



Chaparral Naturalist

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Pomona Valley Bird Alliance

www.pomonavalleybirdalliance.org

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California Bird Atlas Launches: How You Can Report Breeding Behavior

By Patrick Gavit

Many of us observe with wonder and amazement birds on a nest or even birds carrying nest material, and we have a strong desire to share these sightings with others. Maybe we post our firsthand accounts on Facebook or our local Nextdoor group, or we just enthusiastically tell our friends and family in person. This desire to communicate these observations is certainly understandable as the breeding behavior of birds is truly a marvel of nature.

There is now an opportunity to communicate bird breeding behavior to the entire world. The vehicle for doing this is the California Bird Atlas project, whose goal is to create California's first statewide map of breeding bird distribution, behavior, and timing. The project officially launched on January 1.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

An example of bird breeding behavior (Killdeer feigning injury) that can be submitted to the California Bird Atlas.

When complete, the atlas will establish a baseline of data that can serve as an excellent tool for conservation and habitat management and to assess impacts of climate change. Additionally, the data gathered can fill knowledge gaps in the state regarding where different species are breeding.

The wonderful aspect of this project is that it doesn't just rely on scientists collecting data; it relies on each of us submitting observations. So, when you see a bird on a nest, or other evidence of birds breeding, you can submit the data to the California Bird Atlas project which, when assimilated, will become a report that



California Bird Atlas

everyone can see. What a great way for all of us to participate in a valuable science and conservation project.

Forty-four states have breeding bird atlases that provide valuable data for professional and community scientists. While California has never had a statewide breeding bird atlas, numerous counties in the state have conducted surveys and published the data in an atlas format. Conducting a statewide survey requires a lot of resources, including money.

Recognizing this need, at its Oct. 30, 2025, meeting, the PVBA Board unanimously approved a donation of \$10,000 from the chapter to become a founding member of the California Bird Atlas.

"I'm proud of our board for recognizing the importance of this project—both in its scope and its timing," said Tina Stoner, PVBA president. "This is an opportunity to truly make a difference by collecting data that will inform conservation decisions for years. We are especially grateful for a recent bequest that helped make this investment possible."

Submitting observations for the survey is easy since it uses eBird. Examples of breeding behavior that can be submitted include adult birds carrying food, distraction displays (for example a Killdeer acting as if it had a broken wing), carrying nesting material, courtship behavior, and even singing birds. For more information on other breeding behavior categories and how to submit observations see the project website at <https://www.californiabirdatlas.org>.

Save the date for the PVBA's regular monthly meeting on May 7 when Van Pierszalowski, Executive Director of the California Bird Atlas, will speak on "Building California's First Statewide Breeding Bird Atlas."

So, the next time you observe a nesting bird or any bird breeding behavior, consider submitting to the California Bird Atlas Project so that your data can be assimilated and become part of a report that will greatly aid conservation efforts and improve our knowledge of the distribution of breeding birds in California.

Meetings

PVBA meetings take place at 7 p.m. in the Padua Room of the Alexander Hughes Center at 1700 Danbury Dr. in Claremont, generally on the first Thursday of each month from September through June.



Thursday, March 5, at 7 p.m.

Cathy McFadden and Paul Clarke — Birding the Mountains of Colombia

Colombia is the world’s most bird-diverse country, with over 1,900 species, including more than 80 found nowhere else. In 2025, PVBA members Cathy McFadden and Paul Clarke explored Colombia’s mountains—from the Santa Marta range to the three Andean cordilleras—searching for these birds. Join us for a slideshow featuring hummingbirds, parrots, wrens, antpittas, and other rare, range-restricted, and often endangered species.

Cathy McFadden, a biology professor at Harvey Mudd College, studies evolutionary relationships of marine organisms, especially soft corals. She and her husband Paul Clarke share a passion for international travel and global birding.



Thursday, April 2, at 7 p.m.

Patrick Gavit – iNaturalist: Stories from the Front Lines

Discover how everyday observations can lead to extraordinary discoveries using your phone with iNaturalist! Pat will explain what iNaturalist is, how it works, and why it’s become a powerful tool for science, conservation, and community. Through real-world stories, you’ll see how observations by everyday people have led to new species records, range expansions, and meaningful conservation action.

Patrick is a retired biochemist with 37 years in the biotech industry who developed a lifelong love of nature in semi-rural Michigan. A high school field trip sparked his passion for birds. His favorite bird is the Swainson’s Hawk and his favorite animals are reptiles.



Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m.

Van Pierszalowski – Building California’s First Statewide Breeding Bird Atlas

Breeding Bird Atlases mobilize community scientists and professionals to collect detailed, behavior-based bird data across a statewide grid. While 44 states have completed at least one, California has none, leaving over 80% of the state under-surveyed. With platforms like eBird and a growing birding community, a statewide effort is now achievable—and urgently needed.

Van grew up in Cambria, and Kodiak Island, Alaska, working on his father’s salmon boat. A UC Berkeley anthropology graduate and songwriter, he now lives in Los Angeles, where he’s passionate about birding. He completed a 503-species California Big Year in 2023, serves as an eBird reviewer, and leads local birding trips.

See www.pomonavalleybirdalliance.org for full details of presentations and presenter bios.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY (NAS) AND POMONA VALLEY BIRD ALLIANCE (PVBA) MEMBERSHIP

We invite you to become a member of both NAS and PVBA. You also have the option of joining just PVBA. For either option, a yearly individual or family membership is \$20.

Check one:

JOIN Join both NAS and PVBA ONLINE. On the PVBA website, click on “Membership” and then on link to NAS. Make a \$20 donation to NAS. Check Chapter Code: C08

Join both NAS and PVBA BY CHECK. Make out a \$20 check to NAS. Mail to NAS with address slip below.

Join PVBA only, not NAS. Make \$20 check to PVBA and send to PVBA with address slip below.

RENEW Renew your joint membership in NAS and PVBA ONLINE. . . Use the renewal notice you receive from NAS or make a \$20 donation to NAS on the NAS website. *Use the same name as your membership.

Renew your joint membership in NAS and PVBA BY CHECK. Make \$20 check to NAS and send to NAS with address slip below.

Renew your PVBA only membership. Make \$20 check to PVBA and send to PVBA with address slip below.

NAS mailing address: **NAS, PO Box 97194, Washington DC 20090**

PVBA mailing address: **PVBA, 2058 N. Mills, PMB 426, Claremont, CA 91711**

Name _____ Chapter Code C08

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Field Trips

Saturday, March 7

Field Trip to the Living Desert Zoo and Vicinity

47900 Portola Ave, Palm Desert, CA 92660

Easy to Moderate.

A great spot to bird during the spring migration for migrants and desert dwellers alike. Meet at Memorial Park, Claremont at 6:00 a.m. or at the Zoo at 7:45 a.m. Anticipate a full day of birding so bring lunch (or purchase food there), snacks, ample water and appropriate clothing for desert conditions. Admission \$39.95. Contact Trip Leader Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or

DanRCRenee@verizon.net

Friday, April 17

Field Trip and Survey of the North Etiwanda Preserve

4890 Etiwanda Ave, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Difficulty: Strenuous (rocky, uneven terrain, 3.5 miles 800+ ft elevation gain)

Meet at Beryl Park at the West Parking Lot, 6501 Carnelian St, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 for a 7 a.m. departure to the preserve. This is a hike and not a walk, please bring sturdy footwear, a portable lunch, water, snacks, and layered clothing for about 6 hours in the field. Please RSVP with Trip Leader Mike Brossart mjbrossart@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 18

Field Trip to Huntington Central Park

18002 Goldenwest St, Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Difficulty: Easy to moderate.

This urban park features 300 species of waterfowl, raptors, migrants and vagrant species. Meet at Memorial Park, Claremont at 7:00 a.m. Anticipate a full day of birding so bring lunch, snacks, ample water and appropriate clothing. Contact Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net.

Bird Walks

First Sunday of the Month Family-Friendly Bird Walks at the California Botanic Garden

1500 N. College Ave. Claremont

Meet at the entrance at 8:00 a.m. for free admission. This family-friendly bird walk is approximately 2 hours long and is perfect for beginners and experienced birders alike. Loaner binoculars are available. PVAS volunteer Ken Burgdorff (gwrencaps@gmail.com) and others will lead the walks. Please RSVP using the links below. If you have difficulty walking and would like to bird from a tram, please contact the garden at registrar@calbg.org to reserve a spot.

Sunday, March 1 <https://tinyurl.com/March-Walk>

Sunday, April 5 <https://tinyurl.com/April-Walk>

Sunday, May 3 <https://tinyurl.com/May-Garden-Walk>

Sunday, June 7 <https://tinyurl.com/June-Walk>

Saturday, May 9

Field trip to Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and Covington Park

11055 East Dr, Morongo Valley, CA 92256

Difficulty: Moderate (up to 4 mi. but optional feeder watching only.)

A famous desert oasis at the height of spring migration. Meet at 6:00 a.m. at Memorial Park in Claremont (Note earlier start time!). Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day trip. Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net.

Saturday, June 13

Field Trip to the Big Bear Lake Area

(multiple locations - Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous (up to 4 mi.)

Enjoy birding the Big Bear Lake area and Bluff Lake during the mountain breeding season. Meet at 6:00 a.m. (Note earlier start time!) at Memorial Park in Claremont. Bring snacks, water and lunch for a full day of birding. Trip Leader: Dan Gregory (909) 456-4994 or DanRCRenee@verizon.net.

Sunday, July 12

Looking for Black Swifts at Claremont Hills Wilderness Park

4031 N. Mills Ave., Claremont, CA 91711

Difficulty: Strenuous (one mile hike on fire road with steep grade, possible high heat).

Park at the south lot, then proceed north on Mills Avenue to meet at the park entrance gate at 5:00 p.m. Be prepared with ample water, insect repellent, sunscreen and sturdy shoes. RSVP with Tom Miko at tgmiko@gmail.com.

Attention Photographers!

The June 4 PVBA Annual Meeting and Party provides two opportunities to share your best photos: 1) The annual Photo Showcase lets you project 10 to 15 of your favorite shots, and 2) The Photo Challenge will select the top entries for this year's theme, birds preening. Deadline for submissions to Seth Thompson at polpsych@gmail.com is May 20. See full details on the website pomonavalleybirdalliance.org.

Fourth Sunday of the Month Bonelli Bird Walks

Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park. San Dimas, CA 91773

Difficulty: Moderate

Enjoy one of the richest birding sites in Southern California on our fourth Sunday of the month Bonelli Bird Walk. We meet at 7:45 a.m. in the parking lot of Brackett Field airport at 1615 McKinley Ave., La Verne, CA 91773 (better known as the Norm's Hanger Coffee Shop parking lot.) to caravan into the park for **free** entrance. The walk starts around 8:00 a.m. and lasts two to three hours.

Sunday, March 22 - Patty Thorne: pattythorne99@gmail.com

Sunday, April 26 - Keith Condon: catbird117@yahoo.com

Sunday, May 24 - Patty Thorne: pattythorne99@gmail.com

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Stay up-to-date on chapter news and events by signing up for our monthly email newsletter. Use this QR code:



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75 Volunteers Participate in 2025 Christmas Bird Count

By Dan Stoebel, PVBA Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

PVBA members and friends observed a total of 139 species during the Claremont Christmas Bird Count, conducted on Saturday, December 20th, 2025. This is near the long-term average for the number of species of this count, which is centered at the intersection of Mills Avenue and Mt. Baldy Road in Claremont — roughly half in Los Angeles County and half in San Bernardino County.

We had four new countable species on this CBC, which is great for a count in its 54th year. Those count firsts were: Common



Photo: Thick-billed Kingbird observed during CBC

PHOTO BY DAN STOEBEL

Poorwill in San Dimas Canyon; and Neotropic Cormorant, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Northern Waterthrush at Bonelli Regional Park.

We also had our first Swinhoe's White-eyes, which have only been present in the area for the last few years.

Other species of note for our count were: Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Marsh Wren, and Summer Tanager at Bonelli; Vermilion Flycatcher- a new high total for the count of five, with three at Bonelli and two at Bellevue Cemetery; Painted Redstart at San Dimas Canyon Park; and Thick-billed Kingbird at Bellevue Cemetery.

PVBA Board of Directors

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Annual June Meeting and Party

- including
- Food
 - Elections
 - Flock Leader Award
 - Silent Auction
 - Beautiful Photography by your fellow chapter members

Thursday, June 4

Social Hour 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Meeting 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.