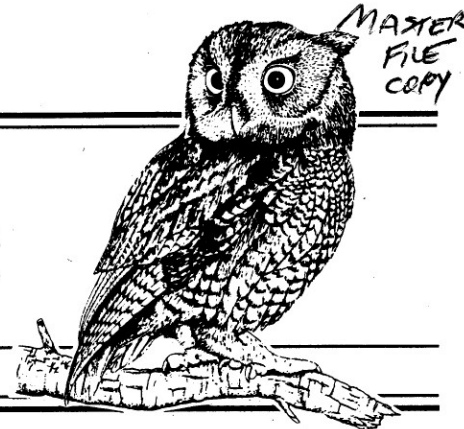


# El Tecolote

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.

Volume 36, Issue 8

May-June 1998



## Selva Verde, Costa Rica

by Sheila Golburgh Johnson

**L**ooking for a good place to enjoy our anniversary, my husband and I acted on the recommendation of local naturalist Cathy Rose and booked two weeks at the end of January at Selva Verde Lodge in the Atlantic lowlands of Costa Rica. We flew into San Jose, where Guillermo, our driver, picked us up early the next morning for the drive over the mountains to the lodge on the Sarapiquí River in the small village of Chilamate. At first we wound through thick fog that prevented a long view, but the steep banks beside the road were bright pink and red with impatiens, a non-native that lines the road for miles. From time to time there was a break in the fog and Guillermo would point out a Cecropia tree rising on the horizon. Beyond the mountains, the land changed to rolling meadows studded with trees. Guillermo, who carries his own binoculars and field guide, was delighted that we were birdwatchers and obligingly stopped every time he spotted a bird. We would see many of them again during our stay, but I have to thank Guillermo for our only sighting of a pair of Laughing Falcons, roosting together on a tree limb in the middle of a meadow. Other birds he stopped for were a Brown Jay, a Squirrel Cuckoo of the most beautiful russet color, Montezuma Oropendola, Red-lore Parrots, Orange-chinned Parakeets, a Roadside Hawk, and a flock of Groove-billed Anis; we also passed Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, and Cattle Egrets in the damper meadows. Eventually he pulled up at the Selva Verde office, and a moment after we jumped out of the van he pointed. "Look!"

We aimed our binoculars and saw our first Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, sitting in a branch eating fruit as if ... well, as if he lived here. After registration we drove to the unloading dock for the rooms, which are on an interconnected maze of boardwalks built on pilings to avoid flooding during the wet season. Guillermo led us to our room at the very end of the boardwalk, facing the river rushing over rocks about fifty yards away through the rain forest. We had difficulty keeping up with him, for the boardwalk enclosed a series of courtyards planted with various fruiting trees and hung with feeders that were bright with flashing, flirting, and feeding birds, already pairing up for mating since it was summer in Costa Rica. Often on our way back to the room after breakfast we would explore other parts of the boardwalk until -- OOPS! -- it was time to head for the dining room

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## Vandenberg Finds Ducky Use for Ponds

excerpted from the L. A. Times,  
December 7, 1997

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, between Lompoc and Santa Maria, is letting the public view a whole new class of flying objects: birds.

In a little-publicized project, the base, aided by the La Purisima chapter of the Audubon Society, has converted four obsolete waste-water treatment ponds into 17 acres of wetlands and 25 acres of willow habitat and opened the area to birdwatchers.

The area, in the Santa Ynez River flood plain, is one of the few remaining riparian willow habitats on the Central Coast, according to the Audubon Society's John Ayres. More than 200 species of birds have been spotted there since 1994, according to Master Sgt. David M.

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again for lunch. Some of the birds we saw here were a pair of Gray-Headed Chacalacas, Black Vultures far overhead, Semi-plumbeous Hawk, Rufus-tailed Hummingbird, Collared Aracaris, Keel billed Toucans, Lineated Woodpecker, White-collared Manakin, Red-capped Manakin, Tropical Kingbirds, Shining and Green Honeycreepers; as well as Golden-hooded, Blue Gray, Crimson-collared, Scarlet-rumped, and Summer Tanagers, and a Red-throated Ant-Tanager. One afternoon, setting out for the dining hall an hour before dinner, a lodge worker was walking along a forest path beside the boardwalk. "Slaty-tailed Trogon," he shouted in the hoarse whisper that bird-lovers affect. We ran down to the path and found the Trogon in a few minutes.

Serendipity, however, has its own surprises, and we also spotted a Three-toed Sloth moving along the branches, a mother with a baby hugging her breast. They were actually moving along the branch - something sloths seldom do - and it was a grand sight.

The next morning we rose at five o'clock to have a bite to eat and join the daily birdwalk at six o'clock when dawn lights the sky. Most mornings we joined these walks, which had a set route along the river, across the road, and through the botanic gardens which are part of the lodge. The morning guide, Jaime, was from an old pioneer family that had settled the area and he had an intimate knowledge of the local flora and fauna, as well as excellent English. We added many new birds to our list on these walks, including a Cinnamon Becard, Barred Woodcreeper (Woodcreepers are a huge family in Costa Rica!), Ringed Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Masked Tityra, Black-crowned Tityra, Snowy Cotinga, many Great Kiskadee and Social Flycatchers, Bay Wren, House Wren, Wood Thrush, Orange-billed Sparrow, and others.

Selva Verde Lodge is a short drive from La Selva Biological Station, a center for tropical rain forest research and education. It is situated at the confluence of the Sarapiquí and Puerto Viejo rivers on 3,739 acres, and offers naturalist-guided tours with a reservation. We took an all-day tour and

found it so rich that we returned another day for a morning tour. The tours covered two different routes and we were surprised to see mostly different birds on the second trip, as well as a troop of howler monkeys frolicking in the treetops. We saw the Violaceous and Black-throated Trogons, Wedge-billed and Streak-headed Woodcreepers, a Dotted-winged Antwren (rare), Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Little Hermit, Green-breasted Mango, White-necked Jacobin, and Blue-chested Hummingbird (the last four birds are all hummingbirds), as well as a Double-toothed Kite, Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon, Hook-billed Kite, Gray-headed Yellowthroat, and Olive-backed Euphonia.

Another day we took a boat ride on the river, and since we were not traveling with a group, we had the boat all to ourselves. I relied on my faulty Spanish here, for although the pilot knew quite a bit of natural history, he spoke almost no English. It was on the river that I saw one of the most beautiful birds; a Long-tailed Tyrant. Its color is not spectacular; this fellow is black with a gray head and white eyestripe, but its long central rectrices describe an exquisite grace as it loops and circles against the sky. Other good sightings on the river were a Buff-rumped Warbler, Mangrove and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, a pair of Sungrebes, a Spotted Sandpiper, Little Blue Herons, a Green-backed Heron, Anhingas, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Northern Jacana, Kingfishers, the electric green *Jesus Christo* Lizard, numerous huge iguanas sunning themselves in overhanging branches, and a pair of Caymans.

One sunny day we hiked from the lodge to another section of the river that bordered meadowland. A copse in the center of the meadow suggested water, so we trekked across the grass to a hidden pond. We sat in the shade a while, resting, until a hoarse croak brought us to our feet. A brownish wing, a golden leg, a black crest -- OOPS! -- we had approached too near; the Boat-billed Heron squawked again and flew across the pond

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to another tree. Barely breathing, we tiptoed in and around the trees until we caught sight of this great bird, providing another image to carry home to Santa Barbara on my inner eye.

*Sheila Golburgh Johnson's articles on birdwatching have appeared in Bird Watcher's Digest, France Today, the Rotarian, Sunset magazine, and many others. Her anthology of bird poetry, Shared Sightings, was published in 1995 by John Daniel & Co., Inc. The first chapter of her current book-in-progress, The Zen of Birdwatching, was recently accepted for publication in a university literary magazine. Sheila has also won awards for her poetry and young adult novel.*



## Birdwatchers in Mexico

by Sheila Golburgh Johnson

A green bird, I said.

There, across the river.

You scanned. I see it too.

Let's move up.

We slogged through sand,  
reached the verge.

Look! I cried. In that dead tree.

You rushed beside me, focused,  
and we saw them — three green parrots,  
yellow beaks, red eye rings.

A draft of air, a gust of luck,  
something flushed them —

with hoarse squawks they surged,  
circled, flashed crimson tails.

The leaves took wing and joined them,  
screeching, air whipped and flailed  
to green froth. They merged,

flew back within the brush;  
but still, those grating cries.

Then silence, and the river.

*from Shared Sightings: an Anthology of Bird Poems, edited by Sheila Golburgh Johnson*

(Continued from page 1)

Leslie, the base's fish and wildlife protection officer. They include various waterfowl, woodpeckers and vireos, as well as rare willow flycatchers, he said.

To arrange free access to the Waterfowl Natural Resource Area, call the Fish and Wildlife Office at (805) 734-8232, ext. 66804, at least 24 hours in advance. Phones are answered 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is a limit of 25 vehicles per day, and no pets are allowed. At the base, visitors receive a map for a self-guided tour. Separately, there is also a regular tour of the base from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays (free except for lunch, about \$4.00 to \$8.00); for reservations, call (805) 734-8232, ext. 63595.

*SBAS is visiting Vandenberg on Sunday, June 7. Please see "Field Trips" on page 5 for details.*

## President's Message

**Transitions:** Exciting career opportunities compel Lauren DeChant to take early leave as our chapter president. Her enthusiasm, organization and positive spirit during her two years as president are already greatly missed. We hope that as she settles into her new position, she can remain active in chapter affairs. Thanks and appreciation to Lauren from the entire board. Gage Ricard steps down this June, after serving as our best Program director in years. Elan Sutton, Audubon's dynamic Education chair since 1996, is already pursuing her new career at UCSB's Graduate School of Education. We hope to keep both actively involved with Audubon, and we thank them for their major contributions.

**Arrivals:** In these circumstances, work of past-presidents Sally Walker and Ron Hirst (our Nominating committee) to field a strong list of board and officer candidates was vitally important, and they didn't let us down. See page 6 for next year's nominees.

**Fun & Adventure:** We hope you'll join the chapter's year-end programs and field trips and look forward to meeting you or seeing you again. Happy late spring and summer.

— Lee Moldaver, Acting President

## May-June Programs

May 27: Wednesday

### The Birds and Habitat of Vandenberg AFB

A slide lecture by  
Master Sgt. Richard Flirt, Jr.  
Doors open at 7:30 p.m.  
program at 8:00 p.m.  
at the Santa Barbara Museum of  
Natural History, Farrand Hall  
Free

VANDENBERG AFB INCLUDES large areas of protected, pristine habitat, including a Waterfowl Natural Resource Area. Come hear Master Sgt. Richard Flirt, from the base's Fish and Wildlife Office, share the avian delights to be found on the base and the programs established there to protect and preserve wildlife and habitat. His lecture will be followed by a tour of Vandenberg AFB on June 7. See the Field Trips on page 5 for more details.



June 21: Sunday

### Annual Picnic & Business Meeting

Giorgi Park  
Old San Marcos Road North  
Noon - 3:00 p.m.

PLEASE JOIN US at beautiful Giorgi Park for our annual picnic and business meeting, where we properly thank departing board members and welcome their successors. As usual, great food (tri-tip and vegetarian entrees and potluck side-dishes), refreshments, games, fun and surprises await. A perfect family event, where kids and guests are always welcome. To attend, please fill out and return the reservation form on page 5 today.

Directions: Giorgi Park is above Cathedral Oaks, on Old San Marcos Road, just west of Turnpike. the Park entrance is on the left side of San Marcos, just past Via Los Santos. There is plenty of on-street parking. See you there!

## Welcome New Members

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON Society extends a warm welcome to all new members. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming Audubon programs 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:

JAY BISHOP  
MR & MRS BROOKS DAVIS  
CAMERON & KATE EVENS  
J MARVIN  
KAREN VONSOMOGI  
GRANT WEYBURN  
ROGER & PAT HALLIN  
EVA KIRKPATRICK  
MS RITA A GRONHOVD  
CLAUDIA KNUDSON  
MISS SUSAN M PETRONIO  
MARTIN & PHOEBE BALL  
ROSLYN BENDET  
MADELEINE BROSTROM  
MS WENDY M BRUSS  
ANNETTE BURDEN  
ELIZABETH L BURNHAM  
MRS ROBERT CAMPBELL  
MR CHRISTOPHER CLAYTON

EMMA L CRUZ  
JASON DART  
DEMOREST DAVENPORT  
MR & MRS JOSEPH DEL BI  
JOAN DOMINGUE  
MS ANNE T ERIKSON  
MR NELS FREDRICKSON  
JOAN FREEMAN  
D BOLANDE HALLIBURTON  
ROBERT & KATHRYN HENRY  
FRANCES W HOELSCHER  
MRS ANNE W HOGAN  
JILL KENYON  
MRS ERALDA KOGAN  
MR PHILIP R LEVER  
J LINDGREN  
MR ROBERT B LINDSAY  
MRS DANIEL A LOWENTHAL  
MR & MRS EDWIN J MARTIN

JOHN MCNALLY  
BARBARA MILLETT  
RUSSELL K MISH  
EDNA J NELSON  
MRS SANG A NEVINS  
ANN OSTROWSKY  
CHELSEA N RUNNALLS  
MS DORTHY SALTER  
VIRGINIA STILPHEN  
DANYA WAHLBERG  
MS REBECCA E WAVE  
ROBERT F ZABLER  
MARIANN ZACHARELLIS  
B L BARNETTE  
PHILIP CROSSLEY  
MRS R DELANDEYE  
MR & MRS DANIEL J GOSS  
SANDRA GRASSO  
EVA HARTENSTEIN

ANN MARSACK  
MS AUDREY E MARTINSON  
JOANN T MFCC  
MS HELEN NOBLE  
PEGGY OKI  
JOSHUA PHILLIPS  
MICHAEL D ROBERTSON  
DAVID SCOTT SCHREINER  
DR & MRS JACK P SHIELD  
NANCY VONDRAN  
DENNIS & MARY WYLIE  
MICHELE L PATRICK  
FANNE BILLS  
WILLIAM HEIT  
MR KEVIN M JOHNSON  
TAMRA LUNSMAN  
E ZUCK





## May-June Field Trips

### EAST CAMINO CIELO, SANTA BARBARA SUNDAY, MAY 3, 7:30 A.M.

Target: Mountain Quail, Goldfinches, Black-chinned Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting

Leader: Dave Compton, (805) 965-3153

Take 101 to La Cumbre exit in Santa Barbara and meet at Carl's Jr. at 3925 State St. Car pool from there. Bring warm clothes in layers, water, and snack. Trip over before lunch, but if birding is good, some participants may wish to bird longer.

### KERN COUNTY DESERT HOT SPOTS: MOJAVE, PAIUTE PONDS, BUTTERBREDT SPRING WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, CALIFORNIA CITY SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY 9-10

Meet at Bird Refuge at 6:30 a.m. on the 9th.

Target: Western land birds and shorebird migrants, desert birds, eastern vagrants

Leader: Steve Tucker, Ventura Field

Ornithologist (805) 659-4870

pintail@jetlink.net — Reservations required

Cost: \$25 to share a room/\$37 for own

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 parking on the left. From the west, take 101 south to Los Patos off ramp (after Milpas exit) and park on street near Bird Refuge parking lot. To reserve your space, send name, address, phone, and check made out to Santa Barbara Audubon Society to 5679 Hollister Ave., Suite 5-B, Goleta, CA 93117. We must receive your check by Wednesday, May 6. Limit of 15 people. For questions about availability of space or status of your reservation, call the office at (805) 964-1468. Wear sturdy shoes, hat, clothes, for cool or hot, sun screen, water bottle, and lunch for both days. Scopes useful at Paiute Ponds. Wildflowers may be spectacular!

**WORLD WIDE WEB** site for Southern California Audubon field trips on line has been changed. It is now:

<http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/SoCal/trips.htm>



### VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 6:00 A.M.

Target: Least Bell's Vireo?, Swainson's Thrush, Nuttall's Woodpecker, White Crowned Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bell's Sage Sparrow, Yellow-breasted chat, Blue Grosbeak?

Leader: Mark Holmgren, UCSB Vertebrate Museum of Systematics and Ecology  
Drivers may appreciate gas money.

Take 101 to Storke, Glen Annie exit in Goleta. Go south on Storke Rd. to Jack-in-the-Box parking lot near corner of Storke Rd. and Hollister Ave. Car pool from here. To reserve space, call Field Trip Coordinator Paul Keller at (805) 968-7804 by Thursday, May 28.

Enunciate your name and phone number slowly and clearly if you get the answering machine. Let Paul know if you want to meet the group at Vandenberg. Back by mid-afternoon so bring lunch. U.S. citizenship required. Bring photo ID. Drivers must bring proof of liability auto insurance. 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.*

### Annual Picnic & Business Meeting

Sunday, June 21, 1998, Noon - 3:00 p.m.

Giorgi Park — \$12.00 per person

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian ☐ Tri-tip ☐

Please fill out and return with payment to  
Santa Barbara Audubon Society, 5679 Hollister Avenue, Suite B, Goleta, California 93117

## Calendar of Events

Sunday, May 3	East Camino Cielo field trip
Tuesdays, May 5, 12, & 19	Population Conference at the Faulkner Gallery
Saturday-Sunday, May 9-10	Kern County Desert Hot Spots field trip
Wednesday, May 27	The Birds & Habitat of Vandenberg AFB
Sunday, June 7	Vandenberg AFB f.t.
Sunday, June 21	Annual Picnic Giorgi Park

### Santa Barbara Audubon Society Board Slate 1998/1999

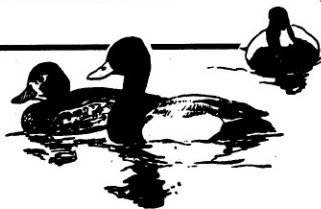
THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS have been nominated to the Santa Barbara Audubon Society Board of Directors, and will be elected at the annual membership picnic on June 21:

Everett King	President
Darlene Chirman	Vice-President
Christine Walden	Treasurer
Mary Wenzel	Secretary
Dave Wass	Conservation
Jim Greaves	Education
Paul Keller	Field Trips
Lee Moldaver	Programs
Janet Eastman	Newsletter Editor
Sheila Johnson	Publicity Chair
Dave Kisner	Membership
Don & Florence Stivers	Hospitality

### Santa Barbara Audubon Society Officers & Committee Chairs 1997-98

OFFICERS		
President	Lauren DeChant	566-9314
Vice-President	Lee Moldaver	682-2120
Secretary	Everett King	569-2307
Treasurer	Chris Walden	969-4256
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Conservation	Dave Wass	682-6962
Education	Elan Sutton	683-1143
Field Trips	Paul Keller	968-7804
Newsletter	Janet Eastman	964-1468
Membership	David Kisner	692-9792
Programs	Gage Ricard	967-3604
Publicity	Sheila Golburgh Johnson	682-4618
AT LARGE	Darlene Chirman	692-2008
	Don & Florence Stivers	967-3690
BIRD REFUGE	Sally Walker	569-5388
RARE BIRDS	Karen Bridgers	964-1316
RARE BIRD ALERT	<i>Lists rare birds sighted recently.</i>	964-8240

*Officers and Committee Chairs meet the second Thursday of the month. Members are welcome to attend. Please call the Audubon office to verify dates and times (805) 964-1468; FAX (805) 967-7718. Cover art by Daryl Harrison.*



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

MAY-JUNE 1998

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### In This Issue...

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