Citizen scientists recorded over 17 million individual birds from 618 species during the nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), between February 17 and 20, 2012. Many count participants spent less than 30 minutes in the field, but the data they collected will be invaluable to professional scientists watching population sizes, migration patterns, and the advance of introduced species across North America.

The mission of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society is to help conserve and restore the earth’s natural ecosystems and improve its biological diversity, principally in the Santa Barbara area, and to connect people with birds and nature through education, science-based projects and advocacy.
an alert whenever somebody sees another so that I can go chase my “missing” species. Many birders use eBird as a tool for planning vacations or weekend birding trips by querying for recent sightings of target birds.

eBird employs a network of volunteers to review eBird submissions at the county level—when users submit data, an algorithm automatically “scans” for unusual species’ presence or counts. If the algorithm flags something as unusual, a reviewer looks at the recording and assesses its credibility. Our Santa Barbara County reviewer is Jamie Chavez, who some Audubon members will also recognize as the moderator of our sbcobirding discussion group. While some birders lament the way technology has changed the pursuit, Chavez says that eBird has changed the way he birds for the better: knowing he will upload a checklist after a day (or a lunch break) in the field, he records his observations more carefully. “I don’t go out birding anymore without a notepad and a pen.”

Chavez also introduced me to some exciting eBird features:

• First, we can now enter breeding data for any bird we see, from carrying nest material to feeding young. This aspect of the database is not yet searchable (much to the relief of breeding birds themselves).

• Second, eBird lets amateur birders use tools that would normally be reserved for professional scientists, such as STEM, or Spatio-Temporal Exploratory Models. An eBird program uses real, user-submitted data to create a model of habitats a species “should” be found in, based on the environmental niche it occupies. The website can create dynamic maps of species occurrence over time, using real data where available and filling in the rest of the predicted range based on the model.

Lazuli Bunting occurrence in the Continental US in May. Lightest color denotes highest probability of observation.

eBird is not just a database of computer age birding. The website allows users to submit data collected on any date, so thousands of birders have been working through their old field notebooks and entering historical data that would otherwise have been effectively lost.

Sources:


EITS Business Sponsors For El Tecolote

Eyes in the Sky welcomes S&S SEEDS (Susan and Victor Schaff) of Carpinteria and ISLAND SEED AND FEED (Matt Buckmaster and Brenton Kelly) of Goleta as Falcon Level Business Sponsors. Such sponsorships are greatly appreciated as they support our raptors’ food and vet care needs as well as education programs within the community. Please be sure to thank them on behalf of EITS and Santa Barbara Audubon when you go in to shop. If you know of a business which might wish to become a sponsor, please contact Gabriele Drozdowski (898-0347) for information.
O
ver a decade ago, the Santa Barbara Audubon Society needed a vast website overhaul. Board member Bobbie Offen volunteered to undertake the daunting task.

“It was my job to completely redesign the site, which I did,” says Offen.

Her varied and difficult work included designing an interactive index, selecting icons for pages, and adding visitors counters and membership forms to what was previously a primitive barebones site.

Offen strove to give the current SBAS website a “clean look with easy, efficient navigation” whose information was never more than two clicks away for any inquiring visitor.

Offen will be leaving her post as webmaster to focus on her other SBAS activities as the organization’s treasurer, as well as outside interests which include docenting at Lotusland, working on her orchard, and traveling.

“I have a ‘three year’ rule for activities in my life and career,” says Offen. “Most positions I have held were for three years [then] I’ve always moved on or up.

“Being webmaster broke that rule.... The SBAS website needed some improvements that would take advantage of newer programming techniques. I felt I could either spend the time to learn them or transfer the position to someone who already had those skills.” Replacing Offen will be Dave Levasheff, whom Offen interviewed and recommended for appointment by the chapter board. Levasheff began overseeing the site for Offen in April 2010.

“I think Dave is not only a great webmaster, but he has a lot more bird knowledge than I ever did,” says Offen. “I felt very good about turning over ‘my baby’ to him and I don’t have any territorial feelings about it. He can change it, enhance it, or do what he wants with it. He is a gem.”

Levasheff comes to SBAS with a thirty-plus year background in computer science. He has written software for Raytheon, and created web-formatted software documentation, among other responsibilities.

Levasheff says that his ultimate goal is to give “a fresh new look” to the site. Currently, he is reformating HTML code to make it more easily maintainable. He is also writing and integrating “server side code” which will allow SBAS webpages to have standard formatting.

The multiple tasks at hand require a great deal of time and effort for Levasheff. In addition to his short- and long-term site duties, he also must keep the site updated about monthly activities such as bird walks, field trips, and programs, as well as posting special reports.

“The sheer number of pages of content has been overwhelming,” says Levasheff. “There are hundreds of pages of content and even more image files,” adding that some are obsolete, out-of-date, or in need of current inputting.

SBAS is truly grateful to both Bobbie Offen and Dave Levasheff for their diligent and selfless contributions to our website. From all of us: great thanks and appreciation to Offen, and a very warm welcome to Dave Levasheff.

Please visit our updated website at: www.santabarbaraaudubon.org/

Aviary Drainage Problems
by Dolores Pollock and John O’Brien

O
ur new aviary was not properly draining the daily wash-down water, and the problem was traced to compacted soil. When the initial foundation was dug, an old well was discovered. That challenge was partially addressed by compacting the soil under the aviary. Without knowing it, that led to difficulty in allowing the wash-down water to drain through the gravel in each aviary room.

Volunteers have removed the gravel, and we are working to resolve the problem.

Meanwhile, the birds returned to Gabriele’s.

El Tecolote, April–May 2012

Page 3
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.

Galapagos Islands—Trouble in Paradise?
Steve Rothstein
April 25

Until recently, the only way to see the Galapagos Islands and its fauna was by being based on a boat. But there are now ecolodges available on several islands and this opens the Galapagos to the seasick challenged among us. Steve Rothstein will describe this land-based way to see the islands and talk about some of the advantages and disadvantages of land based versus sea based tours. He will also describe his observations of avian pox in Galapagos birds and review a number of other diseases that are emerging in the islands’ birds and may threaten their survival. Currently, the fauna of the Galapagos Islands including birds and reptiles is by far the most intact island fauna in the world with the only known vertebrate extinctions being several subspecies of tortoises and three species of endemic rodents, but this could change rapidly in the near future.

Steve Rothstein did his PhD at Yale University and then spent a postdoc at the Smithsonian Institution. He came to UCSB in 1972 and has been there ever since teaching vertebrate zoology, animal behavior and evolution. His research deals with evolution and behavior and has focused on interactions between parasitic birds, such as cowbirds and cuckoos, and their hosts and on the development and function of bird song. He has also been involved in conservation efforts related to cowbird impacts on endangered host species.

Bird Stories: Photos from Africa, Alaska, Brazil, and the West.
Ralph A. Clevenger
May 30

Ralph Clevenger grew up on the coast of North Africa and began diving in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea at the age of 7 with his father. He eventually went on to study zoology at San Diego State University and worked as a diver/biologist for the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California before attending Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California. He holds a BS degree in zoology and a BA degree in photography.

Ralph has followed his passion for the natural world by specializing in location photography and video projects of eco-travel, environmental portraits, wildlife and undersea subjects. He has traveled throughout the world on assignment, and his clients have included Fox Sports, MacGillivray-Freeman Films, University of California, California State Parks and Denali National Park Wilderness Center. His publication credits include: Audubon, Aqua, Islands, Oceans, Outside, Orion Nature Quarterly, National Geographic, National Geographic Kids, National Geographic Traveler, Popular Photography, Nature's Best, Terre Sauvage, National Geographic Books, Smithsonian Books, Sierra Club Books, and other national and international publications. Ralph is the author of Photographing Nature, published by New Riders. Ralph’s stock images are represented worldwide by Corbis Images. Website: www.ralphclevenger.com
Santa Barbara Audubon Field Trips

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 or jacksanford@hotmail.com for details or questions.

Rancho La Vina
4455 Santa Rosa Road
Between Buellton & Lompoc
Sunday April 8, (Easter Sunday)
9 a.m.-12 noon (8 a.m. at car pool location)
What better way to celebrate Easter that enjoying Mother Nature.

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. ($8 gas money to drivers.) We will take Hwy. 101 north to Santa Rosa Rd. off-ramp just before Buellton. We will park and meet at 4455 Santa Rosa Road 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 26, 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: Rob Lindsay
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. ($8.00 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). Turn right at the intersection at the bottom of the descent and continue to the Park entrance on the right.
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 lunch.

Bonus Field Trip: Westmont Campus
Saturday April 21, 2012 8:30 -11:30 a.m.

Thanks to Carrie Steingruber for volunteering to lead a Westmont campus bird trip. This is a wonderful birding opportunity with a very knowledgeable leader. Carrie will be graduating soon and returning to Texas.

Directions: From Highway 101 exit at Olive Mill Road and head toward the mountains (away from the ocean). Turn left at the intersection of Olive Mill and Hot Springs Road and right on Sycamore Canyon Road. Turn right on Cold Springs Road (across from the Fire Station) and enter the 2nd Westmont campus entrance. We will meet in the parking lot to the left of the 2nd entrance.

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.

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!

Jo A. Adams       Gert Hackman       Andy Mirkin       Patricia Schwartzkopf*
Jean Archer       Jonathan Haney*    George Mogyoros    Boris Shraiman
Deana Blackwood   Jerry Hatchett    Robert Mustachich* Sheila Takeuchi
Richard Brownman  Cristina Hernandez* Eric Nagelmann    John Watson*
Sally A. Camp     Marian Kadota    Margaret L. Parson Randy Potts
Jim Cencer        John Leslie     Peter R. Ramsey    Ann S. Welch
Sloane Dickens    Faye Massey      Malana Rhudy*     *Chapter Only Membership
William E. Dunklau Jeremiah McElwee  Greta R. Micol
Konnie K. Gault   Greta Hackman    Andy Mirkin
Friday Bird Walks

Join us on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 8:30-10:30 a.m., except as otherwise noted. 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, 2012:
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.

UCSB Campus Lagoon
Friday, May 11, 2012
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. Coming from the north on Hwy. 101, take the Fairview Ave. off-ramp and head towards the ocean. Fairview Ave will turn 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).

Tucker’s Grove and Kiwanis Meadows.
Friday, April 27, 2012
Target Birds: Cooper’s Hawks, Towhees, American Robins, Lesser Goldfinches, etc.

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

San Jose Creek & Open Space
Friday, May 25, 2012
Target Birds: Hummingbirds, woodpeckers, songbirds, maybe even an owl, etc.

Directions: Take Hwy. 101 to the Patterson Ave. off-ramp and turn north towards the mountains. Turn left on Parejo Drive (the 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 park and meet at the end of Merida Drive.

Volunteer Opportunity: SBAS at CEC Earth Day Festival, April 21

Santa Barbara Audubon Society will be participating in the Community Environmental Council's Earth Day Festival on Saturday, April 21 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Alameda Park. We’ll have an owl pellet dissecting activity for kids and spread the word about SBAS activities and volunteer opportunities. Please stop by to visit! We will be in the Public Square area on Anacapa Street between Micheltorena and Sola. Please note that the festival is a two-day event, but we will only be there on Saturday. (Coal Oil Point Reserve Snowy Plover Docents will share our site on Sunday.)

If you’d like to help staff the booth, set up, or clean up contact Maggie Sherriffs at Education@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org or (805)682-4711 ext. 131.

SAVE THE DATE!
Santa Barbara Audubon Society Annual Meeting and Picnic
Sunday June 24, 2012, 12-2
Arroyo Hondo Reserve, Gem of the Central Coast

White-tailed Kite.
Artist Steven D’Amato
Volunteer Habitat Restoration

Audubon helps recruit volunteers for habitat restoration; come help to restore a creek or estuary while spending a morning in a beautiful bird habitat. We now have a new Audubon-managed project at Coal Oil Point Reserve as well. Contact Darlene Chirman at President@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org or 692-2008. Contact Coal Oil Point Reserve: Reserve Steward Tara Longwell at tara.longwell@lifesci.ucsb.edu or 893-5092. Contact the Land Trust for Arroyo Hondo Preserve: Volunteer Coordinator Sally Isaacson at 260-2252 or volunteer@sblandtrust.org

Plover Project Docent Training

Training takes place at Coal Oil Point Reserve.

Training dates:
April .................................. 14
May ...................................... 5
June ..................................... 2

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

Those interested should Contact: April Price. COPR Conservation Specialist at 893-3703 or copr.conservation@lifesci.ucsb.edu

Red-winged Blackbird
Artist Steven D’Amato

ARROYO HONDO

Contact: Sally Isaacson
Sunday April 8 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m
Sunday May 6 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

COAL OIL POINT RESERVE

Date Restoration Contact
April 21 COPR Trails Tara Longwell
April 28 Audubon restoration Darlene Chirman
May 12 Audubon restoration Darlene Chirman
May 19 COPR Trails Tara Longwell
June 2 Audubon restoration Darlene Chirman

CHANNEL ISLANDS RESTORATION

Contact: Volunteer Coordinator Dee Hamby at volunteer@cirweb.org
Please consult their website or Sarah on restoration projects including Lake Los Carneros, San Marcos Foothills, Santa Barbara Zoo, Carpinteria Creek, Anacapa Island and others. Their website is: www.cirweb.org

Work with the SBAS Birds
Eyes in the Sky

Eyes in the Sky has ongoing opportunities for new volunteers to work with our birds of prey. Volunteers must be available during daytime hours. Call Gabriele (805) 898-0347.

Omission

In the reformatting the print version of the Christmas Bird Count list, Rob Lindsay’s Lesser Yellowlegs got dropped. The total count listed was correct but this bird was not included in the list.

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Rare Birds sbcobirding  http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sbcobirding

Officers and Chairs meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Members are welcomed to attend.
Call the 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

April
Apr.  8 Restore Arroyo Hondo
Apr.  8 Rancho La Vina Field Trip
Apr. 13 Ennisbrook Bird Walk
Apr. 14 Plover Training
Apr. 21 Restore Coal Oil Point: Trails
Apr. 21 Westmont Field Trip
Apr. 21 Earth Day Festival
Apr. 25 Program: Galapagos Islands
Apr. 27 Tucker’s Grove Bird Walk
Apr. 28 Restore Coal Oil Point: Planting

May
May  5 Plover Training
May  6 Restore Arroyo Hondo
May 11 UCSB Lagoon Bird Walk
May 12 Restore Coal Oil Point: Planting
May 19 Restore Coal Oil Point: Trails
May 25 San Jose Creek Bird Walk
May 26 Njoqui Falls Field Trip
May 30 Program: Bird Stories

June
June  2 Plover Training
June  2 Restore Coal Oil Point: Restoration
June 24 Annual Meeting and Picnic

Printed on recycled paper.