

Volume 12, Issue 10, Oct.2025

WEBSITE

scrippsmesagardenclub.com

EMAIL

scrippsmesagardenclub1993

@gmail.com

Meetings 4th Tuesday



Scripps-Mesa Garden Club



Autumn Sunset Over Lake Miramar

Photo by Denise Stewart

Oct. 28—SCRIPPS RANCH LIBRARY 6 pm
Master Gardener Dawn Standke

Nov. 18 – Scripps Ranch Library
Pumpkin Potluck

Dec. 23—No meeting



Bird of the Month

by Dave Fortner



White-crowned Sparrow

This month's bird features the White-crowned Sparrow. These amazing sparrows have just arrived from Alaska--more than 2,000 miles--to spend their winter here with us. At 7 inches long, these relatively large sparrows have a striking black-and-white streaked head with an orange bill. They spend their days foraging on or near the ground, scratching for seeds and insects. You can often hear their beautiful, sweet, whistling call. Attract them to your garden with a ground-level seed feeder. This is one of my favorite winter birds.

Photograph by Cindy Fortner

Minutes from Sept. 24 Meeting

by Barbara Maeselle, Secretary

Our focus this evening was on birds and how birds help us as gardeners and how we can help their survival which is at risk. Since 1970 the US bird population has declined by 3 billion. Twenty five percent of bird population are gone. Contributing to this decline are habitat loss and degradation, pesticides, contaminant use and exposure, hunting, and climate change. As gardeners we profit from the activities of birds. What are these birds doing? They are eating insects, in enormous amounts. For example: hummingbirds eat 2000 insects per day; the Carolina Chickadee babies eat 1000 - 2000 caterpillars per day. As gardeners we are the Key Stone Species in our garden and have a disproportionately large impact on our garden's ecosystem.

It is important for us to understand what we can do to protect and enhance the bird population. Ground level seed feeders and bird baths attract birds. Putting colored dots on expansive windows can prevent birds from crashing into them. Choosing native plants that provide what bird species already eat is perhaps a better idea than bringing in exotic plants.

Our speaker, Dave Fortner, pointed us to a fascinating on-line MIGRATION DASHBOARD which tracks bird movement specific to the San Diego night skies. For example on the night of September 25, 2025 an estimated 758,800 birds crossed San Diego county. The migration begins 30 to 45 minutes after sunset with the greatest number in flight 3-4 hours after migration begins. This kind of very specific information about bird populations all across the US speaks to our recognition of the importance of ensuring the survival of birds to our environment. See the website: birdcast.info

Our Garden Club Bird of September is the California Towhee photographed by Cindy Fortner.

October Garden Chores



Plants Protect Each Other

From Bugs

Basil & Parsley defend tomatoes

Garlic, Lettuce & Cabbage protect Potatoes

Cabbage, Broccoli, Kale are saved by Nasturtiums

Carrots & Cabbage are rescued by Sage

Kitchen gardens are saved by Tansy

- Plant bug protecters between the rows
- Remove the dead leaves from under deciduous fruit
- Keep compost pile moist
- Cover fruit trees with netting to keep pests away
- Adjust automatic irrigation systems to weather
- Plant bare root trees
- Fertilize other trees before winter
- Trim away dead and broken branches.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the sunny southern California summer lingers, the arrival of the winter birds reminds us that Autumn and Winter are still coming, however mild they might be here in San Diego. The couple of gentle fall rains were but a drop for the thirsty ground which hungers for winter storms. Yes, winter is coming, eventually. Did you enjoy the summer enough? I can never quite convince myself that I did.

Be on the lookout for the migratory birds: White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and every manner of duck are arriving daily. Evans Pond at Scripps Ranch Library is a great place to see American Wigeons, Ring-necked Ducks, Northern Shovelers, and American Coots (technically a Rail, but they act like a duck)) along with the year-around Mallards.

And as your garden starts to wither, consider letting it compost naturally, meaning less work for you, free compost, and it provides an important habitat for critters to live and overwinter. By spring, it will have naturally decomposed, providing fertilizer and organic matter which is essential for your garden. And although it doesn't necessarily look picturesque, it is definitely better for your garden ecosystem and will help attract birds.



DAVE FORTNER