

El Tecolote

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Ron Hirst
Editor

Vol. 30, No. 2
October-November 1991



MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Friday Evening
October 25, 1991
8:00pm

Farrand Hall
Mus. Natural History

"The Story of California's Endangered Wildlife" presented by B. Moose Peterson

How many of you have seen a Giant Kangaroo Rat, Least Bell's Vireo or Unarmored Three-spined Stickleback? These are endangered species right in our own backyard. What about a California Leaf-nosed Bat, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, or Little Kern Golden Trout? These, along with the state's many other rare and endangered species will come to life through Moose's multi-media presentation. Moose will highlight the story of California's endangered wildlife through his photographs and knowledge from working with the state's rare, sensitive and endangered wildlife for the past decade.

California has more endangered species than anywhere else in North America. Threatened with extinction from the loss of their native habitat, these species face additional pressure from the state's projected population growth of ten million by the year 2000. Next year the Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization. Will it be strong enough to protect even the most forgotten or smallest native species from extinction? Moose's one-hour presentation will provide you with the insight to better understand the issues and make a positive difference!



Friday Evening
~~November 22, 1991~~ Dec. 6
8:00pm

Farrand Hall
Mus. Natural History

"Sea Birds of the Southern California Region" presented by Paul Collins

This slide show and lecture will cover various kinds of habitats of the region, common species found in each habitat, foraging behavior, and unique biological adaptations for marine birds. Mr. Collins is Associate Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He has done extensive research over the past 17 years on mammals and birds of the Channel Islands region, as well as studies on the distribution of reptiles and amphibians in this area.

AUDUBON ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

October

- Sun. 6 SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL PELAGIC TRIP. Call now for your place on this all-day sightseeing and wildlife cruise to the channel islands. See last month's El Tecolote for details or call Joy Parkinson (CRIC) at 964-6477 or 967-9371 for more information and reservations.
- Sat. 12-
Sun. 13 MORRO BAY/MONTANA DE ORO. This overnight trip will be co-led by our own Everett King and expert S.L.O. birder Jim Royer. This is a prime time for rare passerine birds and a few stops will be made at hot spots on the way to Morro Bay. 15 people can be accommodated at our campsites and the trip limit will be 20. A wide range of birds will be seen and will include warblers, lots of species in Morro Bay and possible rarities just about anywhere. Leave 8:00 am Saturday and return Sunday afternoon. Call the Audubon office, 964-1468 to sign up or obtain more information.



- Fri. 25 MONTHLY PROGRAM: "The Story of California's Endangered Wildlife". See page 1.
- Sat. 26 SANTA BARBARA HARBOR and BIRD REFUGE. This field trip will emphasize finding and identifying shorebirds and waterbirds found near our city. A good diversity of ducks, sandpipers, gulls, terns and other birds will be seen. Leading is Rob Lindsay (964-9514) who taught ornithology in Santa Barbara for many years. Rob's knowledge benefits the beginning and advanced birder alike. Meet in front of the Navy building at the Harbor at 7:30am for a morning of birding.

November

- Sat. 9 STOW HOUSE/LAKE LOS CARNEROS/GOLETA CREEKS. This is the time of year for migrant and vagrant birds. The trip leader, Guy Tingos (687-8266) will tailor the expedition depending upon the availability of water and where the birds are thickest! Meet Guy at Stow house in north Goleta at 8:00am for a morning of birding.
- Sat. 16 CARPINTERIA Slough. Wayne Ferren (961-2506) of the UCSB Herbarium will lead this popular trip which will focus on the flora, avifauna, and ecology of one of the area's best wetland preserves. In order to minimize the impact on the wetland the exploration is limited to 30 persons. Call the Audubon office to reserve your place! Meet at the Andree Clark Bird Refuge at 8:30am for car pooling.

Dec. 6

- Fri. ~~22~~ MONTHLY PROGRAM: "Sea Birds of the Southern California Region" See page 1.
- Sat. 23 HAPPY CANYON/FIGUEROA MOUNTAIN, with Jeff Chemnick (965-0895), to look at oak savanna, chaparral and montane birds. The scenery and altitude contribute to this being an invigorating field trip.
- DEC. 28 92nd ANNUAL AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT.

If there is heavy rain on the day of the trip please call the leader.

The **Carpinteria Creek** clean-up took in about 800 pounds of trash this year. Clean-up and restoration of the creek is a multi-year project being undertaken by the Carpinteria Creek Committee, a local activist group. A similar innovative creek restoration project is being undertaken by the Urban Creeks Council on **San Jose Creek** in Goleta. These creek restoration projects are new endeavors which are the subjects of much research and which could be precedent setting statewide.

Southern California Audubon chapters won a victory when the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recently proposed the **California gnatcatcher** for endangered status. Under the Endangered Species Act, final action should be completed by USFWS within a year. This action protects not only the gnatcatcher but also the coastal sage scrub habitat upon which it and other indigenous species depend. Only 10 to 15 % of this habitat remains. The gnatcatcher once ranged in Ventura and San Bernardino counties but is now limited to increasingly smaller pockets of habitat. It is no longer found in Ventura or San Bernardino and is only on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in Los Angeles County. The USFWS Pacific regional director says, "We are committed to working with California's 'natural community' conservation planning approach to protect habitats that contain numerous sensitive species." Our Audubon chapter wrote a letter in support of listing.

Oil Leasing Plan Update

The Minerals Management Service only California hearing on Sept. 18th in Santa Maria was quite an event! The six MMS administrators appeared blase but a group from San Luis Obispo stirred things up by shouting and demanding that everyone be admitted to the crowded meeting room. Everyone in the room became agitated and police helped restore order. Finally, the meeting room was expanded and the additional 100 people waiting in the hallway were allowed in to sit or stand.

Some notable quotes were given in testimony about the plan. From the representative of Sen. Gary Hart came "proposal should be soundly rejected" and "**sham of the planning and conservation process**" and "we can only wonder if such findings would be made if oil rigs were proposed off Kennebunkport, ME." From the S.B. County Supervisors came well thought out statements about postponing the leases until a coherent **National Energy Policy** is formulated and comments that MMS shouldn't ignore Santa Barbara's wish for pipeline, not tanker, oil transport. From the representative of Assemblyman O'Connell came testimony in advocacy of his Calif. Assembly Bill No. 888 that would create an **Ocean Sanctuary** in much of the planned lease area. EDC Chief Counsel Mark Chyttillo said the plan "failed in its lack of consideration of environmental and ecological details" and "we'll see you in court!"

In general, **nine out of ten speakers were against** the plan and many were hostile to MMS. Recurrent themes included having a National Energy Policy instead of more development, a lack of objectivity in the plan, inadequate impact and mitigation measures in the plan, and protection of the central Calif. coast as a marine sanctuary. It was a raucous meeting and I doubt that the hundreds who wanted to testify got a chance before the midnight closing. By the time Bob Sollen and I left only 30 or so had spoken. The format of the meeting did seem to support the contention that MMS is insensitive to our local concerns and that the cards are stacked against us.

--Ron Hirst

YOUNG CONDORS TO MAKE HISTORY

In a historic move, two young captive-bred California condors in a few days will get new homes in the wilds where none of their species has spread its wings for four years.

The move will be October 10, but the birds won't fly far for a while. Until January they'll be confined to a net enclosure in the Sespe Condor Refuge. They'll be under constant watch by monitors in a blind.

"The enclosure will be big enough for them to test their wings and see their natural environment," said Robert Mest, coordinator of the Condor Recovery Program. Mest, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, spoke at the September 27 meeting of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, and was interviewed before the meeting.

If all goes well, the two chicks, six and eight months old, will be turned loose in January in the region where the last of the 27 remaining condors were captured in 1987. Captive breeding at the San Diego Wild Animal Park and the Los Angeles Zoo has brought the population to 52.

From now on if all goes well, condors will be released annually, Mest said.

Thirteen young captive-bred Andean condors have been monitored in the former range for three years to indicate how young California condors are likely to behave when their turn comes.

Captive breeding will continue, he said, and only young birds will be released. The sex of the first two is unknown. Mest said that scientists didn't want to disturb the birds with sexing tests, and it doesn't matter now anyway. Condors aren't sexually mature until they're six or eight years old, and many more will enter the wilds before the first two are mature.

The birds were taken from the wilds in the 1980s because they were dying off rapidly. Some were shot, some were electrocuted on power lines, some died of poisoning from lead pellets or bullets in carcasses, and other causes.

Mest is confident that the urge to shoot condors has passed, and that the use of copper bullets will eliminate the threat of lead poisoning. Much land in the condor range that was threatened with development has become public and is under governmental protection.

--Bob Sollen



Field Trip Reports

In September the Goleta Beach trip started the day watching a large mixed flock in a feeding frenzy well off the pier. Later at Devereux Slough the group saw sandpipers and a migrating Osprey. The McGrath State Beach trip began at the Bird Refuge with a resplendent male Wood Duck and a Merlin. At McGrath beach 3 juvenile Red Knots were found. As everyone studied the shorebirds one observant young girl asked what "those" birds are and we turned to see four jaegers chasing a gull nearby. Later more Parasitic Jaegers were seen and 2 Common Moorhens and a Tropical Kingbird were at the waste treatment plant.

Excerpt of Letter by NAS V.P. of Public Affairs, Graham Cox

The work that Audubon is doing today builds on our tradition of protecting birds and wildlife. But the issues today are far more complex than they were in the early 1900s or even in the 1960s. Today, birds, wildlife, and wildlife habitat -- our living barometer of environmental health -- face serious threats, and Audubon must continue to change its approach to be effective.

Our four high priority campaigns focus on protection of four critical wildlife habitats: ancient forests, wetlands, the Platte River system, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. All of these areas are under intense threat. If they are destroyed, great numbers of wildlife species, including birds, will be affected, and some, like the spotted owl, may become extinct as the ancient forest disappears. We have also organized a major effort to strengthen the Endangered Species Act, which itself is threatened as it comes up for reauthorization in Congress.

Today, the only way to protect birds is to protect habitat. The most effective way to protect habitat is to deal with the forces which seek to destroy it. So, for example, the key to saving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is to convince Congress that there are better ways to meet our energy needs than drilling for oil in that wild and special place. That in turn must lead us to consider national and international energy policies as they affect wildlife habitat. This concern has also told us, as an organization, that we should be setting an example in our own energy use, hence our commitment to developing energy-efficient offices where waste is kept to a minimum and reuse and recycling are part of our daily lives. We can show, in all our work, how it always relates back to protecting habitat, birds and wildlife.

Something new and important being done these days is that your board and interested members are putting in writing ideas that will be refined into a chapter Mission Statement and goal objectives. All member are encouraged to participate and submit ideas. Two brainstorming meetings have been held so far and two more are planned.

A Southern California Coordinating Council (area Audubon chapters) meeting will be held Nov. 2nd in Laguna Hills. These council meetings are held every three months and bring together local members, state and NAS representatives. Topics run the gamut from local to national issues.

September Board of Directors Meeting

Chair reports were given. Finance and insurance issues discussed. New stationary to be implemented with our new office address. Membership beginning job of learning the new computer program. Programs scheduled through April. Education fundraising initiative discussed. Mission and Goals project mentioned.

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY - OFFICERS 1991-92

| | | |
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