-blooming plants provide an important source of hummingbird food at a time when few other plants are flowering.

In nature, California fuchsia is found in dry areas of the West from Wyoming to Baja. It usually grows on dry, rocky slopes in coastal sage scrub and chap-



arral. In the garden, California fuchsia is more tolerant than you might expect. It can be grown successfully in most soils from sandy to clay, even alkali soils.

While California fuchsia is quite drought tolerant, it can take even regular watering. Like many local native plants, it looks best if you let the soil dry out between waterings, then water deeply. *Epilobium* can grow in full sun to part shade, but flowers best in sunny conditions. Like most natives, it requires no fertilizer but will benefit from an organic mulch (like redwood bark chips), which also helps to control weeds.



California fuchsia has a mounded to sprawling shape — 1 to 3 feet tall, with a 4-foot spread. It spreads via rhizomes (underground stems), making it a good groundcover. It also makes a nice informal shrub and does well on slopes, or in rock gardens or streambeds. After the first year, stems should be cut back severely in winter, after the bloom season. Shape can also be enhanced by pinching the growing tips in spring to encourage bushiness — just as you would a tropical garden fuchsia.

Cultivars “Hurricane Point” (smaller, mounded shape) and “Catalina” (silver foliage) are readily available from native plant growers or at fall native plant sales.

For more information on growing and purchasing this plant, visit the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. You can also learn about local native plants at the “Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden” series on the first Saturday of each month at the center.

This Unknown Peninsula — Giant Swallowtail

By Jess Morton

While a majority of species have had population decreases because of human changes to the world's environment, not all have suffered. Some have adapted well to humans. The giant swallowtail, our largest butterfly, is one of them.

The giant swallowtail is native to the southeastern US, where it may be found throughout the year, though you'll have to hunt for it in Winter. It's larvae feed on any of several related trees, occasionally becoming a pest on citrus. But the species is not native to southern California despite our many similarities of climate. The deserts provided a barrier—until recently. In the last few decades, cities have bloomed across our deserts, providing a fine corridor for the range expansion of the giant swallowtail butterfly.

The larva is known as an "orange dog." Until I saw one in my lemon tree a couple of years ago, I had no idea why. Like many swallowtails, the larvae hide by pretend-

ing to be bird droppings. But the giant is, well, giant, and needs a bit more than just that. When it scrunches itself back into a leafy retreat, the markings on its thorax appear as though a very large and threatening dog-like mouth and eyes are ready to meet your threat. The real head is meekly tucked underneath, but you wouldn't know it by just looking. Which is all the larva hopes you will do.

Not all potential enemies are quite so easily dissuaded from such a plump juicy meal, though. Not toxic like monarch larvae, it does have one more defense, the osmeterium. This is a fleshy "Y" of horns, common to all swallowtails, that can be thrust out from behind the head. It gives off a foul odor and, extruded backward over the larva's body, drives off a predatory wasp or fly. Once fully grown, the larva molts its skin to become a chrysalis, appearing rather like a mummified gargoyle. In miniature, of course.

But the critter you are most likely to see is the adult, and it's a

beauty. The upper side of the wings are brownish black with a prominent yellow bar crossing horizontally. Two more bars parallel the wings' outer edges. Each large "swallow" tail is spotted with a neat yellow patch, above and below. The underside of the wing, though less frequently noted in flight, is even more beautiful. Large swathes of yellow are set apart by dark wing veins, and on the hind wing, a bar of brilliant blue and black markings ends in a bright red spot.

When Audubon began the July 4th butterfly count here more than a quarter century ago, the idea that we would have giant swallowtails on the count did not occur to us. Anise and western tiger swallowtails, yes. But giants, no. They are now always seen. This year, you are more likely to see a giant swallowtail than any other swallowtail, except in our few wetlands.

So watch for them at home. The next swallowtail you see may well be the largest butterfly you have ever seen. So aptly named, the giant.

Gift and New Member Application

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP (*chapter only or national—circle one*) \$25

(your contribution supports local programs) and/or

GIFT ... \$20___ \$50___ \$100___ Other___

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Please send me information now how to make a bequest to PV/SB Audubon

7XCH/C43

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: AUDUBON SOCIETY
MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 2582, PALOS VERDES, CA 90274**

Calendar

Meet Learn Enjoy Restore

Events

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

Wednesday, Oct. 3 at 7 p.m.:

PV/South Bay Audubon board meeting at Madrona Marsh. All Audubon members and friends are welcome to attend.

Sunday through Tuesday, Oct. 7 to 9:

Audubon California Assembly at the Asilomar conference grounds in Pacific Grove, Calif. The 2007 assembly will examine the problems of global warming from a wildlife and ecosystem perspective. Participants will have an opportunity to attend a wide variety of workshops on restoration, policy and education, as well as listen to renowned speakers emphasizing the importance of effective wildlife and habitat conservation in California. World-class birding field trips and much more are offered as part of the assembly. For more information and to register, visit http://ca.audubon.org/audubon_assembly.html or call (510) 601-1866, ext. 3.

Saturday, Oct. 13 from 9 to 11 a.m.:

Harbor Habitat Restoration Project at Ken Malloy Harbor-Regional Park. Cleanup and restoration of this important wetland habitat is led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity

to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. If you have questions, contact Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

Tuesday, Oct. 16 at 7 p.m.:

Audubon Third Tuesday Get-togethers. Jess Morton will report on the Audubon California Assembly in Asilomar. Come to Madrona Marsh and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Saturday, Oct. 27 (time to be determined): 25th Anniversary Bird-class Reunion and Halloween Bird Costume Event for South Coast Botanic Garden birdclass students. Details to follow at motmots@aol.com.

Saturday, Nov. 10 from 9 to 11 a.m.:

Harbor Habitat Restoration Project at KMHRP. Cleanup and restoration of this important wetland habitat is led by Geffen Oren, Martin Byhower and others. Cleanup and restoration of this important wildlife area offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about invasive species removal, native planting, effective debris removal and much more while earning community service credit. All ages, but folks

under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. Bring water, snack, sun/bug repellent and, if possible, work gloves. If you have questions, contact Martin Byhower at (310) 541-6763, ext. 4143.

Tuesday Nov. 20 at 7 p.m.:

Audubon Third Tuesday Get-togethers. Our speaker, Tom Ryan, graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a master of science in 1996 and currently works as a senior biologist/ornithologist for SWCA Environmental Consultants. His research interests include tropical ornithology and special status species recovery. He is currently involved in studies of the burrowing owl, California least tern and the Western snowy plover. Come to Madrona Marsh and socialize with friends, enjoy the bird quiz, raffle and prizes from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Saturday, Dec. 15 from 9 a.m. to noon:

Christmas Bird Count Class. Be a citizen scientist and help survey our local birds. Class will be taught by Bob Shanman at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center.

For a complete list of events at Madrona Marsh, go to www.southbaycalendar.org and click on Friends of Madrona Marsh.

For a complete list of Audubon YES (Youth Environmental Service) program activities, go to www.AudubonYES.org.

Fieldtrips

(See Calendar locations and information box for directions)

Tuesday, Oct. 2 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas. Meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center parking lot and carpool to sites in and near Torrance.

Sunday, Oct. 7 at 8:30 a.m.: Galileo Hills with Ann & Eric Brooks. Meet in the first parking lot at Silver Saddle Resort.

Sunday, Oct. 7 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden, 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes. Leader: Stephanie Bryan. Charge for nonmembers of the SCBG Foundation; you can join at the entrance.

Saturday, Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.: PVP Land Conservancy Nature Walk at Forrestal Ridge; Strenuous walk up Cristo que Viento Ridge; park behind the yellow gate on Forrestal Drive.

Wednesday, Oct. 10 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh with Bob Shanman.

Sunday, Oct. 14 at 8:30 a.m.: Sycamore Canyon, Point Mugu and Oxnard Plain with Ann and Eric Brooks; meet at Sycamore Canyon day parking.

Sunday, Oct. 14 at 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. Join Audubon leaders to explore this important natural area in the South Bay. See meeting location below.

Tuesday, Oct. 16 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Dave

Moody and friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas.

Wednesday, Oct. 17 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

Saturday, Oct. 28 at 3 p.m.: Los Serenos de Point Vicente Natural History Tour at the Trump National Golf Course; switchback trail to the beach; park at the clubhouse.

Tuesday, Oct. 30 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas.

Sunday, Nov. 4 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 8:30 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas.

Saturday, Nov. 10 at 2 p.m.: PVP Land Conservancy Nature Walk at Bluff Cove; park on Paseo del Mar, ½ mile past Neighborhood Church.

Sunday, Nov. 11 at 8 a.m.: Second Sunday Walk at KMHRP. See meeting location below.

Wednesday, Nov. 14 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk at Madrona Marsh. Leader: Bob Shanman.

Tuesday, Nov. 20 at 8 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Join Dave Moody and friends on a ramble around Torrance's best birding areas.

Sunday, Nov. 25, 8:30 a.m.: Upper Newport Bay with Ann and Eric Brooks; meet at upper parking lot at Muth Interpretive Center.

Sunday, Dec. 2 at 8 a.m.: Bird Walk

at South Coast Botanic Garden. Leader: Stephanie Bryan.

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 8 a.m.: "Tour de Torrance." Leader: Dave Moody.

Meeting Locations and Information Sources

KMHRP: Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park, Harbor City; parking lot near the intersection of Anaheim Street and Vermont, west of the 110 Freeway. Park opposite of old boat house.

Madrona Marsh Preserve: 3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance. Between Maple and Madrona Avenues. Park at Nature Center.

South Coast Botanic Garden: 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes.

Eric and Ann Brooks organize birding fieldtrips that are co-sponsored by PV/South Bay Audubon. Suggested donations: \$5 for day trips (\$4 if carpooling). Weekend trips Saturday are \$10 (\$8); Sunday \$5 (\$4). Contact them directly for details at motmots@aol.com or at (323) 295-6688.

Martin Byhower provides field guided trips. For updates and details on all trips, go to www.birdingsocal.com and click on "Updated calendar of events."

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy sponsors walks and other activities on the Peninsula. For more information, consult the website at <http://www.pvplc.org>, contact the conservancy by e-mail at info@pvplc.org or call (310) 541-7613.

PALOS VERDES/SOUTH BAY AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 2582
PALOS VERDES, CA 90274

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PALOS VERDES, CA
PERMIT NO. 172

**Time-sensitive material—
please deliver promptly**

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, of which PV/SB Audubon is the local chapter, are dedicated to the understanding and preservation of our natural heritage.

Officers 2007/2008

President

Martin Byhower 539-0050

Vice Presidents

John Nieto 544-2714

Connie Vadheim 540-9624

Treasurer

Jess Morton 832-5601

Board of Directors

Eileen Byhower	Bob Carr
Linda Chilton	Ollie Coker
Tracy Drake	Allen Franz
Nancy Feegans	Linda Gonzales
Candy Groat	Dan Lee
Lillian Light	Evi Meyer
Geffen Oren	Bob Shanman
Laurie Szogas	Swati Yanamadala

Committees

Birds & Habitat: Allen Franz 832-1671
Calendar: Evi Meyer 378-1234
Conservation: Lillian Light 545-1384
Harbor Park: Martin Byhower 539-0050
Programs/Calendar: John Nieto 544-2714
Membership: Vicki Peterson 375-3150
Outreach: Candy Groat 541-4932

Hummin' is published six times per year by the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society. Authors' opinions do not necessarily represent those of the society. Send articles and suggestions to monkus_boyd@yahoo.com.

Editor Chris Boyd

Hummin' subscriptions for non-PV/SB Audubon members are \$7.50 per year.

For back issues and chapter info, go to www.LMconsult.com/pvaudubon

Help Needed!

Audubon YES!: Contacts with South Bay schools and teen youth groups are wanted. If you are a teacher looking for extra-credit opportunities for your students, or if you are an adult advisor to a teen group looking for volunteer activities, become an active part of Audubon YES!, our Youth Environmental Service program. Audubon wants to work with you and your kids! For more information, call Jess Morton at (310) 832-5601 or visit us online at www.audubonYES.org.

Pick up postage-paid envelopes at Wild Birds Unlimited at Pacific Coast Highway and Crenshaw to recycle your **HP or Lexmark Inkjet cartridges**. For each cartridge sent in these envelopes, \$2.50 is donated to our chapter or to South Bay Wildlife Rehab. This is a great way to reduce waste and to support your favorite organizations.