



Southern California Chapter Council Meeting Notes
Saturday, September 16, 2017

Audubon Center at Debs Park
4700 Griffin Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Attendees:

1. **Don Goeschl, Antelope Valley Audubon Society**
2. **Vic Leipzig, Sea and Sage Audubon Society**
3. **Doug Lithgow, Sea and Sage Audubon Society**
4. **Dave Weeshoff, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society**
5. **Tina Stoner, Pomona Valley Audubon Society**
6. **Kym Buzdygon, Pasadena Audubon Society**
7. **Margot Griswold, Los Angeles Audubon Society**

Preparation for meeting:

- **Optional Birdwalk:** Come join us for an optional bird walk from **8am to 9am**. Meet at **7:45am**. We will be meeting on the other side of Eugene Debs Park at **4235 Monterey Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90032**. Adam Levitan and Lauren Hill will co-lead this bird walk. Adam Levitan leads regular bird walks here at Debs and is also member of LA Audubon and Pasadena Audubon. Some might know that his mother Babs who is an active member with Sea and Sage Audubon. Lauren Hill is our recently hired Volunteer Coordinator at Debs Park. After the bird walk we will drive to the Audubon Center at Debs Park on the other side of the hill (4700 Griffin Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90031).
- Coffee and snacks will be provided. **Please bring your own lunch for the day.**

9:15 am Introductions

9:30 am Legislative Updates, Mike Lynes, Audubon California. Mike will call in by phone.

Mike called in from Sacramento and gave an update of Audubon California's ongoing advocacy efforts on statewide legislation. Mike explained and reviewed the status of the various bills that we have been advocating for. He commented on how this has been one of the most active years for environmental policy. Chapters played an important role in moving votes. Please see attached legislative update for more details (prepared November 8, 2017).

10:50 am Announcements

- Next Council Meeting, Saturday, December 9th, 2017. Time: 9am to 2pm. Will be hosted by Antelope Valley Audubon Society.
- Save the Date: Salton Sea Conservation Field Trip: December 2-3, 2017. For more information, [click here](#).
- National Audubon Society started using Salesforce to update all chapter roster reports as of October 2nd. These changes start kicking in.
- Birdfest at King Gillette Ranch, November 4th, 2017.
- Planning for Bird LA Day has begun. Date is set for May 12, 2018.
- LA Audubon Sponsored event with Los Angeles Public Libraries. Nov 2nd, 10:30 to 12:30 at EchoPark- Edendale library will have binoculars and bird books. Youth can check out a backpack. LA Audubon has organized three bird walks with nearby schools.

11:05 am National Audubon Convention. Reports from attendees.

Report from Natasha: The conference was attended by 435 people. 150 were staff. There was representation from 27 states and 9 nations. There were 6 students from iMatter. Local Audubon chapters have started partnering with local high school climate advocacy group called iMatter to get climate resolutions passed in local cities. For more information on iMatter, click [here](#). In the opening plenary David Yarnold spoke about the centrist nature of Audubon and how this sets us apart from other conservation groups. Our membership is about 52% progressive and 48% centrists and conservative. Through the network, we are now able to reach 5 million people, with a total of 1 million members.

Report from Dave: Dave attended the climate watch community science program and is planning on becoming a coordinator for San Fernando Valley Audubon. Dave attended the strategic planning workshop and participated in a 45-minute Q&A session with David Yarnold. One of the major highlights was the talk by Richard Prum. He wrote a book called the Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choices Shapes the Animal World – And Us. Check out this [recording](#) of the talk.

Report from Don: Don attended and reported back on the experience of connecting with chapter leaders across the nation and in other countries.

Report from Vic: Vic attended 4 years ago and remarked on the improvement in this year's convention. National is starting a series of capacity building for chapters and had some workshops at the convention. The series seems like it will be similar to what Audubon California put out two years ago. Vic noted how the importance of diversity and inclusion was highlighted in the conference and appreciated the talk by keynote speaker David Lanham. Check out this [recording](#) of Lanham's talk which make parallels between birds and humans.

11:35 am Audubon California Board Meeting Update, Vic Liepzig

The last meeting was held in Eureka in Humboldt bay. We were able to celebrate a victory at the coastal commission. An oyster farming operation called Coast Seafoods has a 300-acre oyster farming operation. The company wants to expand the project to over 900 acres. This would extinguish growth of eelgrass which is used by wintering Brandt among other birds. The California Coast Commission declined application but did approve them for 270 acres (30 acres less than previous approval). Audubon CA filed a lawsuit against the EIR. The harbor commission was a rubber stamp for the project. At the board meeting there was a panel where partners who advocated for the protection of the Bay presented their work. Partner included hunters and commercial fishing companies. These organizations thanked Audubon for the role it played in protecting the bay. The coalition has not succeeded in gaining support from local native American groups.

Vic elaborated on the structure of the board. There are five Board members. Each represents their council. The board members will have their own subcommittee meeting. In this meeting we agreed with the staff, that the five board members will stay in place as the representatives of their regions. There was some previous talk of restructuring regions and council. Nothing will change.

The next Audubon California Board meeting in December is always a conference call. The board is looking to recruit new members. If you have anyone who wants to serve as the new board member, please let Vic know.

Q. What characteristics are they looking for in board members?

A. They are looking for someone with expertise in fundraising, donor support, environmental conservation, and/or birds. However, a board member does not have to have all of these characteristics.

11:50 am Chapter Feedback for State and National Audubon- new and unresolved issues to put a button on.

This is an opportunity to discuss anything that you would like to say in person in addition to the survey that I sent out. I would like to get feedback on current method of communication between Audubon California and local chapters. I would also like any feedback on how to improve the council meetings.

Attendees provided the following suggestions and feedback:

- Reaching out to birding chapters: explain how the council can be a great resource to use when asking for support from other chapters, but that chapters should also consider being reciprocal with support.
- Consider doing conference calls instead of in person meetings.
- Some chapter leaders shared how their various chapters have changed the bylaws to give the conservation chair the authority to make decisions on behalf of their chapter when it comes to supporting policies, legislation or issues that are endorsed by Audubon California or National Audubon.
- Can Audubon California make an Arc GIS map with overlay territory map along with assembly members, council members, county supervisors etc.? - Natasha will work on this.
- There is not really a way for people to feel ownership with email action alerts. Policy calls are exhausting. We need to narrow down the issues and pick a few if we want to personally engage people on an issue. I like the idea of a campaign style of engagement.
- Don't move away from the capacity building efforts. By actually engaging a chapter in something, it builds capacity.
- Could all interested chapters have a training on activism or some kind of training on advocacy?
- Ideas for future meetings: Provide a theme and focus on particular areas. For example, best practices for treasurers, membership drive, how to be a field trip chair. Perhaps send out an email asking people if they have any ideas for council meetings topics?

12:15 pm Lunch

1:15 pm Chapter Reports – with theme of trimming best management practices.

Pasadena AS will share about their recent Tree Care for Birds Workshop. Los Angeles AS will share about how they implemented a tree care guideline with the City of Los Angeles. Please do share any work your chapter has done on this issue in your area along with your general chapter report.

Pasadena Audubon Society: Pasadena shared about their tree-trimming workshop. The workshop was attended by staff and supervisors that do tree-trimming for LA County and the City of Pasadena. It was well attended. Gillian Martin from Tree Care for Birds shared best practices with attendees. The Hahamongna EIR was released. It was not well done. They did not address questions and issues that they were supposed to. We have launched a campaign aimed at LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger. We will share information with chapters. We are pushing for a strong response from constituents to adopt a smaller project for the watershed. We are going to do a cleanup at Peck Rd Park on November 12th. We do a bird walk and provide pizza.

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society: We have started attending community meetings concerning LA 2040 Master Plan. A major initiative for us is Santa Susanna Field Lab. The EIR came out. We have gotten board approval and will be participating in Climate Watch. Gillian is also coming out in April to share in our general meeting. We have interest in our board to address the issue of bird friendly buildings. We would like to do that but are looking for someone to take the lead.

Antelope Valley Audubon Society: We organized a formula 1 radio control race event and

fundraised for Central City Lake, which is a park lake in Park City. It is a stopover for birds. Holiday lake, which is used by Tricolored Black Birds is in bad shape. Antelope Valley has just kicked off their bird program for kids with LA county libraries in the Antelope Valley Area.

Sea and Sage Audubon Society: We finished our 13th year of least tern monitoring. It's a very successful project. We partner with California State Park. We also been fighting a dog beach there. We finished our fourth year of monitoring Snowy Plovers. We've had a gap in funding, but got a grant from San Diego Zoo to fund the project until we got back into the USFW grant. Next year we celebrate our 60th anniversary.

Pomona Valley Audubon Society: In regards to Tree Care, Gillian has been a guest speaker in our general membership meeting in the past and spoke about tree cavities. We are talking about the possibility of copying and forwarding our tree care guidelines to different cities. On the community science side of things, we have our North Etiwanda Preserve birding survey coming up.

Los Angeles Audubon Society: City of LA has adopted the tree trimming guidelines years ago. We created the guideline and it was adopted. We have participated in the LA 2040 planning meetings. We are trying to carry that forward as it progresses. The LA City Feral Cat management EIR is out and is coming to a close with public comments. Many groups included LAAS joined a lawsuit years ago which made them drop their first EIR because it was inadequate. They have not changed much and did not consider our approach. We are almost coming out with our strategic plan and at the same time we are redoing our website and rebranding. We have been monitoring the settlement on Santa Rosa Plateau- New Haul development of housing. We have 10 years of uninterrupted data on Terns and Plovers. We attend LA river meetings when we can. Travis just gave a presentation to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy on the LA River and historical ecology data.

2:30pm

Adjournment