The date: 10/28/2026
The week number: 44
The walk number: 1894
The weather: 73 F; sunny
The walkers: Alan Cummings, Viveca Sapin-Areeda,
Chip O'Connor, Kevin Kan, Ellen Yu

The birds (26)

No.	First Name	Last Name	Prob
4	Western	Bluebird	0.38
1	Red-whiskered	Bulbul	0.50
51		Bushtit	0.88
4	American	Crow	0.88
16	Mourning	Dove	0.50
1	House	Finch	0.88
4	Lesser	Goldfinch	0.62
1	Cooper's	Hawk	0.25
3	Red-tailed	Hawk	0.75
2	Anna's	Hummingbird	1
3	Selasphorus	Hummingbird	0.88
4	Dark-eyed	Junco	0.88
2	Ruby-crowned	Kinglet	0.88
2	Northern	Mockingbird	0.88
3	White-breasted	Nuthatch	0
2	Black	Phoebe	1
4	Common	Raven	0.88
1	Hermit	Thrush	0.12
1	California	Towhee	0.75
1	Turkey	Vulture	0.25
1	Black-throated_Gray	Warbler	0.38
1	Orange-crowned	Warbler	0.50
4	Yellow-rumped	Warbler	1
5	Acorn	Woodpecker	1
1	Nuttall's	Woodpecker	0.38
2	Bewick's	Wren	0.62

Walk lasted between 12:00 and 14:07

It was a great walk. WE observed 26 species, 4.4 more than the prediction and just 3 short of the record for the week. But, even more interesting than the count were the "quality" of birds. We had a Hermit Thrush, three White–breasted Nuthatches, and three warblers, including a Black-throated Gray. This week I accidentally found a letter to my brother David, written in 1986, that proved that October 15, 1986 was the date of the first bird walk. I did not recall I had such proof and from time to time I have worried about whether that was really the date or not. Below I show the letter. NO longer need to worry and also apparently I haven't gotten bored with the walks!

Alan,
10/30/2026

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

GEORGE W. DOWNS LABORATORY OF PHYSICS

Mail Code 220-47

21 October 1986

Dr. W. David Cummings
USRA
American City Building
Suite 212
Columbia, MD 21045

Dear David,

The enclosed collection of our contributions to the La Jolla Cosmic Ray Conference includes three articles on our balloon experiment. I have indicated these with a check in the Table of Contents.

By the way, GRIP was finally launched from Palestine on 15 October. The flight was very successful and the crew is now packing up to bring the payload back. The experiment landed safely in a muddy field near Eudora, Arkansas the following day. I called Daddy while the package was in the air and he stepped outside and could easily see it with the naked eye (his binocs were at Dogwoodly!). Anyway, it took two 7-week ordeals but we finally did it. I had to go down for a 4-day stint when we had a problem with the mask. I didn't have time to get to Dogwoodly as the pressure of submitting the abstracts for the Moscow International Conference forced me back about a week before the flight.

On the same day that we launched I went on a noon birdwalk at Caltech with the Assistant to the Provost (one of Suzette's bosses). It was the first time I had looked for birds on the campus and I was sure this was a social interaction rather than a serious bird situation. Well, no sooner had we sat down under a tree to eat our sandwiches than I spotted a Townsend's Warbler - A NEW LIFE BIRD! Unbelievable! Buoyed by this success I was almost able to make an immature Yellow-Rumped into a Nashville Warbler but cooler heads prevailed. (There was NO question on the Townsend's, by the way) We have decided to repeat this exercise on Wednesday noons until we get bored.

Sincerely,

Alan

Alan C. Cummings