



El Tecolote

BULLETIN OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

February, 1979
Volume 17, Number 2

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MONTHLY MEETING - FEBRUARY 23, 1979

BIRD IDENTIFICATION: HOW EXPERT ARE YOU?

Are you an accurate spotter? If so, how quick? Come to the meeting and view some slides to test your skill. We will have Jon Dunn with slides showing both the difficult and easy birds. Jon is working with Kimball Garrett on a book covering this subject. He is a long time birder and frequent contributor to the Western Tanager and other publications. This should be a fun evening at the Fleischmann Auditorium, Museum of Natural History, beginning at 8:00 p.m.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- February 17
Saturday Tucker's Grove - Meet in Tucker's Grove parking lot (Patterson Ave. & Cathedral Oaks). Jim will show you the birds, beginning at 8 a.m.
Leader: Jim Hodgson, 967-3627
- February 20
Tuesday Carpinteria - Meet at 8 a.m. for a midweek walk on Ash Street and the beach.
Leader: Bob Hough, 684-1540
- February 24 & 25
Saturday &
Sunday Morro Bay & Montana D'Oro - Meet at the museum at the Morro Bay State Park at 9 a.m. Saturday; allow 2 hours driving time from Santa Barbara. Camp at the park, or make reservations at a local motel; take lunch for 2 days. Call the leader if you plan to go.
Leader: Sid Tarbox, 687-2067
- March 4
Saturday Gibraltar Dam - A moderate hike up the canyon, viewing water birds as well as passerines. Meet at Thrifty 5-Points parking lot at 7:30 a.m. for car-pooling (driver donation \$1.00). Bring lunch and water. For reservations call Minna Smith, 966-7971.
- March 11
Sunday Dune Lakes - A private preserve in San Luis Obispo County near Oceano on Highway 1. Limited to 24 members in 6 cars. Phone leader for reservations and car-pooling (driver donation \$2.50). Bring lunch and water, wear warm clothing; spotting scopes are useful. Preference given to those members who have never visited this area.
Leader: Tomi Sollen, 966-4836
- Friday night
through
Sunday night Catalina Island - A weekend on Catalina Island at Two Harbors. Car-pool to Long Beach, park cars at Long Beach (fee- \$2.00 per night), and take the Catalina Cruise Line boat at 7:30 p.m. Friday. Return to harbor Sunday about 5:30 p.m. Boat fare round trip is \$12.00. Room and board at Catalina Island Marine Institute, a non-profit educational project, is \$25.00. A minimum of 10 people is required. Bring supper for Friday evening, also sleeping bags. Send check for

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS, CONTINUED

\$25.00, payable to Santa Barbara Audubon Society, to Minna Smith, 1600 Garden Street, #35, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Boat fare will be collected later.

Leader: Minna Smith, 966-7971

April 28
Saturday

Spring Cruise to Santa Cruz Island - Boat will leave from Ventura, Island Packers Cruises, at 8 a.m., and return at 4 p.m. Members: \$17, non-members: \$18; no refunds without getting someone to take your place!! Send check, payable to Santa Barbara Audubon Society, to Minna Smith, 1600 Garden Street, #35, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

Leader: to be announced

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Three local situations provoking our concern are: 1) the proposed LNG plant at Point Conception, 2) the fate of the coast range population of the California Condor, and 3) the ultimate disposition of the relatively unspoiled habitat on More Mesa in Goleta.

You are, of course, aware of the hearings in mid-January concerning the proposed LNG plant. Putting aside questions of Western LNG's contention that we must rush to get the facility built, significant problems remain. Safety is an obvious factor, much remarked on in the media. Pollution of the South Coast's air as a direct result of the plant's construction and ongoing operation has received less attention. The dispoilation of this nearly pristine habitat due to the plant, the tanker traffic, the high tension power lines, and the required pipeline would be unconsonable. An area of great significance archeologically, the plant site and pipeline are planned in a manner which results in maximum destruction of this anthropological and historical treasure. Our hope is that the federal government will declare the Point Conception site unacceptable.

Jan Hamber, an assistant curator of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and a long-time member of SBAS, has drafted a proposed study of the Santa Barbara County California Condor population. Approved by the Condor Recovery Team, her proposal involves scores of days in the field observing Condor courting and resting habits (hopefully), their critical forage areas, and an attempt to accurately determine the size of this part of the remnant population. The SBAS Board of Directors is currently exploring avenues by which we may be of positive assistance to her project.

More Mesa has been much in the news recently. A corporation wants to "develop" it into a condominium/golf course complex. Locally, a group has incorporated as a non-profit organization called the "More Mesa Land Trust Association," whose purpose is to buy the land "to create at More Mesa an agricultural and environmental preserve and to maintain the natural integrity of the terrain and its sensitive natural habitats." More Mesa is a beautiful natural ecosystem with its arroyos, oak groves, and contiguous Atascadero Creek habitat. The mesa is a winter hunting ground for numerous raptor species, including the White-tailed Kite and Short-eared Owl, and a nesting area for the kites and numerous grassland species. It is worth preserving. SBAS is presently coming to grips with our responsibility relative to the above proposals for More Mesa's future.

The SBAS Christmas Count was very successful, with 214 species observed again! Birders came from all over California, were a great help, and very cooperative as well. Special thanks go to Cherie Bratt for her excellent job of "marshalling the troops," Paul Lehman for his involvement in strategy coordination, and to all of you who served the ultimate activity of the count, sighting and counting the birds. While we have cause for self-congratulation, we should remember that the reasons our count is so high are due to the diversity and cleanliness of the Santa Barbara coastal environment, and our mild winter climate. If we allow the South Coast to be paved over, the creeks channellized, and the air polluted, the area will be less supportive of bird populations, and healthy people too.

Good birding --

Brad Schram

FIELD TRIP REPORTSCarrizo Plain, December 9-10, 1978

This was the year for the Carrizo!!! Soda Lake was full; the Sandhill Cranes were there by the thousands. Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Marsh Hawks, American Kestrels; a Prairie Falcon dining; and a Merlin striking a Horned Lark then plucking and eating it in view of our 'scopes!! Mountain Plovers by the hundreds; a Burrowing Owl in its burrow; a Sharp-shinned Hawk in the tree behind the dining room! Altogether 66 species of birds, including all the hawks and falcons one could possibly expect to see.

Thirty-six members enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. W. J. Henderson and his ranch crew who opened the Lodge for us and entertained us royally. Thanks to Brad Schram for his sharp eyes and expertise; and to our bus driver, Don Coulter, for his superb driving and patience.

We had a ball!!!

Joy Parkinson

San Ysidro Canyon, Montecito, January 22 mid-week Bird Walk

Nine Audubon Society members enjoyed a lovely mid-week bird walk up San Ysidro Canyon. Twenty-six species were sighted, including over 100 Band-tailed Pigeons in a huge flock! Other interesting birds were: Golden-crowned Sparrow, a number of Purple Finches, 4-5 pair of Wrentits very close, American Goldfinch, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Joan Lentz and Jean Okuye

Western Wildlife Slide Project

The National Audubon Society's Western Education Center is developing a collection of original color slides of western wildlife. The initial phase of the project will emphasize the birdlife of the region, while succeeding phases will add plants, reptiles, amphibians, etc. The collection will provide a resource, at minimal cost, to chapters and members, for development of educational programs, to illustrate lectures and articles, to incorporate into displays, etc. Black and white glossy prints will be available for publicity and to promote programs and field trips. For the project to be successful your help is needed: please submit your high quality, original slides for inclusion in the collection. Full credit will be given to all donors. To obtain collection entry forms please write to National Audubon Society, Western Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California 94920.

Of Time on the Desert

The following is part of a series on the Desert Tortoise and its habitat, published by the Nature Conservancy.

The Desert Tortoise has lived on earth for 180 million years, a span of time beyond the comprehension of most minds. He existed in near his present form before the evolution of the dinosaurs. Slower to reach physical maturity than humans, he is not sexually mature until about 20 years; the lifetime of a few may span 100 years.

The creosote bush on which the tortoise depends for shelter is also a master of time. This man-high shrub with small dark green leaves, yellow flowers, and silver seed puffs begins with a single stem, enlarges into what might be mistaken for a ring of separate plants. An apparently modest clump may have begun its growth before our nation was formed. An exceptionally large circle with a diameter of 7-8 meters may be 5000 years of age. The fragile flowers last but a few days. Both forms of life, the long-lasting and the briefly blooming, perish quickly under a misplaced vehicle tire. The flower, the shrub, and the tortoise all crack and die back into the earth impartially under the abuse of human power. Sanctuary is needed. Join the Burrow Brigade.

To contribute to the preservation of the tortoise and its habitat write to the Nature Conservancy, P.O. Box 921, South Pasadena, CA 91030, or call (213) 832-9121. If you wish to send a check immediately, earmark your envelope "Desert Tortoise Preserve."

Who Has Wildlife Knowledge? (from Colorado Outdoors, Nov.-Dec., 1978)

Stephen R. Kellert of Yale University's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies divided Americans into 11 interest categories, including birdwatchers, backpackers, anti-hunters, animal raisers; and hunters, by reasons for hunting- communion with nature, sport, or meat. He tested them exhaustively on their knowledge of wildlife. Birders scored nearly twice any other group, followed by rodeo enthusiasts, and nature hunters. The groups with the least wildlife knowledge were anti-hunters and sport hunters.

International Symposium on the Vultures

Researchers, students, and all others interested in vultures are invited to attend this symposium, sponsored by the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, which will be held on March 23 to 26, 1979, at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Two full days of formal papers with ample time for discussion of individual topics are planned. A field trip to California Condor habitat, with a chance of seeing condors, is scheduled on the final day for those who desire to participate. Pre-registration is strongly urged. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mr. Sanford R. Wilbur, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1199 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai, CA 93023, telephone (805) 646-5455.

Acquisition and Maintenance of Bald Eagle Nesting Sites in Florida

Help raise funds by sending cancelled U.S. commemoratives and all foreign stamps from your mail and send once or twice a year to Mrs. George H. Palmer, California State Bird Ch., 111 Apache Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. Leave stamps attached with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch envelope margin. Mrs. Palmer's group prepares and sells the stamps.

DIAL-A-BIRD

For current news of rare and unusual birds in the Santa Barbara area, call 964-8240 any time, night or day. You will hear a 3-minute recording, narrated by Cherie Bratt, giving all the latest information.

Address Changes and El Tecolote Mailing Problems

Send address changes to Joan Lentz, 433 Pimiento Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93108. Let Joan know if you are having problems receiving El Tecolote.

El Tecolote Deadline

The deadline for the March issue is Friday, February 23, 1979. Please send or bring your contributions to Mary Lou Hand, 1731 Robbins Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, or call 682-4044.

El Tecolote
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