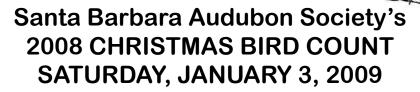
# El Tecolote

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.
Volume 47, Issue 3 December 2008 — January 2009



#### by Joan Lentz

Please come help us count the birds during Santa Barbara Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count to be held SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 2009! Every year, this wonderful effort on the part of over 170 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 p.m. and the compilation countdown at 7:00 p.m. 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. Joan Murdoch has graciously agreed to take participants' sign-ups. PLEASE CALL OR E-MAIL JOAN MURDOCH TO SIGN-UP. Joan is at jrmurdoch@cox.net or you can call her at 969-5132.

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

Any owls other than Great Horned White-throated Swift Any non-Anna's Hummingbirds Sapsuckers (other than Red-breasted) Horned Lark Any swallows Rock or Winter Wrens Common Raven Phainopepla Black-throated Gray Warbler Yellow Warbler Hermit Warbler Wilson's Warbler Any tanagers Any grosbeaks Lark Sparrow White-throated Sparrow Tri-colored Blackbird

Lawrence's Goldfinch

Any orioles

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:

Nashville Warbler

Greater Roadrunner

Joan Lentz (969-4397) joanlentz@cox.net Karen Bridgers (964-1316) k.bridgers@cox.net Dave Compton (965-3153) davcompton@verizon.net

Also, this year we have all the Christmas Count forms available for downloading on the Audubon website, which is: www.santabarbaraaudubon.org Check it out!

If you need forms mailed to you or have difficulty getting them off the computer, Joan Lentz will be glad to mail them to you. Thanks!

#### Report On A Tour Of Tejon Ranch By Jared Dawson

On Saturday, October 4, Jared Dawson and Jeff Hanson from our local Audubon chapter met with some 15 others from Southern California chapters for a guided tour to some of the birding areas of the vast Tejon Ranch, located at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. Garry George of LA Audubon helped to coordinate this. Our leaders were Pete Bloom from Orange County, a raptor and condor expert, for the birding; and Mike White of the Conservation Biology Institute for the ecology.



Tejon Ranch has been much in the news as the subject of an agreement involving Audubon California and the Sierra Club which allows for development of limited areas of the ranch in exchange for permanent easements for conservation, which includes known areas of condor activity.

We met at dawn and spent most of the morning in an area between and along two converging oak riparian streams. The streambeds were clearly trampled and disturbed from heavy cattle traffic. Pete felt that with some planning and effort fences could be arranged to both give the cattle access to water and to help protect stretches of the stream regain a more natural state. Some of the best birds in this area were Rock Wrens, a probable Dusky Flycatcher, Phainopeplas, and a Golden Eagle.

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

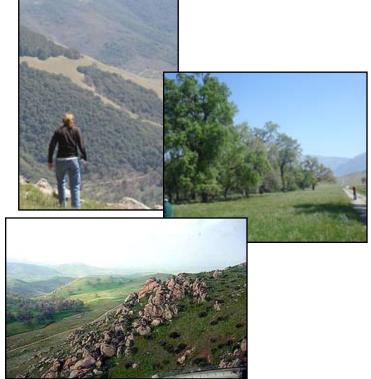
or email: newsletter@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org Submissions deadline is the 10th of the month before publication. Out in the more open oak savannah we were treated to a number of Lewis' Woodpeckers in close proximity, and a good view of a bobcat. A visit to an extensive oak grove was quiet but we did see a flushed Barn Owl.

Later in the day we were rained and fogged out of a view from a higher spot, so we came back down to the edge of a reservoir for some waterfowl and other birds such as another eagle, Loggerhead Shrike, and Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers.

Part of the rationale for this tour was to highlight these areas for possible future chapter field trips. It would seem that much work will have to be done for this to be valuable, both from an environmental standpoint as well as an administrative one; but one could certainly see the potential. We of course only saw a tiny fraction of the conservation area, which includes the mountains that were to the east and the south of us.

On October 29 our chapter hosted a special forum on this agreement. Sierra Club's Bill Corcoran and Audubon California's Graham Chisholm were the presenters. in exchange for not opposing development on 10% of the ranch, 375 square miles of land has been preserved. This pact has not been without controversy in the environmental movement. For a pro summary from the Sierra club, see http://www.sierraclub.org/wildlegacy/resilienthabitat/downloads/2008-05-tejon.pdf.

For more extensive treatment and other links, see the Audubon California site at http://ca.audubon.org/tejon.php. For a negative assessment see Center for Biological Diversity site at: www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/save\_tejon\_ranch/.



Views of the Tejon Ranch.

### Santa Barbara Audubon Programs

All programs will take place at Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Mission Canyon, Santa Barbara. Free on-site parking. All programs 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.

# Cowbirds: Why are they so maligned and so interesting to biologists?

## Stephen Rothstein Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Steve will give a brief overview of parasitic birds and the special opportunities they offer for studies of evolution, followed by a summary of his research on song dialects and song development in cowbirds. Cowbirds require a great bit of learning to develop their vocal repertoires yet they learn only from other cowbirds even though they are always raised by other species. Steve will then address the issue of cowbirds as a threat to other songbirds. While cowbirds are a serious threat to a small number of endangered passerines and, therefore, must be controlled in some circumstances, cowbirds have been demonized to a large extent and blamed for far more damage than they have caused. This demonization has resulted in the excessive use of cowbird control, which deflects attention and funding from the most important threat to endangered songbirds, namely the habitat destruction we have inflicted on ecosystems, especially in riparian areas of the West. Making cowbirds into scapegoats ignores the facts that they have been in North America for at least a million years and are a natural component of its biodiversity.



Hooded Oriole and Cowbird fledglings. Photo by: Steve Rothstein

Steve grew up in New York City, went to Yale University for his PhD dealing with the behavior, ecology and evolution of birds and had a 2 year postdoctoral position at the Smithsonian Institution before coming to UCSB in 1972. He teaches courses in vertebrate biology, animal behavior and evolution and conducts research on the co-evolution between parasitic birds and their hosts, song development and function in songbirds and conservation issues related to riparian bird species and cowbirds.



## More Mesa, Land of Wonder Valerie Olson Wednesday, January 28, 2009

Valerie Olson, as President of the More Mesa Preservation Coalition (MMPC), has worked to preserve all 265 acres of More Mesa in perpetuity. More Mesa, one of the most outstanding scenic and environmentally

sensitive pieces of undeveloped open space remaining on the coast of Southern California boasts sweeping views of both the Santa Ynez mountains and the coast. Incredibly, given its very desirable location, surrounding growth and past building proposals, this unique site remains undeveloped.

Valerie will begin with an overview of the biological resources of More Mesa, including habitat types and the rich flora and fauna found in the area. Special emphasis will be placed on raptors found on the mesa, both seasonally and throughout the year. This will be followed by a discussion of the

history of More Mesa, and how that history has mirrored the paradigms of each distinctive historic period. Valerie will also talk about the recreation that takes place in the area and will show a series of aerial photos from the 1920s to the present. She will conclude with a brief look at what is currently happening on and about the Mesa, and present results of the biological study currently in progress.

Valerie has a B.S. and M.S. in Physics and Mathematics. During her long technical career, she designed and built a wide variety of complex sensors and managed very large Aerospace programs. Since retiring, she has been heavily involved in several environmental issues. She has been a member of the Goleta Beach Working Group, Matilija Coalition, Goleta Visioning Committee (GVC) and has been selected for a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) that will participate in the update of the Goleta Community Plan. Valerie is also a Naturalist for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and a docent for the Santa Barbara Zoo.

#### 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.

#### Lake Cachuma Birding Boat Cruise Lake Cachuma County Park Saturday, December 20, 2008 10 a.m.-12 noon (9:45 check-in time at boat dock)

**Target Birds**: Bald Eagles, White Pelicans, Grebes, Common Loons, sea and water birds, ducks, Ospreys, Great -tailed Grackles, Peregrine Falcons, etc.

Trip Leader: Liz Mason, Park Naturalist

**Cost**: \$15 for the boat trip payable on the boat. \$8 per car for entering the Lake Cachuma County Park.

Limit: 35 people. You must call or email Jack Sanford ((805) 566-2191 or jacksanford@hotmail.com) to make a reservation on or before Tuesday Dec 16th. Please give your name and phone number, and Jack will confirm.

**Directions**: Take Hwy. 154 to Lake Cachuma County Park. Park near the boat launching area and the Fishing and Tackle shop. To car pool, which is a good idea since there is an \$8 entrance fee, meet at the 5 Points Shopping Center near Carl's Junior at 9 a.m. Directions to Carl's Junior: Coming from the south take Hwy. 101 to Lake Cachuma/State St. off ramp. Turn right on State St. and turn right into the Five Points Shopping Center. Coming from the north take Hwy. 101 to the State St. off ramp. Turn left onto State St. Turn right into the Five Points Shopping Center. (\$8.00 gas money to drivers.) We should be back around 1 p.m.

Don't miss this great opportunity to get out on the lake with the Park Naturalist! Hollister Ranch (near Gaviota)
Saturday January 24, 2009
8:00 a.m.-1 p.m.
(7:00 a.m. at mandatory car pool location)

Reservations are required due to a limited number of vehicles allowed on the Ranch.

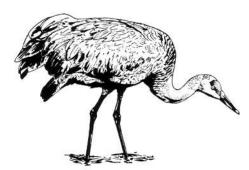
**Target Birds**: Songbirds, ocean and pond waterfowl, raptors and perhaps an owl or two.

Leader: Guy Tingos

Reservations are required as we are limited to 25 people (five vehicles). Please call or email Jack Sanford ((805) 566-2191 or jacksanford@hotmail.com) on or before Wednesday January 21st to reserve your place. Please let Jack know if you are willing to drive your vehicle and how many people it will hold.

**Directions**: Coming from the south take Hwy. 101 to Lake Cachuma/State St. off ramp. Turn right on State St. and turn right into the Five Points Shopping Center. Coming from the north take Hwy. 101 to the State St. off ramp. Turn left onto State St. Turn right into the Five Points Shopping Center. We will meet and park near Carl's Jr restaurant at 7:00 a.m. (\$8.00 gas money to drivers.) We must car pool, as we are limited to 5 vehicles. Bring water, snack or lunch and wear comfortable shoes. Binoculars and spotting scopes are useful.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to bird the private and unique Hollister Ranch.



#### Save this Date!

Sandhill Crane Overnight Field Trip! Saturday, February 14, and Sunday, February 15, 2009

For the 4thyear, Jack Sanford will lead a visit to the Kern National Wildlife Refuge (over 50 species nest here), the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (for Sandhill Cranes) and Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (for Burrowing Owls). All three locations are about 50 miles north of Bakersfield. It will be an overnight trip utilizing camping facilities or a nearby motel. We will return Sunday evening. Check the February/March issue of E.T. for more information.

### **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.

#### Santa Barbara Harbor Bird Walk Friday, December 12, 2008

**Target Birds**: Waterfowl, Belted Kingfishers, Peregrine Falcons, Gulls and shorebirds.

**Directions**: Coming from the north on Hwy. 101, take the Castillo St. off ramp to Cabrillo Blvd. Coming from the south on Hwy. 101 take the Cabrillo Blvd. off ramp. Park on Bath or Mason St. (no time limit) or in the 90 minute parking on Cabrillo Blvd. We will meet on the sidewalk next to the Sea Landing Sport Fishing Building (301 W. Cabrillo Blvd.)

#### Andree Clark Bird Refuge

Friday December 26, 2008

Target Birds: Waterfowl, shorebirds

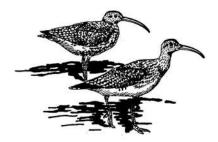
**Directions**: From the south on Hwy. 101, take the Cabrillo Blvd. off ramp. Turn right on Los Patos Way. From the north on Hwy. 101, take the Hot Springs off ramp. Turn left on Cabrillo Blvd. and turn right on Los Patos Way. Park in or around the Bird Refuge parking lot.

#### Coronado Dr. and Devereux Creek Bird Walk

Friday January 9, 2009

Target Birds: Raptors, songbirds plus Monarch Butterflies

**Directions**: From Hwy. 101 take the Glen Annie/Storke Rd. off ramp. Go south on Storke Rd. to Hollister Ave. Turn right onto Hollister Ave. and left onto Coronado Drive. Park at the end of the street.



Whimbrel, Artist Steven D'Amato

## Goleta Sewage Treatment Plant Friday January 23, 2009

Target Birds: Shorebirds

**Directions**: Heading south on Hwy. 101, take the Fairview Ave. off ramp and head towards the ocean. Fairview Ave. becomes Fowler St. The Treatment Plant is across the street from the Santa Barbara Airport. Heading north on Hwy. 101, take Ward Memorial Blvd. Take the last turn off before UCSB to Fowler St. (S.B. Airport). Turn right on Fowler. The Treatment Plant is on your right. Park in the parking lot and sign in at the office.

#### **Bonus Bird Walk**

Sand Point Bird Walk

Bonus Bird Walk for S.B. Audubon Society Members Only

Friday December 19, 2008, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

**Target Birds**: Long-billed Curlews, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Ospreys, White-tailed Kites, waterfowl, Sandpipers, etc.

A Bonus Bird Walk and you don't want to miss this one. SBAS has received permission to offer a Friday Bird Walk for a limited number (20) of S.B. Audubon Society members (only) at the Sand Point private, gated community.

Enjoy this opportunity to bird the Carpinteria Salt Marsh from Sand Point Road. Unfortunately only a limited number of birders will be allowed to sign up for this bird walk. If you are interested, please contact Jack Sanford by phone (805 566-2191) or email (jacksanford@hotmail.com) immediately. Leave you name and phone number or email address, and Jack will confirm your reservation.

**Directions**: To get to the Sand Point Road entrance, take the Santa Claus Lane exit off Hwy. 101, and follow Santa Claus Lane to the southeast end. Parking is available in the business area just before Santa Claus Lane enters Hwy. 101 south. We will meet near the railroad tracks and proceed from there on foot.

## 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.

#### Santa Barbara Audubon Society **Field Trip Reports**

#### **Devereux Slough/UCSB West Campus** October 25, 2008 By Jeff Hanson

The one good thing about fog, is you don't have to haul your scope around

I was pleasantly surprised to find that 20 of us had gathered in the dense fog, at 7:30 a.m. to go birding! After a brief introduction, Rob Lindsay took us from Del Playa right on down the stairs to the beach. It wasn't long before the Blackbellied Plovers, Whimbrels, Sanderlings, and Black Turnstones emerged through the fog, galvanizing the group with the notion that not all was lost!



Whrimbrel and Margled Godwits. Photo by Jeff Hanson

The 3 mile route took us a full mile down the beach to Coal Oil Point Reserve and the pond trail. Along the way, we stopped at the Snowy Plover reserve, where we saw dozens of them hunkered down in their furrows. There were good numbers of shorebirds and gulls there as well.



The group heads into the dues. Photo by Dung Ha

The remainder of the trip took us away from the beach, up the pond trail to the golf course, then down Slough road to the bluff top, and back to the cars in Isla Vista.

Highlights of this half of the trip included Sparrows, Meadowlarks, Goldfinch and Phoebes. At Devereux slough, the Cormorants and Pelicans put on quite a show of group

A big thanks to Rob, for his expert and friendly leadership, and to Jack Sanford for putting this great trip together in our own backyard.

#### Las Cruzitas Ranch field trip November 8, 2008 By Jeff Hanson **Photos by Dung Ha**

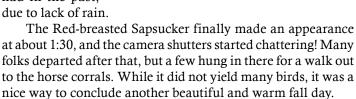
After a quick stop at the corner of Alisos and Happy Canyon to view a Northern Harrier, 27 eager birders arrived at Cruz Philips' ranch at 9:15 a.m. We spent the next 2 hours birding around the main house. We witnessed what Cruz called a "Magpie wake". There was a dead Yellow-billed Magpie at the foot of a tree in the backyard. Several of its own kind had gathered in the tree and were vocalizing, as if they were mourning



the loss. As we worked our way around the house, we encountered a good variety of birds on the ground and in the air.

At 11:15, we took a drive up to the watering trough. On the way, we spotted the 2 golden eagles that we have come to expect at Cruz' place. Turns out it wasn't very birdy up there, so we

came back to the house and had lunch. There were plenty of chairs, so everybody staked out a good spot for viewing and chatting. It was noted that both the variety and quantity of birds are not up to what we have had in the past.



Many thanks to Cruz Phillips for her kind generosity and escorting us around her beautiful ranch.

#### **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 Itvolunteer@yahoo.com or 684-4405. For Coal Oil Point Reserve, contact Tara Longwell at longwell@lifesci.ucsb.edu or 252-4903. or Darlene Chirman at dchirman@starband.net or 692-2008.

#### ARROYO HONDO

Contact: Jane Murray

Sunday December 7 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m Sunday January 4 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

#### **COAL OIL POINT RESERVE**

Contact: Tara Longwell

No Workday in December Saturday January 24 9 a.m.-12 noon

#### **SBAS NEEDS YOU!**

The Santa Barbara/Goleta area faces many challenges from development, including Naples, City of Goleta, Veneco oil development, UCSB Long Range Development Plan, and many others. In order to ensure that development proceeds in the most environmentally friendly way, Santa Barbara Audubon Society reviews developments and makes suggestions for improvement. The SBAS Conservation Committee is looking for volunteers to help us in this effort. Please contact our chair, Steve Ferry, at Conservation@SantaBarbaraAudubon. org if you'd like to help.

#### **Plover Project Docent Training**

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

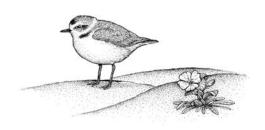
rraining dates:	
December	 No Training
January	 10

#### **Training Schedule:**

Training dates

Tour is	 	 	 9-11 a.m.	
Training is	 	 	 11 a.m.	-1:30 p.m.

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



Snowy Plover by Peter Gaede

#### **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 Membership@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

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

National Audubon Society Membership Application (new members only
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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:
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Mail to:
Santa Barbara Audubon Society
5679 Hollister Ave., Suite 5B
Goleta, CA 93117

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#### http://www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

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Prog: Jennifer	Stroh	880-1195	Plovers@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org	
Hospitality:	Sylvelin Edgerton	964-1658	Hospitality-1@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org	
	Nancy Rohrer	687-7587	Hospitality-2@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org	
Report Rare Birds:	Karen Bridgers	964-1316	RareBirds@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org	
Hear Rare Bird Report964-8240				
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.

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

http://www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

#### December

Dec.	3	Program: Cowbirds
Dec.	7	Restore Arroyo Hondo
Dec.	12	SB Harbor Bird Walk
Dec.	19	Sand Point Bird Walk
Dec.	20	Lake Cachuma Field Trip
Dec.	26	Bird Refuge Bird Walk
		January

Jan.	3	Christmas Bird Count
Jan.	4	Restore Arroyo Hondo
Jan.	9	Coronado Dr. Bird Walk
		DI T : :

Jan. **Plover Training** 

Goleta Sewage Plant Bird Walk Jan. 23 Restore Coal Oil Point Reserve Jan. 24

24 Hollister Ranch Field Trip Jan.

Program: More Mesa Jan. 28

**February** 

Feb.14-15 Sandhill Crane Field Trip

