



El Tecolote

BULLETIN OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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page 14
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"We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth, as 'wild.' Only to the white man was nature 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery. Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it 'wild' for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was for us that the 'Wild West' began."

Chief Luther Standing Bear
Oglala Sioux

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

August 30
Saturday

HARBOR-BIRD REFUGE--A morning walk concentrating on the birds that frequent our shoreline and the refuge lake--good trip for beginning bird-watchers. Meet at 8:30am near the harbor master's office at the SB yacht harbor. Bag lunch optional. Scope helpful.

Leader: Minna Smith 966-7971

September 6
Saturday

MOUNT PINOS--The fall condor watch at Mt. Pinos in the Los Padres National Forest near Frazier Park. Stay in any of the campgrounds off the mountain road or at the Caravan Motor Inn in Gorman (805-248-6411) Friday night and meet at 8am at the big parking lot at the end of the paved mountain road. Those driving up Saturday can meet the group at noon at the top of the mountain at the condor observation point. Always a good spot for montane bird species, native plants, and lots of sunshine. Pack a lunch, water, jacket, sunglasses or hat.

Leaders: Jim Hodgson 967-3627

Bill Gielow 687-3466

September 14
Sunday

CHANNEL ISLANDS BOAT TRIP--Last fall's trip was one of the most successful with many pelagic bird species seen, including the unusual Craveri's murrelet and Red-billed Tropicbirds. This year's trip should prove exciting as we will land on Anacapa Island (part of the Channel Islands National Monument) for a couple of hours of birdwatching and tidepooling before continuing on to the east end of Santa Cruz Island.

In SB meet for car-pooling at Von's parking lot in Montecito at 6:30am or at Ventura Sport Fishing Landing (Anchors Way Drive near the Scotch and Sirloin restaurant) in Ventura. We will leave at 7:30am and return by 4pm aboard the Faisano. Pack a lunch, seasick pills, waterproof jacket, warm clothes, sturdy shoes. Deck chair optional.

Reserve your space immediately by sending a check for \$11.50 (\$12 non-members) payable to SB Audubon Society to Bill Gielow, 3043 Hermosa Rd., SB 93105 (687-3466).

Leader: Brad Schram 968-6255

CALENDAR CONTINUED--

September 21 HOLLISTER or EL CAPITAN RANCH--If permission is granted we will once
Sunday again visit this beautiful north county ranch. If we are unable to gain
permission to Hollister, we will visit El Capitan Ranch which is similar
in habitat to Hollister. Access to Hollister will be limited to a certain
number of individuals so preference will be given to those who have not
visited the ranch before. Contact the leader for further information.
Leader: Jim and Mary Lou Hand 682-1779

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we start our 13th year--we were founded in June, 1963--we can look back with pride on our growth and achievements. From an original membership of approximately 75 we have grown to be over 1,000 strong. We have been involved in many important local, state and national issues and have made our voices heard thanks to a number of dedicated members who have given much time and effort to the Audubon cause. For example: did you know that SBAS is the proud possessor of one of the pens used by the late President Johnson on March 22, 1968, in signing SB 889, an act to designate the San Rafael Wilderness, Los Padres National Forest in the state of California and that this was the first such wilderness in the United States? The pen was presented to us in recognition of our work to make this wilderness a fact.

Speaking of dedicated members, ~~our~~ sincere thanks to retiring Board members: President Virginia Puddicombe, Michael Fishbein, Sey Kinsell, Brad Schram and Timothy Whitehouse. We are grateful for all your hard work.

When an organization becomes as large as ours, and continues to grow (according to NAS our growth rate for the first 6 months of 1975 was 6.91%), it requires the help of many members just to keep it going--to do the many necessary administrative chores.

A number of dedicated people have worked quietly for years with little or no recognition of their achievements. From time to time we will tell you about them and what they are doing for SBAS.

Two who come to mind immediately are Ethyl Lyans and Dorothy Watkins of the Bird of the Month Exhibit Committee. These two women have served on this committee since its inception, early in 1970. They have produced an exhibit for the SB Public Library, month after month, with occasional help from others, but mostly on their own.

It has been suggested that we expand our exhibits to include animals and reptiles as well as birds--perhaps some exhibits on endangered species. This is a wonderful idea but to do so we need more volunteers. Here is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys working with their hands, doing research, or writing; anyone who likes to see thier ideas take solid form.

If you have an idea for an exhibit or would like to help on a single project, or several, please contact Dorothy Watkins at 687-1077. I cannot believe that, out of 1,037 members, we have only two who are able to perform this creative and enjoyable task. Maybe you didn't know who to contact, or how to go about volunteering. Now you do.

Another unsung hero is Linda Gielow, our Refreshment Chairperson for the past two years. The coffee, tea, and goodies which magically appear at the end of each meeting have been Linda's responsibility. However, last June Linda and Bill became parents of a son, Ryan, and Linda needs someone to assist her as she may not always be able to attend meetings. (I think it would be very nice if someone would relieve her of the responsibility entirely).

Linda says the job is simple ~~and requires~~ about 15 minutes of time at each meeting. The chairperson provides coffee, tea bags, cream and sugar, makes the coffee, and heats water for tea. Volunteers provide the cookies and other goodies. (All are reimbursed from the "Cookie Fund", the money which members contribute.)

If you are able to help Linda, please call her at 687-3466. NOTE: This is not necessarily a woman's job. Bill Gielow handled it, beautifully, at the June meeting. So, you men out there, don't be shy. Linda needs help; let's give it to her.

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PRESIDENT' MESSAGE continued

My sincere thanks to SBAS for sending me as its delegate to the NAS convention in New Orleans last April.

The convention theme was Ecosystems and Audubon Goals: The Gulf Influence; the secondary theme was "Son-of-a-gun we'll have big fun on the bayou!"

I learned many interesting facts about the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Delta and, with one all-day trip to Grand Isle on the Gulf, another around Lake Pontchartrain, and Bourbon Street and the French Quarter just across Canal Street from the hotel, I also learned some interesting facts about Louisiana wildlife! I will be happy to share some of my experiences with you at our meeting on September 25.

Finally, I wish to say what a great privilege I find it to serve, once again, as President of SBAS. I promise you I will do my best to be worthy of the honor. If you have any questions, suggestions, or criticisms, please call me. Our chapter is many times larger now than it was back in 1967-1969, and I need all the help I can get.

Joy Parkinson

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FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Figueroa Mountain and Davy Brown Campground, May 3, 1975--In spite of low clouds, birding was good in the valley near Chamberlain's Ranch and Midland School. The sun came out as we climbed, which brought out the wild flowers on the roadsides--worth the trip even if our group of 21 enthusiasts hadn't identified 92 species including: Mountain Quail, Costa's Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Lark Sparrow, Horned Lark, Northern Oriole, Western Tanager, Hermit and Nashville Warblers, Phainopepla, Golden Eagles, Raven, and Pygmy Owl and Pygmy Nuthatch.

Alice Kladnik

Little Pine Mountain, June 7--It was a foggy day in SB but warm and clear in the back country as we started our 14-mile round trip. At Upper Oso campground where we parked at the trail head, we found Phainopeplas and Violet-green Swallows. Along Oso Creek were Western Flycatchers, wrens, and a Pygmy Owl. As the trail left the creek and Big Pine Road (and a few noisy motorcycles) we started our steady climb to the top. Along the way were a great variety of wildflowers including various monkeyflowers, sego lilies, paintbrush, larkspur, fairy lanterns, checkerbloom, yarrow, and wall-flowers. Numerous lizards and horned toads were seen but no snakes were encountered.

A single Turkey Vulture and a Red-tailed Hawk were the only raptors seen as we periodically scanned the sky for a possible soaring condor, but we did see the Lazuli Bunting, Black-chinned Sparrow, and, at the top amid the Coulter pines and spruce, Northern Orioles, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Hairy Woodpeckers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. On the way down we were buzzed by White-throated Swifts coming within arm's length to feast on the seasonal flies that annoyed us along the trail. The day was warm but not hot so although the hike was not effortless, it was not as exhausting as summer hiking can be in So. California. The trail offered many shaded spots for periodic rests.

Bill Gielow

SUMMER TRIPS

I would like to share with you a very nice birding trip we recently enjoyed. We rented a houseboat and floated down Topock Gorge to Lake Havasu. The gorge is a National Wildlife Refuge and is spectacular. It can only be seen by boat, but many boats are available for rent around the Havasu area. We saw more Western and Eared Grebes than you can imagine, literally thousands. Other birds sighted in our three-day trip include: White Pelican, Great Blue Heron and Snowy Egrets, Ruddy Ducks, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Western Flycatchers, Gambel's Quail, Blk-necked Stilts, Forster's Terns, Lesser Nighthawks, Or-crnd and Yellow Warblers, Western Tanagers, and Brewers Sparrow. Also sighted by the Nautical Inn, a Red-breasted Merganser. Two hundred seventy-six species frequent the Refuge and I'm sure we could have seen more had we stayed longer.

Diana and Edward Searcy

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Joy Parkinson

A member of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society

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DESERT WILD BURROS

SBAS members have been guests of the Navy at China Lake Naval Weapons Center near Ridgecrest this year (the Gielows in April and Jan Nelson and Stephen Weissenberger in May) as part of a program of public education regarding ecological damage resulting from the over 1500 wild burros that inhabit Death Valley National Monument and surrounding areas. Anyone who has visited Death Valley knows what a thrill it can be to see these animals in the wild, especially when most endemic species are so hard to find. It is partly this sentimental attachment that has protected the burros on public lands in California to the point that they now pose a serious threat to the fragile desert ecosystem.

The burro is actually an exotic species that is well-adapted to the desert mountains, a habitat similar to its native North Africa, and is reproducing very successfully in the areas of concern. These particular burros are descended from working stock of past desert mining operations. Several attributes of the burro make it a problem species.

1) Overgrazing--A burro, instead of browsing on grasses and shrubs, will actually crop the perennial vegetation beyond easy recovery; thus, some desert flora are disappearing rapidly due to constant grazing pressure by the large number of burros. Although this picture is complicated by several hundred head of cattle sharing the vegetation at China Lake (remaining grazing rights will be terminated), Death Valley has the same problem with no cattle. What would the desert look like if we waited until the burros stabilized their population (by food supply limitation)? Naturalists believe it would never recover. The less tenacious native animals would be seriously depleted; erosion due to lack of ground cover is already evident in some areas.

2) Ruining of waterholes--While native desert animals and the untroublesome wild horses drink at the desert oases and leave quickly to forage widely, the burros languish in the area, eating the surrounding vegetation almost to the ground for several hundred feet thus depriving needed cover for such species as quail. In addition, many of the all-too-few waterholes are knee-deep in burro manure.

3) Exclusion of other species--Their effect is manifested by such things as the decline of a butterfly that has its life cycle associated with a particular overgrazed bush and the competition with the desert bighorn sheep.

Controlling the burros is another problem. They have no predators. Several small tests have shown the futility of such simple solutions as fencing waterholes, and a sterilization program would not alter the rapid rate of habitat destruction as the existing population is already too great a burden and burros live 25 years or more. Is elimination of this species the best solution?

In guiding us about the desert backcountry, most of it excluded from public access, Tilly Barling (Navy Natural Resources Specialist, Public Works Dept., China Lake NWC, CA 93555) and Pete Sanchez (Park Naturalist, Death Valley NM) stressed the importance of viewing the whole picture. A healthy environment is one where all the animals are healthy, where a self-preserving variety of species interrelationships is operating. These experts are claiming that we have singled out the burro and overprotected it where it is an intruding non-native pest. How shall we deal with this problem?

Please send your thoughts to Jan Nelson, 6136 Manzanillo, Goleta 93017. We will forward the information to our regional Audubon representatives. In addition, you may wish to write to the Navy of Death Valley in care of the above-mentioned persons.

Bill Gielow

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REPORT ON WOLF EXPERIMENT

A detailed, 28-page report on last year's attempt to transplant 4 eastern timber wolves to northern Michigan, where the species has been virtually wiped out, has been published as a co-operative venture of National Audubon and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Copies are available for 50¢ a piece from: North Midwest Regional Office, National Audubon Society, R.R. 4, Roving Hills, Red Wing, Minnesota 55066.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLERS

For our vacation, my husband and I spent 2 weeks in late April and early May birding in SE Arizona. Another week we explored Indian Ruins, and the Petrified National Park and remote areas of the Apache Indian Reservation.

The highlight of our trip was birding in remote Guadalupe Canyon. One morning in the hour before breakfast, we recorded 46 species within a one block radius! These included a Beardless Flycatcher, a Buffy-breasted Flycatcher, and a pair of Thick-billed Tropical Kingbirds. We also watched our first Virginia Warbler. These included 29 first sightings for us. We observed a pair of male summer tanagers fighting over a lone female high on Mt. Lemon above Tucson. So much flashing color! And Vermillion Flycatchers! Lane's '74 edition of "Birding in SE Arizona" proved invaluable but his camping information is not always correct.

The Chiricahuas, especially the South Portal entrance and the South Fork Trail, are spectacular birding areas. We were too early for some nesting birds due to a late Spring so missed a few unusual species (and the heat). All eager birders should visit this area.

Thank you, Sid Tarbox for expanding the Education Department, Barbara Greene for taking efficient charge of Membership, Bill Gielow for an outstanding job as Field Trip Chairman, Mike Fishbein for serving as Conservation Chairman and writing all those letters, for continued fine Bird Exhibits by Ethyl Lyans and Dorothy Watkins and where do I stop? Thanks to all who served on the Board or as a Committee member during the past year. Aloha.

Virginia Puddicombe
Past President

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TENTATIVE FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

August 30	Harbor, Bird Refuge	Minna Smith
September 6	Mt. Pinos Condor Watch	Jim Hodgson/Bill Gielow
September 14	Fall Boat Trip to Channel Islands	Brad Schram
September 21	Hollister or El Capitan Ranch	Jim Hand
September 27	Santa Clara River Estuary	tba
October 4	Toro Canyon	Tomi Sollen
October 12	Atascadero Creek, Tucker's Grove, Devereaux Tamarisks	Jim Hodgson
October 18	Sandyland Slough	Virginia Puddicombe
October 26	McMenemy-San Ysidro Trail	Bill Gielow
November 1,2	Morro Bay-Montana de Oro	The Gardners and The Hands
November 15	Happy Canyon-Figueroa Mountain	Louis Bevier
November 23	Goleta and Devereaux Sloughs	tba
December 6,7	Carizzo Plains	tba
December 14	Lake Cachuma	tba

This month's birding area, probably the single most exciting birding spot in the entire country, and surely the most prolific of all the migration hotspots, is High Island, Texas. It is on the Gulf coast thirty miles east of Galveston, and about half-way between Brownsville and New Orleans. High Island isn't an island but is the highest spot along the coast for several hundred miles, which makes it so attractive to migrants.

High Island has two small but especially good birding areas, both of which are heavily wooded with predominately live oaks. The better spot is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Brennan, who are knowledgeable birders. He operates a gas station on Route 124. You should see him or call for permission and directions. They can also direct you to the second spot, a wildlife sanctuary named, I believe, Lamar Woods. It is near the local school. Other areas worth birding are all those with trees, especially Tamarisk trees, along Route 87 east to Sabine Pass. There are not many such areas.

Birding is best in spring though reasonable in the fall. Spectacular migrations accompany incoming cold or low fronts between April 24 and May 14. A suggested birding schedule is to bird the lower Rio Grande Valley (Bentsen State Park, Santa Ana Refuge, and Laguna Atascosa Refuge) calling each day to Galveston for weather information.

Jim and Mary Lou Hand

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to recent actions of the Board of Directors concerning my anti-Exxon editorial in the May-June El Tecolote, actions I feel were unfair and improper, I have resigned as editor and this is my last issue. Jim and Mary Lou Hand have agreed to be co-editors, and I am confident they will be more than adequate in their new capacity.

John Arnold
Past Editor

EL TECOLOTE

Deadline for the September issue will be the 1st day of September. Mail your contributions to Jim and Mary Lou Hand, 2431 Castillo, Apartment B, Santa Barbara, California 93105.

EL TECOLOTE
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