

LA Audubon Field Trip Program



Both sites are located within the boundaries of the Ballona Watershed. Many of the schools visit both Kenneth Hahn and Ballona, which is a great way to demonstrate how the flow of water across the land connects the two locations. We at LA Audubon believe that everybody needs time in the outdoors, and these trips encourage that idea for our younger Angelenos.

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA) is 400 acres of open space, surrounded by the city of Los Angeles. This is the perfect place to show students the importance of an “island of habitat” for animals, plants and human visitors. Our field trip attendees have the opportunity to view urban wildlife, hike scenic trails and learn about the historic habitat of coastal sage scrub, which once blanketed the region. KHSRA is found within the Baldwin Hills, and sits atop the Newport Inglewood earthquake fault. Middle School students learn about local geology at this natural laboratory, and the impact that it has on the landscape, natural resources and the development of our city. College Interns are part of our instructional staff at KHSRA. This provides young adults with hands-on work experience and a chance to explore the possibility of a career in science or education.

The Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve contains the last remaining coastal wetland within the city limits of Los Angeles. Los Angeles Audubon has been leading tours for school children at Ballona since 1991. The students spend the morning touring Ballona, and seeing for themselves the myriad habitats found within a wetland ecosystem. This includes viewing aquatic invertebrates through microscopes, strolling through sand dune and riparian habitat, and using spotting scopes along Ballona Creek to view birds, some of which are species found only in coastal wetlands.

The two programs collectively host 3500 students annually. The tours are primarily staffed by over 60 trained volunteer naturalists and college interns, allowing a multi-generational approach to teaching and learning.

Additionally, every class that participates is provided with a “Pre-site Visit” at their school from LA Audubon staff and volunteers. These presentations prepare the students for their field trip, “frontloading” them with information that helps to enrich their nature experience. Looking for wildlife on their own campus is often a part of these visits—one of our goals is to emphasize that nature is all around us, even in highly urbanized environments. Raising awareness and appreciation of the natural world is the first step to creating future stewards of the environment, and our programs strive to awaken the desire to learn more about the nature in our midst.

- Cindy Hardin
Director of Outdoor Education
(310) 301-5000