

Final Report From the ad hoc Name Committee to the Pomona Valley Audubon Society Board of Directors February 29, 2024

The Committee's Charge

The Board established an ad hoc "Name" committee to investigate member opinions on the question of retaining or removing "Audubon" from the Society's name at the July 2023 planning meeting. The committee members were Kim Hardison, Scott Marnoy, Patty Nueva Espana, and Seth Thompson. We believe that this report concludes our work.

The Approach

The committee decided on a two step approach to assessing PVAS members' views. The first step was a quick and simple survey of those in attendance at the November 2 member meeting that yielded 35 responses, with 23 voting "no" on a name change, 6 voting "yes" and 6 "undecided." and shared that data with you shortly afterward, We then embarked on a wider and more elaborate survey.

Methods

In early November, 2023, we sent a thirteen question email survey to 376 PVAS members for whom we have an email address. We received 50 replies, a 13% return rate. That is actually quite good for this type of survey. It is important to stress that this data is not a random or representative sample. This survey tells us something about what these 50 individuals thought but we cannot draw any conclusions about what all 376 people thought, let alone any conclusions about what all roughly 1,000 PVAS members think. If anyone would like the original raw data for analysis, please contact Seth at polpsych@gmail.com

Results

The first five questions addressed a potential name change for PVAS. Sixty percent of the respondents said they'd read or heard a great deal or quite a bit about the issue and 52% thought it was a very important or extremely important question. The majority, 55%, said changing the name would not affect their participation in PVAS, while 20% said they would be less likely and 24% said they would be more likely to participate. If PVAS did not change its name, 66% said it wouldn't matter while 20% said they would be less likely and 24% said they would be more likely to participate. When we asked for a "yes" or "no" on changing the name, just over half (52%) were opposed and one-third (34%) were in favor. The others were unsure or did not have an opinion.

Here is a snapshot of what some PVAS members were thinking about our name and some other issues in November and December.

1. How much have you read or heard about the controversy over the name "Audubon" for either the national organization or local chapters?

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|--|--------|
| • A great deal | 8.00% |
| • Quite a bit | 52.00% |
| • A little | 36.00% |
| • I haven't really paid much attention | 4.00% |

2. How important do you think the issue of “Audubon” in the name of a birding organization is?

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|------------------------|--------|
| • Extremely important | 20.00% |
| • Very important | 32.00% |
| • Somewhat important | 24.00% |
| • Not so important | 14.00% |
| • Not at all important | 10.00% |

3. If Pomona Valley Audubon Society decided to change its name to eliminate “Audubon” how would that affect your relationship to PVAS?

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • I would be much less likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 14.00% |
| • I would be somewhat less likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 6.00% |
| • It would have no effect | 56.00% |
| • I would be somewhat more likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 16.00% |
| • I would be much more likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 8.00% |

4. If Pomona Valley Audubon Society decided to NOT change its name to eliminate “Audubon” how would that affect your relationship to PVAS?

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|---|--------|
| • I would be much less likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 4.00% |
| • I would be somewhat less likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 16.00% |
| • It would have no effect | 66.00% |
| • I would be somewhat more likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 6.00% |
| • I would be much more likely to participate in PVAS activities or contribute to the organization | 8.00% |

5. All things considered, do you think Pomona Valley Audubon Society should change its name to eliminate “Audubon”?

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|---------------------------|--------|
| • Yes | 34.00% |
| • No | 52.00% |
| • I am not sure | 6.00% |
| • I don't have an opinion | 8.00% |

6. If PVAS does change its name, do you have any suggestions on what its new name should be?

- Pomona Valley birding alliance
- Pomona Valley Bird Celebration Society
- Spineless Bird Watchers of Pomona Valley. You are being bullied into changing the name because of something that happened years ago and was the norm at the time.
- No. JJ Audubon was no better, no worse than the prevailing white folks of his time. We need to work on racism, but it has nothing to do with the name of Audubon.
- Greater Pomona Valley Birders Association
- PV Avian Conservation Society
- Pomona Valley Birding Club
- Pomona Valley Avian Society
- Pomona Valley National Birding Society
- Pomona Valley Bird Alliance
- PV Avid Birders
- The Ornithophile Society
- Maybe something like Pomona Valley Avian Society or something that reflects birds
- Pomona Valley Ornithological Society
- Pomona Valley Birding Association?
- Pomona Valley Birding Conservation Society, Pomona Valley Avian Society, Pomona Valley Conserving Birds
- We should go along with the national Audubon organization for name recognition.
- National Bird Association
- Not sure, but it shouldn't be a person's name. It should reflect the purposes of the organization.
- "Pomona Valley Birding Society" approximately does that, but others could probably come up with something better.
- Pomona Valley Bird Conservation
- PV (whatever the national name may change to)
- Mt. San Antonio Bird Conservation
- Not at this time, but something more inclusive.
- Follow Seattle path with a name like "Birds Connect Pomona Valley"
- PV Birding Club

7. Which of the following PVAS activities have you participated in the past year? Please check all that apply

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Member meetings | 46.81% |
| • Field trips | 48.94% |
| • First Sunday bird walk at California Botanic Garden | 14.89% |
| • Fourth Sunday Walk at Bonelli Park | 36.17% |
| • Volunteer at events such as Village Venture, Family Bird Fest ,
San Dimas Nature Center events | 36.17% |
| • Contribute to the Annual Appeal | 46.81% |
| • Read the Chaparral Naturalist Newsletter | 89.36% |
| • Christmas Bird Count | 36.17% |
| • I contribute to National Audubon but don't really have anything | 10.64% |

to do with Pomona Valley Audubon

8. Can you think of some things that Pomona Valley Audubon does very well?

- Very good at participating in public outreach events
- Education, Newsletter
- Monthly meetings are very well presented.
- Helpful to new members in the field
- It's a warm, welcoming group and has many interesting speakers. I've only attended a few meetings due to being out of the country a lot, but have enjoyed those. I appreciate efforts to save burrowing owls and other native bird species.
- outreach. education. saving the birds.
- Informs me well of birding opportunities in a timely manner....
- I think that the organization does a great job at offering consistent bird walks. I think it's great that you are engaging the membership in the possible re-naming of the local chapter.
- PVAS offers many opportunities to be evolved in conservation of habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- community outreach and education through bird walks, meetings and community event participation
- The monthly meetings are fantastic. I always look forward to them. Wonderful speakers! I love the book sales - always so fun to browse. The PVAS booth at the events I have worked at are well thought and organized. I how we find another wildlife rehab center to partner with because having live birds at events really garners more interest from attendees.
- Provide opportunities for birding and learning more about birds in our area. Presenting interesting and educational programs.
- Great meetings, interesting field trips, burrowing owl observation project and Thompson Creek feeders.
- Bird walks/field trips. Monthly speakers, monthly meetings, educational outreach, conservation
- The communicate well and have a well organized calendar of events and meetings. Speakers are interesting and compelling.
- Meetings and field trips are well done.
- I always mean to go birding with the group at Bonelli Park, and never get around to it, but I think it's great. The speakers and other events sound terrific.
- Communication & Education
- Keeps up with relevant issues for birds and offers nice birding events
- Good presentations @ most meetings, nice outings
- The majority of the veteran bird watchers who attend the Bonelli Bird Walk are very patient and willing to share their knowledge with the fledgling members
- Great outreach and commitment to sharing the joy of birding and the appreciation of wildlife with community. Enjoyable meetings with very good speakers and enjoyable food!
- Member meetings and public outreach to educate people about birds and their environment
- excellent monthly programs
- Newsletter Activities schedule
- Everything. Tina is an awesome president and this is a wonderful group to be a part of.
- The meetings and the bird walks are very good. I have enjoyed the field trips. PVAS has been very successful at volunteer events.

- Outreach events, conservation projects
- All things seem good.
- inform and promote bird conservation
- Community outreach.
- The volunteer booth at Fall in the Farm at the Fairplex was incredibly executed this year.
- Excellent organization and programming
- Being involved in events. Also plenty of bird walks.

9. Are there some things Pomona Valley Audubon should be doing, or should stop doing, that would make the organization more useful to you?

- A more regular “Birding 101 classes
- I can't think of any.
- Stop this silly discussion of changing our name, and get on with what's important: birding, and education the public on birds and the environment.
- I'd like to see more Youth activities.
- I go to church on Sunday morning, may be some events in the afternoon?
- PVAS is remarkably well run and organized in comparison to other organizations of which I've been a member. I'd like to see more activities targeted for beginners that are followed with some networking opportunities. At meetings allow first time attendees to introduce themselves and share what got them into birding.
- Nothing that I can think of.
- I think having a ZOOM link would be great, I can't make some of the meetings due to work
- Nothing I can think of.
- Better social media presence (Instagram)
- More bird conservation
- I'd love to see PVAS at concerts in the park (or other similar venues) with a table and information. I see so many people finding lost or injured birds on social media. Perhaps PVAS canister an information session for nearby cities (Chino Hills,) Publishing an informative article in the Chino Champion would also be a good idea, focusing on seasonal birds (barn owls are especially active right now, for example.)
- Be active year round (including meetings and field trips in the summer months),
- The bird walk at Bonelli was my first experience with the bigger group and I didn't find it a good place to interact. There was too many people and folks were not considerate of each other during the walk.
- Meet earlier in the day

10. How would you describe your ethnic background? Please check all that apply

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| • Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx | 6.00% |
| • Asian | 2.00% |
| • Black or African-American | 0.00% |
| • White | 66.00% |
| • Native American | 0.00% |
| • Pacific Islander | 2.00% |
| • Prefer not to answer | 26.00% |

11. What is your age?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| • 25-34 | 4.00% |
| • 35-44 | 10.00% |
| • 45-54 | 12.00% |
| • 55-64 | 12.00% |
| • 65+ | 48.00% |
| • Prefer not to answer | 14.00% |

12. What is your gender?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| • Female | 54.00% |
| • Male | 32.00% |
| • Non-binary | 0.00% |
| • Prefer not to answer | 14.00% |

13. Are there any additional comments you'd like to make?

- This is a wonderful organization
- I think our Country should Stop trying to rewrite History.
- History happens learn from it don't try and change it. Give credit to where credit is due don't bury accomplishments
- I've just published a book with my Mayan comadre about her knowledge of birds--of their sacred functions as messengers to different deities. The book draws parallels between Maruch's knowledge and what we know of that of the more ancient Maya, and meso-american beliefs in general. It also discusses her observations of birds, birds in local folklore, and specific family events that were influenced by bird messages. You might like to hear more about the book at a meeting. It's published by University of New Mexico Press and available on Amazon and B and Nobel. (Diane Rus, former public school teacher, Claremont USD)
- Honor the work James John Audubon did in making the birds of America known to all, and stop fussing about being politically correct.
- Even George Washington had slaves. It was what they did. Now we need to work on ourselves, reaching out to all as our neighbors and friends, and become color-blind.
- I seem to not attend Audubon mtgs nor events, just don't puss myself out the door enough— will try to remedy that issue for 2023!
- I appreciate that the chapter is engaging on this important topic. I believe that the question should be more along the lines of when and how are we going to change the name. Not "if" we

are going to change the name. John James Audubon was a racist, slave owning, painter who enjoyed painting birds in un natural positions. The accomplishments of the organization shouldn't be tarnished by that fact. The work of the conservation movement as a whole has accomplished great things in the past 100 years. If that same movement wishes to have any significant victories in the next 100 years, they'll need to attract everyone, not just birdwatchers that are okay with an organization being named after a racist. I believe if the organization chooses to keep the "Audubon" name, they will soon become irrelevant. Unfortunately, NAS is suffering because of their decision to keep the name with a mass exodus of key leaders and staff.

- I'm happy to see that the PVAS board is having these conversations!
- I think many of those who oppose eliminating "Audubon" from the name claim that changes like these are "erasing history", but Audubon's name will always be part of the history of ornithology and any formal ornithology textbooks/classes, even if all birding clubs eliminate the name.
- I think the issue of changing a name is also a matter of accessibility. For example, someone who has never heard of Audubon will probably not understand that PVAS is related to birds and might not pay attention to/dismiss advertising of the club. I think that using something like "Pomona Valley Birding Club" is more explicit about the purpose of PVAS and it also sounds more inviting (aka doesn't require knowledge of someone who was alive in the 1800s but instead focuses on the birds).
- I feel quite strongly that the name Audubon is a recognized "brand" and the general public does NOT associate the name with John James Audubon's ethical or societal mores. I agree that National made a good decision to keep Audubon in the name. Removing Audubon from the PVAS group name will dilute the link between our local organization and the National Audubon Society ...perhaps severing the tie, in the public eye, entirely.
- PVAS is a wonderful organization and I feel that most people don't know about the controversy regarding the Audubon name. They associate the name with birding and the name has merit with the general non birding community. The name gives us credibility and with it the general public is more likely to listen to our message than without it.
- I appreciate your seeking our input on this matter.
- Keep up the great work and retain Audubon in the name.
- Jean Jacques Audubon was instrumental, eventually, in recognizing the plight of birds. While he was a slave holder, he was most probably a "quarteron" descendent of slaves as well. Lucy Audubon mentored Geo. Bird Grinnell to establish the Audubon Society (although some members in our club don't admit that-but apparently this is a fact). So, the name "Audubon" at once acknowledges our country's despicable history of racial injustices and the importance a woman, Lucy Audubon, played in inspiring the establishment of our organization. It's a mixed bag but the retention of the name keeps the conversation about the good, bad, and ugly of our country's history alive.
- I love birding, and bought and shared Christian Cooper's book with friends and family. Recently (I'm white) I was walking in the Botanic Garden with binoculars and a Black man told me where he'd seen a red-tailed hawk close to where we were. He was right and I got a great photo of that hawk. Some months ago I was part of a group with binoculars walking along a neighborhood street and another Black man stopped his car to ask us "Do you know that there's an owl's nest in such-and-such nearby park?" and he told us where to stand to see it. We didn't see an owl, but I went back that night and there he or she was, majestically sitting on a branch visible from where he'd said. I'm hoping that the name change and the reason for it will make organizations

like ours more inclusive - and thus make the planet more hospitable to birds and trees and flowers and oxygen and life.

- I do hope to become more active. Thank you for the emails and newsletter. I think I'll make this my NY's resolution.
- Excited to be a part of PVAS, looking forward to the meetings set up with great presenters and topics.
- Birding is for everyone. If one person feels excluded or uncomfortable, that is unacceptable.