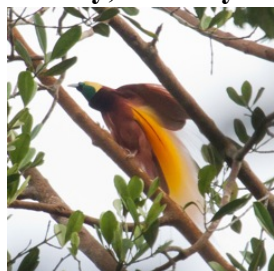


San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society WESTERN MEADOWLARK

Volume 65— Number 2
January-February 2015



Birding Both Sides of the Wallace Line: Lessons in Biogeography Presented by Brad Dawson Wednesday, January 21, 2015



The Wallace Line is a faunal boundary that separates animals of Asian origin and those that originated in Australia and nearby islands. By drawing his line in 1859 Alfred Russel Wallace birthed the field of biogeography, the study of species and ecosystem distribution. Brad’s talk will illustrate Wallace’s discovery with photos from his trips to the two largest islands on either side of the line—Borneo and Papua New Guinea—with a focus on birds, of course.

Originally from the Midwest, Brad Dawson moved to southern California for grad school. He earned his Ph.D in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from UC Irvine. He currently teaches at Fullerton College, microbiology and an introductory bird course.

A trip to Costa Rica in 1999 introduced him to birds, tropical biology, and photography. He has been hooked ever since. Come enjoy wonderful picture



Remarkable Red Crossbills Presented by Lance Benner Wednesday, February 18, 2015

Red crossbills are finches with beaks that cross at the tips. Recently Red Crossbills in North America have been classified into ten types based on differences in their flight calls and may actually represent a number of different species.



This talk will discuss the biology of Red Crossbills, highlight their unique adaptations, make extensive use of eBird maps to illustrate their geographic distributions, and use audio recordings and sonograms to demonstrate how to identify their flight calls.



Lance Benner has been studying Red Crossbills in southern California since 2011 by recording them and using sonograms to determine the flight call types. Working with Walter Szeliga, Kathi Ellsworth, and John Garrett, this led to the discovery that the Red

Crossbills that occur most often in southern California are type 2s and that many of the crossbills in our area during the irruption of 2012—2013 were type 3s.



Local Sightings

Fall 2014 might well go down as the year of the VARIED THRUSH, with hundreds of birds reported throughout southern California, including dozens in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, and at least three making it into Imperial County where it is quite rare, with individuals in Calexico (Nov 7), El Centro (Nov 20), and Brawley (Nov 28).

In San Bernardino County, Prado Regional Park has been the gull hotspot so far this fall, with HEERMAN'S GULL, WESTERN GULL, MEW GULL, GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL, and multiple THAYER'S GULLS all appearing in November. A TROPICAL KINGBIRD also returned to Prado for its seventh consecutive winter being first reported on Nov 13. A SWAMP SPARROW in Rancho Cucamonga (Nov 15-23) and a BROWN THRASHER at Glen Helen Regional Park (Nov 28) were both nice finds on the coastal slope. Up at Big Bear Lake a stunning male BARROW'S GOLDENEYE Nov 14-17 provided the first record for the San Bernardino Mountains, and only the second county record away from the Colorado River. A late FRANKLIN'S GULL at Big Bear Lake (Nov 9-23) and a SURF SCOTER (Nov 16) were also notable. Continuing eastward, the deserts produced some gems. In a fall that has been quite devoid of sparrows, a HARRIS'S SPARROW in Barstow Nov 28 was a nice surprise. The Baker/Zzyzx area was productive as usual, with BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER, BLACKPOLL WARBLER, PALM WARBLER, GRAY CATBIRD, ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK, EASTERN PHOEBE, and EVENING GROSBEAK all occurring in late October and November. The highlights, however, were a RUSTY BLACKBIRD and a COMMON GRACKLE, seen separately in Baker Nov 9.



A little ways to the south the 29 Palms Inn had a very good week with a RUFOUS-BACKED ROBIN Oct 25-29 and a PAINTED BUNTING Oct 25-26. And way out at the Colorado River the highlight of the season was a BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE along the Parker Strip Nov 6, while a flock of 64 BROWN PELICANS over Lake Havasu Nov 2 provided the county's highest count by



an order of magnitude and then some.

In Riverside County, Fairmount Park hosted a warbler extravaganza in late October and early November, with the highlight clearly being the county's second record of PROTHONOTARY WARBLER there Oct 19-Nov 2. Also of note were a BLACKPOLL, a BLACK-AND-WHITE, and two CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS from Oct 24-Nov 8. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area was less productive than usual, but still produced a few interesting birds: SWAMP SPARROW (Nov 2), a very late PECTORAL SANDPIPER (Nov 16), and NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH and LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (both Nov 30). Lake Skinner hosted a CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER Oct 10-18 and a SURF SCOTER Nov 29. The highlight at the north end of the Salton Sea was a fly-by CRESTED CARACARA Nov 9, while other notable sightings included RED-NECKED GREBE (Nov 20), BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (Nov 18), LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL, multiple PACIFIC LOONS, and a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH. At Desert Center a COMMON GRACKLE was an excellent find Nov 3 as were a SURF SCOTER Oct 14 and a MEW GULL Nov 16. Elsewhere in the Riverside deserts significant finds included an EVENING GROSBEAK at the Coachella Valley Preserve (Nov 28), CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR in Blythe (Nov 15), and GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET at Chiriaco



Summit (Nov 16). In Imperial County, the best birds were at the south end of the Salton Sea, namely a BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER Nov 17 and a CRESTED CARACARA Nov 25-26, possibly the same one at the north end earlier in the month. Other notable birds at the sea included a WHITE-WINGED SCOTER Nov 15 and at least two LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS. South and east of the sea a LEWIS'S WOODPECKER was in Calexico Nov 9, a GRAY CATBIRD was in El Centro Oct 15-19 and a PACIFIC LOON was on Brock Reservoir Nov 7. Along the Colorado River, a GOLDEN EAGLE was seen at Palo Verde (Nov 15), Phil Swing Park had a BROWN THRASHER (Oct 17) and a LEWIS'S WOODPECKER (Oct 17-18), while Bard hosted another Brown Thrasher (Oct 24), a BAND-TAILED PIGEON (Oct 26), and an EASTERN PHOEBE (Nov 7).

Text and Photos by Tom Benson

Bird of the Month: Lincoln's Sparrow

By Steve Myers

The Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*) breeds from western Alaska east across most of Canada to the Atlantic Ocean, and south along the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada as far as New Mexico and southern California. In southern California, it nests in the San Jacinto, San Bernardino, and San Gabriel mountains, and on Mount Pinos.

Its nesting habitat in western U.S. mountains is wet meadows containing dense thickets of willows or other shrubs. It nests on the ground, usually under the cover of a willow or other dense plant. During SBVAS field trips to the Greenhorn Mountains, we sometimes find the nests of Lincoln's Sparrow such as the one shown below which was in dense grass within a stand of Corn Lily (see photo below).



Known nesting localities in southern California include many meadows in the San Bernardino Mountains (e.g., Wildhorse Meadows, Bluff Lake, around Big Bear Lake, and Metcalf Meadows), Round Valley in the San Jacinto Mountains, meadows near Wrightwood in the San Gabriel Mountains, and on Mt. Pinos.

The female builds the nest, usually taking 2-3 days. Three to five eggs, most commonly four, are incubated about 11 days before they hatch. Both male and female feed the hatchlings, who fledge in 10-11 days.

Their diet varies seasonally. During nesting they eat primarily arthropods, including adult insects and their larvae. They switch to mainly seeds during the winter months.

In southern California, Lincoln's Sparrows are fairly common during migration and in winter.

Its winter range includes extreme southwestern British Columbia south down the Pacific Coast to the tip of Baja California,

and from southeastern California east to the Mississippi River and south to Honduras. Occasionally, a few birds even make it as far south as Costa Rica and Panama.

Identification of Lincoln's Sparrows is made somewhat difficult by their habit of staying within dense vegetation. They will sometimes respond to "pishing" or other noises, and will tee up on shrubs or low in trees (but generally not for long). They are a moderately sized sparrow, and are finely streaked on the breast. A fairly broad light buffy wash extends across their mid breast, and their bellies are whitish, and unstreaked. The most distinctive field mark on the head is the broad, gray superciliary line ("eyebrow"). The most similarly appearing North American sparrow is the juvenile Song Sparrow, which also has a buffy wash across a streaked breast. They, however, do not have the broad, gray eyebrow, and have a longer tail.



Adult Lincoln's Sparrow, photographed at Bentson-Rio Grande Valley State Natural Area, TX, on January 12, 2007. ©2007 Stephen J. Myers



A Merlin lifts off for Beginning Bird Walk attendees at San Jacinto Wildlife area.

Photo by Kirk Stitt

**A Field Study of Birds: Winter
Course Number: BIOL X405**

Learn the natural history and how to identify the wintering birds of Southern California, including waterfowl, gulls and birds of prey. Many of the prime wintering areas are visited on the field trips.

132-CPF-F23 Starting Jan. 13, 2015 at San Bernardino County Museum

Instructor:	Eugene Cardiff
Schedule:	Tue. 7:30-9:30 p.m., Jan. 13; Field trips all day Sat. Jan. 17, 24, & 31; Feb. 14 & 28 (6 meetings)
Preregistration:	Requested by January 17
Location:	San Bernardino County Museum, REDLANDS Map
Textbook:	"Field Guide to the Birds of North America," Jon L. Dunn & Jonathan K. Alderfer ISBN: 0792253140 Buy Online
Credit:	2 units
Notes:	Visitors not permitted. Enrollment is limited. Class meets at San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands for first meeting only. All other dates are field trips. Trip times may vary.
Fees:	\$255
	(Optional) each for couples and family members. For this discount, enroll by phone: 800-442-4990. -\$20
	(Optional) PINE organization member discount -\$40
	\$255.00 Total Fees
	/ \$235 each for couples and family members / \$215 each with PINE discount (Refund deadline: September 18.)

To enroll in the class, contact UCR Extension by email at: register@ucx.ucr.edu, or by phone at: (800) 442-4990



Feed Your Yard Birds and Help SBVAS

Wild birdseed will be sold at all general meetings of SBVAS as a regular fundraiser for the organization. The seed is a good blend for the area and will be available in 25 pound bags for \$20.

To get your seed and help SBVAS maintain a regular monthly fundraiser, please pay at the sales table and get a receipt. Then see Kirk Stitt in the parking lot to load your seed.

If possible, you should preorder seed by phoning Kirk at (909) 886-5513. Leave a message about the type of seed you want (thistle, black-oil sunflower, or general purpose mix) and your seed will be ready for pickup at the next general meeting.

Who Were These Bird People?

By Dr. John Hewston, reprinted from Bird Awareness Newsletter

William Swainson was an English author and painter in zoological fields. He had three North American bird species named after him: the Swainson's Hawk, Swainson's Thrush and Swainson's Warbler. Audubon had known and worked with him while in England and named the Warbler for his friend.

Thomas Lincoln, as a youth, traveled with Audubon on an adventure to Labrador and made a favorable impression on Audubon. So, Audubon named a sparrow which was collected on that trip the Lincoln's Sparrow after his young helper. (The species was not named for President Lincoln.)

Edward Harris was a wealthy amateur naturalist who befriended and helped Audubon, and went with him on two of his lengthy trips. The Harris's Sparrow and Harris's Hawk were named after him.

Alexander Wilson is known as the Father of American Ornithology. He drew pictures of American birds and wrote several volumes about the birds and their lives, which became the *American Ornithology* basic book. He has named after him a Storm Petrel, Plover, Phalarope, and three Warblers—Hooded, Canada and Wilson's. He and Audubon had met in Audubon's frontier store where he showed his work to Audubon and influenced and hastened Audubon's own work.

William Alexander Hammond was an assistant surgeon in the West where he also collected birds

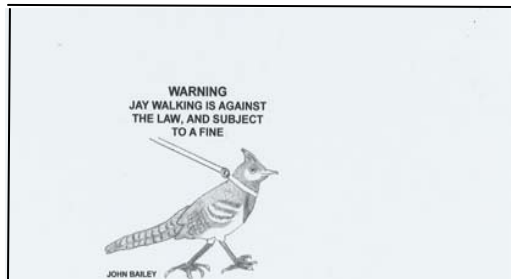
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for the Smithsonian Institution. Hammond's Flycatcher, one of the Empidonax group, was named for him by his companion Xantus de Vesey, also a collector. The Hammond's Flycatcher breeds in the West, from Alaska to New Mexico.

William Hutton was a young naturalist who collected birds near Washington, DC and in Southern California just before the Gold Rush days. The Hutton's Vireo was named after him by Cassin.

William MacGillivray was a Scottish Ornithologist and Professor of Natural History with whom Audubon had become acquainted. He co-wrote Audubon's *Ornithological Biography* and Audubon insisted upon naming a Warbler after him.



Bearpaw Ranch

is a 70 acre nature sanctuary, operated by the San Bernardino Audubon Society and may be visited 7 days a week from dawn 'til dusk by members of Audubon and their guests. Bearpaw Ranch is nestled on the north slope of scenic Mill Creek Canyon at 4,500 feet elevation, surrounded by the towering peaks of the San Bernardino National Forest. To reach Bearpaw Ranch, take Highway 38 to the Forest Falls turnoff. Go only a few car lengths on Valley of the Falls Dr. and look for our small wooden sign on the right. We have a new paved road, the entry is easy for almost all normal passenger cars.



There is an electronically operated entry gate. *Members* who wish to visit the Sanctuary should call any board member in advance to get the gate code. It is not a requirement that the caretaker is at home for you to visit. If the gate does not open because of mechanical failure, you are welcome to walk in or stop for birding along the creek bed. Bearpaw Sanctuary, 38801 Valley of the Falls Drive P.O. Box 88; Forest Falls, CA 923396

Bearpaw Sanctuary is now on Facebook. If you type "Bearpaw Sanctuary" into the SEARCH function, you'll find us. Bearpaw visitors are encouraged to report interesting wildlife sightings and share their favorite nature photos from their Bearpaw visits.

SBVAS Officers 2014/2015
www.sbvass.org &
www.inlandplanet.org

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greyraven@wildmail.com

RARE BIRD ALERT: Tom Benson (909)-648-0899 or (909)-537-3309 or tbenson@csusb.edu

SBVAS BOOKSTORE AND GIFT SHOP:

Nancy Manning (909) 337-9401

CALENDAR

Board Meetings: January 8 and February 5, 2015

General Meetings: January 14 and February 18, 2015

All meetings are in the San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands. Board meetings are the first Wednesday of the month, and General Membership meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month. To reach the museum, take the California St. exit off I-10, go north one block to Orange Tree Lane and turn right. The museum will be on your left. Meetings, except potlucks, start at 7:30 and doors open at 7. Potlucks begin at 6:30.

One of about 50 to 60 Mountain Bluebirds seen on the west side of Davis Road during the Beginning Bird Walk on December 7.

Photo by Kirk Stitt



**Sunday, January 4, 2014—8:00—10:00a.m.
Beginning Bird Walk at Mill Creek Wetlands
Tom Benson (909) 648-0899**

For those of you who are just beginning the wonderful pastime of bird watching, please join us for a fun, slow-paced morning of birding in one of our local wildlife habitats. Our goal will be to teach you enough basic birding techniques and identification skills so that you will feel comfortable birding on your own or joining our longer birding trips throughout the year. We will introduce you to some of our local species. The walk is free. No reservations are needed, however, all participants must sign a liability waiver. You may print one out ahead of time and bring it with you, or the trip leader will have forms available on site. Everyone is welcome. We will meet at the main trailer at 8:00a.m. at the newly created Mill Creek Wetlands about one mile east of Prado Regional Park in Chino. From the Chino Valley Freeway (Hwy 71) exit east/north onto Euclid Avenue, continue approximately one mile and turn right (east) onto Pine Avenue. Go about three-quarters of a mile on Pine and then turn right (south) onto Chino-Corona Road. As soon as you pass; the prison on your right, Chino-Corona Road will turn eastward (the road becomes Cucamonga Avenue to the south). The Mill Creek Wetlands are on Chino-Corona Road about one-half mile east of Cucamonga Avenue. An approximate address in Google Maps is 8500 Chino-Corona Road.

**Saturday, January 10, 2014 - 7:00 am
Salton Sea Goose & Crane Trip
Chet McGaugh (951) 781-3699 & John Green (951) 686-2956**

This trip at times has been called the "waterfowl trip," the "goose trip," and "a wonderful field trip." It is all of that, and more. Perhaps a glimpse at some of the species seen on previous trips will help stoke the fires of desire: American White Pelican (hundreds), American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Snow Goose (thousands), Ross's Goose (hundreds), Greater White-fronted Goose, Bald Eagle, four falcon species, Sandhill Cranes, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Bluebird, and American Redstart. We usually tally over 100 species, and don't have to count individuals (for an opportunity to count every single bird on and around the sea, join us at the Salton Sea North Christmas Bird Count). We will meet at the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area at 7:00 am ([map](#)). Exit Highway 111 at Davis Road and look for us in the parking lot there. We will bird around the south end of the sea; also the surrounding agricultural lands looking for raptors, Mountain Plovers, and the always entertaining Sandhill Cranes.

**Saturday, January 17, 2015
Silverwood Lake Barge Trip
Steve Myers 951-616-7578**

No current information is available for this trip. Please contact the trip leader or check the website for updated information.

**Sunday, January 25, 2015
San Jacinto Valley and Lake Perris
Chet McGaugh (951) 781-3699 & Tony Metcalf (951) 242-7038**

The San Jacinto Wildlife Area (SJWA) and the San Jacinto Valley have lots of birds all year. SBVAS leads a Fall trip, a Spring trip, and now a Winter trip to this remarkable birding hotspot. In addition to the high number of resident species, overwintering birds and the occasional spectacular occurrence, the diversity and number of birds of prey and gulls peak after the new year. So join us on a fairly intense but unstructured day. We will certainly cover the SJWA and adjacent lands, and we may go to Lake Perris and ...well, who knows. We will meet at 7:00 AM at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area entrance.

**Sunday, February 1, 2015 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at Cal State San Bernardino ([map](#))
Tom Benson (909) 648-0899**

For those of you who are just beginning the wonderful pastime of bird watching, please join us for a fun, slow-paced morning of birding in one of our local wildlife habitats. Our goal will be to teach you enough basic birding techniques and identification skills so that you will feel comfortable birding on your own or joining our longer birding trips throughout the year. We will introduce you to some of our local bird species. You may be surprised at what wonderful birds can be seen! Wear comfortable walking shoes, hats and sunscreen and bring binoculars and water. The walk is free and no reservations are needed, however, all participants must sign a liability waiver. You may print one out ahead of time and bring it with you, or the trip leader will have forms available on site. Everyone is welcome.

We will meet at the northeast corner of parking lot G near the Student Recreation and Fitness Center ([map](#)). If you do not have a Cal State San Bernardino parking permit you must purchase a daily parking permit (\$5) from the kiosk attendant on Coyote Drive or from the automated permit dispensers. Please contact Tom Benson for further information. Rain or other conditions may cause last minute changes.

Field Trip Checklist

Comfortable shoes or hiking boots, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent..

A good Road Map,

Full fuel tank, drinking water, snacks and lunch, binoculars and or a scope, field guide
Come and Enjoy. Call Field Trip Leader for last minute cancellations, questions or changes... ☺

Calendar for Field Trips 2014 to 2015



Christmas Bird Counts, December 14 through January 4; please see website or call compilers for more information

**Saturday-Sunday, April 11-12, 2015
East Mojave**



**Sunday, January 4, 2015 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at Mill Creek Wetlands**

**Saturday, April 25, 2015 - 7:00 am
Shorebird Migration at the Salton Sea**



**Saturday, January 10, 2015 - 7:00 am
Salton Sea Goose & Crane Trip**

**Sunday, April 26, 2015 - 7:00 am
San Jacinto Wildlife Area**



**Saturday, January 17, 2015
Silverwood Lake Barge Trip**

**Saturday, May 2, 2015 - 7:00 am
Big Morongo Preserve**



**Sunday, January 25, 2015
San Jacinto Valley and Lake Perris**

**Sunday, May 3, 2015 - 8:00 am
Box Springs Mountain**



**Saturday, January 31, 2015
Seal Beach NWR**

**Saturday, May 9, 2015 - 8:00 am
Whitewater Canyon**



**Sunday, February 1, 2015 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at Cal State San Bernardino**

**Saturday, May 16, 2015 - 9:00 am
Baby Birds at Bearpaw Ranch**

**Sunday, March 1, 2015 - 8:00-10:00 am
Beginning Bird Walk at Prado Regional Park**

**Sunday, May 17, 2014
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway/San Jacinto Mountains**

**Saturday, March to be announced, 2015 - 8:00 am
Bolsa Chica & Orange County Coast**

**Saturday, June 6, 2015
San Bernardino Mountains**

**Saturday, February 21, 2015
Seal Beach NWR**

Brad Singer (909) 838-7951 and Tom Benson (909) 648-0899

**Saturday, June 13, 2014 - 7:30 am
Wrightwood & Blue Ridge**

Located next to the Pacific Ocean on the border of Orange and Los Angeles Counties, the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge hosts a wonderful array of raptors, shorebirds, waders, herons, rails, ducks, and sparrows. Because the refuge sits on an active naval weapons base, access is by special permit only. Field trips to the refuge regularly see Pacific Golden-Plover, Ferruginous Hawk, Ridgway's Rail, Large-billed Savannah Sparrow, and the much sought after Nelson's Sparrow. Other rare possibilities include Reddish Egret, Short-eared Owl, Lapland Longspur, and Cackling Goose. SBVAS has booked a trip during high tide, so that the sparrows and rails can be seen more easily.

This is a half-day trip to the Refuge. Following our stay there, we will have lunch and then pursue wintering rarities in the nearby vicinity in the afternoon. Space is extremely limited on this trip. Attendees will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Those not making it will be put on a waiting list. There is a two-week vetting process by the Navy for all visitors. Look for an announcement on Inland County Birds in the middle of November for application times. Questions, email me at bsinger@gmail.com.

**Saturday, June 27, 2015
Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea- PART I**

**Saturday-Sunday, July 11-12, 2014
Greenhorn Mountains & the Southern Sierra**

**Saturday, August 29, 2015
Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea- PART II**

Participants on the Dec. 7 Beginning Bird Walk at San Jacinto Wildlife area were treated to good looks at a Golden Eagle.

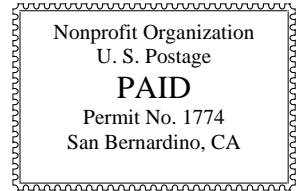
Photo by Kirk Stitt



January/February 2015

Western Meadowlark

THE WESTERN MEADOWLARK
c/o San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
P. O. Box 10973
San Bernardino, CA 92423-0973



Everyone is always welcome!

All meetings in the San Bernardino County Museum 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands

Board Meetings are the 1st Wed.
General meetings are the 3rd Wed.
SBVAS Membership currently at 2,393

To reach the Museum, take the California Street exit off the 10 Freeway and go north 1 block to Orange Tree Lane—turn right. The museum will be on your left...



Chapter Only Membership Application
San Bernardino Valley Audubon

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SBVAS Membership @ \$24 a/year (includes subscription to *The Western Meadowlark*)

I wish to receive the *Western Meadowlark* **only** electronically

Email Address _____

Please enclose a check payable to SBVAS



Membership Application
National Audubon Society (NAS)

NAS New Member/ Gift Membership \$20 (renewal will be \$35, includes 1 year of *Audubon* magazine, 1 year Chapter membership, 1 year subscription to *Western Meadowlark* if in SBVAS area)

NAS Regular/Renewal Membership \$35 (includes 1 year of *Audubon* magazine)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society

SBVAS Chapter
C2ZC110Z

Please clip and mail all memberships to: SBVAS Membership Chair
P.O. Box 10973
San Bernardino, Ca. 92423-0973

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