



*Photo credit: Dave Barton*

## Spring: it's for the birds!

Despite our recent chilly weather, days are growing longer and spring is in the air. This season we're hearing our fine feathered friends singing out, and from stunning photography to a beginner's guide to at-home birding, we're bringing the flock to you.

Read on for a very wild 3D gallery of outstanding bird photography, the latest from our camera team, a beginner's guide to backyard birding, and a few high-flying appearances from some familiar faces.

## AFC SPRING NEWSLETTER

### IN THIS ISSUE:

1. See stunning wild bird photography from Charles Kohlhase in our 3D virtual gallery tour.
2. Catch up with AFC's camera team, spotting wildlife (feathered, furred, and otherwise) throughout the HTC corridor!

3. Get your start bird watching with expert birder Dave Weeshoff of San Fernando Valley Audubon.
4. You know them from their amazing work with AFC - now catch these photographers on the big screen!

## 3D VIRTUAL GALLERY



# AFC Presents: Charley Kohlhase

## EXPERIENCE WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY IN A NEW WAY

From now until April 15, we're delighted to bring you our first-ever virtual gallery show, featuring the avian photography of Charley Kohlhase.

An exceptional scientist and lifelong artist, Kohlhase worked for forty years at NASA/JPL leading the design of several robotic deep-space planetary missions. As an artist, Kohlhase works in photography, sculpture, and digital media, striving to capture unique images that reveal the beauty of our shrinking world.

This 3D Virtual Gallery has been developed by AFC to showcase his work, and to bring you the sounds and calls of native bird species that inhabit our arroyos and foothills. It's best enjoyed with your device in landscape mode, and sound/volume on - we hope it helps your imagination take flight!

[Visit our virtual gallery!](#)

**KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

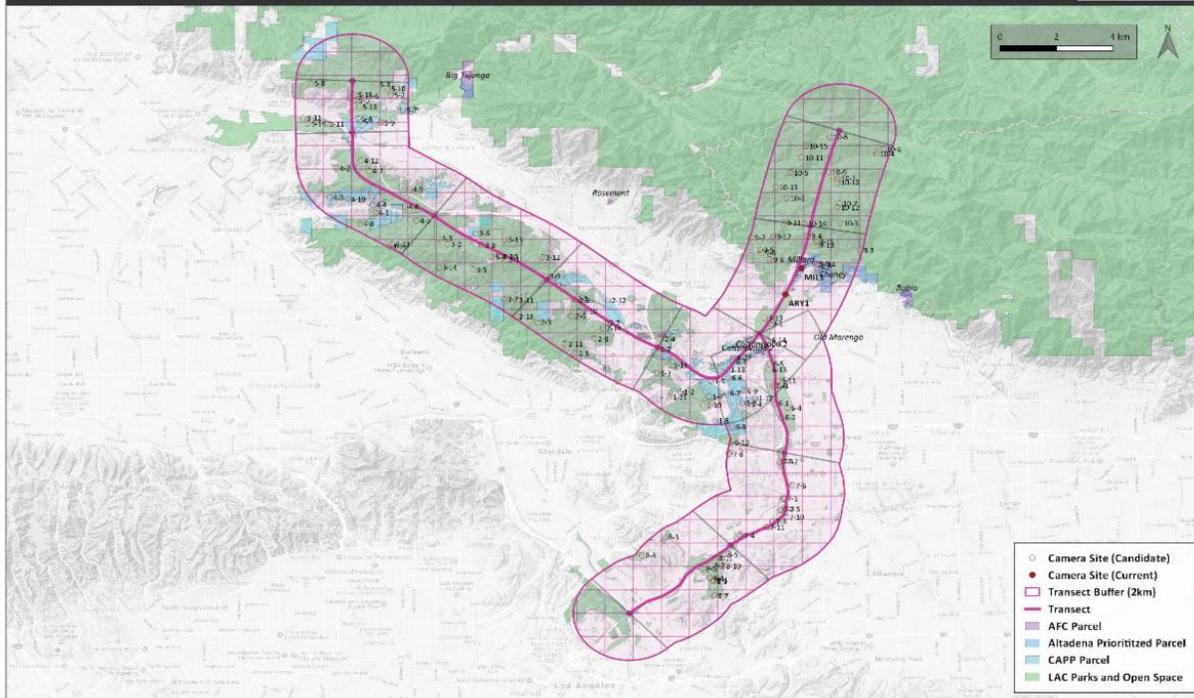


# AFC's Wildlife Camera Team Growing in Leaps and Bounds

## CRITICAL CONSERVATION PROJECT CAPTURING VITAL DATA

AFC's wildlife camera program began in 2014 with two cameras placed in Cottonwood Canyon. Now, we maintain 35 cameras, installed and monitored by a team of students, community volunteers, and scientists. And it's a big job: last year alone, our team analyzed over 100,000 images!

Those cameras are placed along our main transect throughout the Hahamonga to Tujunga (HTC) Wildlife Corridor, stretching from above the Arroyo Seco in the East through the San Rafael Hills and Verdugo Mountains and back to the San Gabriels in the West. Presently, AFC is working on an extension to that transect that will run south down the Arroyo Seco to study potential wildlife passage along this route to and from the Los Angeles River.



Dr. Amanda Zellmer, a Biology professor at Occidental College, leads the team and oversees AFC's partnership with the **Urban Wildlife Information Network (UWIN)**. UWIN is a partnership of researchers, who use standardized wildlife monitoring protocols to understand the ecology and behavior of urban species.

AFC's cameras follow UWIN guidelines, so that the data we collect is standardized. By comparing data throughout the network, scientists can understand differences in animal behavior across regions and find patterns that remain consistent around the globe. UWIN works to provide city planners, wildlife managers, and researchers with the tools needed to make cities part of the solution to the biodiversity crisis, and AFC is making significant contributions to those efforts, as well as conducting our own research to learn more about the ecosystems we work to conserve.



*The AFC Camera Team hard at work - and some of our recent subjects.*

The camera team is currently using camera data gathered over the last two years to analyze the **impact of the pandemic on wildlife presence**. You may have seen news stories reporting increases in wildlife sightings, but that's not the whole story. In the last few months we've seen a decrease in wildlife captured on our cameras in areas with higher human traffic. We've also seen more people spending time in nature as a reaction to rules prohibiting indoor gatherings. What effect does this have on wildlife? Other studies on this topic so far have been inconclusive and we are investigating changes in wildlife activity in our own area. Stay tuned to find out what we ultimately discover!



Another ongoing AFC study focuses on the the **water channels in La Crescenta between the San Gabriel Mountains and Verdugo Wash**. We hope to determine how these channels are used by wildlife to travel back and forth between habitats. With the help of some of local high school and college student researchers, as well as community members who live along these channels, that study will launch and continue throughout 2021.

One of the most exciting parts of camera trapping is going through the wildlife photos that are captured. But not every photo is a winner: motion-activated cameras don't know the difference between a mountain lion and pile of windblown leaves. That's why camera team volunteer Max Ogden is leading a team to develop software that will sort through the photos **using artificial intelligence to identify wildlife**.

We are so grateful for everyone who has contributed to our camera program - it's a multi-talented and dedicated team, working hard to answer important questions about our wild neighbors.

**Want to get involved or find out more?** Please contact Maggie Swomley at AFC by clicking the button below:

[Join the AFC camera team!](#)

**WHO'S VISITING YOUR BACKYARD?**



*A Dark-eyed Junco (L) or a Lesser Goldfinch (R) might drop by! Photo credits: Dave Barton*

# Backyard Birding

## BIRDWATCHING FOR BEGINNERS

*Guest feature by Dave Weeshoff, Conservation Chair, San Fernando Valley Audubon*

Living in the pleasant Mediterranean climate of our foothill communities, we have a wide diversity of plants and wildlife to see and enjoy.

We can observe over 180 species of our avian friends throughout the year just in our local parks and yards, from the tiny Hummingbirds sipping nectar from flowers to the huge, high-soaring Turkey Vultures overhead looking for something dead!

During this period, while we are remaining closer to home, watching our local birds is a relaxing way to take our mind off our problems - and birds are everywhere.

So, **grab a pair of binoculars** - any old pair - and head out to the back yard or a park nearby. Start by looking closer at the “easy” birds that are all around. Once you begin to notice how different they are from one another and how many special beaks, marks, stripes, colors and quirky behaviors they display you’ll begin to appreciate that watching birds is an easy and fun way to connect with wildlife that doesn’t involve paying for an African safari.

Next, find a good bird identification guide (for example, [Sibley Birds West: Field Guide to Birds of Western North America](#)) or download an app to your phone, like [Audubon’s Bird Guide App](#), to help you to identify and name the birds you see.

Perhaps **dedicate a calendar** to list the birds you see throughout the year at



your preferred observation locations. This annualized report will show how our local birds come and go throughout the year. Don't fret if you can't find the name of that bird: there are many avid birders in our neighborhoods eager to help. Just watch for binoculars and floppy hats.

Then, consider adding a water feature - a "bird bath" - to your garden to invite birds for a drink. You might even add a feeder or two to attract even more species, and consider planting bird-friendly, drought-tolerant plants.

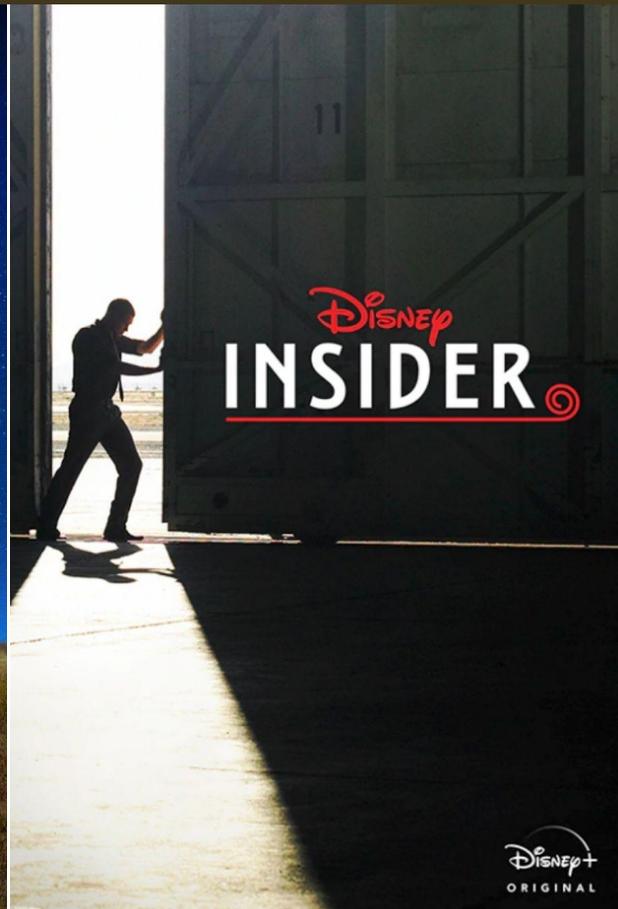
For much more information about all of the above, explore the [California Native Plant Society](#), [National Audubon](#), [Pasadena Audubon](#), and [San Fernando Valley Audubon chapter](#) websites for invitations to free bird walks, Zoom presentations, and all sorts of information about the wildlife conservation, recreational, and educational activities that they provide.

And finally, please keep all cats indoors, for their health, and to protect our local avian friends.

## OUR LOCAL WILDLIFE: NOW STREAMING!



Watch Now »



Watch Now »

*Note: Both these videos appear on proprietary streaming platforms, so a paid subscription to the service is required to watch either episode.*

# See Nikita like never before

## IN NEW SERIES FROM APPLE TV AND DISNEY PLUS

*Earth at Night in Color* on Apple TV+ and *Disney Insiders* on Disney Plus feature some familiar faces to wildlife watchers (both human and feline)!

In Episode 5 of *Earth at Night*, “Cities”, two local photographers and wildlife advocates, **Roy Dunn** and **Johanna Turner** served as location researchers and principal camera operators for a sequence our favorite mountain lion: Nikita!

To capture Nikita on video without altering her behavior, Turner and Dunn used motion activated cameras that turned on when she walked by. Adding to the challenge, Nikita’s travel habits were known only through several years of tracking her paw prints and some glimpses on small trail cameras. Filming took place over the course of about one year in coordination with park officials in the cities of Glendale and Burbank.

“The low-light capability of these cameras is astonishing,” says Roy Dunn. “Most of the wilderness sequences in the series were shot using only moonlight, and here we used the ambient light of the city. As a photographer used to being able to precisely control the light levels, it was a real challenge to anticipate both the exact path Nikita would take (for focus) and the crucially important exposure. At such low light levels, it is easy to get it very wrong.”

“I want people to be able to see and appreciate these beautiful animals,” says AFC advisor and photographer Johanna Turner. “I hope *Earth at Night* lets everyone see what a beautiful, wild place LA is at night. We’re used to these stories about photographers camping out in the cold in some exotic place for months to film a snow leopard or a tiger, and I used to be kind of disappointed that there was no amazing wildlife where I lived. But it turns out there is - we just couldn’t see them.”



*Disney Insider*, available on Disney+, features unique stories from behind the scenes at Disney. In the third and final segment of Season 1, Episode 4, AFC Board Member Joe Rohde is joined by AFC advisor and wildlife photographer and Disney Conservation Hero Johanna Turner for a behind-the-scenes look

at how she captures her unique photographs.

You'll see even more of Johanna's shots of our local native wildlife, filmed right in our study area - and don't miss Joe's shoutout for why wildlife corridors are so important (at 00:15 minutes in, to be precise)!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Upcoming events at the Rosemont Preserve:

- March 21st, 9-11am, Open Gate morning
- April 3rd, 9-11am, Open Gate morning
- April 10th, 9-11am Restoration work
- April 18th, 9-11am, Open Gate morning
- May 1st, 9-11am, Open Gate morning
- May 8th, 9-11am, Restoration work
- May 16th, 9-11am Open Gate morning



*Securing, protecting, and stewarding our precious open spaces*

Arroyos & Foothills Conservancy  
(626) 796-0782  
arroyosfoothills@gmail.com  
www.arroyosfoothills.org

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