Farren Pretty Well: An Audubon Odyssey
by Bill Hintze

We met, all nine of us, at 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning, May 5, at Hollister and Storke’s scenic Jack-in-the-Box and were soon bound for the Goleta foothills -- Farren Road to be exact -- with visions of avian splendor dancing in our heads. Well, to be truthful, only some of the visions were of splendor — those featuring the dazzling lazuli bunting, blue grosbeak, oriole, and humming. And the other visions? “Conspicuously unmarked buff face with plain buff ear coverts and no whisker marks; dark crown stripe; underparts buff; no streaking; flat head and long bill; short, sharp and narrow tail; voice a thin, buzzy trill, sometimes preceded by an introductory note (tic-zzzzzz).” And I hadn’t thought anything was “conspicuous” about a grasshopper sparrow, much less “conspicuously unmarked!”

Those desiring bedazzlement had their moments, of course, the best occurring at the end as a male Costa’s humming performed its aerial display to the lady of his choice, oblivious to the presence of three awestruck birders only a few short feet away. As the happy hummers flew off together into the haze, one birder confessed to have thought “how romantic” and the rest of us -- the grimmer visaged seekers of the conspicuously unmarked? Well, after hearing tic-zzzzzz for the wearilyly 139th time within an hour without sighting a single flat head, nine sets of eyes found themselves gathered behind Farren’s friendly barbed wire staring across 25 yards of grass into blooming mustard. Nothing. And more nothing. Visual nothing, that is.

Would it be all zzzzzzz and no tic again today? Then, from one of the women, “Look! in the middle of that mustard plant! Yes...” And after the inevitable confusion of “Which plant??” and “I don’t see it,” we all saw it. Then Paul got serious and soon his 25x scope revealed all but the yellow in the bend of a wing shimmering very conspicuously behind rising thermals. And our friend had so many more tic-zzzzzzzz in him that we all got two or three good looks each before he dropped down -- whether for sustenance or privacy he didn’t say. We thanked him fervently.

There were a few unexpected rare visions as well: a white-throated swift, two ravens, a profusion of phainopeplas, and a singing lark sparrow who, remembering his manners, didn’t punctuate his speech with his species’ usual uncouth splats and blats. But by 11:30 all enchantment ended as we delivered ourselves into our respective impatient and every-hungry metal monsters -- until the next Audubon trip should release us from their maws once more.

CONTENTS

An Audubon Odyssey page 1

Lee Moldaver: Final President’s Message page 2

Annual Beach Clean-Up
September 15 page 2

Welcome to New Members page 2

September Program & Fall Field Trips page 3

Land Fund Preservation Fund Lives! page 4
Lee Moldaver: Final President’s Message

After what seems like a few months, three years have passed. New energy, enthusiasm, and ideas in the person of new president Lauren DeChant are poised to renew our chapter. The baton I pass on to Lauren represents a very different Audubon from the one passed to me. Our national vision has been clarified and revitalized and a new strategic plan reemphasizes Audubon’s traditional core values.

We’ve survived harsh recession and political turmoil the last few years. However, decades of environmental progress are under new attack as SB County’s commitment to safeguard our wildlands is no longer solid and budget cuts threaten to keep Audubon Adventures out of the reach of many schools. I am confident that Audubon will rise to these challenges facing it.

I would like to thank those past board members who have done so much for our chapter. Board members like Don Rathbun, who did slide shows for schools, clubs, and seniors between his world-wide bird-watching. Bob Zeman, who kept our books regular and balanced checkbooks while working full-time for Patagonia in Ventura. Jim Greaves, balancing fatherhood, field-naturalist work, and editing El Tecolote when nonpareil Dorin Mayes needed a break. Jeff Chemnick, matching knowledge, humor, and sense of adventure with his ardent conviction that Nature share her beauty free of charge. Where do you find a new Joy Parkinson, who’s always there with wisdom and historical perspective? Or the generosity of a Jerry Franklin, who decided SBAS needed an official chapter pin, then made it happen? Or of a Cathy Rose, who did not hesitate when our Land Preservation Fund needed a boost?

My last days as president have been spent seeking modern office equipment for our chapter, sending thank you notes to all who answered the call to help our Land Fund, and thinking grateful thoughts for the many who helped me through my tour. My one wish for the coming year is for a few more Audubon Office volunteers of the mettle of Karl Weissman, Tomi Sollen, and Jean Moseley. It is these volunteers who impart a human voice to Audubon. Thanks to everyone. See you out in the field, where I will try to sustain my glorious record for species misidentification.

Welcome to New Members

The Santa Barbara Audubon Society extends a warm welcome to all of our new members. We look forward to seeing you at Audubon meetings and field trips this fall. We’re glad you’re part of the growing number of local supporters for Audubon’s efforts to excite people about birds and the preservation of their habitat. Thank you for joining:

Ms. Barbara Bette Bretz
Mr. & Mrs. William Brummett
Mr. C. Cagara
Robert & Allison Coleman
Jane Cosgrove
James Forte
Virginia Guess
Arthur Hoff
Susan Holmes
Francesca Hunter
Patti Jacquemain

W. P. Keller
Sharon Liu
Patrick Martin
J. Martinez
Anton Martinich
Mrs. Helen M. McKee
Rose M. O’Brien
Joseph H. Pollock
Linda Travis
Boyd F. Vonkessinger
Niki J. Zolotas

Saturday, September 15
9:00 a.m. to Noon
Santa Barbara Coastal Commission Annual Beach Clean-up

SBAS has adopted the beach at Coal Oil Point north of UCSB to clean up as part of this yearly event. We’ll meet at the parking area at 9 am, where parking permits will be handed out, for a morning of fun collecting debris from the beach. Snacks will be served to all volunteers. Please join us!
SEPTEMBER PROGRAM
Sparrow Identification Workshop with Jon Dunn

Friday, September 27, 1996
8:00 p.m. program; 7:30 p.m. refreshments
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History — Farrand Hall
1226 Puesta del Sol
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
Admission Fee: $5.00

For more details, call the Audubon Office at (805) 964-1468.

Join us for this month’s program when nationally known field ornithologist, bird tour leader, and author Jon Dunn will lead a workshop on Sparrow Identification for the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.

Jon will show slides and teach the fine points of identifying these little brown birds. A former resident of Santa Barbara, Jon was the major consultant for National Geographic’s Guide to the Birds of North America. He also co-authored The Birds of Southern California with Kimball Garrett and is compiling data on a soon-to-be published field guide to the warblers of North America.

The workshop should be of special interest to the serious birder. Bring your questions and sparrow encounter stories to share with the speaker and audience.

Admission fee will cover the cost of bringing Jon, an internationally-renowned educator, to Santa Barbara for this special 2 hour workshop.

FALL FIELD TRIPS

LAKE LOS CARNEROS, GOLETA
Wednesday, September 18, 8 am
Don Rathbun (805) 964-5521
Target birds: resident passerines
101 to Los Carneros exit north on Los Carneros Road to Stow House parking lot next to fire station. Finish by 11:00 a.m.

GUADALUPE-NIPOMO DUNES PRESERVE (THE NATURE CONSERVANCY) at the Santa Maria River Mouth west of Santa Maria
Saturday, September 21, 7:30 am
Rob Lindsay (805) 964-9514
Target birds: fall shore birds
101 to Storke/Glen Annie exit in Goleta. Go south on Storke Road to Jack-in-the-Box parking lot

near corner of Storke Road and Hollister Avenue. Car pool from there. Bring shoes for sand and warm jacket. Scopes useful. Back by mid-afternoon so bring water and lunch. Drivers may appreciate gas money.

LAKE LOS CARNEROS, GOLETA
Saturday, October 12, 8:00 am
Karen Bridgers (805) 964-1316
Target birds: fall passerines
101 to Los Carneros exit north on Los Carneros Road to Stow House parking lot next to fire station. Finish before noon.

DEVEREUX SLOUGH, GOLETA
Saturday, October 19, 7:30 am
Rob Lindsay (805) 964-9514
From the north take 101 south to Glen Annie, Storke and take Storke Road south and turn left onto El Colegio Road, then right onto Camino Corto Lane. From the south take 101 to Los Carneros Road south past Hollister Avenue to El Colegio Road and turn right. Turn left onto Camino Corto Lane and drive to the end and park on the street. Wear junk shoes because of tar. Scopes useful. Bring water. Trip over by 10:30 a.m.

All field trips are open to the public. Unless otherwise noted, trips are free and reservations are not needed. If you need a loaner pair of binoculars for a trip, call the leader several days in advance.
### Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, September 15</td>
<td>Annual Beach Clean-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve Field Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 27</td>
<td>Sparrow ID Workshop</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Thanks to generous members! Land Preservation Fund lives!

Many thanks to members who contributed to SBAS' first Annual Giving program for our Land Preservation Fund. So far, we have received donations totaling $3,500. These contributions show the dedication amongst Audubon chapter members to protect Santa Barbara's environment. The Board of Directors appreciates your generosity. Thank you!

El Tecolote is published 8 times a year by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc. Non-member price for an annual subscription is $10 per year. Audubon members are invited to send announcements, letters, articles, photos, and drawings for consideration to: Janet Eastman, Editor 525 Lorraine Ave. Santa Barbara, CA 93110 (805) 964-6486 (805) 969-4423 FAX jeastman@silcom.com

Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month.

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**SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**Officers and Committee Chairs**

September 1996 - August 1997

**Officers:**
- President: Lauren DeChant ...... 566-9314
- Vice President: Lee Moldaver.... 682-2120
- Secretary: Everett King........... 569-2307
- Treasurer: Annette de Knijf........ 962-1325

**Committee Chairs**
- Conservation: Dave Wass......... 682-6962
- Education: Elan Sutton.......... 683-1143
- Programs: Gage Ricard.......... 967-3604
- Field Trips: Paul Keller....... 968-7804
- Membership: Nancy King......... 964-4741
- Hospitality: Jay Bishop........ TBA
- Publicity: ......................... TBA
- Bird Refuge: Rob Lindsay....... 964-9514
- Rare Birds: Karen Bridgers..... 964-1316
- At Large
  - Ron Hirst......................... 967-0138
  - Rob Lindsay...................... 964-9514
  - Sally Walker..................... 569-5388

Officers and Committee Chairs meet the second Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to attend. Please call the office to verify dates and times at (805) 964-1468.

*WESTERN SCREECH-OWN PEN & INK ON COVER © EILEEN J. GRAY*

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**El Tecolote 35 (1)**

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**EL TECOLOTE**

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