



Poppy Reserve  
Part of the Western Antelope  
Valley

“Globally Important Bird Area” –

One of only 424 in the entire  
world

# Biologically Rich & Diverse

Important migratory route for a variety of endangered birds and provides nesting and hunting habitat for species both iconic and threatened including

Close proximity of the

- San Andreas Fault wetlands
- Angeles Forest on the south and
- Open foraging areas, including the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, on the north.

# Important Bird Area



# Audubon Society: Western Antelope Valley “IBA”

- “The grassland bird community is most impressive in winter, when large numbers of raptors concentrate in the area.
- Large flocks of ...
- Horned Larks and
- Mountain Bluebirds also occur here, widely extirpated elsewhere in the Los Angeles area.”

# Bald and Golden Eagles



Photo courtesy of Robert Kerekes

# Prairie Falcons



# Kestrel



Photos courtesy of Robert Kerekes

# Ferruginous Hawk







**Great Horned Owl**

*Photo courtesy of Mary Wilson*

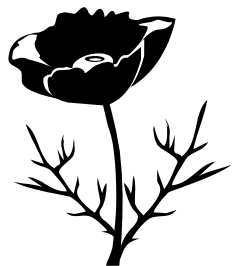


**Barn Owl**



**Burrowing Owl**

*Photo courtesy of Robert Kerekes*



# More About: Western Antelope Valley “IBA”

- **Swainson's Hawk** maintains its southernmost breeding outpost in the state here.
- As this IBA lies in the path of a major spring migrant route for songbirds, these windbreaks can host hundreds of vireos, thrushes and warblers during April and May.

# California Listed Endangered Species

- Contains the last few breeding colonies of two species once abundant in Southern California:

Swainson's Hawk

Tricolored blackbirds



California Listed Endangered Species



Antelope Valley  
Swainson's hawks are  
Nested:  
Joshua tree woodlands

Foraged:  
grasslands and native  
desert scrub  
2010:  
10 nesting pairs in the  
Antelope Valley

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Birds/Swainsons-Hawk>

# Look for flock of Tricolored Blackbirds at the Poppy Reserve in May



# Tricolored Decline 33%

“The results of the 2011 Statewide Survey have been released by Audubon California's Keiller Kyle, the survey coordinator.

The results show a dramatic drop in the number of tricolors statewide, from approximately 395,000 in 2008 to about 259,000 this year, a greater than 33% decrease, this despite an increase in the number of sites visited and an immense effort by 100 survey participants.”

<http://tricolor.ice.ucdavis.edu/>

# Tricolored Blackbirds

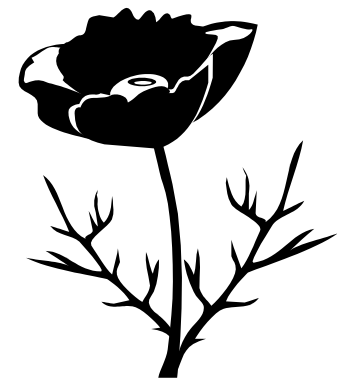
## LA County

- Los Angeles Fairmont Reservoir
- Los Angeles Gorman Post Road
- Los Angeles Holiday Lake
- Los Angeles Lake Palmdale
- Los Angeles Munz Ranch Aqueduct
- Los Angeles Quartz Hill Detention Basin, Ave L west of 60th St. West



# Swainson's Hawk

Photo courtesy  
of Robert  
Kerekes

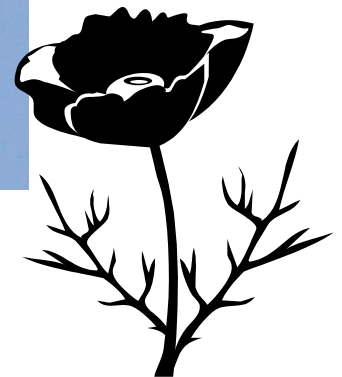




# Swainson's Hawk



Photo courtesy of Robert Kerekes





# **Swainson's Hawks**

95% decline in S.  
Cal. population in  
last 100 years

Remnant  
Population:  
Approx 10 breeding  
pairs in the A.V.

# Swainson's Hawk

## State Threatened Species

Nest in Joshua tree woodlands and ornamental roadside trees,

Foraging habitat include all of the open land types in the Antelope Valley including active and fallow agricultural fields, desert scrublands and grasslands and Joshua Tree woodlands

Prey: Pocket Gophers and other rodents

Migration: California's Swainsons Hawks winter in Mexico, Central America South America, and a small percentage in the Central Valley

Migration habits of the Antelope Valley population are unknown.

Approximately 10 active breeding pairs in the Antelope Valley.

High nest site fidelity, meaning they return to the same site year after year

Source: **Swainson's Hawk**

**Survey Protocols, Impact Avoidance, and Minimization Measures for Renewable Energy Projects in the Antelope Valley of Los Angeles and Kern Counties, California**

State of California

California Energy Commission and Department of Fish and Game

June 2, 2010

# What to look for right now?



# Horned Lark

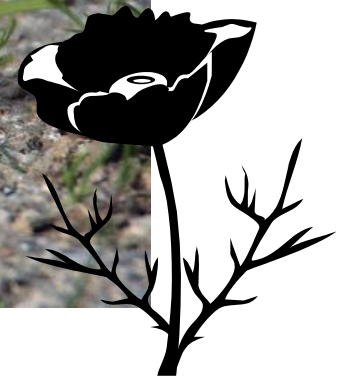


Photo courtesy of Ron Wolf

# Horned lark

- **Size**

- 7-8" (18-20 cm)

- Even its genus name, *Eremophila*, is Latin for "desert-loving," further illustrating this bird's fondness for bare, open ground

## **Voice**

- Song, tinkling, irregular, high-pitched, often prolonged; from ground or high in air. Note, a clear *tsee-titi*.

# Horned Lark

- The only true lark native to North America
- Horned Larks eat mostly seeds of grasses, weeds, and waste grain but feed insects to their young.
- Adults consume some insects as well.

# Horned Lark

- On open fields in winter, flocks of Horned Larks walk and run on the ground. Do not “hop”
- If disturbed, the flock circles in swift, twisting flight, making soft lispings call notes.
- The "horns" of the Horned Lark are little tufts of feathers, visible only at close range.



# Adult Male



# Breeding

- Horned Larks are monogamous for one season.
- The male establishes his territory in January-February.
- He attracts the female by perching on fence posts and bushes to sing his mating call.
- In display, the male takes off into the air, rising to about 300-800 feet; he circles and sings his high-pitched tinkling song.
- After his song is finished, he closes his wings, and dives head first towards the ground.
- Just before reaching the ground, he opens his wings and pulls out of the dive! Such a show-off!

Nest a basket woven of fine grass or other plant materials, lined with finer material, placed in depression or cavity in ground



# Nesting

- The female chooses her nesting site on the open ground, next to a clump of vegetation.
- She often surrounds her nest with a decoration of pebbles.
- Both of the adults feed their young.
- The young can walk and run before they can fly; they fledge in about 12 days.

# Horned Larks

- Males perform a flight-song display high above the ground.
- During the breeding season, courtship, nesting, and feeding take place on territories.

# Horned Larks: Nesting

- Male residents establish and defend territories as early as January and February.
- The female selects the nest site, usually on open ground next to a clump of grass or other low feature.
- She also builds the nest, a slight depression lined with plant material such as grass.
- The nest often has a flat 'doorstep' of pebbles.
- The female incubates 3-4 eggs.
- Both parents feed the young.
- The young walk, run, and leave the nest well before they can fly. Pairs in lowland areas may have 2-3 broods per year, but high altitude/latitude pairs have only a single brood.

# Juvenile



# Horned Lark - Interesting Facts

- The Horned Lark is the only member of the lark family that is native to the new world.
- These birds return to their birthplace after every migration (a characteristic known as philopatric).
- Because of this, local populations have adapted to the color of their habitat resulting in 15 distinct subspecies in the West



# Meadow Lark



Photos courtesy of Bob Waidner

# White Crowned Sparrow “Desert Sparrow”



Photos courtesy of Bob Waidner

# Large long tailed sparrow bright pink or orange bill



Photos courtesy of Bob Waidner

# Mountain Bluebirds



Mountain Bluebirds hunt insects from perches or while on the wing, at times resembling a tiny American Kestrel with their long wings, hovering flight, and quick dives.

# Western Bluebird

Both Mountain and Western can be seen in flocks together



From Providence Mountains, Mitchell Caverns  
Facebook Page:  
(Interpreter Andy Fitzpatrick)



"A lone Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) has been mingling with a flock of Western Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) among the historic buildings here. Even with an overcast sky, the brilliant electric blue of this species is striking. Both species of bluebirds here are winter visitors; come spring they will head north to higher and cooler elevations."

# Turkey Vulture





Larger than a raven but much smaller than a condor.

Light gray flight feathers and tail. Adults have a red head.

Excellent sense of smell.



Migrate through the Antelope Valley in Feb – March.

Gather in flocks at night, even in suburban trees!



# Seen at the Reserve: Loggerhead Shrike



Photos courtesy of Bob Waidner

“Loggerhead,” a synonym for “blockhead,” refers to the unusually large size of this bird’s head in relation to its body.

# Loggerhead Shrike

- All About Birds: The Loggerhead Shrike is a songbird with a raptor's habits.
- Preys on insects, birds, lizards, and small mammals.
- Lacking a raptor's talons, Loggerhead Shrikes skewer their kills on thorns or barbed wire (or Joshua trees!) or wedge them into tight places for easy eating"



# At Poppy and Ripley - Also Look For

Savannah sparrow  
(shown to the left)

Fox sparrow

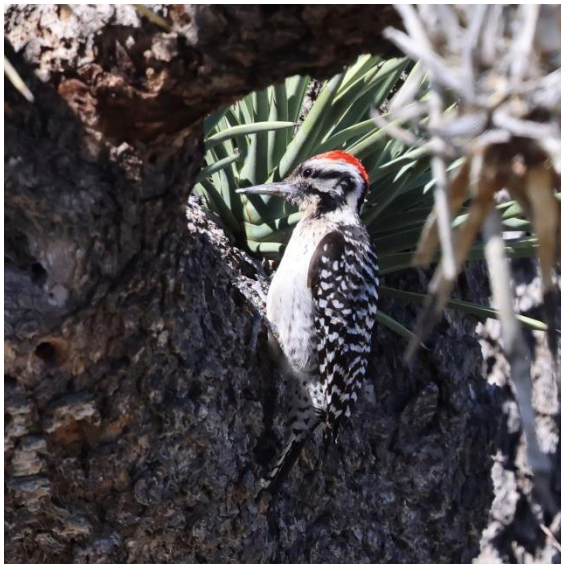
Yellow-rumped warbler

Warbling warbler

Mountain chickadee

Wilson's warbler

Ladder-backed  
woodpecker



Photos courtesy of Bob Waidner

[prmdia.org](http://prmdia.org)