

February 2015

Birders Thank Village Green

Since birder Don Sterba's discovery in December of a Worm-eating Warbler at the Village Green, birders have been flocking here to catch a glimpse of the bird, usually found east of the Rocky Mountains. Several have written notes of gratitude for being able to visit the Green, including Dick Barth, a West Hollywood resident and longtime Village Green birder. "We very much appreciate being able to bird your beautiful Village Green property... quite a special place," he wrote. "I believe the species list for the grounds is now up to 123." Following is a January update from Don and several recent thank-you notes from visiting birders.



A Worm-eating Warbler at Village Green on Dec. 28.
Photo by Don Sterba.

Birder Don Sterba – January Update

There should be fewer strange birders roaming around the Worm-eating Warbler area now, but there is still quite a bit of interest in this rarity that has attracted ardent birders from the San Francisco Bay area and points even farther away. I intend to still look for it fairly often in order to determine how long it stays here before migrating back to its summer grounds (likely east of the Mississippi River).

Due to this concentrated coverage by excellent birders, we have added a few more species to the official list of birds seen "using" (not just flying over) The Village Green:

1. Townsend's Solitaire
2. Varied Thrush
3. Pine Siskin

(Jan. 7) - I saw the Worm-eating Warbler again this morning, at a little after 7:00 a.m., in back of unit #5396 as it picked its way through fallen leaves in search of "worms" - actually it eats caterpillars (that used to be called "worms" a long time ago).

In order to keep this bird reasonably content in its current foraging area, it would help if all the fallen leaves are left on the ground and not raked up or blown away. Ground cover such as this also helps preserve soil moisture, so less watering is required. If someone can contact the person in charge of grounds keeping, maybe you can suggest that the leaves be left as is—at least in the areas around Garage Court 6 and the residential units (front and back) on both sides of Garage Court 6.

Above is a photo I took Dec. 28 while on the annual Los Angeles Christmas Bird Count. The warbler was perched low in a hedge along the west side of the laundry room in back of unit #5396.

Here is a link to a website with more info that includes a range map for this bird:
http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Worm-eating_Warbler/id

Other Early Birder Sightings

“Just had the Worm-eating warbler at Village Green 8am 12/21 in low bushes on the backside of unit 5394.”
- Mark Scheel, Pasadena

“Refound this am by 8 birders behind unit 5400 by laundry room and garage 246. Enter at 5300 W Coliseum. Forages along planters and retreats to trees. Very skulky and shy.”
- Norm Vargas, San Gabriel

Birder Thank-you Notes

Thank you so very much for allowing us crazy birders on your property when a very rare bird occasionally turns up. We greatly appreciate your indulgence allowing us to view and study these birds. It gives us an appreciation of nature and expands our knowledge.

With appreciation and wishing you all A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

- Wanda Dameron, Canoga Park

Dear Village Green residents,

Large numbers of birders have been invading your beautiful complex searching for an unusual bird in the last month or so. We have met with a positive and welcoming

response by residents who have witnessed us wandering around staring through our binoculars. Thank you very much for putting up with our presence and for your interest in our observations. Village Green is a treasure of beauty and a rich habitat for our local and visiting avifauna.

A grateful birder,
Lynn Bossone, Culver City

Thank you very much for allowing my wife and me on your property to view the Worm-eating Warbler, a bird neither of us had ever seen. Hard to believe a laundry room could host such amazement. You have very special grounds. Thank you again.

- Lee Pace, Manhattan Beach

To the residents of Village Green,
I am writing for not only myself, but for the birding population as a whole. With a little apprehension, I arrived last week at your community just before 7:00 a.m. to get a look at your wonderful lost traveler: the Worm-eating Warbler. Every resident I came in contact with greeted me with warmth and interest, never making me feel as though I was a trespasser. In this big city of ours, it is a wonderful thing to be this gracious to total strangers. I left Village Green feeling not only fortunate that I got to see this rare bird, but filled with happiness that community still exists in Los Angeles.

Best,
Scott Logan, Sherman Oaks

My thanks to the residents of Village Green. While watching for the Worm-eating Warbler, I had the chance to talk with several residents. One turned out to be a realtor who specializes in the property that my son, an architect, has an interest in.

While I failed to see the warbler, a past visit, years ago, produced my first ever Red-eyed Vireo. What a lovely community.

- Andy Lazere, Laguna Niguel

The patience and friendliness toward bird watchers by the residents of Village Green is very appreciated. In addition to allowing bird watchers to get a glimpse of a bird that is extremely rare for this area, those residents are helping to further the collection of scientific data as bird watchers enter the observation of all of the birds they see at Village Green into a global database that can help identify important trends relating to the conditions of habitat, impacts of diseases, and impacts of climate change. As such,

residents of Village Green are indirectly participating in a very important aspect of citizen science.

- Walter Lamb, Culver City

To all Village Green residents,

Thank you all for your patience and tolerance to our "birders" intrusion on your property at all hours and days.

I truly appreciate the opportunity that was allowed for me to see this rare bird and this LA Historic Village Green.

- Grace Wong, Altadena

Hello Folks,

We very much appreciate being able to bird your beautiful Village Green property...quite a special place. I believe the species list for the grounds is now up to about 123!

Richard Barth, West Hollywood

Dear Village Green residents,

Thank you so much for allowing the birding community to enjoy your great birds. It means a lot to us.

Best regards,
Susan and Frank Gilliland, Pasadena

Dear Friends at Village Green:

I can't thank you enough for putting up with us birders. You are so lucky to live in such a verdant location right in the middle of all the chaos that is Los Angeles. The peace in your neighborhood is something to be treasured. The birds know it too, and some are residents and some are migrants and some are winter visitors, but they all find haven in your trees and bushes.

Please come out and watch the birds with us. We'd love to share the excitement with you and who knows, you might become birders yourselves.

Happy New Year—
Jean Brandt, Encino
