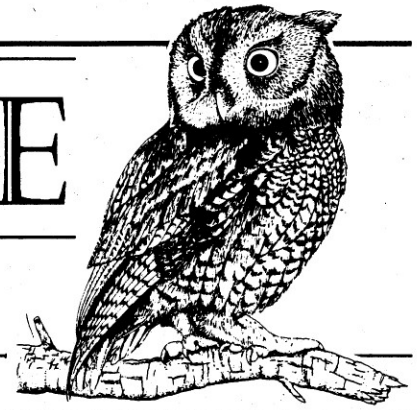


EL TECOLOTE

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Incorporated

Volume 36 Number 4

December 1997 - January 1998



THE REMARKABLE WRENTIT

by
Mickey Long

Its scientific name, *Chamaea fasciata*, means "banded bird on the ground." Hardly banded (a bit striped on the breast perhaps) and rarely seen on the ground, (though low in a bush is the common spot), the Wrentit is a remarkable bird. It is very Californian, ranging up and down our coastal brushlands into Oregon and Baja. More often heard than seen, Wrentits are best counted by listening for the characteristic whistled song, a bouncing ping-pong ball speeding up to a trill. The Wrentit is the only North American songbird in which both male and female develop a full brood patch (a bare zone on the belly for warming eggs) and a cloacal protuberance (a swelling at the vent for sperm storage).

Preferred habitat for these drab little guys is dense, shrubby hillside, and "voice of the chaparral" has long been a nickname. While mist netting and banding birds at Vasquez Rocks one spring, I was rather surprised to capture two Wrentits in the same net in a dense willow stand along the small creek. One was carrying a green caterpillar in its beak. This happenstance added the species to the Park bird list and confirmed their nesting at the same moment. The literature says that green inchworm caterpillars are commonly fed to young. I had not really expected Wrentits in this semi-desert area nor in the deep willows, but they obviously were food gathering and feeding young, probably in the nearby thin chaparral.

Adult food include a variety of insects and spiders and also the fruit of Elderberry, Coffeeberry, Toyon, and even Poison Oak seeds. Point Reyes Bird Observatory has studied the Wrentit in great detail

over many years, and their study of 236 nests indicates an average nest height above the ground at about 26 inches, with a range of about 7 to 54 inches. Pairs mate for life and spend their entire time in about 2.5 acres of habitat.

Showing no close affinity to any other North American songbird, the Wrentit's taxonomic relationship has long been a puzzle for ornithologists. Once in its own family, Chamaeidae, it is currently placed in the large family Muscicapidae but in an Old World subfamily Timaliinae (the babblers of Asia, the Himalayas, and Africa), the only member of the subfamily in North America.

Not flashy, but with a loud "here I am" sound, the Wrentit is a splendid representative of coastal California. Think about the uniqueness of this little bird the next time one lets loose on your walk.

reprinted from the Wrentit, January 1997.

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Santa Barbara Audubon Society
1997 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
 Saturday, January 3, 1998

EVERYONE IS INVITED to help Santa Barbara Audubon with its annual Christmas Bird Count, to be held Saturday, January 3, 1998. On the evening of Count Day, you are all urged to attend the compilation dinner at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History — Fleischmann Auditorium. The potluck dinner begins promptly at 6:00 p.m. and the compilation at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a salad, main dish, or dessert. If your group includes out-of-towners, they may contribute drinks, bread, paper plates, etc. Please bring your own service.

This year's count compiler will be Joan Lentz, assisted by Karen Bridgers and Joan and George Hardie. Please fill out the coupon below and mail it in or call to sign up as soon as possible so that we can organize the count early this year. We will contact you after mid-December to let you know details of the area you will cover.

Before the count watch for the following birds, which we often have difficulty finding on Count Day: grosbeaks, tanagers, orioles, any non-Anna's Hummingbirds, unusual sparrows at feeders such as White-throated or Harris'. Other species we will need: any geese, dippers, pygmy-owls, and Long-billed Curlews. In fact, we are interested in any species listed as rare or very rare in the *Birds of Santa Barbara County Checklist* by Lehman and Lentz. If you see any of the above, or have knowledge of any other interesting birds, please call Joan Lentz at (805) 969-4397 or Karen Bridgers at (805) 964-1316.

A \$5.00 participation fee will be collected on Count Day. Thanks for your help! See you at the Count!

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY
1997 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
 Saturday, January 3, 1998



Yes, I/we want to join the Bird Count team!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Preferred area: _____

Would like to work with: _____

Dinner ☐ Leader ☐ Feeder Count ☐

Complete this form and send to:

Pat Kelly

554 Litchfield Lane

Santa Barbara, CA 93109

or call her at (805) 962-9916

Central Valley Birding
 Symposium
 December 4-7, 1997

JOIN KENN KAUFMAN, Kimball Garrett, Jan Pierson, Nancy Newfield, Ted Beedy, and many other world-class birders as they launch the new Central Valley Bird Club at a Birding Symposium in Stockton, California. They'll cover a wide range of birds as well as photography and field sketching. You can shop for books, optics, birding gear and explore area hot spots from Yolo County to the Merced Wildlife Refuge. For an informational brochure call Cindy at (800) 350-1987.

"MOSTLY BIRDS"

Gallery 113 - 1114 State St. No. 8
 December 3, 1997 - January 3, 1998
 Reception December 6, 2- 5 p.m.

The works of local sculptor A.L. "Pitt" Pittinger will be featured at this holiday show and include wood, alabaster, ceramic, and bronze. Presented by the Santa Barbara Art Association.

La Purisima Audubon
 Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 21, 1997
 Call John Ayres at 1-805-563-2905.

Morro Bay Winter Bird
 Festival
 January 16-19, 1998

COME CELEBRATE THE RETURN of wintering birds to Morro Bay at the second annual Winter Bird Festival. Co-sponsored by the Morro Coast Audubon, the festival offers over 35 expert guided field trips and 20 workshops and presentations. For a brochure contact the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 876, Morro Bay, CA 93443 or call (800) 231-0592.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

The Birth of a Flying Jewel

A presentation on hummingbirds by
Clayton Fogle

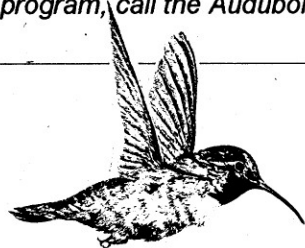
Wednesday, December 17
8:00 P.M.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. for refreshments.
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
Farrand Hall
1226 Puesta del Sol
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

CLAYTON FOGLE HAS HAD a life-long fascination with hummingbirds, and he has become a recognized expert in photographing them. His images of hummingbirds have been published in books such as *A Dazzle of Hummingbirds*, *Discover Birds*, and *Hummingbirds: Jewels in Flight*; and in magazines, including *Birder's World*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Wild Bird*, and *Zoonooz*. His images of other birds and animals appear in *The National Geographic Resource Guide*, among other publications. In his Santa Barbara Audubon program, Clayton will dazzle us with the exquisite beauty of the hummingbird in flight, feeding, nesting and courting.

Please note: Prior to the 8 p.m. program, hummingbird-themed items will be for sale, such as night lights and note cards. You are encouraged to come at 7:30 p.m., when the doors open, to check out these items!

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



Sierra Nevada Field Campus Bird Courses

The Sierra Nevada Field Campus — a division of San Francisco State University College of Science & Engineering — located in Sattley, California, offers bird courses every summer. To find out next year's offerings, call (916) 862-1234 or peruse their website:

<http://thecity.sfsu.edu/snfc/course/htm>.

JANUARY PROGRAM

Antarctic Long-Term Ecological Research: Adelie Penguins, Canaries for Climate Change?

a presentation by Dr. Ray Smith
Wednesday, January 28, 1998, 8:00 p.m.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. for refreshments.
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
Farrand Hall
1226 Puesta del Sol
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

THE ANTARCTIC IS STILL one of the most forbidding and fascinating spots on the planet, and a place of great beauty. In this program for Santa Barbara Audubon, UCSB Geography Professor Ray Smith, a Principal Investigator of the Palmer Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) Program, will share his experiences and give highlights of his research. In the course of his presentation, Dr. Smith will talk briefly about Antarctic sea birds, most notably the Adelie and Chinstrap penguins, and their role in helping scientists assess climate change. In addition to his work on LTER, Dr. Smith is a member of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) Environmental Effects Panel reporting on ozone depletion.

About Solicitations ...

If you are bothered by solicitations from National Audubon Society, you can have your name removed from their appeals list. Just drop a line to the membership department stating your wishes. Including a mailing label from the magazine will speed up the process. Write to: Membership, National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-9562.

El Tecolote is published 8 times a year by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc. Non-member price for an annual subscription is \$15 per year. Please send announcements, letters, articles, or other items for consideration by the 10th of the month to:

Janet Eastman, Editor
Santa Barbara Audubon Society
5679 Hollister Avenue - Suite 5B
Goleta, CA 93117
(805) 964-1468 FAX: (805) 967-7718



DECEMBER & JANUARY FIELD TRIPS

CARRIZO PLAIN, SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5-6

target: Short-eared Owl, Sandhill Crane, Mountain Plover, birds of prey, Mountain Bluebird, Sage Thrasher, Horned Larks, Sage Sparrow

leader: Tom Rohrer: (805) 898-0646

Trip begins Saturday morning at *Motel 6* in San Luis Obispo — \$30 double/\$46 single occupancy. Carpool drivers will appreciate gas money. Bring money for meals. Participants must call Tom for directions to motel, carpool arrangements, and other information. No gas, water, or food on the Plain. Bring food and beverage for snacks and lunch. Dress for hot, cold, and rain. To reserve your space send check with name, address, and phone to reach Santa Barbara Audubon Society, 5679 Hollister Ave, Suite 5B, Goleta, CA 93117-3402 by November 15. Trip limited to 10 participants. Those seeking a roommate may want to tell Tom their smoking and snoring habits and tolerance and their gender.

PALO ALTO BAYLANDS

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13-14

target: Black Rail, California Clapper Rail, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, water fowl

leader: Don Rathbun (805) 968-7804

Trip begins Saturday morning at a motel in or near Palo Alto. Cost not yet known but will include gas, meals, and lodging. Participants must call Don between Nov. 5 and 30th. Those near Santa Barbara will carpool to Palo Alto Friday evening. The extreme high tide on Saturday may flush target birds in view in time for some to drive home that day. Others may wish to bird through Sunday, chasing vagrants, trying again for the rail if not seen, or viewing abundant waterfowl.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AREA

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1998, 8:00 A.M.

target: rare birds seen at previous week's Christmas Bird Count

leader: Paul Keller (805) 968-7804

Meet at Carl's Jr., 3925 State St. Take 101 to La Cumbre exit in Santa Barbara. Go north on La Cumbre Rd. and turn left into Five Points Shopping Center and park at Carl's Jr. AAA Santa Barbara & Vicinity E-16, DeLorme p. 98 A-7. Car pool from here. Priority will be to get permission to look for rarities on private property. Trip over before lunch.

VENTURA COUNTY GAME PRESERVE IN OXNARD

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1998, 7:30 A.M.

target: Virginia Rail, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Yellow-headed Blackbird

leader: Guy Tingos, (805) 681-0026

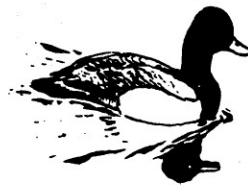
Meet at Andrée Clark Bird Refuge parking lot. From the east take 101 north to Cabrillo Blvd. (left lane exit just past town of Montecito). Take Cabrillo and turn right onto Los Patos Way and look for bird refuge on left. From the west, take 101 south to Los Patos off ramp (after Milpas exit) and turn right into refuge parking. Carpool from here. If you want to meet at the game preserve, call leader for directions and procedures. Trip over by noon.

Looking ahead ...

February 22 — Figueroa Mountain with Dave Compton

March 7 — Rancho Jocosco with Jeff Chemnick

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.



Birding in California Tour January 1-18, 1998

A JANUARY 1-18 Southern California "birding marathon" tour will follow the annual National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Counts. The tour, being organized by Gadabout Tours in Sacramento, will originate in San Diego and include Newport Beach, Borrego Springs, the Salton Sea (winter bird capital of California) and the area near Brawley and El Centro. A per-person price of \$1,175 includes double-occupancy lodging, ground transportation, daily breakfast and lunch, park admissions, gratuities, and a pre-tour briefing. The trip will be escorted by expert birder Todd Easteria and is restricted to eight members. For details, call (916) 455-4734.

INTERNET ADDRESSES

The following universal resource locators (URL) for some World Wide Web pages may be of interest to birders who are on line:

1. Audubon-California: <http://www.audubon-ca.org>
2. Southern California Audubon info:
<http://www.audubon.org/audubon/SoCal.html>
3. LA County Breeding Bird Atlas:
<http://www.lam.mur.ca.us/~lacbba/>
4. Office of Migratory Bird Management:
<http://www.fws.gov/~r9mbmo/homepg.html>
5. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: <http://www.fws.gov>
6. Refuge Net: <http://www.refugenet.com>
7. Birding on the Web: <http://www.birder.com>
8. Birding (with links to other pages):
<http://antares.prodigy.com/igroups/playtime/birdcoi/birdcoi.htm>
9. Sibley-Monroe Classification of the World's Birds:
<http://compstat.wharton.upenn.edu:8001/~siler/birdframe.html>
10. Wild Birds Unlimited:
<http://www.wbu.com>
(A feeder cam updates pictures of birds at the store feeder!)



RARE BIRD ALERT
(805) 964-8240

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Santa Barbara Audubon Society extends a warm welcome to all new members. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming Audubon meetings and field trips. 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:

Susan Belanger
Mr. Frank Ilse Bourbeau
J.C. Castor
Beverly Cheverez
K.G. Crawford
Mr. R. S. Downey
Travis Fisher
Warren Gardner
T.L. Gorrindo
Anne Linn
Heather McBride

Christine McConnell
Paul Morlan
Genevieve Nowlin
Susan Richards
Theophil X. Siebold
Mr. Joseph E. Skyes
John Snodgrass
Mrs. Laura Swander
David B. Welby
Donna Whitney

A Challenging Volunteer Project Isla Vista School Nature Study Program

Isla Vista School principal Steve Flores is putting together a nature study program for 4th and 5th graders and is looking for two Auduboners to act as instructors and mentors to four classes. The study site is 24 acres of wetlands, riparian habitat, and native grasslands located next door to the school.

SBAS has volunteered to find the two instructors, whose main qualifications should be a sense of adventure and a willingness to try. To be part of this challenging project, please phone Dave Wass at (805) 682-6962.



☒ **YES!**

National Audubon Society Membership Application

I want to join
Audubon and help
protect wildlife and
wildlife habitats.

Special new-member rate of \$20

Make check payable to and send to:

National Audubon Society
Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 5100
Boulder, CO 80321-1000

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Zip _____

Local Chapter — Santa Barbara Audubon Society C13 7XCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday-Sunday, December 4-7	Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton
Friday-Saturday, December 5-6	Carrizo Plain field trip
Friday-Saturday, December 12-13	Palo Alto Baylands field trip
Wednesday, December 17	December Program: <i>Birth of a Jewel</i> - hummingbirds
Sunday, December 21	La Purisima Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count
January 1-18, 1998	Birding in California trip
Saturday, January 3, 1998	SBAS Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, January 10, 1998	Christmas Bird Count Area f.t.
Tues.-Fri., January 16-19, 1998	Morro Bay Bird Festival
Wednesday, January 28, 1998	January Program: <i>Antarctic Long-Term Ecological Research: Adelie Penguins, Canaries for Climate Change?</i>
Saturday, January 31, 1998	Ventura County Game Preserve f.t.

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers and Committee Chairs
September 1997 - August 1998

OFFICERS

President: Lauren DeChant 566-9314
Vice President: Lee Moldaver.... 682-2120
Secretary: Everett King..... 569-2307
Treasurer: Chris Walden 969-4256

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Conservation: Dave Wass..... 682-6962
Education: Elan Sutton..... 683-1143
Field Trips: Paul Keller..... 968-7804
Newsletter: Janet Eastman 964-1468
Programs: Gage Ricard..... 967-3604
Membership: David Kisner..... 692-9792
Publicity: Sheila Golburgh Johnson 682-4618

BIRD REFUGE: Rob Lindsay..... 964-9514

RARE BIRDS: Karen Bridgers..... 964-1316

AT LARGE

Darlene Chirman 692-2008
Don & Florence Stivers 967-3690

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. FAX (805) 967-7718.

PEN & INK DRAWING ON COVER BY DARYL HARRISON

EL TECOLOTE

Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.
5679 Hollister Avenue — Suite 5B
Goleta, California 93117

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