

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Mission La Purisima-Vandenberg: Two trips to La Purisima Mission and Vandenberg were held, March 16 and 23, under the capable leadership of Russ Spowart. Twelve birders attended each outing. Highlights on the first trip included a Red-shouldered Hawk on a nest near the mission, Lawrence's Goldfinches, white-throated swifts, violet-green swallows, two Hermit Thrushes, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. There were many waxwings and robins. VAFB was very windy but 41 species were seen including beautiful views of a pair of Marsh Hawks, White-tailed Kites, Buffelhead, Red-breasted Mergansers, Dunlin, and the usual waterfowl. Kent Mayell saw 1 Ruddy Turnstone, and the following week six were seen. The Long-billed Marsh Wren was heard by many but seen by few.

Fifty-nine species were seen on the second trip including many Horned Grebes, Yellow-billed Magpies, and 1 Black Brant.

We enjoyed the wildflowers as much as the birds.

Gerrie Human

Big Sycamore Canyon: About 17 birders gathered for the April 12th field trip in the Big Sycamore Canyon area of Point Mugu State Park. A beautiful day produced at least 46 species of birds. Four species of wrens were identified: Bewick's, House, Rock and Canyon, including an active Bewick's nest hole below eye level. An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen preening and exposing his lovely orange crown so seldom seen.

The expected Northern and Hooded Orioles seemed to be establishing their territories with but few females in evidence. Both Cassin's and Western Kingbirds were sighted. No waterfowl or shore birds are included in this count.

Ruth Parker

Refugio Pass-Nojocui Park: A cold wind, sunshine, lush fields of green, and 58 species were the fare for 22 birders on this trip, April 26th. An enjoyable picnic at Nojocui Park ended the trip.

Bill and June Gardner, Tomi Sollen

Southeast Arizona: Spent a fabulous week in the wilds of Patagonia, Arizona, some 50 miles SW of Tucson and on my own managed to see 30 new species for my life list. Included were the Black, Gray, and Zone-tailed Hawks; American and Painted Redstarts; Cardinals, Pyrrhuloxias, Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, Hepatic, Western and Summer Tanagers, Red-faced Warblers and the Bridled Titmouse.

The highlight of our trip was a visit to Mile-Hi at Ramsey Canyon, where in addition to sighting nine new species of hummingbirds, we saw a Lichtenstein Oriole--considered a rare visitor in the area. I would certainly recommend that all birders visit this area.

Minna Smith

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BIRD REFUGE NEWS

The Park Department has begun work on the Master Plan for the Bird Refuge. The \$35,000 allocated by the City Council will be used to provide many long-needed improvements, originally suggested by the Audubon Society. There will be a paved parking lot. An irrigation system will be installed for new planting along the north shore, and for shrubbery to screen the railroad. Paths will be constructed in this natural area with benches placed at appropriate viewing points. As a suggestion to the Park

Dept. we are preparing a planting list which will provide both food and shelter for birds.

No funds are available to employ equipment for de-utrification which have been used with good results in other parts of the world. However, last spring the water was successfully sprayed with a new non-toxic chemical which did reduce the algae. No harm was caused to either the fish or the birds.

Dorothy Martone
Bird Refuge Chairwoman

HATHAWAY? NO WAY!

Speaking by invitation at the first round of Senate hearings on the nomination of Stanley K. Hathaway to be the new Secretary of the Interior, Charles Callison, Executive Vice President of the National Audubon Society, said the Society was "gravely apprehensive about Hathaway's capacity and purpose to faithfully execute the laws and programs for which he as the Secretary of the Interior would be responsible." The hearings were held by the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

"We fear that because of his record of public acts and utterances he would never command the confidence of the public, or of the Congress, or of the thousands of Department employees who must look to their Secretary for inspiration and leadership," said Callison. He raised the question of whether Hathaway would continue to pursue "hasty development of energy resources, seeking to circumvent environmental restraints," and asserted that Hathaway's "active and public utterances concerning laws and regulations to protect wildlife have been such to encourage a flouting of such laws."

The message is clear: Hathaway has no place in the Interior Department. Write to your Senators urging them to vote against his nomination as Secretary of the Interior.

ROSS'S GULL

(Editor's Note: Rich Miller is now living in Massachusetts. He was an early president of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society and he is still keenly interested in what is happening in our part of the world. He sent me the following letter about THE GULL which caused such turmoil among the birding world.)

Enclosed are a number of clippings on the Ross's Gull, and I hope that I'm able to report that I am the only member to have seen it! On a 20 degree day, clear, strong NW wind, after about 3 hours of waiting, freezing, pacing looking and eating, with about 300 others, on March 9th, I finally saw it. This was the BIG WEEKEND, Roger Tory Peterson having been there the previous week for his 668th North American bird--me for my 358th--pretty skimpy indeed. It was a great sight of a lifetime, you can be sure.

My warmest greetings and affectionate best wishes to all in SB and environs... keep up the good birding and hope you, or shall I say we, can continue the numbers of new members and new birds; 66 and 67 were high points in the Christmas Count, and in 64 (or 65?) we had our highest count in the Goleta area, John Hildebrand and I.

Rich Miller

SIERRA COURSES by PRBO

The Point Reyes Bird Observatory will lead three courses into and across the Sierra's. The first course is a Transect of California, a 6-day camping trip across California to observe birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies and plants. Last year's transect turned up 62 bird nests, photographer's gold.

The second course "east of the Sierra" will explore a beautiful part of California at the height of spring, including the fascination of the ancient Bristlecone Pine, the beauty of perennial wildflowers in high meadows, and the soothing quiet of lakes and trees above 10,000 feet.

The third course, "Stanislaus River--Flow of Life", will explore a major California river running through many habitats each with its own season.

Transect of California: 21-27 June, \$200

East of the Sierra: 12-18 July, \$80

Stanislaus River--Flow of Life: 26-31 July, \$80

For further information or enrollment write Meryl Stewart, Box 442, Bolinas, California 94924.



EXXON PROCESSING PLANT--LAS FLORES CANYON: VOTE MAY 27, TUESDAY

An oil and gas processing plant of the type proposed under this rezoning for Las Flores Canyon is designed to separate the mixture that emerges from the drilling; the components of which are oil, saltwater, and natural gas. It will also remove other by-products from the mixture including sulphur compounds and hydrogen sulfide gas. This project will also require more undersea pipelines, new drilling platforms, new oil drilling and increased tanker traffic.

PIPELINE--It would be over 7 miles of fragile pipe in a seismic, active area. This would carry all the oil produced from the platform to the oil and gas processing plant in Las Flores Canyon and back to a tanker loading bouy. This pipeline would be vulnerable to earth and mudslides, earthquakes, leaks, and major breaks. Eighty-four (84) percent of leaks from platforms come from the pipeline serving them or the drillhole. The safety monitoring system on the pipeline is activated by a decrease in the volume of oil coming through the pipeline but cannot detect leaks smaller than 500 barrels per day.

THE PLATFORM--If it is built, it will be the tallest oil drilling and production platform in the world. Because of its depth the platform is experimental in nature; it will be hard to detect and stop leaks. Exxon has still not completed its undersea geologic surveys.

SULPHUR DIOXIDE--is a toxic gas composed of sulphur and oxygen. It would be emitted at the rate of over 70 tons per year. This would be located approximately 12 miles west of the Goleta Valley. Sulphur dioxide is highly irritating in small quantities and poisonous in larger amounts. When combined with moisture in the air, it produces sulphuric acid which can then form an "acid rain" which is very harmful to animals and humans and crops. It increases the corrosion of metal, paint, and rubber.

The proposed plant would produce: 9,692 tons of SO₂ per year uncontrolled. At an efficiency rate of 99%, the plant would still produce over 70 tons per year, which is equivalent to increasing Santa Barbara's automobile traffic on the South Coast by 40-50 percent.

LAS FLORES--SOME MORE FACTS

Miles of Pipeline:	Over 7	Danger to Marine Environment	Highest (84% of all spills come from pipeline)
Oil Tankers/Barge Trips per Year	150-200		
Rate of Offshore Oil Development	Rapid	Loss of Agricultural Land	1,500 acres converted from agricultural/open space to oil manufacturing
Air Pollution	Over 70 tons (SO ₂)		
Conservation of Resources	None--Oil and Gas Depleted as fast as possible	Distance of Tanker loading from shore and State Beach Parks	3/4 to 1 mile
Fire Hazard	Located in high fire hazard area	Truck trips/year of hazardous materials through South Coast	2,080 explosive gases 208 molten sulfur
Ongoing Recreational Impact	High--Oil tankers and barges, pipelines and air pollution would heavily impact El Capitan and Refugio and South Coast Beaches		

PROPOSITION A--AN EDITORIAL

It is my firm belief that as an environmentalist I have not only the right but also the responsibility to work to prevent what appears to me to be environmentally destructive and irresponsible proposals. Such is the case with the Las Flores Canyon oil processing plant proposed by the Exxon Corporation and approved by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on February 10, 1975.

The Las Flores plant should not be approved and as responsible voters of Santa Barbara County, Audubon Society members can and should do all in their power to prevent the passage of Proposition A.

Currently we are being inundated with pro Exxon material purporting to show the benefits of an Inland plant site. The question is not one of Inland versus Offshore, regardless of what some members of the seemingly knowledgeable Board of Supervisors would have you believe. Read the proposition. It asks, once you decipher it, shall County Ordinance Number 2686 become effective?

If you vote no on A you are not voting yes to an offshore plant. It is not an automatic, nonpreventable alternative to the Inland plant. In the first place, the Federal Deep Water Port Act of 1974, which gives veto power to the governors of adjacent states affected by offshore oil production in Federal waters, appears to give Governor Brown the option of prohibiting the offshore plant. Exxon would have you believe that such is not the case. However, Assemblyman Gary Hart has received information from the State Attorney General's Office that supports the contention that Governor Brown does have veto power, this decision coming after an exhaustive four days of research into the question. Certainly the offshore facility will be contested in court.

Also, court action is certain to ensue based on the contention that the EIR for the offshore facility is not adequate. Therefore, automatic construction of an offshore facility is not assured.

I also contend that a National Energy Policy should be developed and until such a policy is established the rapid depletion of our finite resources should cease. Once the policy is developed, and alternative sources of energy production is assured, we can perhaps then recover the oil from the channel. I believe that a legacy of responsibility in respect to the utilization of our finite resources is an extremely valuable contribution to future generations. Anything less would be deplorable.

One other thought: What does this plant mean to Exxon? MONEY.

What does denial of this plant mean to Santa Barbara? The answer to that can be achieved on May 27th.

Don't forget to vote...every vote is needed Tuesday May 27, 1975.

John Arnold, Editor

(Editor's note: The following statement was written at my request by Steve Maskel, a student at UCSB and a member of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.)

On May 27th, Santa Barbara voters will have a chance to vote in support or opposition to a zone change that would allow Exxon Corporation to construct an oil processing plant in Las Flores Canyon. The oil would be delivered to the site by pipeline from a huge offshore platform to be located in federal waters. A no vote on Proposition A would overturn county ordinance number 2686 which rezones properties owned by Exxon to allow the processing of oil.

The Inland Alternative Committee, made up of Exxon supporters, insists that a rejection of the Las Flores zone change would result in offshore oil production and processing next to the platform, at greater environmental risk and with a loss of natural gas.

The leaders of Stop Exxon Here say that a voter rejection of the onshore facility does not automatically insure that Exxon will construct the offshore processing plant. They argue that although Exxon has received federal approval to construct an offshore processing plant, these approvals will likely be challenged.

On the basis of a review of the ballot issue, I recommend a no vote on Proposition A. If the issue was only one of offshore verses onshore processing of oil, then the onshore facility would be preferable, but the issue remains a much larger one. Obtaining oil from the Santa Barbara Channel remains a risky and environmentally dangerous business, despite oil company assurances that their technology is nearly fail-safe. A no vote on Proposition A would block construction of the processing plant and indicate the continued opposition of county residents to oil development in the channel.

Steve Maskel

El Tecolote: Deadline for the combined August-September issue of the Tecolote is the first Friday of August. Send your contributions to John Arnold, Box 14348 UCSB, Santa Barbara, California 93107.

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