

# El Tecolote

BULLETIN OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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## SKOFIELD PARK - RATTLESNAKE CANYON WILDERNESS AREA

Some 80 - 100 acres across from Skofield Park were acquired as a Wilderness Area, at a very reasonable cost from the Skofield family, by the City of Santa Barbara with help from the County in the middle 1960s.

A number of groups and individuals testified before the council at that time. One of them was Robert Easton, a true friend of wilderness, who was one of the most active members of the committee to establish the San Raphael Wilderness and is now one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Dick Smith Wilderness addition to the San Rafael.

Mr. Easton has monitored the Skofield Park Wilderness for many years and became more and more concerned about the vandalism taking place there. A few years ago he approached the city regarding fences on the Gibraltar Road side, and signs at the entrance at Las Canoas Road. He contacted SBAS and received our moral support.

After much time, effort and expense on his part, the fence and gate are in place on Gibraltar Road, and a wooden sign prohibiting fires, camping, shooting, etcetera. At the entrance to the wilderness near the stone bridge on Las Canoas Road, there is a large sign: "Skofield Park, Rattlesnake Canyon Wilderness Area", and a smaller sign like the one on Gibraltar Road at the beginning of the trail. They are very handsome, hand-carved wooden signs, in keeping with the area.

Mr. Easton did all the negotiating, corresponding and meeting with city officials. He even purchased the lumber for the signs and paid the labor costs from his own pocket. The cost was approximately \$600.

Those of you who enjoy the Rattlesnake trail, or, indeed all natural areas, might like to help defray the cost of these signs, which are for the benefit of all of us. All contributions are tax-deductable, and all contributions will receive a letter of thanks from the City of Santa Barbara.

If you would like to help, please make your check payable to "Santa Barbara Audubon Society", earmarked "Signs" and mail to P.O. Box 2067, Santa Barbara, CA 93102. Any amount is welcome.

Joy Parkinson

(Edit. note: Joy Parkinson is a past president of SBAS and is clearly still involved in local environmental issues. We thank her for bringing this matter to our attention.)

## BIRDS IN SANTA BARBARA

by Paul Lehman

This has been an excellent winter for over-wintering species unusual for the season or for California as a whole. An amazing 17 species of warblers have been seen in Santa Barbara County since early December. Until the last several years the only regularly occurring winter warblers were thought to be Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Townsends', and Common Yellowthroat. In the past few years we have found that a small number of Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warblers also winter here. In addition to these, this season has produced 7 Black and White, 8 Tennessee, 4 Nashville, 7 Yellow, 4 Palm and 11 Wilsons' Warblers, all believed to be of annual occurrence. More unusual have been a Northern Parula on Vandenburg A.F.B. in mid-December, a male Black-throated Blue in S.B. January and February, the Graces' back for its third winter in Montecito, a Bay-breasted in S.B. in early December, a MacGillivrays' in Goleta for its second winter, and an American Redstart in Goleta in mid-December.

Other highlights of the season include several Whistling Swans, a 'Eurasian' Green-winged Teal, and Eurasian Wigeon in Goleta, a Ruff near Santa Maria, the first documented winter record of Black-chinned Hummingbird for the county in Hope Ranch, single Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of the eastern race (*varius*) in Montecito and of the Great Basin/Rocky Mtn. race (*nuchalis*) in Goleta, an Ash-throated Flycatcher in S.B. (very unusual for winter), 4 Western Flycatchers between Goleta and Carpinteria (a high count), Brown Thrasher and Bells' Vireo continuing in Goleta, 2 Warbling Vireos in S.B. (very rare in winter), Scotts' Oriole and 2 Summer Tanager in Montecito, 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the Museum grounds, Indigo Bunting in S.B. (our second winter record), up to 8 Red Crossbills in Hope Ranch, and a Harris' Sparrow in Goleta.

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### Tecolote Deadline

All articles to be used in the April issue of El Tecolote must be submitted to the editor by Monday, March 15.

## Habitat Walks

In March the Santa Barbara Audubon Society is having two habitat walks in our area. They are as follows:

Thursday: Lake Los Carneras and Stow House

March 11 This walk allows excellent observation of wintering land and water birds. Meet in the parking lot behind the fire station on Los Carneros Road near Stow House at 9:00 a.m.

Thursday: Atascadero Creek

March 25 This walk will provide an opportunity to see a large variety of shore and land birds. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the South Patterson bridge where it crosses Atascadero Creek.

In addition, our bimonthly walks in the Botanic Garden will continue at 9:00 a.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Nesting activities should be in full swing.

Nancy S. Crawford, Chairman  
Education Committee

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### Dial-a-Bird

For current news of rare and unusual birds in the Santa Barbara area call 964-8240 night or day. You will hear a three minute recording giving all the latest information. If you have any unusual or exciting sightings, please call Nancy Crawford at 964-7508. Good Birding!



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### New Board Member

We regret to announce that Waldo Abbott, member emeritus of our board has chosen to resign from the remainder of his term. In his place we are delighted to welcome Joseph E. Boyd. Mr. Boyd and his wife, Marion, returned to the U.S. last summer after 8 years in Geneva, Switzerland where he served as area controller - Europe for Alcan Aluminum Ltd. We wish to thank Mr. Boyd for his willingness to serve on our board and look forward to his contributions to the effectiveness and vitality of our chapter.

Santa Barbara Audubon Society  
Board of Directors

February Actions

1. \$125 will be donated to help defray the costs of the signs recently installed in the Skofield Park - Rattlesnake Canyon Wilderness Area (see story, pg.1). This money shall be drawn from the donations received in memory of Less Cook, T. Nelson Metcalf, and Tom Raysor.
2. The board voted to pay the gasoline and registration fee costs to any board member attending the Western Regional Conference of NAS in Asilomar, California.
3. Joseph E. Boyd was selected to replace Waldo Abbott on the Board of Directors following Mr. Abbotts resignation from the board.
4. \$150 shall be spent towards preparation of office space for our chapter in the Goleta Depot building at Lake Los Carneros.
5. Jim Greaves, Conservation Committee Chairman, was directed to begin a tentative Nature Study Area plan for Lake Los Carneros in conjunction with other interested groups (Botanic Gardens, S.B. Museum of Natural History).
6. Robert Lindsay, El Tecolote Editor, was directed to select a new printer and mailing service in the hopes of obtaining better quality and faster production of our newsletter.

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Membership Report

Seventy-five members renewed their Audubon membership in December. However, almost the same number have allowed their memberships to lapse. In our fight to conserve air, water, land and all life it is most important to maintain our numbers. Please support us and pay your dues on time.

The following new people have joined our ranks: Frances T. Bird, C. M. Childs, J. Dozier & Family, Olive Franklin, Dr. Frances S. Gott, Bob MacDonald, Alberta Northway, Mrs. Robert Odell, Erika M. Ortiz, Mrs. J. G. Pavo, Mr. Michael Petracca, B. J. Thomas and Mrs. Dana L. Thomas. We also add to our local memberships Richard D. Spight, Irene Conway and Janine Builder. Welcome all of you.

Minna E. Smith  
Membership Secretary

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Field Trip Report

Morro Bay - Montana de Oro St. Park

A score of members enjoyed two beautiful days at Morro Bay on January 30 and 31. Although the tides were not as favorable as usual, we had good viewing of many species and identified nearly 100 on the trip. While we failed to sight a Peregrine Falcon, we were happy to learn that the pair on Morro Rock had fledged two young this past year.

There were numerous interesting sightings. The slough produced big flocks of large sandpipers, especially Long-billed Curlews and also close-ups of the shy Sora (no Virginia Rail this time). At one spot below the bluffs of Montana de Oro were 14 Black Oystercatchers, while on another outcrop were six species all in view at one time: Black Oystercatchers, Spotted

Sandpiper, Surfbird, Black and Ruddy Turnstones. Then at the campground we enjoyed the feeding antics of a sizeable flock of Lesser Goldfinches.

Perhaps we should mention one special sighting. On the bay we were searching for Brants when we spotted a small flotilla far out. However, upon closer inspection they turned out to be just a string of Polymeris Vulgaris left tethered by some hunter. It was a varied and satisfying weekend.

Sid Tarbox



## Calendar of Coming Events !!!

### -March-

March 6 Field Trip - Hope Ranch and Goleta. This is a local  $\frac{1}{2}$  day trip to residential  
Saturday areas with good numbers of wintering birds. Carpooling is especially encouraged because the stops have limited parking space available (Hope Ranch). Meet at Thrifty's parking lot in the 5-Points shopping center at 7:30 a.m.  
Leader: Not yet scheduled

March 9 Board of Directors' Meeting - 7:30 p.m. Members are welcome to attend. Meetings are held in the Fleischmann Auditorium annex at the Museum of Natural History.  
Tuesday

March 20 Field Trip - Botanic Gardens and Bird Refuge. We will hope to see the first  
Saturday of our early arriving breeding species, eg. Western Flycatcher and Black-Headed Grosbeak. Meet at the Botanic Gardens at 8:00 a.m.  
Leader: Violet Gray & Jim Greaves  
962-7317 (best before 9:00a.m.)

March 26 General Meeting - We are fortunate to have as our  
Friday speaker Dr. Garrett Hardin, emeritus professor of Human Ecology at U.C.S.B. He will discuss the world population explosion and its impact on our resources and environment.

Dr. Hardin is a world renowned authority who has written numerous books and articles on the subject. His essays on "The Tragedy of the Commons" have been translated into numerous languages. In view of Audubons' growing concern over population problems, his message will be timely and thought provoking. Meetings begin at 8:00 p.m. in the Fleischmann Auditorium at the Museum of Natural History.



### -April-

April 11 Field Trip - San Antonio Creek & Santa Ynez River. We will start the day west  
Sunday of Los Alamos along a section of San Antonio Creek where some good riparian habitat remains and holds many nesting songbirds including Yellow-breasted Chat, Wilsons' Warbler and Blue Grosbeak. Take a lunch along and expect to drive an hour to get there in the morning. Meet at Storke Rd. & Hollister Ave. in the Fedmart parking lot (NW corner) by 6:30 a.m. Leader: Louis Bevier  
964-1030

April 13 Board of Directors' Meeting - The same as March 9.  
Tuesday

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### Bird-A-Thon

Coming up this April will be the 2nd Annual Audubon Society Bird-A-Thon. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this event, we are asking our members to solicit sponsors who, after you spend a day (or whatever length of time you choose) tallying up the number of bird species you see that day, will donate a certain amount of money for each species you see. If you wish to participate, it is best to let your sponsor(s) know about how many species you expect to see. Amounts of 5¢ to \$1.00 per bird are typical although larger amounts are certainly welcome if your sponsor is so inclined.

This is an excellent way to raise funds for Audubon. Last year, 150+ chapters raised over \$92,000 nation wide. Our chapter will again sponsor an expert birder though that person has not yet been selected.

The final date for this event has not yet been determined but will be around the 24th or 25th of April. Final details will be forthcoming in the next issue of El Tecolote.



### Audubon Ark

The Audubon Ark is coming to Santa Barbara April 8th to the 11th. The Audubon Ark is an Endangered Species Mobile Education project of the National Audubon Society and the Celanese Corporation designed to inform the public of extinct and vanishing species. We will need volunteers to man the display and pass out flyers while the Ark is here. If you wish to help, let us know at the next meeting or by calling any board member. But, in any case, do plan to see this enlightening and informative display.

### Dick Smith Scholarship

It is again time to select the Society's recipient of the Dick Smith Scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Camp of the West. We urgently need your help in securing top candidates for this \$575 award. Nominees need not be Audubon members.

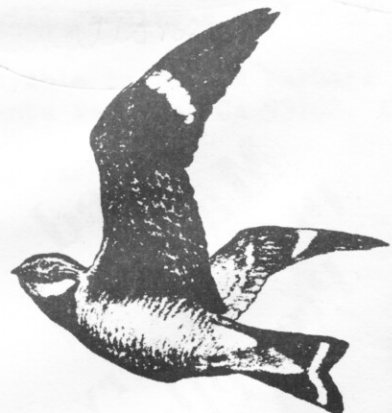
In past years these scholarships have enabled teachers, rangers and writers to attend the camp, people who would not otherwise have been likely to go, yet were in good positions to promote the cause of conservation of our natural resources. The scholarship covers all costs for one of the four two-week sessions, except transportation to and from the camp.

It is our aim to find candidates who have a strong interest in ecology and conservation, who have a background to gain much from the camp and who offer promise of using the training to advance the cause of conservation. Consequently it is requested that the following information be provided for each nominee: (1) evidence of interest and activity to date, (2) evidence of ability to profit significantly from the training, (3) ways in which the benefits would probably be "passed back" into the community and (4) financial need, if any.

We stress the need to make our reservation early to assure a place in the session of our winner's choice. We therefore ask that all nominations be submitted by no later than March 15 (sorry for the short notice). If you think you know someone who could benefit from this award, please contact:

Eileen Gray  
4866 Vieja Drive  
Santa Barbara, CA 93111  
or

Jim Greaves  
1826½ Loma St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103



### Sad Farewell

The News-Press recently reported the death of T. Nelson Metcalf at Valle Verde retirement community at the age of 91.

The Metcalfs came to Santa Barbara in 1956 shortly after his retirement from the position of Athletic Director of the University of Chicago. Nelson promptly joined the Museum Bird Group here. In 1963 he was one of the founders of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society and served as its first president. Thereafter he served it in many capacities such as secretary and field trip chairman until the late 1970s. In 1967 he prepared the first edition of the 'Birds of the Santa Barbara Region' for the society. He also taught adult classes in ornithology for the Continuing Education program of Santa Barbara City College.

Many outdoorsmen in this and other regions will long remember Nelson Metcalf as a fine teacher and excellent field companion. We are fortunate that he chose to spend his retirement years in our midst. The family requests that any memorials be directed to the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.



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EL TECOLOTE  
Santa Barbara Audubon Society  
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