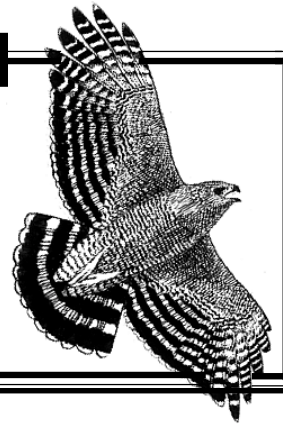


Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary



Volume VI • Issue 4

Fall 2003

Spring 2004 Natural History Classes

Instructor: Dave Bontrager

The Identification and Natural History of Birds

Come take a bird class in the peace and quiet of Starr Ranch Sanctuary. We will explore bird life through classroom lectures, slide talks, videos, and considerable field time.

Elements of bird identification (ID) will be tied into investigation of bird behavior, habitat relationships, and bird structure. Knowledge of the habitat a bird selects and the place it occupies in that habitat is often an important part of bird ID. Likewise, bird behavior is very useful. The manner in which a bird flies, feeds or otherwise behaves can be just as important in ID as whether it has wing bars or an eye ring. In this class, the questions “where is the bird?” and “what is it doing?” will be asked just as often as “what size is it?” or “what color is it?” The Natural History section of the class will focus closely on selected species and bird families for a detailed look at food habits, diet, and foraging guilds, reproductive behavior, population status, predator prey relationships, nest parasitism, and many other behavior related topics.

We hope you'll take this class as a way to expand your general knowledge of birds while expanding your ID skills. Beginners are absolutely welcome although completion of Sylvia Gallagher's outstanding beginners ID class would be beneficial (see www.seaandsageaudubon.org).

DATES: Saturdays, 8 am - 1 pm March 27, April 3, May 1 & 8, June 12 & 19, July 17 & 24 COST: \$75
CLASS LIMIT: 20

Field Natural History and Ecology

Last offered in the spring of 2001, this popular class includes elements from each of Dave's 6 natural history courses plus its own unique material. Classroom topics will include: Starr Ranch Mammals, Fire Ecology, Reptiles and Amphibians of Starr Ranch, Pollination Ecology, The Coastal Sage Scrub Community, and Predator/Prey Relationships. Field study will include general nature walks plus several class projects including: (1) group investigation of a riparian woodland study plot, (2) a look at pollination ecology, (3) various exercises designed to deepen the students' awareness and expand observational skills, and (4) several demonstrations by the instructor including: small mammal live trapping, bird banding, and finding and interpreting animal sign.

DATES: Sundays, 8 am - 1 pm March 28, April 4, May 2 & 9, June 13 & 20, July 18 & 25 COST: \$75
CLASS LIMIT: 20

RESERVATIONS: 949-858-0131

QUESTIONS: Contact Dave at 541-937-3970 or dbontra243@aol.com or call 858-0309

Welcome

Bill Chandos (below, left), our new administrative assistant, brings information technology expertise to our growing office. He currently lives in Trabuco Canyon with well-known activist dad, Ray Chandos. Matt Lechmaier (below, right) is field crew leader for weed control and restoration this year and will supervise four field assistants who will arrive late fall. He has a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin.



Caroline Lee (above, left) and Joanna Solis (above, right) are research interns who will do their project jointly on stream monitoring and enhancement in Bell Creek. Caroline has a degree in biology from the University of Pennsylvania. Joanna was with us this summer as education intern and we're happy to have her back helping with stream research.

Thanks to:

- ... the Echols family for the donation of a utility trailer
- ... Curt Brown for his advice and assistance with our telecommunication systems
- ... Pete Bloom for parting with his beloved VW bus for our use
- ... Lenora Kirby of Las Virgenes Institute for Resource Management for our new Garmin 12 GPS

Welcome & Thank You to our New "Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary"



*The Samuels Family
Daniel Secundy
The Young Family
Steve and Vicky Vosbigian
V.T. Savage*

Lifetime Members

<i>Bertram & Phyllis Baker</i>	<i>John Harper & Judy Curtin</i>
<i>Neil Baker</i>	<i>Don & Carolyn Honer</i>
<i>Al & Janet Baumann</i>	<i>Mitzi Kafesjian</i>
<i>David & Karla Blinn</i>	<i>Fay Neuls</i>
<i>Roc & Andee Burrell</i>	<i>David Reynolds</i>
<i>Pete & Sandy DeSimone</i>	<i>& Felicity Kurr-Reynolds</i>
<i>Bill McKee</i>	<i>John & Kimberlee Staff</i>
<i>& Mary Ann Desmond</i>	<i>Stephen Stackpole</i>
<i>Mark Frazier</i>	<i>Karen & George Thagard</i>
<i>Sylvia R. & Jim Gallagher</i>	<i>Jorge & Corie Wong</i>

Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary

100 Bell Canyon Road • Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679

Phone: 949-858-0309 • Events & Information Line: 949-858-0131 • Fax: 949-858-1013 • E-mail: sdesimone@audubon.org • www.starr-ranch.org

Pete DeSimone Sanctuary Manager	Matt Lechmaier Field Crew Leader
Sandy DeSimone Director, Research & Education	Leslie Boby.....Field Assistant
Gail Hall Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs	Ben Henshaw.....Field Assistant
Matt McGee Biologist-Educator	Dave Kimble.....Field Assistant
Jerry Belzer Ranch Maintenance	Helen de la Maza Coastal Sage Scrub Restoration, part-time
Bill Chandos.....Administrative Assistant	Dave Bontrager Biologist-Educator, part-time
Joanna Solis Research Intern	Dana Kamada Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs, part-time
Caroline Lee Research Intern	Sandy DeSimone Newsletter editor

Starr Ranch Sanctuary is owned and operated by the National Audubon Society under the Audubon California state office. We preserve 4000 acres of some of the last remaining southern Californian mosaics of coastal sage scrub, grassland, oak woodland, riparian woodland, and chaparral. Our mission is to stimulate, coordinate, and perform scientific research on the biology and conservation of the unusual mediterranean climate ecosystems at Starr Ranch and to extend our science to the local community in the form of unique natural history education programs and conservation activism.

Members of Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary receive four issues of our quarterly newsletter, monthly opportunities to visit Starr Ranch, and first notification of nature classes and special events. You also become a member of Audubon and receive Audubon magazine quarterly. Your contribution provides financial support for our research, education, and conservation programs. Your support is critical to Starr Ranch. Please join us today by filling out the membership envelope in this newsletter and mailing it to us. Change of address information can be e-mailed to sdesimone@audubon.org.

We thank John Schmitt for designing our Starr Ranch t-shirt and newsletter logo.

Starr Ranch Bird Observatory News

by Gail Hall, Biologist-Educator for Bird Programs

Beginner Bird Banding Class

This fall, biologist Dave Bontrager and myself are co-teaching a bird banding course for beginners at Starr Ranch. The goal of the class is to have 12 volunteers trained and ready to help out with our Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (M.A.P.S.) program at the Sanctuary. M.A.P.S. was developed by the Institute for Bird Populations and is a continent-wide research effort to monitor the ability of over 200 hundred species of birds to survive and reproduce in different habitats, climates, and regions.



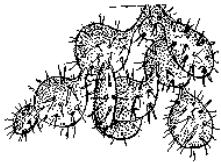
We have a fantastic crew of fledgling banders, they are all eager and ready to learn and in the months to come, their skill level and confidence will increase dramatically. But what *really* makes this crew so great is that every one of them has the most important qualities of a good bander: respect, care, and consideration for the birds before all else. These are qualities that cannot be taught (although they can be enforced!), one either has them or one doesn't. This group has got it, and I am grateful.

Calling All Birders!

Christmas Bird Count at Starr Ranch Sanctuary

Beginning this year, Starr Ranch will be running its first annual Christmas Bird Count! The Christmas Bird Count program began on Christmas in 1900 when conservationists decided to count, rather than hunt, birds that day. Now it is a national bird monitoring effort coordinated by Audubon. Participants in the Christmas Bird Count at Starr Ranch will spend a morning in the heart of the Sanctuary finding, identifying, and counting birds. The count data is then sent to Audubon for analysis where it will be used to monitor national as well as local trends in avian populations. We need at least 12 participants to make the count work. We welcome all birding skill levels. If you are interested in contributing, please call or email me for more information (949) 858-3537, ghall@audubon.org.


Organizational Meeting: December 16th, 7:00 pm at Starr Ranch Call or email Gail to RSVP



—THANK YOU!

---PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL---
TIME TO RENEW YOUR FRIENDS OF STARR RANCH MEMBERSHIP?
THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNLESS YOU RENEW NOW!

Starr Ranch Sanctuary
100 Bell Canyon Road
Trabuco Canyon CA 92679

 Audubon CALIFORNIA

Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary is a quarterly publication of the National Audubon Society's Starr Ranch Sanctuary.
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Friends: Visit Starr Ranch This Fall-Winter

Saturday, November 1

FAMILY NATURE WORKSHOPS

General Public

Join us for a morning of workshops and walks offered by our staff and docents that will include Cougars, Bobcats, and Coyotes, Hawks and Owls, Small Mammals Trapping and Release, Songbird Monitoring, Bat Biology and more. 9 am - 1 pm. Bring a picnic lunch. Free but by reservation only. For reservations call 949-858-0131.

Wednesday, November 5

SEA AND SAGE BIRD WALK

General Public

Our new biologist-educator for bird programs, Gail Hall, will lead this late fall bird walk. Meet at 7:45 am in the Albertson's shopping center parking lot off Plano Trabuco Road to carpool into Starr Ranch. Bring a picnic lunch, if you wish. \$5/person donation; free for Friends of Starr Ranch. If you have questions, call Nancy Kenyon at 949-786-3160 or kenyon@exo.com.

Wednesday, November 19

NATURE WALK WITH DAVE BONTRAGER

Limited to Friends of Starr Ranch Sanctuary

Friends of Starr Ranch are invited to join biologist-educator Dave Bontrager on a walk in the peace, beauty and shade of Bell Canyon. The walk will focus on plant/animal relationships. Meet at the lab at 8 am. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water and snacks. For reservations call 949-858-0309.