El Tecolote

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc. Volume 43, Issue 3 December 2004/January 2005

2004 Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, January 2, 2005

By Joan Lentz

Please come help us count the birds during Santa Barbara Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count to be held Sunday, January 2, 2005! Every year, this wonderful effort on the part of over 180 local and out-of-town birders keeps Santa Barbara in the top five Christmas Counts in the United States in number of species sighted!

On the evening of Count Day, please join us at the compilation dinner at the **Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History** in Fleischmann Auditorium. The potluck dinner begins promptly at 6:00 pm and the compilation countdown at 7:00 pm. Please bring your favorite salad, main dish, or dessert to share. If your group includes out-of-towners, they may contribute drinks, bread, chips, etc. Please bring your own service.

This year's count compiler will be **Joan Lentz**, assisted by the wonderful CBC committee. **Chris Walden** has graciously agreed to take participants' sign-ups. Pleae contact Chris to sign up.

Before the count, you can help us by scouting your neighborhood or anywhere else within the Count Circle for the following interesting or unusual birds:

Cattle Egret Blue-winged Teal Greater Scaup Mountain Quail Common Moorhen Virginia Rail Black-necked Stilt Lesser Yellowlegs Long-billed Curlew Common Snipe Thayer's Gull Greater Roadrunner any owls other than Great Horned White-throated Swift any non-Anna's Hummingbirds Sapsuckers (other than Red-breasted)

Horned Lark



Townsend's Solitaire By Shawneed E. Finnegan

any swallows Rock or Winter Wrens Common Raven Phainopepla Nashville Warbler Black-throated Gray Warbler Yellow Warbler Hermit Warbler Wilson's Warbler any tanagers any grosbeaks Lark Sparrow White-throated Sparrow Tri-colored Blackbird any orioles Lawrence's Goldfinch

Plus any montane species such as: Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Townsend's Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Brown Creeper, Pine Siskin or Cassin's Finch.

If you see any of the above or know of any other interesting birds, please let one of the following know:

Joan Lentz, 969-4397, jelentz@rain.org

Karen Bridgers, 964-1316, kbridgers@msn.com

Dave Compton, 965-3153, davcompton@earthlink.net

To sign-up please contact **Chris Walden**Phone: 969-4256, E-mail: walden@rain.org
Address: 222 W. Mountain Dr., Santa Barbara, CA 93103

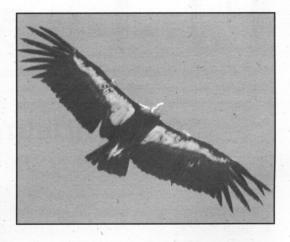


Also, this year we're going to have all the Christmas Count forms available for downloading on the Audubon website, which is: http://www.rain.org/~audubon/. Check it out!

Major Condor Sighting

By Sheila Golburgh-Johnson

On a foggy Saturday morning, August 28, a group of **SBAS** members left the SB Bird Refuge in a caravan headed for Fillmore, where we met **Richard Posey**, a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From Fillmore Richard guided us to the Hopper Mountain Wildlife Refuge where California Condors had nested this spring. This area is closed to the general public, and we are grateful to our leader, **Jack Sanford**, for organizing the trip. Zigzagging up and down the steep, winding road to Hopper Canyon, a few of us managed to mistake another USFWS vehicle for the head van, and had to stop and do a white-knuckled 360 degree turn to catch up with our guide. As our car hesitated on the road, we saw



the unmistakable great black birds with the white undersurface on their forewings and jumped out of the car to catch good looks at two Condors slowly circling over the valley below the road. At twice the size of a Turkey Vulture, the Condor is awesome at first sighting. It was a great look, even though we were trying to pay attention to the other lost car and to Richard, who was trying to gather us together again.

Re-united, we parked on Pinnacle Ridge and stood looking out at Hopper Canyon where the birds are fed. It wasn't long before we saw two Condors circling at the opposite side of the canyon, too far to get a detailed look. As often happens with birdwatching, however, patience rewarded us. About ten minutes after that far-off pair disappeared from view, a Condor rose on thermal spirals on our side of the canyon, and as we watched its magnificent flight, another rose to join it. The two of them circled slowly for a while less than a couple of hundred yards from us, and I had a chance to study them carefully. It is an unforgettable sight to watch a California Condor circle: great extended wings tipped with spread, finger-like primaries, and bare-skinned head extended. **Don Johnson** watched one rise from below our sight line to about 25 feet from him. Altogether, we must have seen about six Condors.

About 11:30 we climbed back in our cars and Richard led us down into the canyon to the Hopper Ranch to eat lunch. On the way down, one of us spotted a Condor on a branch of a tree about three hundred yards from the road. The caravan stopped so that we could get a good look at it, and through a scope we could see the Condor's crop and bill. Not easily startled, the great bird was still sitting there when we headed once more towards the ranch.

At the ranch, I had a chance to find out about the roads that stitch their way across the golden hills like a quilt, anchored by oil tanks and pumps here and there, some of the pumps actually working. It turned out that long before Los Padres National Forest was established the oil field was there, with a deed for mineral rights that goes back as far as the 1890's.

It was a wonderful trip, yet many questions about the Condor program remain unanswered. Of the three chicks that were hatched this spring, only one survived. Blood tests are being conducted to find out if there were toxins involved, which would have a dire effect on the future generations. Also, the adults are fed artificially, since conditions have changed so much since Condors flourished in prehistoric times. Fossil records indicate their numbers reached a peak in the Pleistocene, millions of years ago. They are a living fossil that has survived only through immense human effort and resources, which may not be enough.



White-tailed Kite An endangered bird of Ellwood Mesa

Ellwood Mesa — Preserve It Forever!

The Trust for Public Lands and Save Ellwood Shores are nearing the December 15 deadline for purchase and protection of Ellwood Mesa. Of the total \$20.4 million required, almost \$1 million is still needed. In 2003, SBAS matched member contributions for the campaign, together raising over \$5,000. Thank you if you donated during the Audubon Challenge. SBAS Board urges you to please make a contribution to:

The Campaign to Save Ellwood Mesa P.O. Box 1244 Goleta, CA 93116-9903

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.

Eagle Reintroduction on the Channel Islands

Dr. Peter Sharpe, Speaker

Wednesday, December 8 (note special date)

Peter Sharpe will present a program on the history and current status of Bald Eagles on the Channel Islands. He will also discuss factors that led to their decimation, and the restoration efforts that began in 1980 on Santa Catalina Island and in 2002 on Santa Cruz Island. The program will include both slides and a video of the restoration efforts.

Dr. Sharpe received his Bachelor's Degree in Ecology/Ethology from the University of Illinois. He continued his education studying Ruffed Grouse ecology and



completed his Master's Degree in Zoology at Southern Illinois University. Dr. Sharpe attended Colorado State University for his Ph.D., studying the behavioral ecology of Townsend's Ground Squirrels in southwestern Idaho. Dr. Sharpe has been directing the Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS) Bald Eagle restoration activities on the Channel Islands since 1997. In addition, he has participated in other IWS projects, including studies of Osprey, Island Fox and Loggerhead Shrike.

Don't miss this rare, behind-the-scenes story of Bald Eagles on the Channel Islands. Come join us for this informative and enjoyable program!

The Night Shift, Bats of Santa Barbara

Mary Wenzel, Speaker Wednesday, January 26

ost people are surprised to learn that Santa Barbara has over a dozen different bat species. Join us for an intimate look at "the night shift" — the bug catchers who take over after the last bird has roosted. The talk will include photos, videos, sounds and little-known details about the fascinating natural histories of our local flying mammals. Mary Wenzel will also share the latest tips from the Bat House Research Project for those who would like to welcome bats to their backyard.





Mary has a passion for bats! She has been caring for local injured and orphaned bats since attending Bat World Boot Camp in Mineral Wells, Texas in 2001. She has done bat survey work in California, Borneo and Australia. She spent November 2003 and 2004 in Queensland, Australia, caring for orphaned spectacled flying foxes. She created and maintains a web site that allows bat researchers and enthusiasts to exchange bat sounds (www.batcalls.org). Her latest bat project involves producing and distributing bat videos to help show people the fascinating world of these highly beneficial and often misunderstood animals.



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.

Bird Walks Continue!

Join us on the first and third Fridays of each month from 8:30 am to 10:30. Please contact walk leader Jack Sanford, 566-2191, jacksanford@hotmail.com, if you have any questions or are interested in leading a future walk.

Friday, Dec 3, Santa Barbara Harbor Target Birds: Waterfowl, shorebirds

We will meet on the sidewalk next to the Sea Landing Sportfishing Building (301 W. Cabrillo Blvd). From 101 north take the Castillo St exit and turn right on Castillo St and proceed to Cabrillo Blvd. From 101 south take the Cabrillo Blvd exit and turn left on Cabrillo Blvd. Park on Cabrillo Blvd (90 minute time limit) or, better yet, on Bath St or Mason St (no time limit).

Friday, Dec 17, Andree Clark Bird Refuge/beach area Target Birds: Waterfowl, shorebirds

From 101 north take the Los Patos Way exit and turn right on Los Patos Way. From 101 south take the Cabrillo Blvd exit, turn left on Cabrillo Blvd, and right on Los Patos Way. Park in or around the Bird Refuge parking lot.

Friday, Jan 7, Coronado Dr/Devereux Creek Target Birds: Raptors, songbirds

From 101 take the Glen Annie/Storke Rd exit and turn south on Storke Rd and proceed to Hollister Ave. Turn west (right) on Hollister Ave and south (left) on Coronado Dr. Park at the end of Coronado Dr.

Friday, Jan 21, Goleta Sewage Treatment Plant Target Birds: Shorebirds

From 101 take the Fairview Ave exit and turn south towards the ocean. Fairview Ave turns into Fowler Rd and then Moffet Rd. The Goleta Sewage Treatment Plant is across the street from the Santa Barbara Airport. Park in the Treatment Plant parking lot.

Friday, Feb 4, Stow House/Lake Los Carneros

Target Birds: Waterfowl and winter song birds From 101 take the Los Carneros exit and turn north towards the mountains. Stow House is on the right. Park behind the fire station.

Birding Lake Cachuma by Boat

Lake Cachuma County Park Saturday, December 11, 10 am – 12 noon

Target Birds: Bald Eagle, White Pelican, Grebes, Common Loon, Ducks, Osprey, Great-tailed Grackle, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, etc.

Trip Leader: Liz Mason, Park Naturalist

Cost: \$15 for the boat trip plus \$5 per car entrance fee at

Lake Cachuma County Park

Limit: 30 + people. You must call or E-mail Jack Sanford (566-2191 or jacksanford@hotmail.com) to make reservations. Please give your name, phone number and number of people.

Take 154 to Lake Cachuma County Park and park near the boat launching area and the Fishing and Tackle Shop. To car pool (this is a good idea because of the \$5 per car entrance fee) meet at the Five Points Shopping Center near Carl's Junior (3925 State St) at 9 am. We should be back by 1 pm.

Don't miss this great chance to get out on the water with the Park Naturalist!

Figueroa Mountain

Saturday, January 22, 8:00 am – 2 or 3 pm (at carpool place, drivers may appreciate gas money, \$5)

Target Birds: Mountain birds such as Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Nuthatches, maybe Cassin's Finches, etc.

Leader: Dave Compton, 965-3153, davcompton@earthlink.net

Take 101 to the La Cumbre Rd exit in Santa Barbara. Go north on La Cumbre Rd and turn left into the Five Points Shopping Center and park near Carl's Jr (3925 State St). We will car pool from here.

Bring lunch and water. Dress in layers. Some Adventure passes will be available, however if you have one please bring it with you. Will the elusive Cassin's Finch be seen or heard?

Save This Date! Sandhill Crane Field Trip!

Saturday, February 12 - Sunday, February 13

We will visit the Kern National Wildlife Refuge (water birds), the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (Sandhill Cranes) and Colonel Allensworth State Park (Burrowing Owls). All three locations are between Bakersfield and Fresno. It will be an overnight trip with primitive camping (open space with a restroom) available at the Kern National Wildlife Refuge. We will return on Sunday. Check the Feb/Mar issue for more information.



Sandhill Cranes

Devereux Slough Field Trip Report

By Jack Sanford, Field Trip Chair

I was extremely pleased when **Rob Lindsay** volunteered to lead a Field Trip to Coal Oil Point and Devereux Slough on October 16. After all he has probably led more Santa Barbara birding field trips than anyone else. It therefore came as no surprise when we tallied over 55 species of birds on our 2 1/2 hour trip. Rob was just great at spotting and identifying birds and giving a short but concise run down on them.

We also had a good group of birders attending whose spotting and identifying skills were also appreciated. It is really great to go birding with a group because with the increased number of eyes we are able to spot so many more species. Here is a sample of the birds we saw: Pelagic Cormorant, Long-billed Curlew, Long-billed Dowitcher, Dunlin, Gadwall, White-tailed Kite, American Kestrel (m & f), Northern Harrier, American Pipit, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Snowy Plover (100's), Willet, House Wren and Greater Yellowlegs.

Sightings. . .



Little Blue Heron by Diane Pierce Seen at Carpinteria Salt Marsh feeding only a few yards from the main intrepretive center on Ash Ave.



Burrowing Owl by Shawneed E. Finnegan Seen on More Mesa. The bird was calling from atop a shrub near the bluff about 200 meters east of the west end of the property.

Other recent Santa Barbara County rare bird sightings include:

Ocean Park/Santa Ynez River mouth: Cattle Egret, White-faced Ibis, Black Turnstone, Ruddy Turnstone, Surf Bird, Red-necked Phalarope, a young Brant, and a Red Knot that appeared to be a molting adult.

UCSB: Magnolia and 2 Nashville Warblers, with a Redhead and lots of Bonaparte's Gulls at the lagoon.

Cachuma Lake: 3 Bald Eagles, 9 Common Loons, 28 White Pelicans and a Peregrin Falcon.

For more birds and more details about where to see them, please check out the Rare Bird Report at 964-8240. The report is updated every Friday.



White-headed Woodpecker Seen on La Cumbe Peak in a grove of tall trees just off the road near the burned pine trees, easily located by its raspy pecking. The female was seen most often, but a male was spotted as well.

Membership News

By Steve Ferry, Membership Chair

We Need Your E-mail Address

SBAS has e-mail addresses for many members. However, many long-term members joined before e-mail existed, so we do not have their addresses. We would like to modernize our contacts with our members by communicating via e-mail. We'd like to inform you of upcoming field trips, programs, volunteer opportunities and action alerts for issues of local interest. Please send an e-mail message to siferry@cox.net with your name and indicate which kind of alerts you'd like to receive:

Field trips	Volunteer opportunities:
Programs	Eyes in the Sky
Action alerts	Restoration
Special events	Snowy Plover Docent
All of the above	Special Events
	(e.g. Earth Day booth
	Science Projects
	(e.g. White Tail Kite)
	All Volunteer

The **SBAS** e-mail list will only be used for **SBAS** business and will not be sold or shared with any other group.

We are also considering distributing **El Tecolote** via e-mail for those members who would prèfer or posting the ET on our website. Doing so would reduce our mailing expenses. Please indicate in your e-mail how you would prefer to receive **El Tecolote**: e-mail, web site, or paper mail. Thank you.



Northern Harrier By Shawneed E. Finnegan

Welcome!

SBAS extends a warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to seeing you at our programs and field trips. Thanks for joining!

Jean Bryson	Jennifer Pet
Barbara Davis	Gerald Petrini
Shirley Dunbar	Mondra Randall
Sara Fargo	Eddie Rode
Robert Isaacs	Beverly Shames
Dennis Lewis	James Wapotich
Annemari Lillep	Roland A. Way
Elizabeth MacArthur	Emily Wilson
Michael Moony	Kazuye Yoshimura
Sylvia I Murry	

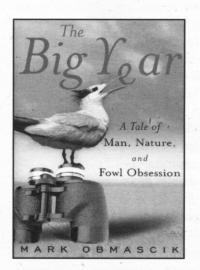
The Big Year

A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession
A book review by Elaine Uomini

The year 1998 was an unprecedented year. El Nino blew scores of unusual species off course and pre-9/11 airline regulations allowed people to bounce all over North America on a moment's notice. Conditions were ripe for the biggest Big Year tallies ever before. And perhaps, ever again. Three obsessed quirky birders set out on a year-long competition. Their stories, as told by Mark Obmascik, combine to make a rollicking, funny, joyful page-turner. Kenn Kaufman in his review writes "Mark Obmascik has captured the best and worst of birding, the euphoria and insanity of bird-chasing as an extreme sport, in this vivid well-crafted epic." This book is great fun for birders and non-birders alike.



Downy & Hairy Woodpeckers By Steven D'Amato



Volunteer Restoration Opportunities

Audubon helps recruit volunteers for habitat restoration for Coal Oil Point Reserve and Arroyo Hondo Preserve. It's planting season, so come and help restore bird habitat. To volunteer at Coal Oil Point contact Julie Love, jlove@lifesci.ucsb.edu, 453-4840, or Darlene Chirman, dchirman@rain.org, 692-2008. To volunteer at Arroyo Hondo contact Land Trust Volunteer Coordinator Jane Murray, ltvolunteer@yahoo.com, 684-4405.

Date	Time	Place	Contact
Sun, Dec 5	9am-12:30pm	Arroyo Hondo Preserve, bring a lunch, hike afterwards if you like	Jane
Sat, Dec 18	9am-noon	Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact for site	Julie
Sun, Jan 2	9am-12:30pm	Arroyo Hondo Preserve, bring a lunch, hike afterwards if you like	Jane
Sat, Jan 15	9am-noon	Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact for site	Julie



Arroyo Hondo Preserve, photo by Randy Leffingwell



Semipalmated Plovers at Coal Oil Point Reserve

Other Trips & Events

Other Audubon chapters offer interesting field trips and events too! Visit this site to schedule birding trips and participate in events all over California:

http://audubon-ca.org

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
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Make check payable to:	Name	1
National Audubon Society	Address	
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Santa Barbara Audubon Society	State/Zip	
5679 Hollister Ave., Suite 5B	Phone	
Goleta, CA 93117	E-mail	2
Golda, Cri 75117	- IIIII	_

Calendar of Events

Dec 3	Bird	Walk:	SB	Harbor	

	Dec 5	Restore:	Arroyo	Hondo	Preserve
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Dec 11 Field Trip: Lake Cachuma

Dec 17 Bird Walk: Bird Refuge

Dec 18 Restore: Coal Oil Point Reserve

Jan 2 2004 Christmas Bird Count

Jan 2 Restore: Arroyo Hondo Preserve

Jan 7 Bird Walk: Coronado Dr

Jan 15 Restore: Coal Oil Point Reserve

Jan 21 Bird Walk: Goleta Sewage Plant

Jan 22 Field Trip: Figueroa Mountain

Jan 26 Program: Bats of Santa Barbara

Feb 4 Bird Walk: Lake Los Carneros

Feb 12 Field Trip: Sandhill Cranes



Check our website for any changes or late additions to our Bird Walks, Field Trips or Programs:

http://www.rain.org/~audubon/

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: eltecolote@cox.net

Submission deadline is the 10th of the month.

SBAS - July 2004/June 2005

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

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Treasurer: Ginny Turner	964-6384	vtuner10@cox.net

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I	Programs: John O'Brien &	962-7799	mlbm@cox.net
ı	Marsha MacDonald		
۱	Conservation: Julie Love	453-4840	jlove@lifesci.ucsb.edu
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	At Large-Outreach: Julie Kummel	964-9444	jkummel@rain.org
	At Large-Outreach: John Walker	562-9911	johnlee@umail.ucsb.edu
	At Large-Outreach: Natasha Carr	967-1383	tahi4@cox.net

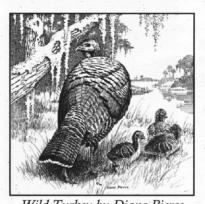
APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster: Bobbie Offen	684-0160	bobbieo@cox.net
Eyes In The Sky: Gabriele Drozdowski	898-0347	pelican7@cox.net
Snowy Plover Docent Prog: Jennifer Stroh	961-9378	fivefive@hotmail.com
Hospitality: Don & Florence Stivers	967-3690	
Report Rare Birds: Karen Bridgers	964-1316	kbridgers@msn.com
Hear Rare Bird Report	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



Wild Turkey by Diane Pierce

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