

El Tecolote

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY



May/June 1995

Vol. 33, No. 7

Don't Shoot! Please!

► Paul Keller

DURING my early years as a birdwatcher, almost any trip to a new birding place would yield a life bird, or perhaps several. Like most birders I'm a morning person, so the thought of skipping say New Year's Eve festivities so I could rise early and have a place, whatever place, more or less to myself sounded inviting. So, before dawn one New Year's Day I found myself driving from Los Angeles (where I lived at the time) to Lake Piru just east of the Sespe Condor Refuge.

I'd seen condors before: My first sighting had been the previous June at the summit of Mt. Pinos. With my sister Marilyn, I drove to the parking lot at the end of the road not really knowing where to go from there. We managed to find our way up the trail amongst the limber pines at the top of the mountain just in time to see a circling thunderbird eclipse the sky. With deafening silence, the great vulture seemed to move so slowly — move, not fly, as if staying in the sky by means of antigravity levitation rather than by normal avian aerodynamics. The experience so affected me that before the summer was over I'd been back twice to Mt. Pinos to see condors again. Now I was at Lake Piru hoping for another glimpse.

I quickly got down to the business of ticking off some life birds. On the lake I saw my first bufflehead and common merganser. In the streamside growth I checked off a ruby-crowned kinglet, and in the coastal sage-scrub a sage sparrow. Yet the bird that made that day (and not just because it was a life bird) was the golden eagle perched on a fence post on the ridge across the lake. This fully adult eagle took to the air and flew across the crest before swooping towards the shore where it frightened a great blue heron into a panic flight. Passing the heron, the eagle then flew along the water flushing some dabbling ducks and gave chase for a moment until it powered its way back up, caught a thermal and soared over the ridge. With the eagle now out of sight, the life below could recover from its dominance.

A strange, distant popping noise shook me out of my reverie. Checking the source, I saw three young *hombres*, with beer and rifles, shooting at a red-tailed hawk circling overhead. The buzzard flew off. What should I do? Should I say something? Another bird soared over the hill into view. I looked through the binoculars — a condor! Cruising in that stately way as only

(See *Don't Shoot!* on page 4)

May Programs

Wednesday, May 17, 1995

Faulkner Gallery, S.B. Main Library
7:15 p.m. Find a seat / 7:30 p.m. Enjoy the show

Twenty-sixth Annual Members' Slide-Show Exhibition

By this time of the year, quite a few of us have decided that some of our slides are just as eye-catching as those we have seen at Audubon Programs. So Lee Moldaver, in his role as chapter president, has decreed that all and any members who wish to present examples of their avian and nature photographic artistry, should collect together no more than fifteen of their slides to be shown at Members' Slide Night. This year this special event is being held at the Faulkner Gallery. Please take note, Lee is also opening up the exhibition to painters and sculptors, so be on the lookout for something new.

Dave Wass, the program chair, asks all would-be exhibitors, including photographers, painters, sculptors, to phone him at 682-6962 to reserve projector time or exhibition space. The chief judge and awards chairwoman will be Sally Walker.

Friday, May 26, 1995

Farrand Hall, S.B. Museum of Natural History
7:45 p.m. Joyce's refreshments / 8:00 p.m. Program begins

Bob Barnes and "Birds in the Balance"

Unlike most humans, birds don't pay attention to political boundaries. They go where the food is, and will continue to until the availability of food and friendly habitats declines to zero. Unfortunately, that is just what is happening. Appropriate habitats at both ends of many birds' migration routes — and in between — are being obliterated by thoughtless human agricultural and development practices.

Bob Barnes has some ideas (and slides) about this and he thinks that you have some too. He is coming all the way from Sacramento to talk with you. Yes, Bob has a title: Birds in the Balance Coordinator for the Western Region, and he is a past president of both the Tulare County Audubon Society and the California Wilderness Coalition.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 13: Pelagic trip from Ventura Harbor to Anacapa, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands

This trip is SOLD OUT! A standby list is being compiled for possible last-minute cancellations. Call Jeff Chemnick (965-0895) for status.

Saturday, May 27: Goleta creeks and vicinity

Karen Bridgers will lead this hunt for spring migrants around the Goleta creeks and vicinity that she knows so well. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Stowe House parking lot, 304 North Los Carneros Rd., Goleta. Back before lunch. No charge. Call Karen (964-1316) for information.

Saturday, June 3: International Center for Earth Concerns — Garden and Habitat Preserve

This is make-up day for the previously scheduled trip. We will visit this incredible 350-acre ranch and preserve in the Ojai foothills. The exotic African and Australian gardens should still be in bloom. Director John Taft is our host and guide. Meet at Andree Clark Bird Refuge at 7:30 a.m. and carpool to Ojai. Bring a lunch and we'll eat on the grounds after our tour. Return to SB early afternoon. Cost is \$5 per person. Please bring cash, or check payable to ICEC, with you. Call Jeff Chemnick (965-0895) for more information.

Confessions of a Nuthatch Avider

Bird watchers top my honors list.
I aimed to be one, but I missed.
Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,
My aim turned out to be erratic,
And I, bespectacled and binocular,
Exposed myself to comment jocular.
We don't need too much birdlore, or do we,
To tell a flamingo from a towhee;
Yet I cannot, and never will,
Unless the silly bird stands still.
And there's no enlightenment in a tour
Of ornithological literature.
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,
Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?
You rush to consult your nature guide
And inspect the gallery inside,
But a bird in the open never looks
Like its picture in the birdie books —
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage,
And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,
Watching the clock instead of the finches,
But sometimes I visualize in my gin
The Audubon that I audibin.

— Ogden Nash



CONSERVATION REPORT

◆ "Takings" legislation is the number one anti-environmental legislation. On March 3 the House passed (277-148) takings legislation, HR 925, requiring taxpayers to pay for even the most minor impacts on property values that result from enforcement of certain federal regulations. The bill was narrowed to apply only to impacts caused by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and wetlands protection provisions of the Clean Water Act, and "Swampbusters" in the Farm bill. A further provision guarantees that an owner of water rights under most federal water-related statutes is guaranteed compensation if his water right is diminished by a government action. The original proposal to compensate landowners if 50% of their property value was lost was considered too mild, and the final bill would provide compensation to any landowner who loses 20% of the value of the *portion of the property affected* by the ESA or wetlands law. If more than 50% of the property is affected, the government would be required to buy the entire property at the landowner's request.

The requirement that taxpayers compensate landowners automatically for virtually any impact on private property caused by these laws could cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. This bill is an extremely effective backdoor attempt to gut both the ESA and federal wetlands protection.

The Senate is critical to our efforts to stop takings legislation; we can expect floor action anytime in May or June. Let Senators Feinstein and Boxer know by phone, fax or letter that you want strong ESA and wetlands protection, and object to takings legislation.

U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein

331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 228-3841 / Fax: (202) 228-3954

U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer

112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-3553 / Fax: (310) 414-5700 (L.A. office)

◆ Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH) is a long-standing, legally enforceable land designation put in place to protect rare and threatened ecosystems such as native grasslands, unique wildlife habitat, and wetlands in California. Recent decisions by our county supervisors put carefully chosen ESH areas at risk of development. Your board of directors and National Audubon leaders support initiatives fighting development in these areas. We are providing monetary support to the Save Ellwood Shores and EDC legal actions against the approvals for the Southwest Diversified property.

◆ Volunteers who responded to our newsletter appeal were trained on how to select and grow native California plants and trees. We will be growing them during the spring and summer in order to plant this fall at a site chosen for restoration.

◆ Your chapter donated 14 pairs of old binoculars and a old scope to the Audubon Birds in the Balance campaign. These binoculars will be highly valued by naturalists in Mexico who otherwise could not afford such tools. If you have old optical equipment that works or can be refurbished, please make it a tax-deductible donation to your chapter and we will forward it to Birds in the Balance.

— Ron Hirst

Sharing a Passion for Birds

Partners in Flight invites you to share your *passion for birds* on International Migratory Bird Day, **May 13, 1995**. The mission of Partners in Flight is to maintain populations of migratory birds.

Sharing your excitement for birds and birding is so important to the successful conservation of birds. Long-term monitoring programs have provided much evidence to suggest that many species of neotropical migratory birds are at risk. Threats to their populations are many and complex, although habitat loss throughout North America, Central America and the Caribbean has had the greatest impact on declines of these species.

Birders are a fast-growing and potentially powerful force in the U.S.: Sixty-five million Americans enjoy bird watching and bird feeding. Are we a massive, silent constituency when it comes to speaking out on behalf of conservation of birds? Let's make 1995 the "Year of the Birder" and make our voices heard. Let's communicate our passion to policy makers, the news media, business leaders, teachers, students, friends, family and neighbors, and let them know of the threats to bird populations, the severity of habitat loss, and the need for sound conservation strategies.

The day will be observed in Santa Barbara County with the third annual International Bird Day census. If you want to participate, or get more information, call the office (964-1468) now.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Birding can be a solitary activity, out alone along the trails, watching, waiting, listening. It links all Auduboners to Mr. Audubon himself (on his Western travels), and to Thoreau and Muir. In the wilds, ego recedes before Nature's majesty, reminding us why Teddy Roosevelt created our National Parks and Forests to fulfill that American vision descending from Jefferson and Lincoln. It's why we *must* resist mercenary pressure to dismantle our legal safeguards for the natural world. And why you should write Congresswoman Andrea Seastrand (1216 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515), encouraging her to protect Nature as God entrusted it to us. Imagine the next generation hiking a clear-cut forest where the trained ear can detect no sound of life. Desperate loggers, fishermen, ranchers worry about tomorrow's paycheck, or corporate balance sheet. We expect our national government to worry about the *future*, and a healthier world.

Yet Audubon is more than just solitary hiking and birding. There's a hearty social component of sharing and caring that makes it great fun. Things like Members' Slide Night (Wednesday, May 17th at the Faulkner Gallery), where those "secret" spots with magic vistas or marvelous wildlife are offered, spiced with a funny story or travel anecdote. Don't *you* have a shot to share? Call 964-1468 to sign up. Or our annual meeting, Sunday, June 11th (Tucker's Grove this year), where food, fun, prizes, and stories combine with election of new board members. Don't *you* know someone who'd be great on the board? Submit their name or nominate them from the (grassy) floor. Take time before our summer break to: salute UCSB Environmental Studies on their 25th anniversary; to volunteer an hour each week at our office; to support an Audubon Adventures classroom for next fall.

And join me in thanking: Karl, Tomi and Jean for their office help; Joy Parkinson and Peggy Boucher for pinch-hitting; Jeff Chemnick (and all his leaders) for the year's great field trips; Dave Wass for the diversity of our numerous programs; Joyce Pettersen for her hospitality at everything; Bob Zeman for keeping our ledgers away from Orange County; Don Rathbun for all his slide shows and presentations; Ron Hirst for tracking Conservation during the year; and finally, Dorin Mayes for making the *El Tecolote* something very special.

— Lee Moldaver

ANNUAL PICNIC & BOARD ELECTION

32nd ANNUAL AUDUBON PICNIC

Sunday, June 11, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Are you hungry for barbequed tri-tip (or an alternative vegetarian dish) accompanied by salad, garlic toast, cake and beverage, served under a canopy of sycamore and live-oak trees? Are you charged up for the challenge and repartee of swift minds in combat and eristic ballet? Have you made your guesses as to which finalists will leave the event garnished with the emblems of honor to be presented by Sally Walker? Are you ready to relax with your long-time Audubon friends, and perhaps meet a few new ones? If so, you're right on schedule for the last meeting of the current Audubon year — the annual picnic on Sunday, June 11th, from noon to three.

This year, part of the price of admission is finding the park where the event will be held — **Tucker's Grove**, instead of Giorgi Park which was badly damaged by the winter storms. Actually, it's very easy to find: at the junction of Cathedral Oaks and Turnpike Roads. If you're not sure, ask the person on duty at the office (964-1468) when you call to make your reservations.

Last of all, this will also be a time of looking back and looking forward — looking back at what our chapter accomplished in the past year, and looking forward to what we want to do in the year ahead, led by the new officers elected during the business portion of the program.

Annual Picnic Reservation

Sunday, June 11, 1995

Name _____
Please reserve _____ Tri-tips; _____ Vegetarian dish
Adults — \$8 each, Children — \$4 each

Please mail your check and this coupon before
June 4, to: Santa Barbara Audubon Society,
5679 Hollister Ave, #5B, Goleta, CA 93117

(Don't Shoot! Continued from page 1)

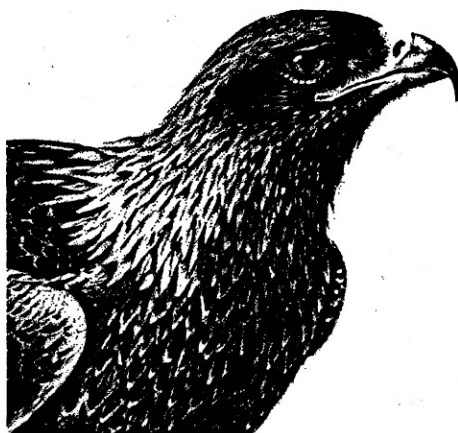
condors can — but this time accompanied by a steady pop, pop, pop — it glided over the ridge unharmed. The bird (representing somewhere between two and three percent of the world's population of California condors) was out of jeopardy — for the moment.

I knew right off I would never forgive myself if I didn't talk to these guys. What if I wimped out, walked away, and this condor flew back into the shooting gallery and a bullet? I walked slowly, thinking of what one lone person could say to three people with guns.

"Excuse me! Excuse me, but did you know that you were just now shooting at a California condor?"

"A condor? No! Condors are so . . . so big!" one of them replied.

I explained that, yes, it really was a condor, as I had just identified it with the binoculars. I pleaded with them to respect the desire of bird lovers such as myself and not shoot at ravens, hawks, eagles — and especially condors, as so few of them are left. I did manage to mention that the law protects these birds. One of the three men pointed to a bird in the sky and asked me what it was. I looked up and told him it was a raven. Then I noticed the golden eagle was back on its fence post and



pointed it out to them. Two of the three showed polite interest but the other kept looking at the speck on the ridge. I handed him my binoculars. He stared at the eagle for several moments, then with seeming reluctance, handed the glasses back to me. I could see that this man had the heart of a birdwatcher.

Well, they assured me they would no longer shoot at "my birds." As I returned to the parking lot I looked over my shoulder and saw the three firing away with their rifles, aiming not at the sky but at ground level towards bottles and cans. Would they continue to respect the lives of birds after I was out of sight? I figured that indeed they would, in small part because of what I'd said, and in large part because an eagle had touched a man's heart.

Audubon Adventures

We're still behind our goal for funding the Audubon Adventures classroom program. Donations in ANY amount are welcome for this really worthwhile project. Please don't disappoint the kids. Send your check today to Santa Barbara Audubon Society, 5679 Hollister Ave, 5B, Goleta, CA 93117.

**THE NEXT MONTHLY MEETING AND NEWSLETTER
WILL BE IN SEPTEMBER — HAVE A GREAT SUMMER.**

Santa Barbara Audubon Society
5679 Hollister Avenue, Suite 5B
Goleta, CA 93117

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SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President: Lee Moldaver	682-2120
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Treasurer: Bob Zeman	964-5731
At-Large: Marie Dornan	968-4496
Joyce Pettersen	967-2741
Conservation: Ron Hirst	967-0138
Education: Don Rathbun	964-5521
Programs: David Wass	682-6962
Field Trips: Jeff Chemnick	965-0895
Membership: Nancy King	964-4741
Hospitality: Joyce Pettersen	967-2741
Publicity: Betty Bazzi	967-5200
Bird Refuge Census: Helen Matelson	966-3217
Rare Bird Reporter: Karen Bridgers	964-1316
Rare Bird Alert	(805) 964-8240
SBAS Office	(805) 964-1468

OFFICE HOURS

Monday	11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Thursday	11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday	11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP

Special new member rate	\$20
Individual	\$35

Please send *only* new member applications and *El Tecolote* subscriptions to: Santa Barbara Audubon Society, 5679 Hollister Ave., Suite 5B, Goleta, CA 93117.

EL TECOLOTE

Editor: Dorin Mayes (805) 683-1079

El Tecolote is published 7 times a year by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society. Members are invited to submit articles, announcements, letters, photos and drawings for publication consideration. Copy deadline is the 10th of the month prior to publication. Non-member subscription is \$10 per year
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RARE BIRD ALERT NUMBERS

Los Angeles	(213) 874-1318
Monterey Bay	(408) 375-9122
Morro Bay	(805) 528-7182
No. Calif.	(510) 524-5592
Orange County	(714) 563-6516
Sacramento	(916) 481-0118
San Bernadino	(909) 793-5599
San Diego	(619) 479-3400