



El Tecolote

BULLETIN OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Vol. 11, No. 10
November 1973

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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Nov. 17&18 Morro Bay-Montana de Oro: Meet at Morro Bay State Park
Sat, Sun Natural History Museum parking lot at 10 am Sat.
Allow 2 hrs driving time from Santa Barbara. Camp at the
park or make your own motel reservations. There is a
Motel 6 at 298 Atascadero Rd., Morro Bay (805 772-8881).
Take lunch for two days. Spotting scopes are helpful in
observing the great numbers of shorebirds and wildfowl;
if possible bring one along. Call leaders if you plan
to go. Suggested driver donation: \$4.00.
NOTE: in this and in all such trips the optimum number
of persons per car is 4.

Leaders: June & Bill Gardner
962-0152

Nov. 20 Sandyland Slough: Meet at Santa Claus Lane near Carpin-
Tues. teria at 8:30 am. Observe marsh birds, shorebirds until
around 11:30 am.

Leader: Les Cook, 963-4501

Nov. 23,24 Notice: Los Banos Wildlife Refuge proposed field trip
25 has been cancelled; Instead see Carrizo Plain, trip below.

Nov. 27 Board Meeting: Natural History Museum, Jr. Library,
Tues. 7:30 pm. Members always welcome.

Dec. 1&2 Carrizo Plain: Ancestral wintering grounds of the Sand-
Sat, Sun hill Cranes. Excellent area for seeing eagles, hawks, and
falcons, as well as coyotes and bobcat (one was seen last
year). We are going to repeat the highly successful format
of last winter's trip. Don Coulter, the driver who was so
helpful last year, will again transport the group in the
charter bus. The fare will be \$11.00---excluding rooms---
per person for a minimum of 30 passengers. Please make
checks payable to Santa Barbara Audubon Society and mail
them to Bill Gielow, 3043 Hermosa Rd. S.B. 93105 by Nov.
20. We have deposited \$100 to hold 18 rooms at the Calif-
ornia Valley Lodge. Room rates vary from \$8.40 for a
single to \$16.80 for a room for 4 persons.

IMPORTANT: You can pay for your room at the lodge but we must
know how many are going so that unfilled rooms can be released
for complete deposit refund. Call Bill Gielow at 687-3466 by

Nov. 19 if you plan to go. The bus will leave the Museum of Natural History at 7:30 am. and, for Ojai-Ventura area passengers, from the shopping center at the intersection of 150 and 33 in Ojai at 8:30 am. Take lunch for two days.

Leader: Waldo Abbott, 962-1308
Arrangements: Bill Gielow, 687-3466

- Dec. 7 November-December Meeting: This will be our annual "Members
Fri Slide Night." Anyone with slides they would like to share
 with us should contact Brad Schram (968-6255) by Dec. 1.
- Dec 15 Santa Barbara Christmas Count: Sey Kinsell, organizer.
Sat
- Dec. 28 Sespe Count: Mike Goodwin, organizer.
Fri.
- Jan. 13 Lake Cachuma-Paradise Canyon: Meet at Paradise County Park
Sun on Paradise Rd. (on the right about 2 miles north of San
 Marcos Pass on Hwy 154) for consolidation of car passengers.
 (Prior arrangements to attain the 4-persons-per-car optimum
 are encouraged).

Leader to be announced.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

McGrath State Park--On Oct. 10, twelve Audubon members from the San Fernando Valley Society, Ojai, Camarillo, Ventura & S.B. enjoyed an excellent day of birding in the McGrath State Park area in Ventura. A total of 69 species were sighted with black turnstones, parasitic jaeger, northern phalaropes & pectoral sandpipers highlighting the outing. An excellent warm morning was followed by lunch in the park.
(Virginia Puddicombe)

Imperial Beach/Tiajuana River Valley/Silverwood Sanctuary--
Two cars with 6 eager individuals arrived in Imperial Beach Friday evening. Foggy weather darkened the sky both Sat. & Sun. morning. Bird activity was at a minimum but as the morning sun broke through, birds were observed--first special was the Tropical Kingbird with Savannah Sparrows, 2 Sage Thrashers perched on top of bushes beside the road as a family of Guinea Hens scurried across the field. On a wire above sat a Sage Sparrow. Marsh Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks and a Kite in the distance were seen but no Bobolinks. The highlight of the trip was the 2 Golden Eagles perched on top of poles, shifting from pole to pole. The one Black Brant on the San Diego River floodway was a beauty. At the San Elijo Lagoon about 50 Snowy Egrets flew from shore to a small island. What a sight!

Mr. Gander, the naturalist at Silverwood Sanctuary welcomed us early Monday morning. It was cloudy but the beauty of the area with its trails through chaparral and rocks house many varieties of birds and animals.

We wish to thank Mr. Gander and the San Diego Audubon Society for their hospitality.

(Toni Sollen)

Botanic Gardens, Oct. 25-- Dr. Mary Erickson, professor emeritus from UCSB's Biological Sciences Department, led a small group among the native flora at the Botanic Gardens. Twenty species, including Hermit thrushes and Hutton's vireo, were sighted. Additionally, a Merriam chipmunk and tree frogs were seen.

San Roque Canyon, Oct. 31--Thirteen members and guests enjoyed a clear sunny morning hike up the canyon along the creek (still running) among sycamores, oaks, and willows. The abundance of seeds and berries attracts large numbers of birds in the fall and winter. The path provides several points for observing birds bathing and preening. The usual canyon residents were very cooperative, allowing careful observation of their markings and behavior. We spotted a hermit thrush, common snipe, Townsend's warbler, sharp-shinned hawk, and a Virginia rail which rewarded our quiet approach with a long clear viewing. A total of 34 species were seen.

(Bill Gielow)

Birding in England-- On Sunday, Aug 19, about 30 members of the Shropshire Ornithological Society, plus 2 guests from SBAS (Hobey Holbrook & Joy Parkinson), met near Allscott, Shropshire to bird the sugar beet factory settling ponds, wonderful spots for waterfowl and waders. There were botanists and entomologists along so we learned a few plants, butterflies etc., as well as birds.

The ponds were rich in birds--a multitude of Black-headed gulls, ducks and the ubiquitous coots. On the mud flats were dozens, possibly hundreds, of snipe. Waders ran hither and thither. It was exciting.

An incomplete list of birds included: Mallard, teal, wigeon, Tufted duck, pochard, kestrel, moorhen, coot, lapwing, ringed plover, little ringed plover, snipe, black-tailed godwit, green sandpiper, common sandpiper, redshank, spotted redshank, greenshank, Herring gull, black-headed gull, wood pigeon, collared turtle dove, swallow, house martin, carrion crow, blackbird, pied wagtail, yellow wagtail, starling, bullfinch, and house sparrow.

After Hobey left for further adventures it was my pleasure to be entertained by Julian and Angela Langford. I joined them and several other members of the Shropshire Ornithological Society on their bird ringing (banding) expeditions. Both are licensed bird ringers. Julian has banded over 50,000 birds in the past 17 years.

My three evenings with them were the high points of my trip to England. It was wonderful to help set up the mist nets over the pond, and even more wonderful when the first bird caught on the first evening was a Ruff (actually a female, called a Reeve) which was a life bird for me. What a way to examine birds!

On the second evening we went out for curlews. Altogether 8 were caught, one of which Julian had ringed in 1969. The third evening we went for warblers, very exciting for me. Most of the birds trapped were already ringed. Reed warblers, whitethroat, dunnock, and yellowhammer were caught. Life birds for me were chiffchaff, blackcap, and a winter wren.

(Joy Parkinson)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Board of Directors, at its October meeting, passed the following:

1) \$50.00 to the Committee for Santa Barbara to help cover expenses in presenting material for alternate plans for the East Beach area. American Communities and Hyatt House withdrew their plans. We will continue to work with this committee for better planning of this area.

2) Pledged \$400.00 to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in Bolinas, CA; \$200 now and \$200 next year. Funds from grants they received 3 years ago were not renewed. Members who have visited this interesting and significant organization may wish to send individual contributions. For more information, see below.

3) Selected Bill & Linda Gielow as our scholarship recipients to the Audubon Camp of the West in Wyoming for next year.

The 90 minute bird song cassette is now available in the library.

We would like to thank our former editor, Lou Dartanner, for coming to our rescue last year with the Sept. bulletin. Fifi Webster generously volunteered to take the editorship but appealed for help. Lou has done a wonderful job. The board and I appreciate your contribution to the society Lou and we will keep in touch with you.

The new editor is John Arnold.

Our mailing committee will assemble the bulletin on the second Thursday morning rather than the second Friday. We hope this change will speed up postal delivery. Please let us know when you get your bulletin.

Roderick Nash's program on the Wild Rivers was an excellent presentation. The comparisons made between the rivers was most interesting. We must continue to keep our rivers wild and natural-- not only for river running, which I hope will be in smaller numbers, but to keep the natural forces of nature unleashed. Our thanks to Rod & Sandy Nash.

We would like member participation at the following open hearings:

Tues., Nov. 13- Community Forum on Congressional Oil Hearings and the S.B. County Oil Ordinance. Cabrillo Youth Center, 8-10 pm.

Sat. Nov. 17- Congressional Oil Hearings, Patsy Mink Chairperson. Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 8 am-1pm.

Tomi Sollen

EXCERPTS FROM SBAS STATEMENT TO OIL HEARING PANEL

Audubon members come from every walk of life. Some are businessmen. Some are housewives. Some are retired.... In every respect we consider ourselves qualified to address the problems at hand. In speaking of the Audubon membership it should be said that it is not anti-oil company.

We remember the well-meant statements and claims by employees of oil companies. They asked us to trust them and to have faith in their technological expertise.... We got the big spill of 1969 and in addition day-by-day pollution so at this very minute our beaches are not fit to walk on.

Again we are asked to have faith in the experts and on top of that we are told that these experts are not just employees of a corporation doing a job of making profits for themselves...but they are conservationists at heart and in practice. We do not doubt their sincerity, but we must perforce take a different viewpoint.

...we agree with the statement...that the "government should carefully weigh the known perils and esthetic blight of drilling against the more attractive possibility of tapping known federal oil reserves in safer inshore areas".

(Robert E. Kasson, Conservation co-chairman)

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Wintering water and shore birds are arriving in their usual numbers, but there is a noticeable shortage of migrating land birds along the coast. It may be that for some reason they have come south via the mountains or inland valleys.

On previous 2½ day trips to the Tiajuana River Valley the average number of land species seen has been 79. On this years 3½ day trip only 53 land species were seen.

One or two Arctic and Red-throated Loons were in or near the S.B. Harbor Sept. 9 to Oct. 12.

The 2 immature Roseate Spoonbills remained at the Goleta or Devereux Sloughs from July 30 to Sept. 14. During this time they changed color from almost white to a pale pink.

One Fulvous Tree Duck was on Tecolotito Creek at Hollister Ave. on Oct 3, but got away before a second confirming sighting.

A Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, and an Osprey were at Lake Cachuma Oct. 14.

Solitary Sandpiper on Tecolotito Creek Sept. 14.

Pectoral Sandpipers at Goleta Sept. 27 & Oct. 15.

Parasitic Jaegers at Ventura Sept. 15 and at Goleta Oct. 3 & 20.

Black Tern on UCSB lagoon Sept. 20.

A Pigeon Guillemot at the S.B. Harbor from Sept. 8-20, when it was found dead on the sandspit.

A Common Murre, well-oiled and dying was picked up in the north shore of the Bird Refuge Sept. 27.

Tropical Kingbird, Goleta, Oct. 27.

Black and White Warbler, Goleta Slough Sept. 19.

Virginia's Warbler at Storke Rd., Goleta Sept. 5-13 & on Ben Lomond Dr. Oct. 8.

Northern Waterthrush, Rocky Nook Park, Aug. 16.

Ovenbird, Botanic Garden Sept. 6 & Oct. 19.

Prarie Warbler, Storke Rd. Oct. 13.

Orchard Oriole in the Mesa, Oct. 8.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, male, on the Mesa, Oct. 5-6.

Summer Tanager, female, Storke Rd., Oct. 9.

Palm Warbler, Storke Rd. Oct. 20.

Blackpoll Warbler, Goleta, Oct. 3, 9.

NEW NAMES FOR BIRDS

The long-awaited report of the A.O.U. Check-list Committee has announced a number of changes in the classification and names of birds. For the benefit of those members who do not subscribe to

American Birds, here are the changes that affect birds that have been seen in this region:

Pale-footed Shearwater becomes FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER
Slender-billed Shearwater becomes SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER
Leach's Petrel becomes LEACH'S STORM-PETREL
Common Egret becomes GREAT EGRET
Wood Ibis becomes WOOD STORK
Blue Goose is now "morph" of SNOW GOOSE
Widgeon now spelled WIGEON
Shoveler now becomes NORTHERN SHOVELLER
Pigeon Hawk becomes MERLIN
Sparrow Hawk becomes KESTREL
Knot becomes RED KNOT
Red-shafted, Yellow-shafted and Gilded Flickers are now races of a single species, the COMMON FLICKER
Catbird becomes GRAY CATBIRD
Audubon's & Myrtle Warblers now races of a single species, the YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER
Parula Warbler becomes NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER
Bullock's & Baltimore Orioles now considered races of one species, the NORTHERN ORIOLE
Slate-colored and Oregon Juncos are races of one species, the DARK-EYED JUNCO.

If you have seen all the birds mentioned above, your Life & North American lists have been reduced by six.
(Nelson Metcalf)

REMINDER

Any sightings of rare birds or birds that are out of season in the Santa Barbara area, should be reported to Jewel Kirger, 969-4192, so she can put it on the Rare Bird Alert.

We are saddened to announce that Marguerite Fenzi, a devoted Audubon member who loved Santa Barbara, passed away October 14, 1973.

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY

As Tomi wrote earlier in this bulletin, the PRBO desperately needs funds to continue to carry out their valuable contribution to American conservation and ornithology. The Observatory can show solid accomplishments in a number of ways, one of which is the restoration of the populations of the Farallones, the largest breeding seabird colony in the continental United States.

If you wish to contribute, send your tax-deductible gift to:

Point Reyes Bird Observatory
Mesa Road
Bolinas, CA 94924

FCWLPOX IN HOUSE FINCHES

Dr. Dennis Power and Gerrie Human are studying house finches affected with fowlpox, which appears as a growth where feathers are not present. To date about 50 cases have been reported.

Of interest to the researchers is the following: Sex of bird, location of bird and date seen, location of pox. Additionally, any other pertinent information would be appreciated. Records from January 1973 would be helpful. Write to Gerrie Human, PO Box 287, Summerland, CA 93067.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Santa Barbara

Goleta

Ms. Joan Bower, Marc Kummel,
Col. & Mrs. Camden McConnell,
Allen Reitz

Susan R. Halliday, James B.
Robertson

New members who sent their dues to the National Audubon Society do not despair. We will be notified in 3 months or so. Our membership as of October 16, 1973 totals 753. Have you told a friend about the Santa Barbara Audubon Society?

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DEPARTMENT OF QUOTES WITHOUT COMMENT

Boston--"In the past 50 years whalers have killed 2 million whales. In 1962 alone, 67,000 were killed." SB News-Press

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CHRISTMAS COUNT

So far about 25 of our members have volunteered for the Christmas count which will be Saturday December 15.

This is your opportunity to tromp around the tules, clomp over the creeks and roam over the meadows in search of our winter visitors, migrants, and who knows what else.

You are guaranteed to have a good time and we need your help, amateur or professional, to contribute to the success of our previous years. Call or write to Sey Kinsell, 687-3308.

Note: After this year's count we will gather at the Museum of Natural History for a social period, including coffee, tea and cookies, at 7:30 pm. Rally time will be 8 pm.

SESPE COUNT

The Sespe count will be Friday Dec. 28. The Friday date was chosen to get the help of rangers on this count. To volunteer and for a great time, contact Mike Goodwin, leader, at 963-1265.

C.S. Kinsell, M.D. 687-3308
3308 Calle Fresno
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Please mail this no later than
December 1. Write small
but think big.

I want to help make this count one of the best ever!

DATE

FROM

ADDRESS

Preferred area

Membership Information: New members, send application and check made out to National Audubon Society to membership chairperson, Mrs. Maxim Smith, 1600 Garden St., Apt. 35, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Change of address: send to above. Non-member subscription to El Tecolote: send \$1 per year to above address.

El Tecolote: Deadline for next issue: Friday, January 4, 1974. Mail or bring to: John Arnold, 431 Elwood Beach Dr., Apt. 1, Goleta, CA 93017.

Editor's Note: If anyone has a typewriter he or she is not using and you want to sell it (cheep cheep) please contact me.

John Arnold

"Birds generally wear the russet dress of nature at this season. They have their fall no less than the plants; the bright tints depart from their foliage or feathers, and they flit past like withered leaves in rustling flocks," Thoreau
November-1853

EL TECOLOTE
SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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ARE ESTUARIES REALLY NECESSARY?

What are estuaries? Estuaries are, for all practical purposes, bays where rivers meet the sea -- where fresh water and nutrients coming down from the land are mixed by the tides with salt water from the ocean, producing a constantly changing environment of great biological productivity and immense economic value. Often included are certain productive bays with little or no river flow, but which otherwise have the biological characteristics of true estuaries, such as Newport Bay in Orange County.

Where are California's estuaries? The world over, estuaries account for only a fraction of a percent of the ocean's total area. And while there are some large estuaries on the East Coast, such as Chesapeake Bay with over 4300 square miles of surface area, there are actually very few estuaries on our West Coast, and these are all very small. The largest California estuary is San Francisco Bay, which now is only 400 square miles. Much more typical are estuaries the size of Morro Bay, only 3 square miles, and the tiny coastal lagoons of Orange and San Diego Counties, most less than one square mile. In all, California's estuaries add up to only 660 square miles, with only 50 square miles in Southern California -- just 25% of that which existed here in 1900.

Why are estuaries so important? We all recognize the role of estuaries as harbors, with their commercial and industrial developments. But estuaries are vitally important to the world's oceanic fisheries. Fully 2/3 of the world's fisheries, currently about 70 million tons a year, are dependent upon estuaries. Many food organisms live their entire lives in estuaries -- clams, oysters, scallops, bay shrimp, striped bass, shad, and many others. But even more organisms use the estuary as a NURSERY GROUND -- the adults of Gulf prawns, Dungeness and blue crabs, herring, menhaden, halibut, flounder, sand bass, and others migrate into estuaries to lay their eggs. Juveniles grow rapidly in this rich, nutritious environment. Salmon migrate through the estuaries between the ocean and the fresh-water streams where they breed. In 1963, well over a billion pounds of estuarine-dependent fish and shellfish were taken in California waters, with a value then of over \$100 million. With proper management, these figures could be greatly increased.

Why are estuaries so productive? On land, plant growth is usually "limited" by the availability of water. But in fresh water and the ocean, plant growth is limited by the availability of certain nutrients, needed in trace amounts. Rivers bring these nutrients down to estuaries where, due to the constant ebb and flow of the tides, they are mixed and rapidly recycled. Estuaries are NUTRIENT TRAPS, constantly fertilized through river flow and tidal action. Scientists have measured the rate at which green plants grow in estuaries, and have found that estuaries are among the most productive regions on Earth, perhaps equalled only by tropical sugar-cane fields, and 5 times as productive as a Nebraska wheat field. Since all animal life is dependent upon green plants, which in turn derive their energy from sunlight, the incredibly high green plant productivity in estuaries can support a rich population of animals, many of which are of great value to man.

How do estuaries "work"? In most aquatic habitats, the important green plants are tiny, floating, single-celled phytoplankton. But because of the high turbidity of estuaries, sunlight does not penetrate deeply, and the phytoplankton are not abundant. Rather, the most productive plants in estuaries are the eelgrasses rooted in the tidal channels and the varied and often beautiful salt marsh plants in the higher wetlands, covered (and fertilized!) at least once a day by the high tides. Surprisingly, there are no

important grazing animals that eat living eelgrass and other salt marsh plants. Instead, the above-ground parts of these plants die and decay. The bacterial action that breaks down this dead plant material into very small particles takes place in the vast expanses of tidal mud flats. Both the bacteria and the plant breakdown products, called ORGANIC DETRITUS, are fed upon by the myriad worms, mud-shrimps, and other creatures that live in the tidal flats. Clams and oysters filter this material out of the water above the mud flats stirred by the tides. A great variety of fish, crabs, and birds feed on these mudflat worms and shrimps, and larger carnivorous fish such as salmon and striped bass feed on the smaller fish and shellfish. All the food organisms that man takes from estuaries are dependent upon the integrity of the salt marsh-eelgrass-mudflat system, known as the DETRITUS FOOD CHAIN. Disruption of the detritus food chain will diminish all fisheries dependent upon estuaries.

How does
man affect
estuaries?

Throughout history, estuaries have been convenient disposal sites for domestic and industrial wastes; many estuaries have been extensively altered to benefit shipping and industry. DOMESTIC WASTE disposal can result in a reduction of the oxygen concentration in the water, causing fish kills. Migration of salmon up the San Joaquin River is now blocked by low oxygen levels in the Delta at Stockton. Contamination of estuaries by inadequately-treated sewage containing microbes for cholera, hepatitis, and salmonella food poisoning means that large areas of many estuaries can no longer be used for cultivation of clams and oysters. INDUSTRIAL WASTE disposal may also lower oxygen levels in the water, as has until recently been the case in Los Angeles Harbor. Industrial wastes may be directly toxic to estuarine life, and to humans as well: 42 people are known to have died from eating shellfish contaminated by mercury from a plastics plant at Minamata, Japan. Construction of DAMS, and DIVERSION OF RIVER WATER away from estuaries will often alter the sediment-nutrient balance in estuaries to the detriment of fisheries, and will surely cause greater upstream penetration of salt water. The Suisun Marshes of San Francisco Bay, famous for winter concentrations of ducks and other migrating waterfowl, will be destroyed as bird feeding grounds by the increasing salinity of the water as Sacramento River water is increasingly diverted into the State Water Project. AGRICULTURAL WASTE disposal adds pesticides to the estuarine life system - it may well be that the complete loss of the market crab fishery in San Francisco Bay has been caused by pesticides from the Central Valley. Most seriously, DREDGE-AND-FILL operations to deepen ship channels and provide industrial sites and apartment projects at the water's edge totally destroy the very basis of the detritus food chain, converting productive salt marshes and tidal flats into biologically sterile channels and concrete walls. Pollutational inputs can be stopped and water quality will be restored. But once wetlands and tidal flats are destroyed, they can be regained only at great expense.

What is the
future of our
estuaries?

Over the past century Californians have destroyed many of our valuable, productive estuaries, and suffered the loss of important estuarine fisheries and wildlife. Of 28 estuaries originally in Southern California, none remains biologically intact, 3 have been totally destroyed, and 10 altered drastically. Dredge-and-fill plans have been prepared for most of the remaining 15, leading inevitably to their biological destruction. The future of all our estuaries, and thus of many of our important fisheries, remains bleak -- unless we recognize the basis of estuarine productivity -- the detritus food chain -- and take immediate steps to preserve tidal flats and salt marshes.

Larry C. Oglesby, Ph.D., Vice-President
Pomona Valley Audubon Society
September 1973