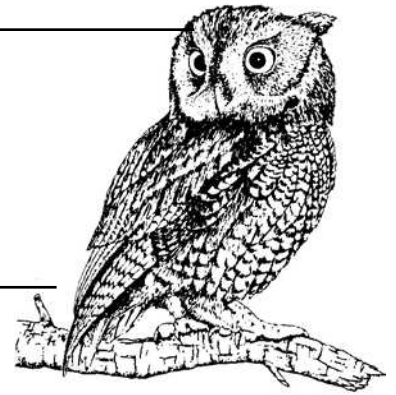


El Tecolote

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.

Volume 45, Issue 5

April — May 2007



Coal Oil Point Reserve and SB Audubon Partnership by Darlene Chirman, President, SBAS

In the summer of 2001 a pair of Western Snowy Plovers were observed exhibiting breeding behavior in the dunes at Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR), part of the UCSB Natural Reserve System. While plovers maintained overwintering populations at COPR of 100 individuals, they had not successfully bred at Sand's Beach for thirty years. As soon as two newborn chicks were discovered, a "Chick Watch" was initiated.

Many Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) members participated in this, having someone on the beach during all daylight hours, until one chick fledged. The other chick was lost to crow predation.

So what changed to allow successful breeding of Snowy Plovers at this beach? SBAS had been working with COPR to devise a Snowy Plover Docent Program, but we hadn't started yet. Kedy Radasky was researching what other groups had done and creating a training program for volunteer docents. Kevin Lafferty of the US Geological Survey had monitored the plovers to determine the disturbance factors, especially off-leash dogs, but the program to educate beach-goers to reduce disturbance had not yet been instituted. Cristina Sandoval, Director COPR, observed the nesting plovers in sand dunes that had formerly been overgrown with non-native Acacia. A 3-year volunteer project, including many SBAS volunteers, had been begun in 1999 to remove six acres of Acacia from the dunes and adjacent dune swale.

The Plover Docent Program was begun in the fall of 2001, with funding by a generous SBAS member. As



Students from Community Day School help remove iceplant near the Snowy Plover nesting habitat at Coal Oil Point Reserve

the program grew, the chapter was successful in obtaining grants from the UCSB Shoreline Preservation Fund and two years of funding from the Whale Tail grant program (Whale Tail license plate funds). For the past three years, the University has funded the Docent Coordinator, Jennifer Stroh, half time, and SBAS has sought donations and grant funds to supplement that time and to help fund such items as the "skunk fence". This

fencing was installed by docents who are also SBAS members. The fence was placed in the dunes to keep the skunks away from the nesting area, as they prey on plover eggs and chicks.

Plover chicks cannot fly in the first month after hatching, during which time they are very vulnerable to predation. The plover docents spend a lot of their time chasing off crows, in addition to educating beach users and asking dog owners to leash their dogs. In November 2001, the California Coastal Commission approved a "symbolic fence" which had been installed on an emergency basis, to protect the primary roost/nesting site, and the closure of a secondary trail to the beach, known as the Delta trail, which led directly into the plover roost and caused a high rate of disturbance. SBAS members and the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) on our behalf submitted written comments and testified at the hearing to approve these protections for Western Snowy Plovers.

While the Plover Docent Program continued as a joint project of SBAS and COPR, the chapter increased restoration efforts with the Reserve. Initially, COPR

applied for grants and SBAS recruited volunteers to help implement the projects, restoring the slough margin. In 2002, however, SBAS was awarded a restoration grant by the Wetland Recovery Project, and the chapter managed the two-year project in coordination with Sandoval. Since that time, we have continued to fund components of the restoration with member donations and grants. The Shoreline Preservation Fund has awarded grants to COPR and to SBAS to restore multiple sites on the Reserve. Most recently, SBAS has been awarded a grant of \$11,739 by National Audubon for an Important Bird Area Shorebird Enhancement Project at COPR.

We will continue to eradicate non-native shrubs and iceplant near the mouth of the slough and re-establish native vegetation. Matching funds donated by chapter members Doug Hamilton and Virginia Hawley helped this project to be competitive, and allowed us to get started on the work before the breeding season. The introduced shrubs harbor raccoons and skunks, which prey on plover eggs and chicks, and iceplant provides a poor nectar source for native marsh-dependent butterflies and poor foraging habitat for the state-endangered Belding's Savannah Sparrow that is resident in the slough. We've already had several school groups and a local employee group helping to remove iceplant near the mouth of the slough, before the start of the plover breeding season. COPR has just been awarded a \$260,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to restore seven acres of the slough margin over three years, and SBAS is ready to assist with recruiting volunteers to help.

The reduced disturbance on the beach and restoration of the adjacent habitat have combined to provide the habitat requirements needed for the return of California Least Terns to Sand's Beach. The seven tern fledglings last summer were the first since 1960.

Predation is still a problem, and for the past two summers, the Reserve has recovered eggs from abandoned nests. Last year eleven chicks were raised in a plover nursery at COPR, and released on the beach when they could fly. The shed that was used as the nursery was getting overheated in the summer sun, however, so SBAS member Virginia Hawley donated funds for insulation and another SBAS volunteer installed it. So we will be ready if nests are abandoned this breeding season!

COPR has urban development expanding in adjacent lands. The EDC has represented the chapter in negotiations with the University and in comments to the Coastal Commission, to protect wetland and other environmentally sensitive habitat, restore the "South Parcel" on the northern Reserve boundary and institute erosion-control measures on that property to protect Devereux Slough. The California Coastal Commission

has also, with our urging, required an Enforcement Plan to back up the docents' educational role in protecting plovers and terns from off-leash dogs and trespassers in the exclusion zone. As the additional residents will add more visitors to the beach, the chapter has applied for a grant from the Marisla Foundation, with the help of Audubon-California, to expand the Snowy Plover Docent Coordinator position to full-time, until the University fully funds this position as housing is constructed.

The recovery of the threatened Western Snowy Plover and the endangered California Least Tern has come about at Sand's Beach because Santa Barbara Audubon, the Coal Oil Point Reserve, the Environmental Defense Center, and hundreds of volunteers have worked together to educate the public, to enhance the habitat, and to see that policies protective of the natural resources are implemented. We've demonstrated that an informed public can share the beach with threatened and endangered species. The partnership of the COPR and SBAS allow both to fulfill our missions. Winter plover populations are now 200-400. Last year COPR fledged 59 chicks, including the nursery fledglings; let's see how many fledge in the summer of 2007!

SAVE THE DATE!

"Feather the Nest"

2007

*SBAS Benefit Auction
to support the MAX Project*

Saturday May 26 2-5 p.m.



Under the oaks at the SB Museum of Natural
History
Live Birds of Prey,
Live & Silent Auction, Wine and
Hors d'oeuvres

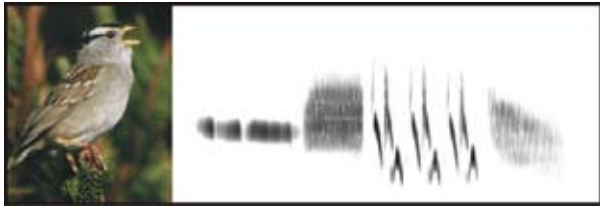
Santa Barbara Audubon Programs

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 p.m. and are free to the public. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. SBAS members are encouraged to bring guests.

Nature's Musicians: An Introduction to Bird Songs

Jill Soha PhD

Research Associate at the Borror Laboratory
of Bioacoustics at The Ohio State University



White-crowned sparrow and its song; Photo courtesy Jill Soha

Please Note Special Date:

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Birds have a variety of calls and songs in their repertoires, each with different functions. The vocal organ and the mechanics of sound production in birds differ from those of humans, and birds have the ability to sing two tones at once. At the same time, similarities exist between birds and humans in how our vocal abilities develop early in life. Special brain circuitry underlies vocal learning and production in songbirds. Although each species is predisposed to learn certain song types, learning occurs by a process of memorization and auditory feedback during a sensitive period. This presentation will provide an overview of these fascinating aspects of bird song.

Jill Soha is curator and research associate at the Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics at The Ohio State University, which is the second largest public archive of animal sound recordings in the U.S. She has a PhD in Animal Behavior from UC Davis and does research on song learning and recognition in songbirds.

Return of the Condor

John Moir

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Award-winning science writer John Moir will tell the riveting story of the California condor's dramatic rescue from the brink of extinction. By 1982 the bird's numbers had fallen to just 22 individuals. Moir, who is author of the new book *Return Of The Condor: The Race To Save Our Largest Bird From Extinction*, will recount how a remarkable team of scientists carried out a plan to save the species that flew in the face of traditional condor conservation methods. The presentation includes rare photos that take you deep inside the world of the condor and the biologists who are working to save this iconic bird. Moir will also discuss the current effort in California to require the use of alternative ammunition to replace lead bullets that are harmful to condors, other wildlife, and humans.

John Moir has written about the condor recovery effort for years and is a member of the National Association of Science Writers and the Northern California Science Writers Association. For more information, go to <http://returnofthecondor.com>.



Photo: Chris Parish/Peregrine Fund

Santa Barbara Audubon Field Trips

Everyone is welcome! These trips are fun for both beginning and expert bird watchers. 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. Please contact Jack Sanford (805) 566-2191 jacksanford@hotmail.com for details or questions.

Rancho La Vina
4455 Santa Rosa Road
(Between Buellton & Lompoc)
Saturday, April 7, 9 a.m.-12 noon
(8 a.m. at car pool location)

Target Birds: Spring migrants, songbirds, woodpeckers, etc.

Leader: Paul Keller

We will car pool at 8 a.m. from the parking lot near Carl's Jr. in the Five Points Shopping Center off State Street. (\$6 gas money to drivers.) We will take Hwy. 101 north to the Santa Rosa Rd. off ramp just before Buellton. We will park and meet at 4455 Santa Rosa Rd. at 9 a.m.

Bring water and a snack and wear shoes that are comfortable for some leisurely walking. Binoculars and spotting scopes are useful. Enjoy ranch owner Jose Baer's generous hospitality in allowing us to bird his ranch.

Nojoqui Falls County Park
Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m.-12 noon
(8 a.m. at car pool location)

Target Birds: Yellow-billed Magpies, Purple Martins, Blue Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, Barn Owls, vireos, towhees, woodpeckers and orioles.

Leader: Jared Dawson

We will car pool at 8 a.m. from the parking lot near Carl's Jr. in the Five Points Shopping Center off State Street. (\$6 gas money to drivers.) We will take Hwy. 101 north to the Nojoqui Falls turnoff (the obscure turnoff just after the large truck parking area). We will hike to the falls (an easy walk) and then bird the entire park. If you plan on meeting us there we will park and meet at the parking area nearest the falls at 9 a.m. Bring water and a snack or stay longer and bring lunch.

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!

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Andrea Adams-Morden | Mark Holmgren |
| W. H. Barker | Mr. Wolfgang Lauter |
| Robert Cathcart | Charlene B. Little |
| Nancy S. Cole | Willard W. McEwen |
| Mr. Wayne M. Cole | James B. McKillip |
| Spencer A. Conway | Cheryl McRae |
| Richard Corum | Suzanne Medlyn |
| Mr. Nicolas J. Cunningham | Joseph Murphy |
| R. Cutner | Kathy Neely |
| Aerie Dikeman | Ms. Jill Nelson |
| Jack Engle | Walter Rahn |
| Kathleen Flynn | Mary Serisawa |
| June Gill | Mary Rae Staton |
| Helena Hill | Charles Swegles |
| Donald D. Hoffman | Denise Taylor |

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 _____

Field Trip Reports

“Mugu Coastal Duck Ponds”

February 18, 2007

by Jeff Hanson

We arrived at 9 a.m. sharp on a beautiful morning, and 35 of us set out on foot—a first for this annual event. Thanks to Google Earth and the many local birders in attendance, we mapped out a fabulous walking tour. As we entered the property, we found ourselves surrounded by raptors. Peregrines, Red-tails and a Coopers Hawk stood sentry on poles and trees as we marveled at the Ibis flocks in the air and the Harriers coursing down low. We immediately went to the west side for 2 of our target birds—the Vermillion Flycatcher and the American Bittern. As luck would have it, we got 2 of each. Both the male and female flycatchers were on the fence, and one of the Bitterns froze on the road where everyone got a good look at it from close range as Marsh Wrens were buzzing in the bulrushes all around us. We then headed west down the road we had driven in previous years, picking up many species of waterfowl and shorebirds, and a few gulls and songbirds. We got to the halfway point in about 2 hours, and some folks opted to finish up early. The rest of us decided to walk a large loop around the western half of this marvelous 600-acre property. At the south end we got a pair of Yellow-headed Blackbirds and a small flock of Snow Geese in the air. We finished the 3.5 mile walk right at 1 p.m. To close a nearly perfect day, we were greeted by a Burrowing Owl in the ag fields as we departed. We logged 67 species for the trip.

It is worth noting that all the comments I received about walking instead of driving were positive. Most people simply felt it was a more positive experience to have the freedom to be on foot on such a small course (3.5 miles), than to have the narrow berm roads clogged with cars.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the owners of this fabulous property, and especially to **Joel** the manager.



Burrowing Owl photo by David Levasheff



Godwits photo by Jeff Hanson

Point Mugu NAS

February 23, 2007

by Jeff Hanson

We arrived at the main gate after a delightful drive down the coast, the bright clear morning offering all the makings of another sterling day of birding. Our guide and base biologist **Michelle Kuter**, cleared 23 of us with base security, and off we went to the Mugu lagoon. The birding was terrific, and we stayed for over an hour at the viaduct that crosses the lagoon. There were waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, gulls and skimmers on both sides of us, including some close views of the Black Scoter. Then we went out to the mouth of the lagoon for more ducks, shorebirds, a large gathering of Brown Pelicans, and pelagics offshore. There was a large colony of Harbor

Seals basking in the sun as well. Moving right along, Michelle then took us over to the west side, where we met up with the base's main biologist, **Martin Ruane**. Martin and his associates were netting and banding songbirds that morning as part of an ongoing monthly activity. We had a rare opportunity to see just how it was done. Many of us got to see Bushtits and an Anna's Hummer up close while they were being banded and released. As we worked our way down the western perimeter, the Tree and Cliff Swallows were zipping around in large numbers. Ahead of us, a Golden Eagle lifted up off the ground for all to see, then headed east to the lagoon. We drove the length of the road, paralleling the duck ponds next door, where we saw large numbers of Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler and American Wigeon. Before we knew it, 4 hours had passed and it was time to head for the gate. Thanks to the sharp eye of Oscar Johnson, we logged a total of 89 species for the trip.

Our special thanks goes out to Michelle and Martin, and to the staff and management of Point Mugu NAS. As always, the untiring efforts of **Jack Sanford** and **Peggy Kearns** are greatly appreciated.

Friday Bird Walks

*Join us on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 8:30-10:30 a.m. Please call Bird Walk leader **Jack Sanford** 566-2191 or email at jacksanford@hotmail.com if you are interested in leading a future bird walk to your favorite birding location or have any questions.*

Ennisbrook Nature Trail **Friday, April 13, 2007**

Target Birds: Nuthatches, Common Yellowthroats, Townsend's Warblers, Spotted Towhees, etc.

Directions: Take Hwy. 101 to the Sheffield Drive turn off. Follow Sheffield Drive and turn left on San Leandro Lane (first left). The nature trail is located on the right side of the road past the white picket fence near a pump house. We will park and meet near the entrance gate.

Tucker's Grove and Kiwanis Meadows. **Friday, April 27, 2007**

Target Birds: Cooper's Hawks, Towhees, American Robins, Lesser Goldfinches, etc.

Directions: Take Hwy. 101 and exit at Turnpike Road. Turn north towards the mountains on Turnpike Road. Cross Cathedral Oaks Rd. and enter San Antonio County Park (Tucker's Grove). We will park and meet near the playground/restroom area.



Cooper's Hawk by Kirsten Munson

Field Trips/Bird Walks **Do you have an idea?**

We are always looking for suggestion for places to visit on our monthly field trips. If you have an idea and are not sure where or what to do next, or are interested in helping coordinate a field trip contact **Jack Sanford** (805) 566-2191.

UCSB Campus Lagoon **Friday, May 11, 2007**

Target Birds: Grebes, Herons, Dowitchers, ducks, Godwits, Plovers, etc.

Directions: Coming from the south on Hwy. 101 take the Ward Memorial Blvd. exit. Take the Goleta Beach County Park exit and park at the west end of the Goleta Beach parking lot (nearest the UCSB campus). Coming from the north on Hwy. 101 take the Fairview Ave. off ramp and head towards the ocean. Follow Fairview Ave. which turns into Fowler Rd. Turn right into the Goleta Beach County Park. We will park and meet at the west end of the Goleta Beach parking lot (nearest the UCSB campus).

San Jose Creek & Open Space **Friday, May 25, 2007**

Target Birds: Hummingbirds, woodpeckers, songbirds, etc.

Directions: Take Hwy. 101 to the Patterson Ave off-ramp and turn north towards the mountains. Turn left on Parejo Drive (second street from Hwy. 101). Follow Parejo Drive to the end (at Merida Drive and San Jose Creek). Turn right on Merida Drive. We will meet and park at the end of Merida Drive.

Bonus Bird Walk

Winchester Canyon **Friday April 20, 2007, 8:30-10:30**

Target Birds: Kingbirds, Kinglets, Red-shouldered Hawks, Barn Owls, Siskins, Woodpeckers, Titmice, Towhees

Directions: Take Hwy 101 to Winchester Canyon Rd exit. Take Winchester Canyon Rd. Cross Cathedral Oaks Rd. Turn right on Winchester Rd. and left on Rio Vista Drive. Park near the open space area.

OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Habitat Restoration

*Audubon helps recruit volunteers for habitat restoration at the Coal Oil Point Reserve and the Arroyo Hondo Preserve. Come help to restore a creek or estuary while spending a morning in a beautiful bird habitat. Contact the Land Trust, Arroyo Hondo Preserve Volunteer Coordinator **Jane Murray** at ltvolunteer@yahoo.com or 684-4405. For Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact **Tara Longwell** for site at longwell@lifesci.ucsb.edu or 252-4903. or **Darlene Chirman** at dchirman@rain.org or 692-2008.*

ARROYO HONDO

Contact: **Jane Murray**

Sunday April 7 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Note: Change from usual schedule due to Easter Sunday

Sunday May 6 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

COAL OIL POINT RESERVE

Contact: **Tara Longwell**

Saturday April 14 9 a.m.-12 noon

Saturday May 19 9 a.m.-12 noon

SBAS Needs Your E-mail Address

To be added to the **SBAS** e-mail list, just send an e-mail message with the subject line, "Add + your name" to sjferry@cox.net. The **SBAS** e-mail mailing list will only be used for **SBAS** business and will not be sold or shared with any other group.

National Audubon Society "Paper Free" Renewal Program

Tired of having **National Audubon Society** send multiple renewal notices that consume our precious forests? Call 800-274-4201 and sign up for NAS's "Paper Free" Renewal Program. Instead of mailing multiple renewal reminders, NAS will automatically renew your membership each year. You'll receive just one bill, approximately two months in advance of your membership expiration date. Your membership in Santa Barbara Audubon will be included in your NAS renewal. Save paper and simplify your accounting!

Steve Ferry
SBAS Membership Chair

Plover Project Docent Training

Training takes place at the Cliff House at Coal Oil Point Reserve, from 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Training dates:

April7

May5

Training Schedule:

Tour is10-11 a.m.

Training is11 a.m. -1:30 p.m.

Those interested should call **Jennifer Stroh** to register at 880-1195.

IceCube Ocean Toss Goleta Beach April 14, noon-2 p.m.

Bring your own ice cubes
Call for action on climate change!
Symbolic of inadequacy of small-scale solutions to global warming.

Sponsored by "Step it up." sign up or for more info?

<http://events.stepitup2007.org/events/show/627>

Audubon Office Work Party

Next Work Party

April 25

May 16.

7-8:30 at the office.

Audubon Board Recruitment

Annual elections are held in July.

Likely openings for 4-5 positions:

Treasurer

Science Chair

Conservation Chair

Membership

Please contact Darlene at 692-2008 or dchirman@starband.net or any board member to find out more.

Earth Day

Santa Barbara Audubon is celebrating Earth Day!

We will have a booth at the County Courthouse Sunken Gardens on Sunday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If you would like to help, contact **Patty Malone** at pamalone@verizon.net. Or be sure to just stop by and say hello when you are enjoying the Earth Day festivities!

Calendar of Events

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

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

- Apr. 7 Plover Training
- Apr. 7 Restore Arroyo Hondo
- Apr. 7 Rancho La Vina Field Trip
- Apr. 13 Ennisbrook Nature Trail Bird Walk
- Apr. 14 Restore Coal Oil Point Reserve
- Apr. 18 Program: Nature's Musicians
- Apr. 20 Winchester Canyon Bird Walk
- Apr. 22 Earth Day
- Apr. 25 Office Work Party
- Apr. 27 Tucker's Grove Bird Walk
- May 5 Plover Training
- May 6 Restore Arroyo Hondo
- May 11 UCSB Campus Lagoon Bird Walk
- May 16 Office Work Party
- May 19 Restore Coal Oil Point Reserve
- May 19 Nojoqui Falls Field Trip
- May 23 Program: Return of the Condor
- May 25 San Jose Creek Bird Walk

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, Andy Lentz, Editor
5679 Hollister Avenue, Suite 5B
Goleta, CA 93117

or email: sbasnews@cox.net
Submissions deadline is the 10th of the month before publication.

SBAS - July 2006/June 2007

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

OFFICERS

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Secretary	Susan Lentz	968-6011	salentz@cox.net
Treasurer	Ginny Turner	964-6384	vtturner10@cox.net

BOARD MEMBERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Field Trips Chair	Jack Sanford	566-2191	jacksanford@hotmail.com
Programs Chair	John O'Brien	962-7799	mlbm@cox.net
Conservation Chair	Julie Love	453-4840	jlove805@gmail.com
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Membership Chair	Steve Ferry	967-5162	sjferry@cox.net
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Publicity Chair	Ben Shalant	448-4447	kagawaben@hotmail.com
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At-Large-Outreach	John Walker	570-7864	johnlee@umail.ucsb.edu
At Large-Outreach	Margo Kenney	963-3011	margo@margokenney.com

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster: Bobbie Offen	684-0160	bobbieo@cox.net
Eyes In The Sky: Gabriele Drozdowski	898-0347	eyes-in-the-sky@cox.net
Snowy Plover Docent Prog: Jennifer Stroh	880-1195	stroh@lifesci.ucsb.edu
Hospitality: Sylvelin Edgerton	964-1658	sylvelin@earthlink.net
Nancy Rohrer	687-7587	rohrer_n@yahoo.com
Report Rare Birds: Karen Bridgers	964-1316	k.bridgers@cox.net
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.**



Printed on recycled paper.

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

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