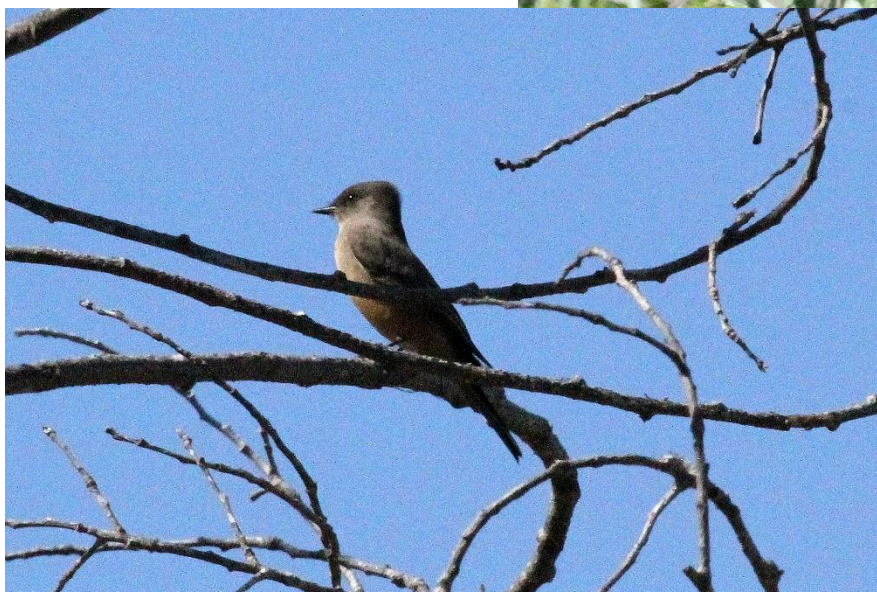




The welcoming sign for San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary spelled out the rules visitors were asked to follow. Pretty typical of all wildlife sanctuaries.

The first bird we encountered along the San Diego River was this White-faced Ibis. It was standing motionless taking a sun bath.



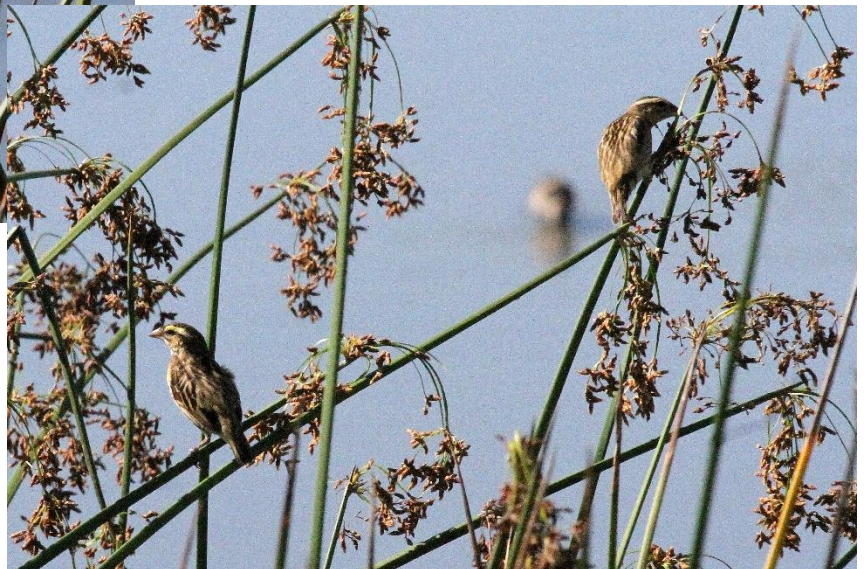
A typical western bird in this area was the Say's Phoebe. One can make out its gray breast and pinkish belly. The head shape is diagnostic.

On the first pond we explored, two Northern Shovelers were paddling slowly in the water. A hen was on the left, while an eclipse drake swam on the right. It was late September, so he had lost his breeding coloring.



Very soon on our first day at the marsh, we found our target bird – a beautiful male Orange Bishop. Since then, the bird is now named the Northern Red Bishop.

Not far from the male, a pair of female Orange Bishops were feeding in the same reeds. The blob in the water in the background was a Long-billed Dowitcher.





Here three Long-billed Dowitchers were probing the bottom of the shallow wastewater pond in the marsh.

A surprise turned up in the reeds. A Belding's Savannah Sparrow seemed excited about something with its head feathers flared up. We had close-up views of this subspecies at Bolsa Chica Wetlands a few days later.



Our last bird on this first, short visit to the marsh was an Osprey carrying a fish.
A running joke is that a field mark of an Osprey is a fish in its talons.

On our second day at the marsh,
we were greeted by three then four
American White Pelicans.
We had more time to explore on
this visit.



The bank of the San Diego
River showed a Black-
necked Stilt passing a Snowy
Egret just standing quietly.

In the grass by the sanctuary's
buildings a California Towhee
hunted for insects.





In leaf litter at the edge of the grass, an Orange-crowned Warbler stretched out as it took off.

In the same area, a Western Fence Lizard, sporting blue dots down its back, searched for food.



Out in the first pond an American Avocet swept its long bill across the water trying to stir up a meal.

Pond 1 of the marsh had deeper water and an island in the middle. Two American Coots were swimming in this deeper pond.



Out on the island, a Great Egret landed to hunt along the water's edge. More coots and a duck were off to the left.

A Brown Pelican flew along the island past several ducks, which we failed to identify.





At the farther end of the island, three Western Gulls rested and preened, while three American White Pelicans also preened. In between a Double-crested Cormorant stood proudly.

Out on the pond, a Western Grebe swam in the sunshine. Note how the black cap on its head extends down below its red eye.

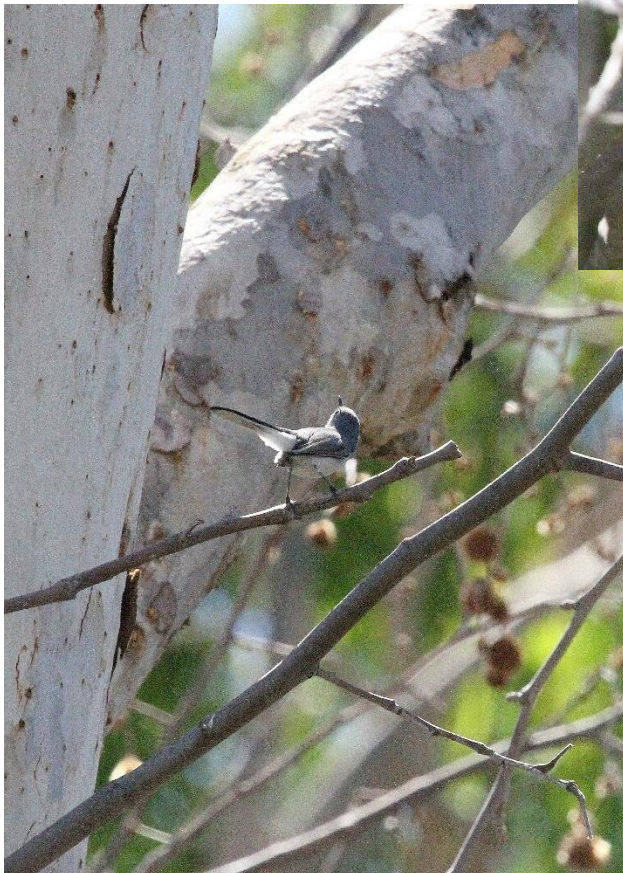


Not far away a Clark's Grebe had rolled its belly up to preen its feathers. This grebe's black cap stops above the eyes. In back is a Horned Grebe.



A nice capture was all three grebes in one frame – up front left the Horned Grebe, to the right the Western Grebe, and in back the Clark's Grebe.

A windbreak of bushes and trees between the marsh's ponds was a place to find a Bushtit. By its light eye color and brown cap, this was a female of the Pacific subspecies.

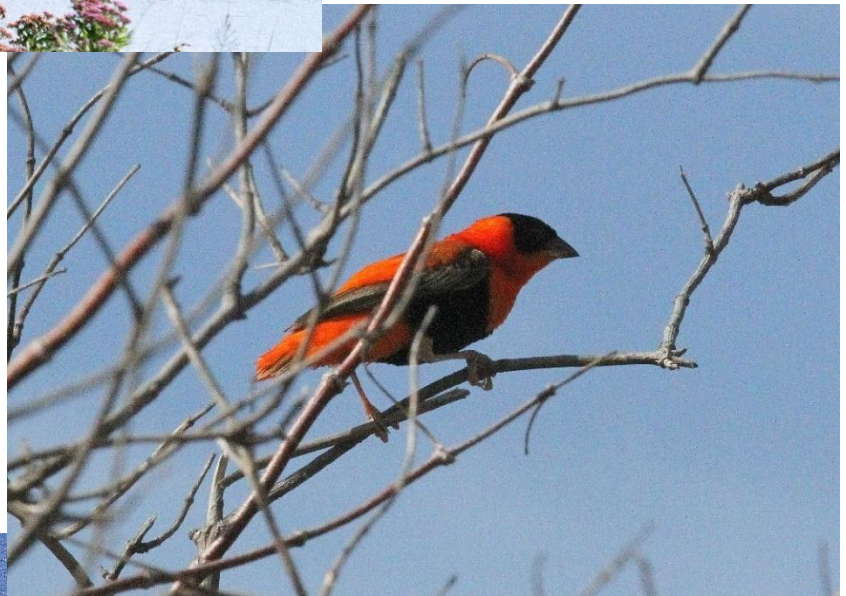


On our way out of the sanctuary, we came upon a familiar bird, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in a sycamore tree.



On our last day in Southern California, we made a third stop at San Joaquin Marsh first thing in the morning. On the first pond (Pond E) two avocets and a Black-necked Stilt patrolled the water as three flyers photobombed my shot.

In the earlier light, this Orange Bishop looked more like its new name: a Northern Red Bishop.



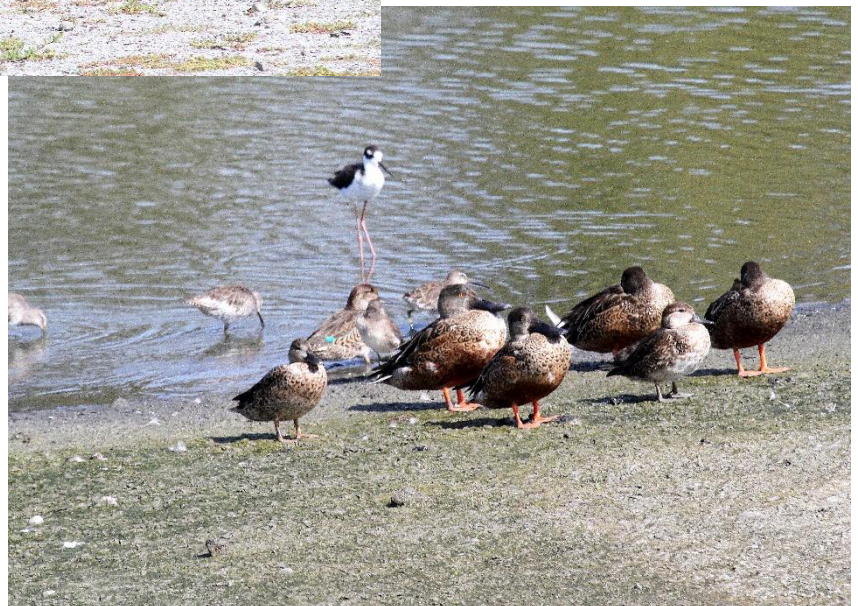
American White Pelicans are supposedly 'rare' at San Joaquin, yet 18 pelicans flew over the sanctuary on our last visit. The second time we saw them in three days.

We visited a new location, Pond D, which was filled with shorebirds of all kinds. Many Western Sandpipers probed the shallows near the shore.



Black-necked Stilts, Northern Shovelers, Western Sandpipers, and smaller sandpipers warmed in the morning sun. The brown-backed stilts are females.

This close view of part of the group showed three Green-winged Teal among the shovelers. Note the iridescent green patch on the bird below the stilt.





A slight scare went through the group of waterfowl as this Sharp-shinned Hawk soared overhead. It was little danger to most of the birds.

A Black-necked Stilt looked a bit awkward in flight with its legs held at an angle under it.



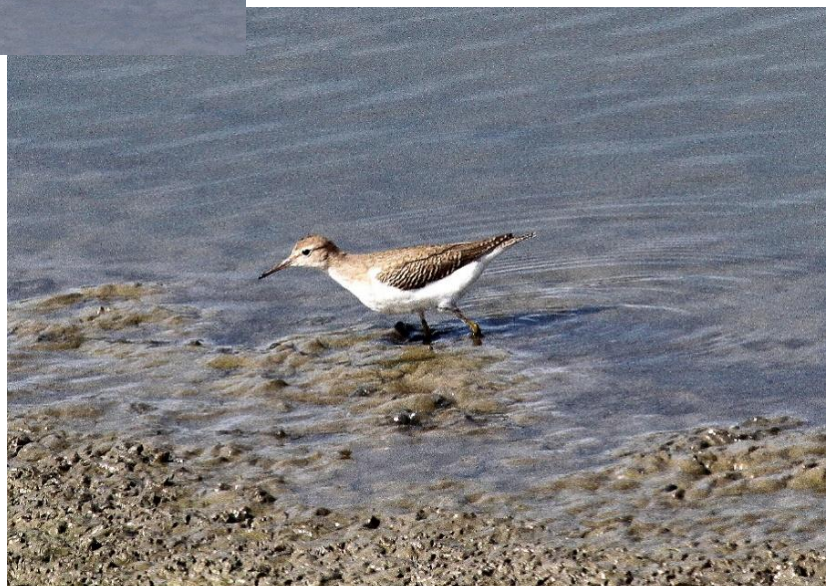
A dramatic size comparison between a Long-billed Dowitcher and a Western Sandpiper.

On the far shore, a jumble of dowitchers, sandpipers, and a couple of shovelers was made more confusing by their reflections in the water.



A male Black-necked Stilt made a fine portrait as it waded in the shallow water.

A Solitary Sandpiper trudged through mud all by itself.

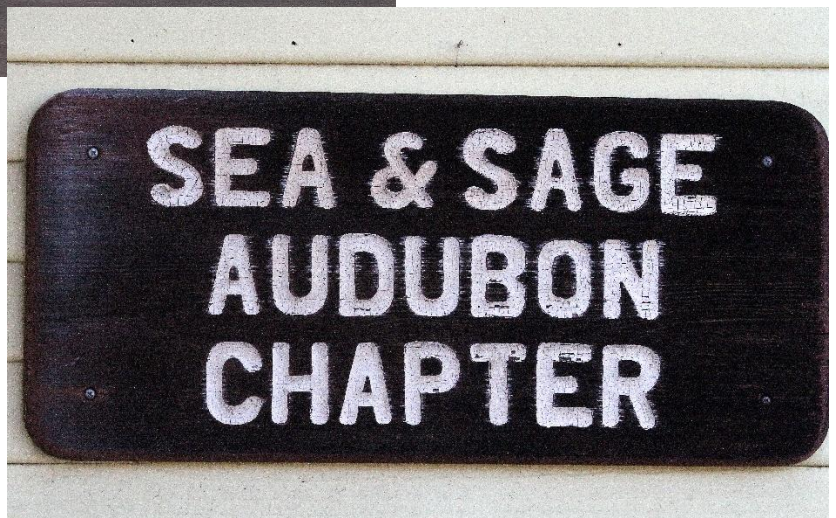


Nothing exotic here – a pair of Mallards flew over Pond D, proving that they're everywhere!



The Audubon House was one of the buildings in the Marsh Campus. It was the Sea & Sage Audubon Chapter's headquarters and contained a fine gift shop.

The sign found near the door of the Audubon House.



A walk around the Marsh Campus of buildings revealed a nice, male Anna's Hummingbird gathering nectar from the flowers.



A few steps away another familiar bird appeared, a White-crowned Sparrow.

Our last bird photo at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary was this silhouette of a Black Phoebe.



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