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California Least Tern

Newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society

Founded 1969

June 2010

Thoughts from the President - by Donna Bray

Thoughts on the Gulf Coast Oil Spill

The mission of the El Dorado Audubon Society is the conservation of native birds and their habitats. The society provides leadership in conservation and educates its members and the community, so that they may appreciate birds and participate in the society's conservation efforts.

El Dorado Audubon Society is a California chapter of the National Audubon Society serving the communities of Artesia, Avalon, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Cypress, Hawaiian Gardens, La Palma, Lakewood, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Paramount, Rossmoor, San Pedro, Seal Beach and Sunset Beach.

It is impossible not to feel discouraged and saddened by the terrible mess the oil spill is creating in the Gulf. The oil that will impact that coast for years is still gushing out as of this writing.

Obviously the nesting birds, the shore-using birds, the ocean birds that depend on clean water for their food and even the trans-gulf migratory birds that need a healthy habitat when they make land will suffer. We Auduboners may think about the birds first, but there are many other creatures, (including humans) who will be sickened by this event. I was encouraged to learn that the National Audubon Society and eBird are

organizing volunteers to monitor and record the nesting birds along the coast. Getting good data, baseline and ongoing, is how science is done. Audubon hopes that this will help provide a foundation for restoration and long-term protection.

Yes, this was an accident, not foreseen, but if you are like me, you have a long memory for the West Coast events like the Santa Barbara spill that was so close to home and the Exxon Valdez accident that is still impacting Alaskans. If you are interested in helping with advocacy, go to www.audubonaction.org and sign

(Continued on page 7)

Program: June 17th, 5:00p.m.

Member's Night

By Mary Parsell, Program Chair

Celebrate Summer with our Annual Gathering of Members and Friends:

Join us for our annual "members and friends" night! We are celebrating another great year of birding, great programs, and fellowship. We will start off the evening with a bird walk at 5:00 p.m. (for early birds) followed by a potluck at 6:30 p.m. Bring a few slides or a poem to share (slides may be traditional, DVD or PowerPoint).

For the potluck please bring a main dish, salad/vegetable or desert and your own plate, cup and place setting. We will provide soft drinks and water.

Hope to see you there!

Note: We take off the months of July and August, beginning again in September of 2010.a

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Chapter Happenings

Field Trips:

Idyllwild Area

By Carolyn Vance, Field Trip Chair

Idyllwild Area **Saturday, June 12th**

Our October trip was rained out so we're going to try it again! We will start at Lake Fulmor, then Idyllwild Park and Hurkey Creek County Park. A Forest Service Adventure Pass is required for the Lake (\$5 at Big 5, Sport Chalet, REI) and there is a \$2 per person user fee at the Park, but can be used at the other locations that day.

This is an all day trip with a 90 minute drive each way and lots of walking in higher elevations (5200 - 6200 ft.) To carpool, meet at the south end of the El Dorado branch library parking lot (on Studebaker Rd. just south of Spring St., Long Beach) on Saturday, June 12th at 7:15 a.m. or in the parking lot of Lake Fulmor at 9:00 a.m. There are rest-rooms at the lake but no soap/water; the Park has flush with soap, water & towels.

Remember to bring binoculars, field guides, a hat, water, snacks and lunch. There is a small store to buy food if you forget.

Directions: Take I-10 Fwy south to Banning. Take 8 Street exit. Go south on Hwy 243 and follow the signs. The lake is approx. 15 miles south of Banning. (Thomas Guide 783, E-5). a

Continuing throughout the Summer:

Gum Grove Park walks along the Los Cerritos Wetlands from the Orange County side continue on the second Saturday of June, July and August, 8:00 a.m. We are planning walks on the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority Phase I property, on the Hellman property 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m. If interested please write us at eldoradoaudubon@yahoo.com and will let you know dates and times as they are planned. Aa

Birding with New Friends

By Carolyn Vance, Field Trip Chair

Birders are friendly people, always willing to show off their local "hot spot." So when the Chapter received an e-mail from Helen Lane, of Texas, asking where to go bird when she was out here for a conference, two places sprang to mind: our own GIBA (Globally Important Bird Area) the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge and the always productive El Dorado Nature Center.

Helen joined Greg Cook (next year's Trip leader) and me on a beautiful April day to bird the Nature Center. First stop was the Anna's Hummingbird nest just off the bridge, where 2 tiny babies waited for mama to return with breakfast. Farther on, an Allen's Hummingbird gave us wonderful views perched on a branch, turning this way and that as we got to see the iridescence of his gorget. Helen thought he was a life bird for her!

We also saw the Great-horned Owls. Mom and a couple babies were just fuzzy outlines hidden behind lots of leaves. But Dad was sitting out in the open, a truly magnificent specimen!

We thank Helen for giving us the opportunity to show off the places we sometimes take for granted. El Dorado Audubon is blessed with two fantastic birding spots! Go out and see them, again, with new eyes. You never know what wonders they will hold. Aa

Bluebird Box Trail:

So far this year the bluebird pairs have been more productive than '09. All 20 nest boxes have eggs, hatchling or fledglings. The count in the nests as of May 12th is 10 fledged, 47 babies and 33 eggs.

The egg count is not accurate because some of the females sit so tight when we check them that not all are visible.

We've had help this year from our neighbors who have two children 10 and nine years old. Dad happens to be our veterinarian, specializing in injured and sick birds and wildlife. The whole family is very interested in the project, so we have the kids help Joan with the paper work. They tell us that they have received class credit for reporting on the program.

Happy birding, Roger and Joan Kneeland a

Tank Farm Removal - The Long Beach Planning Commission approved the tank demolition project (MND) with modifications which are an improvement. This came about after community members and organizations provided testimony and asked for a full EIR instead of a MND. This is the site where Home Depot was proposed several years ago. It is between the San Gabriel River, Los Cerritos Channel and Los Cerritos wetlands.

More information could be found on the City of Long Beach's website.

El Dorado Audubon's website is www.eldoradoaudubon.org. We will continue to post news there, from our home page and we may also post on "twitter" accessed from our home page.

Land Swap parcel, marketplace pond, goes to City Council May 18th. Stay tuned for the result.

The Dream Continues -- 100 Acres Addition in 2010? The Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCA) will be considering purchase of 100 acres of wetlands owned by Hellman at their May 27 meeting in Sacramento. El Dorado Audubon and Audubon California have written letters of support. If all goes well the purchase would be completed in fall of 2010. Let's hope so!

From the agenda, item 32 (Los Cerritos Wetlands, \$6,180,000): "*To consider the allocation for a grant to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority for a cooperative project with the State Coastal Conservancy and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, to acquire 100+/- acres of land to protect critical coastal wetland habitat, scenic features and vanishing remnants of California's wetland landscape located in the City of Seal Beach, in Orange County. The proposed funding source allows for the acquisition, protection and restoration of lands in or adjacent to urban areas. [Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Fund of 2002 (Proposition 50), Section 79572(a)].*"

Recommended sources for information on these and other issues relating Los Cerritos Wetlands are listed below. If computers are not your thing, please let us know and we can mail you info. to Clarann, Eleanor or Mary at 714/501-2872, 562/596-0832, 562/252-5825 or any board member.

On Facebook, "Second and PCH, Citizens Against Catastrophe"

Egrets No Regrets www.egretsnotregrets.com

Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, www.lcmlandtrust.org

Los Cerritos area photos and information, www.caopensespace,

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority, www.lcwa.org

Online News

www.lbreport.com and Dave Wielenga's blog accessed through www.lbreport.com

Print and online news

www.pressestelegramn.com

www.latimes.com

a

Bird

RARE BIRD ALERT: THEN AND NOW

By Charles T. Collins

Every now and then a bird appears at a time and place outside of where it might be predicted to occur. Finding or getting to see one of these rarities is just one of the many pleasures of birding. Sometimes these rarities are just outside their normal range and thus not entirely unexpected. In other cases they may be half a continent away from where they normally occur.

In the 'dark ages' (meaning before cell phones and digital cameras) it was important to write a detailed description of a newly found rarity, particularly when other observers were not present to help confirm the identification. Did the white on the forehead extend beyond the eye? Were the undertail coverts white or yellow? Was the eye ring complete or broken? Did it walk or hop? What did it sound like? Such details of plumage, behavior or vocalizations may have been critical in getting the record 'accepted'. Back then rushing to a nearby phone to call others was also important in hopes of rounding up other observers.

Sometimes this was a lost cause as was true of a Prothonotary Warbler which landed briefly in front of us at Bolsa Chica but minutes later continued its flight to who-knows-where and was never seen again. However, in another case, a Mississippi Kite was found on the CSULB campus by Brian Daniels and it stayed around for several hours allowing birders, alerted by a relay of phone messages, time to get there and see it.

Now, flash forward to the present and the game or rules have changed. On April 13 a Wilson's Plover was sighted at Bolsa Chica. This was the first record of this species for Orange County and one of the few records for the state. Very quickly a digital image was obtained and uploaded to the web site for notable Orange County bird sightings. Thus, there was little need for a detailed written description. The photo showed all necessary details. Hundreds of additional digital images were taken of this bird in the following days. The need for a relay of phone messages was also bypassed as the web site alerted many more potential observers almost instantly. In this case, the bird stayed around until at least late on April 16 and during this time was seen, photographed and enjoyed by many people.

The goal in seeing this bird may have been to add to a life list, state list, county list or year list. In this case it also provided a wonderful opportunity to see a Wilson's Plover at close range and observe its foraging behavior. Unlike the more familiar Semipalmated Plover which actively moves about gleaning food items from the mud surface, the Wilson's Plover stood stock still for long periods. Then it rushed forward to grab a small crab which had been lulled into emerging from its burrow by the immobile predator. After consuming the crab, legs and all, the plover again remained still until another crab unwittingly emerged and was similarly targeted for dinner.

My wife and I did not hurry down right away to Bolsa Chica to

see the plover as we had both seen this species in parts of its normal range in Baja California and Florida and there was no guarantee that it would still be there. However when it appeared that the plover was staying around we changed our minds and a day later went to see it. Unfortunately a passing Peregrine had scattered all of the shorebirds there only a few minutes before our arrival. We returned again the next day and were rewarded by getting to see the Wilson's Plover at close range; it seemed oblivious to people passing on the nearby dike or standing around watching it and photographing it. We also had ample time to note its unique foraging behavior, something we had not been able to stop and observe previously. This we greatly enjoyed!

So, making the effort to go and see a rarity (assuming it stays around) may result in much more than just a check-mark on some list. It could offer the opportunity to really 'get to know' a new species and perhaps compare it to others that more commonly occur in your area. This would more than repay the time and effort involved. I recommend it! Aa

IN MEMORIUM:

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Robert (Bob) Roemer recently. We remember him as an avid bird watcher. He and his wife Marilyn attended many El Dorado Audubon programs, potlucks and field trips. In retirement, they enjoyed trips to many places, enjoying the people, the history and of course, birds! In his professional life, he joined Potter-Roemer, Inc. in 1950, a leader in the fire protection industry retiring in 1990 as CEO. During his career he introduced new innovative and business practices.

Our sincere condolences to Marilyn and the family. Donations in his memory may be made to El Dorado Audubon Society, since he loved volunteering for the bluebird nesting boxes in El Dorado Park. a

Also, Lindsay Fitch's father passed away in April. Our thoughts and condolences go out to her and her family as well. Aa

Dana Point Preserve Trail

By Steve Liivoja, Member-at-Large

Last President's Day, the sky was clear and blue, the sun was bright and shiny and I just could not see myself staying indoors to watch the Winter Olympics. I had heard of an area called "The Headlands" in the Dana Point area so I decided to go down there, check out the place and do a little birding.

Just south of the intersection of Pacific Coast Hwy. and Green Lantern St. is my target destination. The Headlands, or Dana Point Preserve, is a 30 acre tract of land located on a dramatic promontory looking over the Pacific Ocean. To the north you look down onto Strand Beach and to the south the Dana Point Harbor.

The Preserve was opened in November 2009 as mitigation for activities impacting the endangered California Gnatcatcher and Pacific Pocket Mouse. It consists of both coastal and bluff sage scrub and is composed entirely of native plants. It has a lovely on-half mile trail which includes 5 overlooks with benches and an elevation shift of about 100 feet.

After parking in the small parking lot and passing the Nature Center (which unfortunately was

closed), I was eager to hit the trail! As I walked, I noticed several phoebes, Anna's Hummingbirds, a thrasher and a Loggerhead Shrike. Near the Cliffside portion of the trail I noticed what appeared to be a wild bee hive in a chasm of the cliffs. As I scanned out with my scope towards the ocean I was pleasantly surprised to see a spout shoot up from a whale!

The trail does not take very long to complete and there is no bad view anywhere on it. I was a little disappointed in not seeing any wildflowers in bloom since we have had a lot of rain recently. I spoke with a local resident at one of the overlooks and she mentioned that at one time this property was designated for residential development. (I'm so glad that didn't happen!) She also mentioned that the remnants of a military lookout used in World War II were found during the preservation effort.

To the south of the Preserve, facing the Harbor is a small open space known as Harbor Point Park which also has a nature trail with overlooks. A bit more east of this Park, along Green lantern St. is yet another open area known as Hilltop Park that also has a nature trail.

I really enjoyed visiting this Preserve and walking the trails. I strongly encourage you to check it out. The Preserve is open 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to sunset. The address is 34558 Green Lantern St., Dana Point (Thomas Guide page 971, F-7). Parking and admission are free. The view is worth the driver itself! Aa

Our

Conservation News

By Mary Parsell, Conservation Chair

Support Audubon California's Important Bird Area -- Los Cerritos Wetlands - Coastal Commission, June 9, 10 or 11

Habitat Destruction, SEADIP Subarea 23 Loynes Drive near Studebaker, Appeal No. A-5-LOB-10-15

As you know, El Dorado Audubon, "Our Town -- Long Beach", LCWLT, and community members appealed the Long Beach Planning Commission decision (Dec. 2009) to the California Coastal Commission. The California Coastal Commission found "substantial issue" and there will be a hearing at the June Commission meeting in Marina del Rey (Marina del Rey Hotel on Bali) on June 9, 10 or 11.

Our chapter is working with Audubon California, Los Angeles, Sea & Sage and other chapters on this issue. The exact day will be known about two weeks prior (around May 27) and one can check for the date on the CCC's website: www.coastal.ca.gov.

To review we are looking for the site to be re-contoured, restored and monitored for five years after the restoration. LCW, including this site, is an Audubon California Important Bird Area. The IBA program is to protect the earth's biodiversity. (see www.auduboncalifornia for information on IBAs.

Here's how you can help:

It is important that as many environmentalists and people who were shocked at the destruction of Subarea #23 attend the California

Coastal Commission-really important to show numbers!! We can arrange car pools - Marina Del Rey has some yummy restaurants for lunch.

You can also write to the California Coastal Commission and support our appeal (A5-LOB-10-15). You need to make 17 copies of your letter, one for each of the commissioners and 5 for staff. We can make the copies and mail for you if that is easier for you. You can use our eldoradoaudubon@yahoo.com email to do that. If you have specific knowledge about the birds, plants and other wildlife on the site, please include that in your letter. If you send directly, please email or mail us a copy.

Write to:
Mr. Gary Timm
District Manager
California Coastal Commission
200 Oceangate, 10th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

For questions or more information, copies of the biologist's reports, please email eldoradoaudubon@yahoo.com or call or email any of our chapter leaders. We are working hard on behalf of the wildlife. We have used funds from the Bradley and Grueber memorial funds and El Dorado Audubon Habitat Defense Fund, we those who have contributed. We hired biologist Brenda McMillan and LCWLT hired Travis Longcore (Land Protection Partners) whose reports have been essential to this effort. We shared our data with both.

2nd & PCH EIR Comments needed by June 4 - It is a massive project that is planned on the corner of Second St. and PCH near

the beautiful serene Alamitos Bay Marina and Los Cerritos Wetlands. Great Blue Herons nest in the palm trees around the marina and bay. Black-crowned Night Herons and egrets are often seen as well as gulls, terns, etc. The 10.8 acre project is inconsistent with the Certified Local Coastal Plan (SEADIP) which calls for buildings to be 35 feet tall (a two or three story building).

The plans call for a 12 story building (and two stories on top of that for equipment. The developers are looking for the city to amend SEADIP as well as the City's General Plan and give them variances. Most of the other buildings are 6 and 7 stories.

There is no mitigation for increased traffic (approximately 15,000 more cars daily)

It is 500 cars under parked.

Residential units are included (325 condos) which is not consistent with Coastal dependent uses and 220,000 sq. feet of retail (nearby retail space sits vacant)

The area is zoned for a village atmosphere which people would like to keep--space is zoned for a hotel --low height-low density-- and we need a lovely hotel in east Long Beach. Imagine a restored wetlands and our beautiful Alamitos Bay Marina as a place for residents and visitors to enjoy!

The EIR was released and the comment period ends June 4. Please write now! Send your comments to: jeffrey.winklepleck@longbeach.gov. cc: mayor@longbeach.gov, district1@longbeach.gov through district9@longbeach.gov.

(Thoughts from page 1)

up. They send out occasional Action Alert emails that make taking action easy. Politics are often about the numbers, and if enough of us respond it can really make a difference.

Instead of just sitting and feeling bad, let's try to do something positive in the face of this environmental disaster. Aa

TRIP REPORTS:

By Carolyn Vance, Field Tip Chair

April - Oak Canyon:

Our trip to Oak Canyon in Anaheim was more memorable for what we didn't see. All agreed that this is a wonderful spot hidden away, but for those of us who had been there before, the lack of Wood Duck and Wrentit was disappointing.

Now don't get me wrong - we got to see wonderful birds including lots of Acorn Woodpeckers and Oak Titmouse, Scrub Jay, California Quail, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, Nuttall's Woodpecker, and Black-headed Grosbeak among others. Make time to check out this spot. The Nature Center is only open on Saturday, but the trails are open every day until dusk.

May - Shipley Nature Center:

Baby birds were the highlight of the day! We started out getting several birds in the parking lot, including a Red-tailed Hawk flying over and lots of Anna's Hummingbirds.

One inside we saw a nest box with a House Wren sitting nearby and then realized the quiet little noises we were hearing were coming from her babies inside the box. We also saw some immature Cassin's Kingbirds on a branch over the small pond there and an adorable baby Coot. The Coot gave us pause in identification as he was fuzzy gray with a reddish beak, but once he stepped out of the water and I saw his yellow lobbed feet, there was no mistaking his parentage!

We also saw lots of Western Tanagers, Nutmeg Mannikin, California Towhee, Bushtit and Black Phoebe. Then we came across a crow nest high in a tree and could hear the baby yelling for his parents to feed him.

On the way out we saw a female Tree Swallow hanging out of a nest box. You could only see her face and toenails, but she was very stubborn, refusing to leave to chase us off. We also had a female Western Bluebird hanging around that area, maybe upset that the Tree Swallow got her box.

As we were walking out to the parking lot to leave, we heard a woodpecker drumming. Finally a female Downy Woodpecker was found and we watched and heard her for a few minutes. What a wonderful ending to a great day of birding! Aa

2010 - 2011 Board:

New Board Members will be voted in at Members' Night. They are:

President - Donna Bray
1st Vice President - Mary Parsell
2nd V.P. - Carolyn Vance
Treasurer - Joe Rosenthal
Secretary - Michelle Baney

Any other nominations will be accepted before the voting. Aa

Join El Dorado Audubon Society!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats. As a member, you will become an important part of our dynamic chapter and receive a host of benefits including:

A 1-year subscription (10 issues) of our chapter newsletter, *California Least Tern*

Automatic membership in National Audubon Society, and a 1-year subscription (4 quarterly issues) of *Audubon*, its award-winning magazine.

Admission to Audubon Centers across the country.

A 10 % discount on products at select Audubon Nature Stores

Yes! I want to join today!

\$20 - Chapter Only (no magazine)

\$15 - 1 year Student/Senior Rate
(Chapter Only)

(Make check payable to El Dorado Audubon for either of the above 2 memberships)

\$20 - 1 year National Audubon Rate

\$20 - 1 year Student/Senior Rate(National)

\$30 - 2 year National Audubon Rate
(Make check payable to National Audubon)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Please mail your tax-deductible check to El Dorado Audubon Society, Attn: Membership Chair, P.O. Box 90713, Long Beach, CA 90809-0713.

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June Calendar of Events

- 3 **Board Meeting**, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. at Lindsay Fitch's home.
- 12 **Field Trip**, Saturday, 7:15 a.m. to the Idyllwild area. (See article on page 2 for details)
- 12 **Bird Walk**, Saturday at **Gum Grove Park**, 8:00a.m. Meet at the Park, Avalon Dr. near Catalina Ave. in Seal Beach. Also July 10 and August 14.
- 13 **Bird Walk**, Sunday 8:00 a.m. at El Dorado Nature Center. Meet in the parking lot (\$7.00 parking fee). All skill levels welcomed!
- 17 **Member's Night**, Thursday at 5:00 p.m., El Dorado Nature Center. Birdwalk and potluck. **Remember to bring your recyclable aluminum cans and plastic bottles!** (See article on page 1 for details)
- 26 **Refuge Tour**, Saturday, **Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge** at 8:30 a.m.. Reservations required no less than 48 hours in advance by calling 562-598-1024 and leaving your name and number in party. Identification (adults only) will be required for admittance. A \$5 donation to the Friends of the SBNWR is requested.
- 9/16 On Vacation for July & August. Join us in September for our General Meeting/Program.

El Dorado Audubon Society holds its monthly meetings in the El Dorado Nature Center 7550 E. Spring Street, Long Beach. The public is welcome to attend meetings and field trips.

El Dorado Audubon Society, Inc. assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending meetings or field trips sponsored by the society.

El Dorado Audubon Society

Web: www.eldoradoaudubon.org
E-Mail: ElDoradoAudubon@gmail.com
El Dorado Nature Center: 562-570-1745
Seal Beach NWR: 562-598-1024
Bird Rescue (IBRC): 310-514-2573

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1st Vice President	Mary Parsell 562-252-5825
2nd Vice President	Lindsay Fitch 714-229-0126
Treasurer	Eleanor Beland 562-438-7522
Secretary	Michelle Baney 562-429-4714

Chairpersons

Audubon Adventures	Lindsay Fitch 714-229-0126
Birdathon	(Open)
Bluebird Boxes	Roger & Joan Kneeland Ted Koopman
Christmas Bird Count	Rich Sonnenberg 562-597-3476
Conservation	Mary Parsell 562-252-5825
Education	Lindsay Fitch 714-229-0126
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California Least Tern, the newsletter of the El Dorado Audubon Society, is produced monthly, September through June. The deadline for all submissions is the second Thursday of each month. The editor reserves the right to edit all contributions to meet space or deadline requirements.

Persons who are not members of the National Audubon Society, or who are from chapters other than El Dorado, may receive this newsletter. Simply submit your name, address, and a yearly fee of \$10.00 to the treasurer at the chapter address.

If you need to check your membership status or request changes to your name or address with the National Audubon Society, please call 800-274-4201.

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