

El Tecolote

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.
Volume 42, Issue 6 June/July 2004



Island Fox vs. Golden Eagle The Unfair Advantage

By Kendy Radasky

The Problem

Between 1994 and 1995, the Island Fox populations on all three northern Channel Islands (Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel) began declining at an alarming rate. By 1998 the San Miguel population was down to a few dozen individuals. Similar declines occurred simultaneously on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. In response to these dramatic declines, the Island Fox was listed as a Federally Endangered Species in early 2004.

The Search for Answers

Golden Eagle predation was identified as the cause of the majority of fox deaths in the late 1990s. Golden Eagles were first recorded on San Miguel Island in 1995, and the first nest was discovered on Santa Cruz in 1999; it is thought that the Golden Eagles took up residence on the islands to hunt introduced pigs and sheep. In the past, Golden Eagles were deterred from settling on the islands by bald eagles (which prefer to eat fish – not mammals), but bald eagles were extirpated from the islands (and much of their range) by DDT, shooting, and egg collecting.

Prior to the colonization of Golden Eagles on Santa Cruz Island, Island Foxes were at the top of the food chain with no natural predators. Consequently Island Foxes lack defensive adaptations to survive with Golden Eagles.



Island Fox, photo by Gary Roemer

The Plan

The National Park Service convened an "Island Fox Recovery Team" in 1999 – this panel of experts recommended actions to help "bring the fox back from the brink of extinction." Recommendations included:

1. An Island Fox captive breeding program
2. The capture and relocation (to the mainland) of all Golden Eagles on the islands

3. The restoration of Bald Eagles to help discourage Golden Eagle recolonization on the islands

These actions are all currently underway, with extremely dedicated teams of distinguished scientists, field biologists, and volunteers working to save the Island Fox.

Latest News and Challenges

1. Over 30 Golden Eagles have been captured and successfully relocated to NE California (most recently in January 2004), but as many as 14 Golden Eagles continue to evade capture (and are still feeding on foxes). Despite skilled and often heroic attempts at capture by National Park Service employees and contracted field biologists (including, even, the use of helicopters) the remaining eagles are extremely wary, and refuse to be caught.

2. To date over a dozen Bald Eagles have been re-introduced to Santa Cruz Island. Though there were a few mortalities (as expected with any reintroduction program), at least 10 individual Bald Eagles appear to have become established on the islands, while a few others have been tracked flying back and forth to the mainland.

3. The Island Fox captive breeding program has had limited success. Though the program has produced several litters of pups each year, a recent release of 9 captive-bred foxes on Santa Cruz Island resulted in 5 deaths (by Golden Eagles); the remaining 4 foxes were recaptured and returned to captivity to prevent further mortalities. It appears as though Island Foxes may not have the opportunity to succeed until all of the Golden Eagles are removed.

4. As the remaining Golden Eagles are extremely wary and difficult to capture, both fox and eagle biologists continue to work hard toward the goal of Island Fox recovery.

[Continued on page 2]

La Arcada Open Air Festival a Great Success!

Many Thanks to SCAPE and Sponsors!!!

By Julie Kummel

The Festival was great fun and a big success for **SBAS**! A stroll through La Arcada Courtyard the weekend of May 15 & 16 revealed a wealth of paintings, sculpture and photographs depicting our area's natural landscapes, birds and other fauna. Music abounded and hundreds of art lovers had a chance to view paintings from some of SB's best known artists, along with some live painting demonstrations!

SBAS was chosen by SCAPE (Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment) as the beneficiary of this year's show, and Audubon netted over \$5000 as our portion of sales!

At the **SBAS** information table volunteers kept busy distributing literature, selling art cards and raffling off some wonderful prizes donated by Teletron Computers, Samy's Camera, and Morninglory Music. Raffle winner of the grand prize of a digital video/still camera was **Susan Belloni**. Other sponsors included Island Seed and Feed, La Arcada Investment Corporation, Southwest Art Magazine, Main Events International, Art Essentials, Slavka Fine Framing, Naked Wall and Orex. Thanks to all for your generosity in sponsoring this event! Thanks to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Santa Barbara Main Library for providing the venue. Thanks as well to all who volunteered at the **SBAS** table: **John Walker, Lee Moldaver, Darlene Chirman, Natasha Carr, Jack Sanford, Kendy Radasky, Steve Ferry, Catherine Graham** and **Julie Kummel**.

And of course, a huge, huge THANK YOU goes out to **Sally Hamilton** and the dedicated group of SCAPE volunteers and artists who put in long hours to make this well-organized event happen! SCAPE, a group of artists dedicated to using art in service of the environment, puts on this amazing 2-day event every year to benefit environmental organizations and causes.



[Continued from page 1] 5. The absence of Golden Eagles on the islands is so important in the eyes of 3 biologists (Dr.s **Rosie Woodroffe, Gary Roemer** and **Franck Courchamp**) previously involved in the fox recovery work, that they believe lethal removal of the Golden Eagles might be necessary.

"You've got a choice between a handful of Golden Eagles, which are quite common, and three subspecies of Island Fox that now live nowhere else in the world. It's unfortunate, but you've got something that's irreplaceable and unbelievably precious." **Dr. Rosie Woodroffe**, UC Davis

National Park Service officials have not determined at this point that Golden Eagles must be lethally removed. In fact, they have stated that any such decision would require considerable study, and a lengthy permitting process. Though the possibility of lethal removal has been introduced, it isn't likely to occur anytime in the near future.

What Santa Barbara Audubon Thinks

SBAS Board of Directors strongly supports the restoration of the Island Fox to sustainable levels. We believe that lethal removal of Golden Eagles, as a last resort, may be justified to save the Island Fox. The protection and survival of the endangered Island Fox is critical to preserve the Channel Islands' unique biodiversity.

Sources

Los Angeles Times article, "Golden Eagles Could Die to Save Threatened Island Foxes", 28 Nov 03

National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park, "Meet the Island Fox" website: www.nps.gov/chis/rm/IslandFox/Index.htm

Personal Communication with Nick Todd, wildlife biologist working for a non-profit contracted in the Channel Islands National Park for Golden Eagle removal.

Santa Barbara News-Press Article, "Claws of a Dilemma", 28 Nov 03



Photo by Ken Owen

Ken Owen

Island Fox, Santa Cruz Island subspecies

Santa Barbara Audubon Programs

All programs, unless otherwise noted, will take place at Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara. Free on-site parking. All programs, unless otherwise noted, will begin at 7:30 pm, doors open at 7:00 pm, and are free to the public. SBAS members are encouraged to bring guests.

Two Naturalists Honeymoon in Africa

Satie Airame and Jeff Chemnick, Speakers

Wednesday, June 23

Satie and Jeff will share slides with us from their recent 3-month honeymoon in southern Africa. They will give us a review of the natural wonders of southern Africa and Madagascar with a special focus on the birds and other animals of Madagascar.

Dr. Satie Airame is involved in the creation, policy implementation and design of our Pacific Coast marine reserves. Jeff Chemnick is involved in the study of Mexican cycads; mapping populations and describing new species. Their collective biological interests cover all manner of life forms, especially exotic birds and strange plants.



Sickle-billed Vanga



Long-tailed Ground Roller

SBAS Annual Meeting & Picnic

Arroyo Hondo Preserve

Sunday, July 18, 10 am - 3 pm

10 am – Docent-led hike

Noon – Potluck at the Hollister Meadow
(with election of new Board and short meeting)

Suggested donation to Arroyo Hondo Preserve: \$5/person

Bring a dish to share and the BBQ grill will be sizzling

SBAS will provide cold soft drinks and watermelon

Come for the docent-led hike or just for the picnic

Opportunity for hiking on your own before or after picnic

RSVP to **Darlene Chirman**, 692-2008, dchirman@rain.org

Carpooling is encouraged – Darlene can facilitate

SB Audubon Society

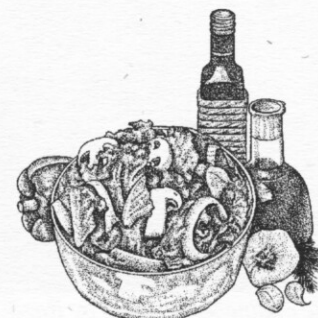
Slate of Nominees, July 04-June 05

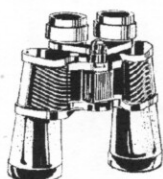
<u>Board Position</u>	<u>Nominee</u>
President	Darlene Chirman
Vice-President	Lee Moldaver
Secretary	Susan Lentz
Treasurer	Ginny Turner
Science Chair	Open
Conservation Chair	Julie Love
Education Chair	Mary Thompson
Programs Chair	Open
Field Trips Chair	Jack Sanford
Membership Chair	Steve Ferry
Newsletter Chair	Bill & Elaine Uomini
Publicity Chair	Open
At Large-Outreach	John Walker
At Large-Outreach	Natasha Carr
At Large-Outreach	Julie Kummel

DIRECTIONS TO ARROYO HONDO PRESERVE:

From Santa Barbara: Traveling northbound on U.S. 101, the Preserve is approximately 23 miles from the La Cumbre Rd. overpass. The entrance is approximately 4.5 miles past Refugio State Beach, and the next driveway after you see a concrete bunker-style building at the Tajiguas Landfill turn-off. Make a sharp right turn into the Preserve at the bottom of the hill immediately after CalTrans Call Box #101-412.

Park past the barn and orchard. We'll walk to Hollister Meadow. Shuttle available for picnic supplies and anyone needing assistance.





Santa Barbara Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome! These trips are fun for both beginning and expert bird lovers. Binoculars are useful for enjoyment of birds, but if you don't have a pair please call the trip leader and we'll lend you a spare. Trips are free unless noted.

Carpinteria (Sandyland) Salt Marsh

Carpinteria

Friday, June 25, 8:30 am

Target Birds: Long-billed Curlew, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, Ducks, Sandpipers

Trip Leader: Jack Sanford, 566-2191, jacksanford@hotmail.com



White-tailed Kite

Enjoy the birds of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh with **Jack Sanford**, a resident of Carpinteria, and our soon-to-be new Field Trip Chair. To get to the marsh take the Santa Claus Lane exit off 101 and follow Santa Claus Lane to the southeast end. Parking is available in the business area just before Santa Claus Lane enters the 101. We will meet near the antique store and proceed from there on foot into the marsh. Trip over by 10:30.

Lake Los Carneros Field Trip Report

By Jack Sanford

Saturday afternoon, March 27, was a glorious day at the lake. Not only was the day perfect but I for one added a life bird to my list. Yes, thanks to **Guy Tingos** for volunteering to lead the field trip, and to **Constance Thayer** whose keen spotting abilities enabled all 35+ participants to view a Wilson's Snipe. Even when I was given the exact location I had a difficult time actually identifying it because of the bird's great camouflage coloring. However, thanks to a couple of very good spotting scopes, we were able to get a very clear view of the bird. That was certainly the highlight of the trip. It was a very good birding day as over 30 species were recorded.

We started the walk with a Hooded Oriole, a Northern Mockingbird, a Black Phoebe, an American Robin and a California Towhee near the train station. From there we proceeded around Stow House where we spotted several Cedar Waxwings, an Anna's Hummingbird nest, a Northern Flicker and a California Thrasher. We were off to a good start! As we proceeded around the lake we spotted a Bewick's Wren, a White-tailed Kite, two Western Bluebirds, a Great Egret and a Spotted Towhee. On the lake we recorded American Coots, Ruddy Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, a Mallard, some Gadwalls and a Northern Shoveler. Overhead were Turkey Vultures, Barn Swallows and a Red-tailed hawk. The



Male Phainopepla, photo by Roger Millikan

Wilson's Snipe was spotted in a very small pond to the north of where the ducks are fed by visitors. Before crossing the wooded bridge a Phainopepla was seen in a nearby tree. While on the bridge a male Belted Kingfisher was spotted as were several Red-winged Blackbirds, and two Black-crowned Night Herons. In addition we saw Western Scrub-Jays, Mourning Doves, American Crows, House Finches and Brewer's Blackbirds. Guy spotted two Common Ravens flying overhead and heard a Marsh Wren.

It is my observation that what makes these field trips so interesting and enjoyable is having so many eyes spotting the birds and pooling information along with someone knowledgeable (like Guy) to identify, explain and answer any questions the group might have. If you haven't experienced an Audubon birding field trip you should by all means try it; you might like it. Plus the price is right -FREE.

Big Day!

By Peter Gaede

Wes Fritz and I did our third annual Santa Barbara County spring Big Day on May 1, and this year we were joined by **Jeff Davis** and **Marshall Iliff**. It was a long and exciting day, beginning at midnight and ending at 10 pm, and we found a grand total of 187 species. Overall numbers of migrants were low just about everywhere, but we managed to find almost all of the breeding birds along our route. We also had several lingering birds staked out from the past several weeks, and as with most Big Days, a few surprises.

We began at midnight under an almost full moon and clear skies, and had 23 species before dawn. The quality of the nocturnal birds found was an encouraging way to begin the daylight hours and included birds like Clapper Rail, Least Bittern, Spotted Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl. It was a nice surprise to find a Northern Saw-whet Owl calling from the exact same location as last year in a lower elevation oak woodland, .5 miles past the ranger station on Paradise Road.

The upper elevation portion of our route at the top of Figueroa Mountain was somewhat uneventful but produced small numbers of target birds found no where else on our route - Hermit Warbler, Brown Creeper, Mountain Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, etc.

Scouting at the mid-elevations/Santa Ynez Valley by Wes paid off as we made our way down the mountain and stopped at locations where there were nesting Loggerhead Shrikes (Armour Ranch Rd.); Lawrence's Goldfinches, Grasshopper Sparrows and Rock Wrens (Figueroa Mtn. Rd.). We found the continuing Red-necked Grebe at the west end of Lake Cachuma and also added a Horned Grebe here, decked out in full breeding plumage.

Birding at coastal locations produced a few unexpected birds. One of our most interesting was an Ibis at Ocean Beach showing characteristics of both Glossy and White-faced, and which we consider to be a probable Glossy x White-faced hybrid. The bird was seen in the marsh vegetation on the right before entering the parking area. Lingering ducks that we found were American Wigeon-1 (Devereux Slough); Northern Pintail-1 (Ocean Beach); Blue-winged Teal-8 (Ocean Beach); Redhead-2 (Sandpiper Golf Course); Ring-necked Duck-1; Lesser Scaup-1; Long-tailed Duck-1 (S.B. Harbor); Bufflehead-8 at three locations; and Red-breasted Merganser-3. A few other noteworthy odds and ends were a Franklin's Gull that flew past the Santa Barbara Harbor jetty, a Least Tern at Ocean Beach, and the pair of Ross's Geese at Rancho Goleta. The White-faced Ibis that **Dave Compton** mentioned seeing fly out of Basin E-F was undoubtedly the same bird that we saw fly into Area K. Our biggest misses were probably Vaux's Swift, Nashville Warbler, Black Turnstone and Common Poorwill.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Editors' note: To the best of our knowledge this is a new record for a Big Day in Santa Barbara County! Congratulations to Peter, Wes, Jeff and Marshall!



Spotted Owl, photo by Peter Gaede



Northern Saw-whet Owl

West Nile Virus

By Dave Kisner



West Nile Virus was first introduced into the United States in 1999 in the Northeast and has spread very rapidly all the way to the west coast.

The West Nile Virus infection can cause fatal inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) in humans and horses. It can also kill certain domestic and wild birds. The virus is spread by mosquitoes from infected animals to other individuals.

Since we birders are out chasing rarities or watching our feeders at home, we are more likely to find and notice dead birds. These birds can provide important information to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) on the spread of this disease and the regional level of infection. If you find a dead bird (especially an American Crow) please report this bird to the West Nile Virus Dead Bird Surveillance hotline 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2437) or by submitting a report to the DHS at <http://www.westnile.ca.gov>.

More information is posted on the **SBAS** website including links to the CDC and DHS.



June & July Volunteer Restoration Opportunities

Audubon helps recruit volunteers for habitat restoration for the Coal Oil Point Reserve and the Arroyo Hondo Preserve, as well as for the project we manage at Coal Oil Point Reserve. Come help restore our local natural areas. To volunteer at Coal Oil Point Reserve contact **Julie Love** at jmlove818@hotmail.com or 453-4840 or **Darlene Chirman** at dchirman@rain.org or 692-2008; or check our **SBAS** website at www.rain.org/~audubon. To volunteer at the Arroyo Hondo Preserve please RSVP the Land Trust Volunteer Coordinator **Jane Murray** at ltvolunteer@yahoo.com or 684-4405.



Date	Time	Place	Contact
Sat, June 5	9am-noon	Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact for site	Julie/Darlene
Sun, June 6	9am-12:30pm	Arroyo Hondo Preserve, bring a lunch, hike afterwards if you like	Jane Murray
Sun, July 4	9am-12:30pm	Arroyo Hondo Preserve, bring a lunch, hike afterwards if you like	Jane Murray
Sat, July 24	9am-noon	Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact for site	Julie/Darlene

"I Need To Get Me A Constituency"

By Dave Wass

One of the great lines in that marvelous movie by the Coen brothers "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?" is when the governor running for re-election realizes he needs a constituency — an organized group that shares his values (and his love of Country Music) and will work and vote for him. Well, thanks to the fortuitous advent of the Soggy Bottom Boys, the anti-heroes of this epic, he finds his constituency and wins the election.

That is where the Naples Coalition (of which your Audubon Society is a charter member) is right now. For the last two years the members of the coalition have done their homework, they know the laws and the procedures, they are dialoging with the developer and they have a great cause — the preservation of as much open space and environmentally sensitive habitat in the Naples area as possible, with its special views, beaches, bluffs, mesas and unique flora and fauna.

Well, I'm a Soggy Bottom Boy (actually, I helped start the first wet land restoration project ever attempted by our chapter) and am hoping that you will become part of the Naples Constituency and sign up to take an active part in preserving and protecting Naples, "The Gateway to the Gaviota Coast". We can use any skills and talents you would care to share with us (including money). And you can help make this dream come true, for now and for future generations.

Sign-up Sites:

Audubon Chapter Office, 964-1468 or audubon@rain.org

Conservation Committee **Dave Wass**, 683-0705, david.wass@cox.net

TGIF

THANK GOODNESS IT'S FRIDAY!

Join the **Santa Barbara Audubon Society**
and the **Environmental Defense Center**

Friday, July 9, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara

Cost: \$10 at the door

Drinks, hors d'oeuvres, live music & good company

Proceeds will benefit wildlife habitat protection

For more information call EDC at 963-1622



Female Phainopepla, photo by Roger Millikan

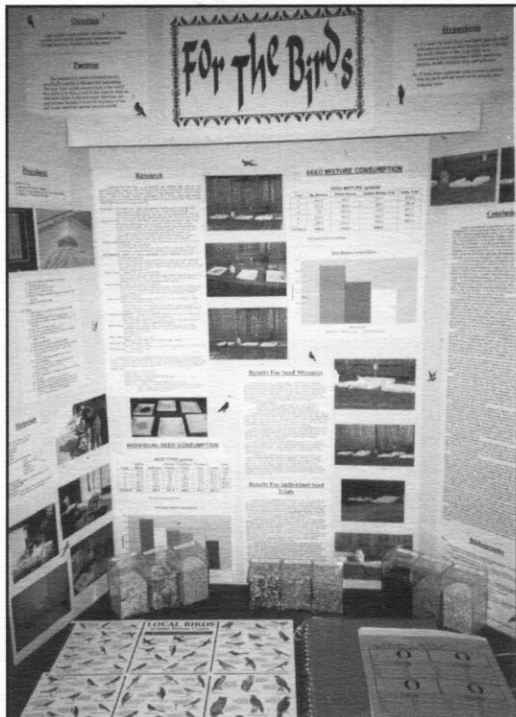
Congratulations Science Fair Audubon Award Winners!

By Kendy Radasky

Between April 4 and 8, young scientists from junior high and high schools all around Santa Barbara County submitted their science projects to the Santa Barbara County Science Fair, held at the Santa Barbara County Education Office. **SBAS** was pleased to present special awards to 3 budding ecologists. **Stacy Hill** won 1st place (\$50) for her project, "For the Birds" (investigating seed preferences of several local bird species); **Jasmine Baldwin** earned 2nd place (\$30) for "Plant Invasion" (a study of the invasive qualities of Cape Ivy); and **Nicole McCracken** was chosen to receive our 3rd place award for "Sparrow Foraging Habitats" (a study of the endangered Belding's Savannah sparrow at Coal Oil Point Reserve). These three students' projects were complimentary to the primary concerns and goals of

SBAS: protection and preservation of natural habitats through scientific investigation and education.

Way to go, Stacy, Jasmine, and Nicole! Keep up the great work!



Stacy Hill entry entitled "For the Birds" is the winner of the **SBAS** best entry prize in the 2004 Science Fair. Photos by Catherine Graham.

Earth Day

By Catherine Graham



This life-sized puppet of an adult California Condor with a 9 foot wing span was awe-inspiring to those who saw it at the Children's Area on Earth Day. **Ginny Turner** managed to open it to almost its full width. **Catherine Graham** had fun constructing it. It will tour various local schools in the future for a quick show and tell.

National Audubon Society Membership Application

(new members only)

Includes membership in **National Audubon & Santa Barbara Audubon Society** (C13 7XCH) and subscriptions to **Audubon** magazine & **El Tecolote**, the **SBAS** newsletter

☐ \$20 Introductory Membership

☐ \$15 Senior (62+) or Student

Make check payable to:

National Audubon Society

Mail to:

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Calendar of Events

- June 23 Program: Two Naturalists
Honeymoon in Africa
June 25 Field Trip: Carpinteria Salt
Marsh
July 9 TGIF
July 18 Annual Meeting and Picnic

Wanted!

Audubon Board Members

Santa Barbara Audubon is looking for energetic volunteers to help preserve local birds and habitat, and educate the public about birds and wildlife. Several positions will be open for the July 2004/June 2005 time period: Science, Programs and Publicity. So whatever your skills, we need you! Please contact President **Darlene Chirman** at 692-2008 or any current board member to find out what the positions entail.

El Tecolote is published 6 times a year by the **Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.** Members are invited to send announcements, letters, articles, photos and drawings for consideration to:

SBAS, Bill and Elaine Uomini, Editors
5679 Hollister Avenue, Suite 5B
Goleta, CA 93117

or e-mail: eltecote@cox.net

Submission deadline is the 10th of the month.

SBAS - July 2003/June 2004

(805) 964-1468, audubon@rain.org
<http://www.rain.org/~audubon/>

OFFICERS

<i>President:</i> Darlene Chirman	692-2008	dchirman@rain.org
<i>Vice-President:</i> Lee Moldaver	964-1468	audubon@rain.org
<i>Secretary:</i> Susan Lentz	968-6011	salentz@cox.net
<i>Treasurer:</i> Ginny Turner		vtf7@juno.com

BOARD MEMBERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<i>Field Trips:</i>		
<i>Programs Chair:</i> Mary Thompson	965-9995	marydee2@earthlink.net
<i>Conservation:</i> Dave Wass	683-0705	david.wass@cox.net
<i>Education:</i> Lisa Sobczak	683-2009	asobczak@ix.netcom.com
<i>Science:</i> Kendy Radasky	961-9378	kradasky@aol.com
<i>Membership:</i> Steve Ferry	967-5162	sjferry@cox.net
<i>Newsletter:</i> Bill & Elaine Uomini	964-9401	eltecote@cox.net
<i>Publicity:</i> Natasha Carr	967-1383	tahi4@cox.net
<i>At Large-Outreach:</i> Christine Cowles	687-8633	christine_cowles@yahoo.com
<i>At Large-Outreach:</i> John Walker	898-0347	johnskyw@hotmail.com
<i>At Large-Outreach:</i> Open		

APPOINTED POSITIONS

<i>Webmaster:</i> Bobbie Offen	684-0160	bobbieo@earthlink.net
<i>Nominating Committee:</i> Sally Walker	569-5388	walker160@cox.net
<i>Eyes In The Sky:</i> Gabriele Drozdowski	898-0347	pelican7@cox.net
<i>Snowy Plover Docent Prog:</i> Jennifer Stroh	880-1195	stroh@lifesci.ucsb.edu
<i>Hospitality:</i> Don & Florence Stivers	967-3690	
<i>Report Rare Birds:</i> Karen Bridgers	964-1316	kbridgers@msn.com
<i>Hear Rare Bird Report</i>	964-8240	

Officers and Chairs meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Members are welcomed to attend. Call SBAS office to verify dates and times. FAX: 967-7718. Cover art by Daryl Harrison.

El Tecolote

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

Dated material, please expedite
June 2004

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Santa Barbara, CA
Permit Number 125



Island Fox, photo by Brian Latta

or current resident

In This Issue... Island Fox vs. Golden Eagle