



El Tecolote

BULLETIN OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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MONTHLY MEETING—OCTOBER 26, 1979

“Cowbirds in the Sierra Nevada: A Possible Danger to the Songbird Population”

An apparent invasion by the socially parasitic brown-headed cowbird which threatens Sierra songbirds is being studied by U.C. Santa Barbara researcher Dr. Stephen Rothstein, Associate Professor of Zoology. His sighting of the cowbirds has led to a project sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Forest Service on cowbird occurrence in the Sierra. Come and join with us for a most interesting slide program at the Fleischmann Auditorium, Museum of Natural History at 8:00 p.m.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- October 11
Thursday** **Devereux Slough**—Our first weekday excursion. Returning shorebirds and ducks. Meet at Museum of Natural History for car pooling at 8 a.m. or at the entrance kiosk to Devereux at 8:30. Driver donation: \$1.00. Dave Vincent, Leader.
- October 13
Saturday** **Hollister Ranch**—Its a privilege to visit this private property rich in migrants and shorebirds. Special permission to allow 25 members to bird the canyons, beaches and Ranch House property. Meet at Thrifty Parking lot at Five Points at 7:15 a.m. for car pooling. No more than six cars. Bring lunch, water, binoculars and scopes. Driver donation—\$2.00. Reservations—Minna Smith: 966-7971. Leader: Brooks Allen. If unable to attend, please cancel in order to accommodate waiting list.
- October 20
Saturday** **Lake Piru**—Many raptors, migrants and perhaps a Condor! Meet at Mission at 8:00 a.m. for car pooling; or meet at Henry's in Fillmore at 9:30. Bring lunch, drinks, jackets. Scopes will be helpful. Plan to return to Santa Barbara between 4 & 5 p.m. Limit: first 40. Driver donation—\$3.00. Bill Gielow: Leader. Call 966-7971 for reservations.
- October 28
Sunday** **Sandyland Slough**—Meet at the Museum of Natural History at 8:00 a.m. for car pooling or at gate at lower end of Santa Clause Lane at 8:30 a.m. (park opposite stores facing north) An opportunity to view choice shore birds and enter private property. Limit first 30. Bob Hough: Leader. Call 966-7971 for reservations.
- November 3
Saturday** **Lake Los Carneros**—Meet at Museum of Natural History for car pooling at 8:00 a.m. or at the entrance to the Lake at La Patera at 8:30. Scopes will be useful. A half-day trip. Driver donation—\$.50. Ann Terry: Leader.
- December 8 & 9
Saturday &
Sunday** **Carrizo Plains Overnight**—Maximum of 35, Minimum of 30. Wintering ground of the Sandhill Cranes. Excellent area for hawks, eagles, and mountain plovers. Last year every species of hawk that could be expected was seen, as well as cranes, plovers, owls, roadrunners, etc., etc., etc. We have reserved rooms at California Valley Lodge and chartered a bus. The combined cost of the bus fare and room is \$33 per person, double or triple occupancy of rooms. Participants will buy their own meals at the restaurant across the street from the motel. Bring lunch and water for two days. The bus will leave from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History at 8 a.m., and the shopping center on Highway 33 in Ojai at 8:45 a.m. on Saturday. Return will be approximately 4:30 p.m. Sunday.
- NOTE:** In order to keep the cost of the trip down we need a **Minimum** of 30 people on the bus. It is important that you sign up early if you plan to go so that we can determine if the trip will “fly”. Please make checks payable to **Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.** and mail to: Joy Parkinson, 568 Beaumont Way, Goleta, CA 93017. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope or postcard if you wish confirmation of your reservation. Questions??? Call Joy Parkinson at 967-9371.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Faced with such complex and critical issues as the on-going destruction of Mono Lake and the rapid decline of the California Condor, it is possible to be staggered at the difficulty of reversing the trend, and assume a stoic "death-watch" posture. The Audubon societies of California have conceived a plan whereby it is possible for all members and friends—regardless of age, means, or field experience—to make a significant contribution toward the effort to stay the decline and save the condor and Mono Lake.

The California **Birdathon** will be an opportunity to go as "all out" as one could wish. As with the well-known jogathons and bikeathons, the **Birdathon** enlists interested individuals who get friends, relatives, enemies, co-workers, and businesses to pledge a specific amount for each bird species the participant finds during the twenty-four hour period of November 24th in the state of California. Like the otherathons, it is the participant's responsibility to solicit the pledges, do the birding, collect the money, and forward the money together with the completed forms to: Western Regional Office, National Audubon Society, 555 Audubon Place, Sacramento, CA 95825. All contributions are tax deductible, checks should be made out to the National Audubon Society. The proceeds will directly benefit the above causes.

Full information on the **Birdathon** was included in the June/July issue of **ACT** [**Audubon Conservation Topics, West**], and a sample pledge form is included in this issue of **El Tecolote**. Copy as many as necessary from this form for use in soliciting donors. One should give donors an idea of the number of species one expects to see; if 120 species are seen and a donor pledges \$.10 per species the donation from that individual will be \$12.00, and it is proper to make pledgers aware of this.

I hope that you can take part. Start signing up pledges now. A total of \$5.00 from a feeder watch is \$5.00 more than is presently in the fund. If you cannot take part in the birding aspect of the project you may still sponsor a birder. Further information will appear in the November issue of **El Tecolote**.

Birding diligently all day in November in Santa Barbara county one could expect to see over 150 species of birds. If we work at it, our contribution to the Audubon cause will be substantial—and we will have a pleasant day in the field as well. A sterling combination. Besides, who enjoys "death-watch" postures?
Good birding, Brad Schram

SPOTTED SANDPIPER NESTING

Spotted Sandpipers were discovered breeding for the first time in Santa Barbara County in 1979, during the Bell's Vireo research project. Three nests were found, and at least five young (from twelve eggs) were produced by at least four adults. Again, thanks go to SBAS for partially supporting the research that helped locate this new nesting species.
Jim Greaves

DUNGENESS BIRD REFUGE

We, Sema and Bob English, visited the Dungeness Bird Refuge on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State in August which is definitely **not** the best birding time on the Dungeness sand spit but it was good birding to us nonetheless.

Karl and Marie Gruebel, local Auduboners, took us birding. Karl is doing a population study for the Government on local birds. We saw Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots, Marbled Murelets, Common Murres, innumerable Glaucous-winged Gulls, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Common and Red-throated Loons, Eared and Horned Grebes, Brandts and Pelagic Cormorants and many other species.

On the Strait de Juan de Fuca we observed four Bald Eagles fishing for approximately one half hour. We have an Olympic National Park Bird Check List if anyone would like to see it.

Sema and Bob English

CONSERVATION REPORT

MONO LAKE

An interagency task force was created in December, 1978 to develop a recommended plan to protect the natural resources of the Mono Basin that were threatened as a result of the declining level of Mono Lake. The lake level is dropping 1.6 feet per year as a result of the diversion of water by Los Angeles from streams flowing into Mono Lake. The California Gull nesting has been virtually wiped out as a result of the land bridge formed from the mainland to the traditional nesting site on Negit Island.

The task force has recommended a plan known as Plan "P" which is strongly supported by NAS and the Mono Lake Committee. Briefly this plan proposes: A channel excavated between Negit Island and the mainland in Fall, 1979; predators removed from Negit. State "license plate fund" to be used for funding. Reduce Los Angeles water exports from 100,000 to 15,000 acre-feet per year to allow inflow into Mono Lake of 85,000 acre-feet per year. This would bring the level of Mono Lake up to 6,388 feet in 50 years. Legislation would protect Los Angeles' right to increase its water export over 15,000 acre-feet per year should Mono Lake rise above 6,388 feet.

Los Angeles to practise 15 percent water conservation and to expand use of reclaimed wastewater. State and federal government to furnish 87.5 percent of the cost of water reclamation plants.

Letters supporting the task force's recommendations are needed. They should be sent as soon as possible to: Mr. Jack Coe, Chairman, Mono Lake Task Force, Department of Water Resources, 849 South Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90014. For more information, contact David Gaines (714) 647-6386.

MORE MESA

Several plans for More Mesa have been proposed, from condominiums to tourist hotel/restaurant complexes to blocks of greenhouses. The Santa Barbara County Planning Commission's recommendation to the Board of Supervisors will be for 40-acre agriculture. Santa Barbara Audubon and other groups favor open space.

In February, 1979, SBAS Board of Directors passed a resolution favoring the preservation of More Mesa as a "natural area".

A natural grassland cut by ravines with oak groves and willows, More Mesa is prime habitat for numerous species of birds and mammals at all seasons of the year. In a letter to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, our president, Brad Schram points out that More Mesa is an extremely important wintering roost and forage area for the White-tailed Kite, and that the grassland section of the mesa is the only area on the south coast which is the wintering ground for the Short-eared Owl. States Brad: "...the entire mesa habitat is the object of our concern....the issue before us is not simply to mindlessly stop "another development plan"...It is rather to preserve an endangered habitat, to the benefit of both its dependent flora and fauna and that of the south coast which justly prides itself on its environmental concern".

As an individual, let your supervisor know how you feel about More Mesa.
Conservation Committee

BELL'S VIREO RESEARCH REPORT

The Bell's Vireo research this year was most rewarding, with over 48 territorial males located just east of Gibraltar Reservoir (representing 40 percent of the known population of the subspecies in the United States). Over half of the territories nested, and at least 34 young fledged by mid-July. I wish to thank the SBAS for its tremendous support (financial as well as moral) in this undertaking. Work is to continue next breeding season. Meanwhile, if you are concerned for the welfare of this species, please petition the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish and Game, and the Department of the Interior to have them include the species on their Endangered Species lists. Thanks again for your kind support.
Jim Greaves

UCSB NATURAL RESERVE ADDITION

Approximately 68 acres of UC Santa Barbara's west campus were added to the University of California's Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve by action of the regents Friday, September 21.

This reserve is part of UC's Natural Land and Water Reserves System established in 1965 to protect samples of California's diverse ecological habitats in their natural state for teaching and research purposes.

The existing Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve contains the only dune area left on the south coast that is relatively undisturbed and in its natural state according to a UCSB biologist who does field work there. It also contains a beach and the outlet for the Devereux Lagoon. Gray foxes, weasels, opossums and white-tailed kites inhabit its 49 acres.

The addition consists of the lagoon itself, its banks, most of the meadow to the west of the lagoon and 10 acres of meadow previously set aside as a potential building site. There are salt marsh, salt flat, eucalyptus hedgerow and valley grassland habitats.

A statement to the regents by UCSB officials said the enlarged reserve will allow study of areas in transition from one habitat to another.

Its marsh is the home or nesting stop for a number of rare and endangered species of birds, including the black rail, light-footed clapper rail, Belding's savannah sparrow, white-tailed kite and the California least tern. Several species of raptors use the meadow as a feeding ground.

The existing reserve has been used for research and field studies by students in biology, geology, natural history, anthropology and environmental studies.

Biologist David Coon of the UCSB Marine Science Institute is manager of the reserve.



The forms printed below are for your use in obtaining pledges for the November 24th **Birdathon**. Please feel free to copy them. Good Luck!

AUDUBON'S CALIFORNIA BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name/Business _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Yes, I am willing to sponsor your effort in the California **BIRDATHON** for the furtherance of the National Audubon Society's important work in preserving the California Condor, saving Mono Lake and in other important wildlife conservation issues.

Signature _____

My Pledge Amount _____ x _____ number of species observed

\$ _____ Total Donations to the National Audubon Society.
Please Make Checks Payable to National Audubon Society.

COLIMA MEXICO SEMINAR— NOVEMBER 20-30

The National Audubon Society is pleased to offer a rich birding experience based at the Hacienda El Cobano in Colima, Mexico. Field trips will be made to seven distinct habitat types: the Pacific Ocean with its broad coastal marshes and lagoons; thorn forests near Playa de Oro on the coast, dry thorn scrub habitat near El Salado; the desert shrub and deciduous forest of the agricultural Plains de Colima; riparian forests in the barrancas (steep walled canyons that have cut through the volcanic plains); tropical forests on the flanks of the Volcan de Fuego near San Antonio, Colima; and a humid pine-oak zone, 6-9,000 feet in elevation, on the other side of the 14,000 foot Vulcan de Fuego in the state of Jalisco, Mexico.

Accommodations at the Hacienda are simple and clean rooms with 2 or 3 single beds sharing a bath with an adjoining room.

The workshop is limited to 24 participants with enrollment on a first-come basis. The registration fee of \$35 per person is part of the total fee and must accompany each request for registration. The balance of \$555.00 is due on or before November 1, 1979. The cost of the program does not include round trip airfare to Guadalajara. It does include all instruction, room and meals, as well as transportation to and from the Guadalajara Airport, some 150 miles away.

For further information, write:

Robin Hernbrode
Audubon Ecology Field Seminars
National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3557
Boulder, CO 80307
(303) 499-0219

BOOK REVIEW

Anyone who is interested in bird watching no matter where he or she may reside will find much of interest in the book, just published, entitled **My World of Birds: Memoirs of an Ornithologist**, by Dr. George J. Wallace (Published by Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia, Pa., at \$10.00).

In addition to writing a well-know text on Ornithology, Dr. Wallace was one of the very first biologists to study the effects of the use of DDT in Dutch Elm Disease Control Programs upon wild birds. His definitive study upon the disastrous effects of DDT upon Robins in central Michigan formed a part of the factual basis for Rachel Carson's **Silent Spring**, a widely acclaimed book which alerted the public to the danger of the widespread use of chemicals in our environment.

The non-professional reader may find the lists of scientific names of birds observed a bit overwhelming; but the author includes so many interesting and highly readable accounts of his experiences that the book makes for fascinating reading for anyone interested in birds or just Natural History around the world. Bill Drew

AUDUBON'S CALIFORNIA BIRDATHON DONATION SUBMITTAL FORM

Please complete the form below and submit with collected donations by 14 December 1979.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Chapter _____

Total species seen _____

EL TECOLOTE DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions to the November issue is Friday, October 26 (monthly meeting). Bring your contributions to the meeting or send them early that week to John Bullock, 217 South Third street, Lompoc, CA 93436.

DIAL-A-BIRD

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

ADDRESS CHANGES AND EL TECOLOTE MAILING PROBLEMS

Send address changes to Jean Johnson, 266 Canon Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93105 or call Jean at 687-1651.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The SBAS Board of Directors meets in the Junior Library at the Museum of Natural History at 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be October 11. Members are welcome to attend.

EL TECOLOTE

Santa Barbara Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2067
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

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