

1. [†]BALLUS, GWEN, [‡]MELISSA CADY, AND ^{‡§}COLLEEN HANDEL. **The Alaska Landbird Monitoring System: A Broad-scale Monitoring Tool.** [†]Tongass National Forest, 8465 Old Dairy Road, Juneau AK 99801; gwenbaluss@yahoo.com. [‡]U. S. Geological Survey Alaska Science Center, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage AK 99503; mcady@usgs.gov, [§]colleen_handel@usgs.gov.

Most of Alaska's 135 species of breeding terrestrial birds are not adequately sampled by any continental monitoring program. Lack of road infrastructure in the state has resulted in insufficient and geographically limited sampling for programs such as the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). To address this deficiency, Boreal Partners in Flight developed the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey (ALMS). This program utilizes a statistically rigorous sampling design to achieve the following goals: (1) to monitor the population trends of a wide variety of landbird species, (2) to estimate population sizes of selected species, (3) to model bird-habitat relationships at large spatial scales, and (4) to complement information collected from the roadside BBS. The ALMS is a cooperative project supported by various state and federal land management agencies coordinated by the U. S. Geological Survey. The sampling framework consists of a stratified random selection of 10km-by-10km blocks on federal and some state resource lands (>45% of the state). Each block contains a randomly offset grid of up to 25 points surveyed using 10-minute point-transects (variable-circular plots). Each selected block is surveyed once during June on a biennial basis, and associated habitat data are collected. We discuss sampling design, methods, participation to date, and a selection of preliminary results, including density estimates of Pacific-slope Flycatchers (*Empidonax difficilis*) on the Tongass National Forest. Design and implementation of this statistically rigorous program should be of interest to those who wish to efficiently and systematically monitor landbirds over vast or difficult-to-access areas. – **Poster Presentation.**

2. BRADY, CHRISTINE M. **Effects of Habitat Degradation on Raptors Utilizing A Suburban-Wildland Interface.** California State Polytechnic University, Department of Biological Sciences, 3801 West Temple Avenue, Pomona CA 91768; cmbrady@csupomona.edu.

As natural habitats in Southern California continue to be severely impacted by the growing human population, raptors are forced to hunt and breed in diminishing suitable areas. The campus of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly), typifies this situation. Its mosaic of habitat types has historically provided foraging and breeding areas for 13 species of resident, transient, and wintering diurnal raptors. A decade following the completion of a study on raptors utilizing the campus environs (1995), there has been a notable decrease in both species richness and abundance. Only 4 species are currently found on campus. Contributing factors to this decline include a loss of approximately 119,969 square meters (1,291,336 square feet) of hunting, roosting, and nesting sites to new structures; vertebrate pest control/elimination; encroachment of bus routes and parking stations into nesting areas; paving and landscaping of productive hunting areas within the campus proper; increased human access to nesting and roosting sites; disappearance of passerines; defoliation of nest trees by the red gum lerp psyllid (*Glycaspis brimblecombei*); and possibly West Nile Virus. The campus Master Plan calls for an additional 192,835 square meters (2,075,664 square feet) of structural development (excluding parking lots, walkways, landscaping, and amenities) in the next six years. Of particular concern for further habitat loss is Proposition 60A passed by California voters in November 2004. Under this resolution, "unused" or

“underutilized” public lands may be declared “surplus property” and sold, with the proceeds going into the state General Fund. At risk are prime agricultural lands, coastal sage scrub, and oak and walnut woodlands.
– **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 1:00–1:20.**

3. BOUSMAN, BILL. Breeding Avifaunal Changes in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1927–2005. 321
Arlington Way, Menlo Park CA 94025; barlowi@earthlink.net.

In 1927, Grinnell and Wythe published the status of all species known from the nine counties contiguous to the San Francisco Bay. With the extensive breeding bird atlasing that has taken place over the past 20 or so years, it is possible to examine changes in the breeding birds over this nearly 80-year time frame. As a baseline, I have augmented the Grinnell and Wythe data with other pre-1927 breeding records, either those published later and unknown to Grinnell and Wythe or from egg collections. For present-day comparative data, I have used records from the literature, egg collections, and county experts. The Grinnell and Wythe baseline represents 160 species. Seven more species were listed, but without breeding evidence. I have found additional breeding confirmations for four of these (164), as well as breeding confirmations for an additional nine species. This brings the augmented Grinnell and Wythe total to 173. Since this period, the total number of species known to be breeding in the Bay area has increased to 212, a 23% increase. In my presentation, I will discuss four species that are now extirpated in the Bay area, as well as the 43 species that are recently added breeders. Many of the new species are irregular and casual breeders and of lesser importance. However, 17 of these I conclude to be now part of the Bay area breeding avifauna. These changes have occurred for a variety of reasons, the most important of which is probably natural range expansions. The comparison of breeding species over this time period provides an interesting and sometimes speculative look at natural changes to our ecosystems and some of the human impacts. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 1:20–1:40.**

4. BROWN, MARK. Possible Hybrid Between Ross’s Goose (*Chen rossii*) and Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*) in a Coastal California Urban Park. 704 South McClelland Street, Santa Maria CA 93454; gavkbrown@sbceo.org.

In this presentation, I discuss my observations of an apparent Ross’s Goose × Swan Goose (*Chen rossii* × *Anser cygnoides*) hybrid at Waller Park, an urban park in Santa Maria, California. My identification of this individual is based on my observations of its morphology, behavior, and vocalizations. As far as I know, there are no previous records of Ross’s Goose × Swan Goose hybrids. However, there are previous records of hybridization involving closely related species, among them Snow Goose (*C. caerulescens*) × Swan Goose and of Ross’s Goose × Greylag Goose (*A. anser*) hybrids. I will discuss specifically how this particular hybrid combination, involving a native species that breeds in the high arctic and an exotic that is widely noted but at lower latitudes, might have arisen; and I will discuss more generally the implications of hybridization for both native and exotic populations of waterfowl. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 1:40–2:00.**

5. CHISHOLM, GRAHAM. Bird Conservation along the South Fork of the Kern River: Past Successes, Future Challenges. Audubon California, 4225 Hollis Street, Emeryville CA 94608; gchisholm@audubon.org.

It has been more than 25 years since The Nature Conservancy and Audubon started working to conserve a 15-mile segment of high-quality cottonwood-willow riparian habitat on the South Fork of the Kern River just upstream of Lake Isabella in Kern County. This area has been targeted for conservation because it is a stronghold for Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and numerous other riparian bird species. Audubon and California Department of Fish and Game have made significant additions to The Nature Conservancy's original acquisitions. To date, more than 10,000 acres has been brought under conservation, including 4,300 acres so far in 2005. Despite this success, the challenge of securing long-term conservation remains daunting for a number of reasons, including a growing number of retirees and second-home owners buying property in the southern Sierra Nevada, remaining private lands in the 100-year floodplain, potential changes in land use in the floodplain and upland, and continuing threat of invasive plant species. Securing long-term conservation will require the application of a range of strategies, including the following: acquiring fee interests or conservation easements on five additional properties in core areas, restoring riparian vegetation on certain tracts, limiting the number of new homes in upland areas to reduce potential impact from groundwater withdrawal, ensuring that private and public conservation partners are committed to long-term management for riparian habitat and riparian-dependent bird species, maintaining an active invasive plant management program, and funding long-term monitoring. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 1:30–1:45.**

6. DEL NEVO, ADRIAN. Recognizing Individuals and Regional Populations Using Sound Science: Implications for, and Advances in, Conservation Biology. Department of Biological Sciences, California State University at Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach CA 90840-3702; adrian.delnevo@get.net.

Historically, recognition of bird song (signals) has largely been limited to comparing sonograms. An advance in sound analysis complemented by new analytical techniques provides recognition (“capturing”) of individuals and populations. Preliminary data for Willow Flycatchers indicates that individuals and regional populations can be recognized by their calls and subsequently “recaptured” and their likely natal population (geographic origin) identified. The approach has broad implications for the monitoring of various species, particularly for those species that are secretive or that otherwise require substantial monitoring effort. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 1:45–2:00.**

7. [†]FLOYD, TED, AND [‡]JAY WITHGOTT. Recent and Future Trends in Western Field Ornithology. [†]American Birding Association, P. O. Box 7974, Boulder CO 80306-7974; tedfloyd@aba.org. [‡]7515 Southwest 34th Avenue, Portland OR 97219; withgott@nasw.org.

This presentation provides a brief overview of recent highlights in, and examines possible future directions for, field ornithology in western North America. Current and future western field ornithologists will presumably maintain their strong interest and expertise in descriptive natural history, while at the same

time relying on modern computational approaches and embracing emerging paradigms of interdisciplinarity and integrative management. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 1:00–1:15.**

8. GALLAGHER, SYLVIA, MODERATOR. Expert Identification Challenge: Recorded Sounds. 21562 Kaneohe Lane, Huntington Beach CA 92646; jgallagher@pocketmail.com.

In this panel presentation, experts at identifying birds by voice will attempt to identify “mystery sounds” of common and not-so-common birds of western North America. Panel members will explain what they are hearing and why they think what they are hearing is what they think they are hearing. The goal of this presentation is to showcase how a balanced approach—partly systematic, partly subjective—to learning bird vocalizations is the one most likely to obtain success. – **Panel Presentation: Friday, 30 October 2005, 7:00–8:15.**

9. HEINDEL, MATT. The California Bird Records Committee: Recent and Future Directions. 2837 Corte Papaya, Carlsbad CA 92009; mtheindel@aol.com.

In this presentation, I will provide an overview of the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), how it functions, what its purposes are, and what some recent decisions have been. Some basic philosophical issues, relevant to any state, will be addressed, including a discussion of problem areas for the committee and for birders alike. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 3:40–4:40.**

10. HOUSE, DEBBIE. Membership Limitations of Urban Bird Communities. 172 Summit Road, Bishop CA 93514; roadkill123@earthlink.net.

Urban areas provide different resource-sets than those found in native plant communities, and they therefore support bird communities that differ substantially from those in natural areas. Guild structure, foraging behavior, avian community characteristics, and habitat structure were examined in four urban developments of different ages (six months to 75 years) in Orange County, California, and were compared with nearby coastal sage-scrub habitat. Several bird species found to be common to abundant in the older developments were less abundant in or absent from the newer housing developments. The youngest neighborhood attracted more open-habitat species and more native scrub species, and had higher indices of species evenness, than did the older neighborhoods. The older urban areas exhibited greater dominance by a few species and the reduction or absence of breeding neotropical migrants. This work relates to the edge effect studies of Bolger et al. (1997), who examined habitat fragmentation and urbanization effects on coastal-scrub bird species. In my study, “edge/fragmentation reduced” species (as defined by Bolger et al.) were generally absent from the urban areas. “Edge/fragmentation insensitive” species were found to be present in urban areas, but they had decreased abundances relative to the native coastal sage scrub community. “Edge/fragmentation enhanced” species had higher densities in urban areas than in native coastal sage-scrub communities. My findings suggest that the limited vegetation volume and near absence of a shrub layer in urban developments imposes a serious limitation on the use of urban habitats by native shrub-dwelling species. The patterns of avian community structure observed further suggest that urban bird community membership is limited primarily by habitat structure, but species interactions and the dispersal

abilities of shrub-inhabiting bird species also likely play a role. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 2:00–2:20.**

11. HOWELL, STEVE N. G. At-sea Identification of “Black Petrels” (Genus *Procellaria*). PRBO Conservation Science, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach CA 94970.

The genus *Procellaria* includes four species of medium-sized to large, predominantly blackish petrels: White-chinned Petrel, *P. aequinoctialis* (widespread in temperate southern oceans); Spectacled Petrel, *P. conspicillata* (subtropical South Atlantic); Westland Petrel, *P. westlandica* (temperate south Pacific); and Parkinson’s Petrel, *P. parkinsoni* (subtropical and tropical Pacific). These species of “black petrels” share mostly to entirely blackish-brown plumage and pale bills and represent both underappreciated and overstated identification problems. Two species, White-chinned and Parkinson’s Petrels, have been reported in North American waters. Here I outline at-sea identification criteria based largely on my at-sea experience since 1990 with hundreds of White-chinned, Spectacled, and Westland Petrels, and with 30+ Parkinson’s Petrels. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 4:20–4:40.**

12. LAWS, JOHN M. Field Sketching: Learning to Sketch and Document Birds in the Field. 155 Dolores Street No. 3, San Francisco CA 94103.

In this workshop, participants will learn how to capture the feeling of the living organism while including the details critical for identification. This workshop is designed to help the beginning and intermediate field ornithologist, biologist, or sketch artist develop drawing skills for use in the field. It will help participants home in on the points of identification so that you can quickly document, in the field, those frequently fast-moving birds. Bring drawing paper, pencils, eraser and a portable hard surface, such as a clipboard, for drawing. – **Workshop: Friday, 30 September 2005, 8:30–11:30; and Saturday, 1 October 2005, 8:30–11:30.**

13. ††LINCER, JEFFREY L., †JOHN D. BITTNER, AND †LESLIE NELSON. Monitoring HCPs with Raptors. †Wildlife Research Institute, P. O. Box 2209, Ramona CA 92065; †jefflincer@tns.net.

Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) are a potential vehicle to protect natural habitats and endangered species while accommodating anticipated development of a region. However, without a defensible monitoring program, there is no scientific basis for determining if an HCP is actually working. If environmental management decisions are to be made in a timely manner, biological trends need to be identified as soon as possible. San Diego’s Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) is one such subregional HCP for southwestern San Diego County, California. The total MSCP study area encompasses 12 jurisdictions and consists of 582,000 acres of which 43 percent is in unincorporated areas under the jurisdiction of San Diego County. The monitoring of raptors was recognized as a critical component of the MSCP; its Biological Monitoring Plan has identified Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, and Northern Harrier for grassland monitoring. Raptor species considered “covered” by the MSCP include Bald Eagle, Cooper’s Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and Swainson’s Hawk. Although once widely distributed and relatively common, the subject species have significantly declined in California over at least the past 50 years. They have been, and continue to be, the classic “miners’ canary,” revealing habitat changes long

before humans can notice, and properly plan for, them. Under a California Department of Fish & Game grant, the Wildlife Research Institute has developed and recommended a long-term monitoring program for raptor species covered by the MSCP. To accomplish this goal, WRI has monitored raptors, during 2001–2003, at 45 locations, within and adjacent to the MSCP. Criteria for site selection have been developed, appropriate Raptor Monitoring Areas chosen, and protocol details proposed for a long-term, science-based, monitoring protocol. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 3:30–3:45.**

14. MCCALLUM, ARCH. Birding by Ear—Visually! Applied Bioacoustics, P. O. Box 51063, Eugene OR 97405; mccalluma@qwest.net.

Most birders and field ornithologists are visual learners, but during the breeding season land birds are 9 times more likely to be heard than seen. For those of us who have to relearn songs and calls every year, a visual aid to remembering the hundreds of song-types and call-types around us would be really useful. The sound spectrogram (also known as sonogram) is such an aid. In the first segment of this workshop I will show you how spectrograms represent different qualities of sound, how spectrograms reveal the vocal gymnastics of avian sound production (e.g., singing two songs at once), and how spectrograms elucidate the organization of notes into phrases, phrases into songs, and songs into bouts. In the second segment, we will use spectrogram-based training programs to learn the song-phrases and calls of *Empidonax* flycatchers. In the final segment, we will discuss recording equipment, and participants with their own recordings can digitize and visualize them. Recommended reading: Don Kroodsma's *The Singing Life of Birds*. –

Workshop: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 8:30–11:30.

15. MCCALLUM, ARCH. Vocalizations of Western Flycatchers in Oregon. P. O. Box 51063, Eugene OR 97405; mccalluma@qwest.net.

Recently recorded samples of “Western” Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis* complex) male position-notes (MPN) and advertising songs from the east slope of the Cascades in Deschutes County, Oregon (15 territories) and the Warner Mountains in Lake County, Oregon (13 territories), when compared to extensive samples from the core ranges of the Cordilleran (*E. occidentalis*) and Pacific-slope (*E. difficilis*) Flycatchers, perhaps clarify both the confusion over identification cues and the current status of the species in central Oregon. Because some birds use song phrase 2, which is broken in Pacific-slope and continuous in some Cordillerans, like the MPN, such birds may be misconstrued as “bilingual” for MPN. Nevertheless, numerous individuals manifest considerable variability in their MPNs, which may also lead to the impression of bilinguality. On the one hand, this variation makes the often-heard MPN not very useful for identification, particularly when it is wrongly assumed to have only one distinctive and diagnostic form per nominal species. On the other hand, song is much more stereotyped within individuals. Songs from Lake County are very similar to core-range Cordilleran songs. Songs from Deschutes County are intermediate, with a wide range of variation among individuals, some approaching those of Lake County. The distribution of song phrases in Oregon appears to have changed little since Ned K. Johnson's research in the 1960s, in contrast to the reported eastward expansion of *E. difficilis* in British Columbia. – **Oral**

Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 2:30–2:45.

16. MCGOWAN, GREG, AND MITCH SIEMENS. Raptor Foraging Habitat: Mitigation Based on Science, Not Just Size. LFR Levine Fricke 301 South Miller Street - Suite 210, Santa Maria CA 93454; greg.mcgowan@lfr.com.

Effective mitigation for projects impacting raptor foraging habitat can be pragmatically developed using habitat quality criteria to improve the results for both raptors and the project proponent. Simple acreage ratios do not adequately reflect functional values of land for mitigation because they do not consider issues such as prey base, perching sites, surrounding land use, edge effect, etc. To evaluate suitable habitat for mitigation, a set of habitat quality criteria has been developed as a basis for comparison. Santa Barbara County, California is experiencing high development pressure with sprawl expanding into natural areas, reducing raptor foraging habitat. Responding to regulatory criteria protective of native botanical communities, development is frequently directed to occur in non-native grasslands, avoiding complicated and costly native habitat restoration. Historically, impacts to non-native grassland have rarely been mitigated. However, the County of Santa Barbara recently required a large residential development to mitigate for the loss of non-native grassland as raptor foraging habitat. Initial requirements specified a simple replacement acreage ratio (1:1). Working cooperatively with the developer and the County, and with input from the Predatory Bird Research Group, CDFG, and USFWS, a matrix of conditions was developed to facilitate review of potential mitigation properties based on habitat quality for raptor foraging including but not limited to the size of the parcel. Comparing nine parameters for habitat suitability, the approach focuses on the quality of mitigation habitat while providing limited flexibility on the size of the replacement parcel (larger or smaller) based on its habitat quality. This approach provides for scientifically defensible mitigation and provides an incentive to the project proponent to identify the highest quality habitat by allowing some latitude in replacement size (which directly impacts cost) if a slightly smaller parcel provides higher functional value for raptor foraging habitat than what is being impacted. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 3:15–3:30.**

17. MORLAN, JOSEPH, MODERATOR. Expert Identification Panel: Mystery Slides. 1359 Solano Drive, Pacifica CA 94044; jmorlan@ccsf.edu.

An annual offering at WFO meetings, the expert identification panel consists of 3–5 bird-identification experts who are presented with slides of difficult or problematic birds. The identities of the birds, if known, are not revealed at first to the panel. Operating as a group, the panel works through the identification process, “thinking out loud” for the benefit of audience members. The proceedings are often entertaining, but the more important end-result is distinctly educational: All of us gain improved insight into the actual process of bird identification. – **Panel Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 8:30–9:45.**

18. †PANDOLFINO, EDWARD, AND ‡JAMES HELMERICKS. Changes in Winter Abundance of the Ruddy Turnstone along the Coast of California. †5530 Delrose Court, Carmichael CA 95608; erpfromca@aol.com. ‡Colville Village via Pouch 340109, Prudhoe Bay AK 99734.

We used data from Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) to demonstrate a significant decline over the past 28 years of the Ruddy Turnstone population wintering along the coast of California. Of the 17CBCs with analyzable data, eight revealed significant decreases, but none revealed an increase. The average number of

Ruddy Turnstones counted since 1990 has decreased by 43% compared to the average prior to 1990. Declines were noted on CBCs from north of San Francisco to San Diego. Older data from some of the California CBCs suggested that the higher numbers of turnstones recorded in the late 1970s and 1980s may have reflected a period of unusually high abundance, perhaps part of a cyclic change. Several factors may have contributed to the decrease of the Ruddy Turnstone in California. However, we suspect that the most important is climate change, possibly related to the long-term fluctuations of sea surface temperature known as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation. There may have been a general decline in the quality of intertidal habitats along the California coast, affecting wintering populations of the Ruddy Turnstone and possibly of the Wandering Tattler. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 2:45–3:00.**

19. †RHODES, CAROLINE, AND ‡MADHUSUDAN KATTI. **Foraging Behavior of Urban Birds: Contrasting Old Neighborhoods with New Developments.** Department of Biology, California State University at Fresno, M. S. SB73 2555, East San Ramon Avenue, Fresno CA 93740-8034; †KeeperCJR@aol.com. ‡mkatti@csufresno.edu.

Urbanization is a dominant trend in California and worldwide. The San Joaquin Valley is home to 3.2 million human residents and is expected to draw many more in coming years. There is an urgent need to understand how urbanization affects biodiversity, and to reconcile urban development with conservation. When a habitat changes from wild to urban, bird diversity tends to decrease. Community composition shifts towards human commensals (mostly non-native), which outcompete native birds in their ability to avoid predation and exploit available food resources. Previous studies of such changes typically contrast wild vs. urban habitats, paying less attention to the considerable variation within urban/suburban areas. Here we address variation in species composition and foraging behavior among different urban habitat types within Fresno-Clovis, California. We build upon recent experimental studies of foraging behavior in Arizona's central valley, which used artificial food patches (seed trays) to show that urban habitat has more food available than the surrounding desert, and was dominated by highly efficient foragers, e.g., House Sparrows. Furthermore, urban foragers are less wary of predators, indicating lower predation risk in the city. We extend this experimental approach to examine within-city differences in habitat by comparing older neighborhoods (larger yards, greater mature tree cover) with newer housing developments (more recent habitat disturbance, smaller yards, less tree cover). We test the hypotheses that: (1) the more-complex habitat in older neighborhoods has more food available for birds, i.e., birds will spend less time foraging on seed-trays; and (2) older neighborhoods support a more diverse bird community. – **Poster Presentation.**

20. †RYAN, THOMAS P., ‡KEVIN CLARK, §LYANN COMRACK, °KATHY KEANE, ©WALLY L. ROSS, AND ¶MICHAEL D. TAYLOR. **The Status of California Least Terns Nesting in a Human-dominated Landscape in Marina del Rey, California.** †Foothill Associates, 24961 The Old Road – Suite 102, Stevenson Ranch CA 91381; tom.ryan@foothill.com. ‡U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad CA 92011; kevin_clark@fws.gov. §California Department of Fish and Game, South Coast Region, 4949 Viewridge Avenue, San Diego CA 92123; lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov. °Keane Biological Consulting, 2892 North Bellflower Boulevard – Suite 480, Long Beach CA 90815; keanebio@yahoo.com.

©3640 Radnor Avenue, Long Beach CA 90808; chlross@yahoo.com. ☒Santiago Canyon College, 8045 East Chapman Avenue, Orange CA 92869; taylor_michael@sccollege.edu.

In 1977, three pairs of California (*browni*) Least Terns were discovered nesting at Venice Beach, California, north of Ballona Creek. Although they had been known to nest here prior to 1919, this was the first modern record. Since re-establishment, the Venice Beach Colony has supported up to 16.6% of pairs of breeding Least Terns statewide, and over 30% of statewide fledglings. In recent years, their population has declined, with complete breeding failures occurring in 2002, 2004, and 2005. These failures are likely due to increased predation by the American Crow, combined with other pressures associated with their close proximity to human habitation and recreational areas. Because of the variety of problems this colony faces, the degree to which crows can be blamed for these losses has been debated. In 2005, survey methods were revised to include observations by local volunteers, and to include collection of data on predator population, visits to the colony, and predation events. In 2005, approximately 210 Least Terns comprised the Venice Beach Colony. Nesting began on 24 May 2005 as detected by an American Crow removing a Least Tern egg from the colony. Least Terns attended approximately 90 nests between 24 May and 7 June 2005. Only one nest was observed with greater than one egg, and all nests were depredated by crows prior to hatching. Crows visited the colony at a rate of 1.3 to 3.0 visits per hour, and the predation rate was approximately 0.78 eggs per hour during nesting, resulting in the predation of approximately 177 eggs. In 2005, crows were at least the proximate, and possibly the ultimate, cause of the failure of the colony. In the future, we will attempt to coordinate observations by volunteer monitors and the project biologist with attempts to discourage crow predation. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 3:00–3:15.**

21. SCHRAM, BRAD. Birding Seasons on the Central Coast. 1210 Antler Drive, Arroyo Grande CA 93420; gonebrdn@lightspeed.net.

This keynote presentation will look at the unique aspects of birding on California's central coast. The main focus will be on the seasonal distribution of birds in the region. In a nutshell: In summer, we catch up on chores around the house, in fall we hit the vagrant traps and do a boat trip or two, in winter we chase each other's wintering birds, and in spring we look (usually in vain) for something rare among the thin groups of migrants while trying to document breeding-range extensions. The talk will be illustrated by interesting historical photographs, and it will use the term 'coalescent stochasticity' at least three times. – **Keynote Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 7:00–8:00.**

22. SULLIVAN, BRIAN L. eBird—Birding with a Purpose. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850; bls42@cornell.edu.

Each time we observe birds, we collect valuable information regarding the distribution and abundance of the birds in our area. We fill our notebooks and home computers with thousands of bird records; but what ultimately happens to the collected observations of a lifetime? Typically, our observations remain on the shelves of our homes, where they are unusable for the benefit of birds and birding, and inaccessible to scientists wishing to use the data for research and conservation purposes. Too often, the majority of our field notes simply fall by the wayside. The rarest observations make print in various state or national journals. But what of the common birds? What of the volumes of data collected each day on Tree Swallows

or American Robins? What of the data we collect on species that, while common today, might someday warrant conservation concern, such as the Northern Flicker or the American Kestrel? Harnessing the technology of the internet and the combined efforts of birders everywhere, we now have the capacity to archive all the information collected each day by birders. eBird <www.eBird.org> is a free online data archive that allows users to submit their observations to a centralized database, where the data is warehoused, vetted, and then disseminated to interested parties in a useful way. eBird allows birders to keep track of the birds they've seen by creating personalized output such as frequency histograms for each species at your local birding location, as well as life, year, state, and county lists. In addition, the program generates output based on the cumulative observations of all eBird users, wherein patterns of bird distribution and frequency become evident at large geographic scales. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 1:15–1:30.**

23. THORNGATE, NELLIE. Effects of a Cowbird Removal Program on Riparian Bird Abundance in Central Coastal California. Ventana Wilderness Society's Big Sur Ornithology Lab, HC 67 – Box 99, Monterey CA 93940; nelliethorngate@ventanaws.org.

The dramatic range expansion of the Brown-headed Cowbird in the past century has been driven largely by anthropogenic factors including urbanization, farming, and grazing. Cowbird parasitism can have significant negative impacts on several passerine species, and cowbird-removal programs have been instrumental in the recovery of many declining populations. However, the efficacy of removal programs may vary according to target species, habitat features, and geographic location. Here we examine data collected during a cowbird removal program established along moderately grazed portions of the Salinas and Nacimiento rivers in Monterey County, California, in order to evaluate the impacts of the removal program on avian populations, particularly riparian focal species. We conducted five-minute point counts and vegetation surveys at seven sites adjacent to cowbird traps and at five sites away from cowbird traps. Riparian focal species detected included Black-headed Grosbeak, Common Yellowthroat, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Song Sparrow, Tree Swallow and Warbling Vireo. There was no difference in overall avian abundance between trap and non-trap points; only Song Sparrow abundance differed significantly between trap and non-trap sites, with higher abundance at non-trap sites ($p=0.01$). Overall avian diversity was strongly correlated with percent tree and shrub canopy ($r=0.602$ and $r=0.532$), and Brown-headed Cowbird abundance was moderately correlated with shrub cover ($r=0.475$). Song Sparrow abundance was not correlated with any vegetation feature. These results suggest that the impact of cowbird removal on cowbird and riparian focal species abundance at this site may be minimal, and that habitat restoration and livestock management will be key in moderating the influence of cowbirds on other avian populations in the area. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 2:00–2:15.**

24. UNITT, PHILIP. Effects on Birds of the 2002–2003 Wildfires in San Diego County. Department of Birds and Mammals, San Diego Natural History Museum, P. O. Box 121390, San Diego CA 92112-1390; punnitt@sdnhm.org.

In 2002 and 2003, 654 square miles of San Diego County burned in wildfires, including the largest recorded fire in California history. The Pines Fire of 2002 burned much of the chaparral on the county's

eastern slope; bird monitoring here consists of 32 routes about 1–2 miles long covered once per month December–February and once every three weeks 15 April–15 July. The Cedar Fire of 2003 burned central San Diego County, including the entire Cuyamaca Mountains and its isolated stand of coniferous forest. Bird monitoring in the Cuyamaca Mountains consists of five routes covered on the same schedule as the Pines fire routes. Small sedentary birds of chaparral, especially Bushtit, Wrentit, and California Thrasher, were affected the most severely and are recovering only slowly. Fox Sparrow and Hermit Thrush, winter visitors characteristic of mature chaparral, were nearly eliminated; almost none had returned even three years after the fire. Mountain Chickadee and Pygmy Nuthatch were eliminated from burned forest, surviving only in small unburned enclaves; almost none had recolonized burned forest by two years after the fire. Most summer visitors returned to the burned forest. Species taking advantage of the burned areas include Mountain Quail, Mourning Dove, Costa’s Hummingbird, Common Raven, Rock Wren, Lesser Goldfinch, Lawrence’s Goldfinch, House Finch, Chipping Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, and, above all, Lazuli Bunting and Black-chinned Sparrow. Small isolated breeding populations of Dusky Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Green-tailed Towhee returned. Those of White-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, and probably Spotted Owl were decimated. Those of Cassin’s Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and probably Saw-whet Owl were eliminated. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 3:20–3:40.**

25. [†]VAN DOOREMOLEN, DEBBIE M., AND [‡]SETH A. SHANAHAN. **Avian Monitoring at an Urban Demonstration Wetland in Southern Nevada.** Southern Nevada Water Authority, Las Vegas Wash Project Coordination Team, 1900 East Flamingo Road – Suite 255, Las Vegas NV 89119; [†]debbie.vandooremolen@snwa.com. [‡]seth.shanahan@snwa.com.

A demonstration wetland was constructed at the City of Henderson Water Reclamation Facility in Henderson, Nevada, in 2001 to determine whether constructed wetlands can polish municipal wastewater flows while providing wildlife habitat as an ancillary benefit. Birds are censused to determine their impact on water quality through nutrient and bacterial contribution and to provide information on the habitat value of the wetland. The 5.75-acre wetland pond consists of three loafing islands, 11 submerged planting beds (hummocks) and approximately 80% open water, yielding four distinct habitat types, including the pond edge. Native bulrushes (*Schoenoplectus* spp.) are planted on the hummocks, and saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) lines the perimeters of the loafing islands and pond. Biweekly to monthly vehicular censuses are conducted, beginning within two hours of sunrise and continuing until approximately four hours after sunrise. Monitoring began in August 2004 and has continued through May 2005. In 23 site visits, 8,293 individuals from 75 species have been detected. The species contributing the largest number of individuals over the monitoring period was the winter-resident Northern Shoveler, with 2,703 recorded. Year-round residents, Mallard, Ruddy Duck, and American Coot, also contributed significantly with 445, 1,157, and 961 individuals, respectively. Together, the four species account for nearly 65% of the birds identified in the wetland. Open water and loafing islands were the two most commonly used habitats, accounting for 37 and 25 percent of the birds, respectively. Remaining individuals were almost evenly divided between the hummocks and pond edge. Census results show that the wetland provides valuable habitat for birds, especially waterfowl, and highlights the importance of providing open water and loafing areas in wetlands

designed to provide avian habitat. Future research will include analyzing the data to determine avian nutrient and bacterial contribution to the wetland. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 2:20–2:40.**

26. [†]VANTASSELL, COURT C., [‡]KELLY J. SORENSON, [‡]JOSEPH L. BURNETT, AND [§]JAMES PETTERSON. **The Pinnacles National Monument California Condor Project: Reintroducing *Gymnogyps californianus* to a Landscape Dominated by Private Land.** [†]Ventana Wilderness Society, Pinnacles National Monument, 5000 Highway 146, Paicines CA 95043; courtvt@ventanws.org. [‡]Ventana Wilderness Society, 19045 Portola Drive, Salinas CA 93908. [§]National Park Service, 5000 Highway 146, Paicines CA 95043.

Pinnacles National Monument is the newest of five release-areas for the California Condor Recovery Program. The 24,000-acre park is a relatively small wilderness area surrounded by vast private lands in the Gabilan Mountains of central California. This unique environment increases the need for several programmatic management strategies, as follows. (1) Due to frequent public usage of the park, hazing was implemented to deter condors from approaching or becoming habituated to humans. (2) Carcasses were proffered for the condors to ensure a regular supply of food as well as to reduce the likelihood of condors ingesting lead from a contaminated food source. (3) Power lines within the park were retrofitted with flight diverters to reduce the likelihood of mid-air collisions. (4) Electrified mock power poles were placed within and outside the release facility in effort to deter condors from perching on power poles. The long-term goal for the Pinnacles National Monument site is to release 20–30 condors; currently, there are six condors free-flying within the park, with plans for eight more to be released in 2005. – **Oral Presentation: Saturday, 1 October 2005, 3:00–3:20.**

27. WEHTJE, WALTER. **Recent Developments in Southern California Pelagic Birding.** 2286 Barbara Drive, Camarillo CA 93012; walter.wehtje@verizon.net.

Historically, Southern California Pelagic Birding has been limited to full-day trips leaving out of Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara. These trips focused on local specialties, but they were too short to reach the deeper waters at the edge of the continental shelf. Poor weather conditions also limit birding near the northern Channel Islands during spring and early summer. Recently, high-speed catamarans out of Santa Barbara and multi-day pelagic trips out of San Diego have improved our ability to visit these areas, resulting in regular sightings of Murphy's Petrel and Red-billed Tropicbird. It is hoped that sightings of Cook's Petrel will soon be regular. This talk will focus upon the experiences of some recent trips and will share our increasing understanding of the distribution of the more unusual species off the Southern California Coast. – **Oral Presentation: Friday, 30 September 2005, 4:00–4:20.**