



THE OBSERVER

Volume 80, Issue 1, September 2021

Whittier Area Audubon Society

We are a chapter of National Audubon Society



Audubon

Visit our website
www.whittieraudubon.org

VIRTUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

www.whittieraudubon.org

To Be Announced

Thursday, September 16, 2021
7:30pm

The City of Whittier is not yet allowing meetings in the Community Center. Hopefully this will be our last virtual event in Google Meet. Go to our website to RSVP and get a link emailed to you.

Our September speaker is having technical issues that we hope to resolve. Check out website for further developments.

Field Trips

Beginning Bird Walk, San Gabriel River Spreading Basins

We expect that soon we will be allowed to resume bird walks in Sycamore Canyon. Please check our website for details. Until then:

Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August,)

September 11, 2021 7:00am

We are waiting for the Habitat Authority to complete their required trip leader training so we can take a group into Sycamore Canyon. Until then, our location is the San Gabriel River Spreading Grounds.

National Audubon is allowing in person outdoor activities, in line with local county and state restrictions, therefore our regular field trips can resume. Please come masked to outings. Thanks for hanging in with us during the pandemic.

Check our website for updates
A huge thanks and kudos to our Webmaster Rebecca Menendez for keeping us going.

Meet at the eastern terminus of Mines on the west side of the spreading basin. Please check our website for further details.

FIELD TRIP

Restrictions on outdoor activities have been lifted, so our chapter is planning a full schedule of field trips this year.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2021

We will begin our chapter new year with an outing to the **Los Angeles River**. We will check out the residents and visitors to the River from Golden Shores in Long Beach, upstream to DeForrest Park.

Meet at Whittier's Community Center parking lot at 7:00 am. 7630 Washington Ave (not Washington Blvd.)

Bring a lunch and water and be prepared for hot and sunny weather.

Mailing Address:

Whittier Area Audubon Society
P.O. Box 548
Whittier, CA 90608-0548

- **General Meeting: TBA**
- **Bird Walk: Spreading Basin**
- **Field trips Los Angeles River**
- **Items of Concern: Ongoing conservation issues in our community**

CHAPTER ACTION ITEMS

There are several ongoing situations in the Whittier Area that we feel require citizen awareness and perhaps citizen action.

We plan to keep a close eye on these projects and we will be keeping our members informed.

Hsi Lai Monastery Site As proposed, the Project will have the potential to significantly impact protected and special-status species and their associated habitats. We are particularly concerned about the impacts to the federally threatened coastal California Gnatcatcher. Patches of coastal sage scrub habitat that occur on the project site may act as important "stepping stones" that allow gnatcatchers to move between adjacent open spaces. Whittier Area Audubon advocates for the protection and preservation of coastal sage scrub and riparian habitats in addition to the existing oak woodlands for the wildlife and habitat they support.

Homeless Encampments In The Narrows

Whittier Area Audubon is deeply concerned with the fire hazard and impact to the natural resources (specifically federal listed endangered and threatened



bird species) posed by homeless encampments. It's a huge undertaking to address the issue of homelessness, as there is no single cause and the reasons are varied and complex. Unfortunately, with increasing encampments, the growth and frequency of wildfires in the area will also increase leading to ecological degradation, decreased biological diversity and habitat loss for many resident and migratory bird species, as well as loss of nature education opportunities for area schools and all visitors.

Dam Repair the US Army, Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District

(Corps) is undertaking a major construction project at Whittier Narrows, known as the Dam Modification Plan (DMP). During the environmental documentation process, the Corps prepared, submitted, and finalized the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This included consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Carlsbad Field Office (CFO), under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA or Act) of 1973, Section 7 (a)(1) for the Federal Endangered least Bell's vireo and the Federal Threatened California gnatcatcher and its designated critical habitat. The Corps

did determine that the DMP project is likely to adversely affect the federally endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*; LBVI or vireo), the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*; CAGN or gnatcatcher), and designated critical habitat for the gnatcatcher.



Road to Blue Ridge

Field Trip Report – June 2021

From Steve Huber:

As COVID restrictions eased up, Whittier Area Audubon hosted our first field trip since early 2020. As has been our practice in years past for the June field trip, we went to a higher elevation. Thirteen birders joined leaders Steve and Liz Huber on the caravan up to the San Gabriel Mountains. Our first stop was the Grassy Hollow Visitor Center. Although not open, there are still feeders at the center and a couple of bags of seeds brought by

Linda Leroy and Al Moreno helped get things started. In addition to the Steller's Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, we saw nesting Western Bluebird, Pygmy Nuthatch and Violet-green Swallow. A walk around the area yielded Dark-eyed Junco, Cassin's and Purple Finch, Green-tailed Towhee and Western Wood-Pewee. White-headed Woodpecker and Red-breasted Sapsucker rounded out the list of target birds.

We next stopped on the side of Blue Ridge Road to call in a Black-chinned Sparrow. Although it was not a great look, we did get one to respond. A Dusky Flycatcher and Fox Sparrow were added to the list. Blue Ridge Campground was next on the agenda. A walk around the campground yielded Western Tanager, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Flicker, Chipping Sparrow and Hairy Woodpecker. The campground is known as a reliable area for Williamson's Sapsucker and we were treated to great looks at a male foraging in the trees.

Green Tailed Towhee, Grassy Hollow

We continued up Blue Ridge Road to Guffy Campground. We had a very pleasant picnic lunch (it was not windy!) but did not add any new species to our list. We were very fortunate in that



we had great weather, saw most of our target birds and had a wonderful outing with our birding friends. Looking forward to more great trips in the future as the current situation allows.

(Photos courtesy of yours truly)