

El Tecolote



NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Volume 54, Issue 5 | April – May 2016

www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

OUR BUSY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

by Cherie Topper

Have you ever wondered what our Conservation Committee is up to? You may be surprised to discover both the volume and the variety of our activities in the community on SBAS's behalf. We are fortunate to have experts on this committee who are familiar with all aspects of conservation – botany and native plants, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Planning, Engineering, and, of course, Ornithology! In fact, you may be motivated to *join* this dynamic group of smart and dedicated volunteers who are making an impact on our community.

What We Do

The Conservation Committee provides the focus for the Chapter's commitment to advancing Audubon's environmental mission in the community. The Committee, facilitated by co-chairs Virginia Gardner and Darlene Chirman, oversees the development and implementation of goals, objectives, and strategies for all conservation issues and projects that advance the SBAS mission of helping to **conserve and restore the earth's natural ecosystems**, enhance its biological diversity, and connect people with birds and nature. We function in a number of different but overlapping arenas, including political/community advocacy, bird conservation, land use, and leadership in restoration.

2015-16 Accomplishments So Far

The committee tracked many projects of concern, and prepared and submitted well-researched comment letters particularly on Environmental Impact Reports, study reports, and agency plans. For many of the projects we teamed with other organizations to coordinate our comments and discussions with local government officials and others. Some of those with the most long-lasting implications include:

- The Refugio Beach Oil Spill - tracked by

several committee members including Steve Ferry, Cherie Topper, and Scott Coop|Virginia Gardner provided background on the overall process of the spill response, incident command system, criminal and civil investigations, and eventual Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) process.

- Village at Los Carneros and Shelby Ranch residential developments in Goleta.
- Chaparral protections: Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan, Mountain Communities Defense Zone Project.
- Proposed Chumash Museum Construction at Lake Los Carneros.
- Santa Barbara Airport Master Plan.
- Goleta Slough Area Sea Level Rise and Management Plan, Goleta Slough Mouth Inlet Study.
- Goleta Beach Bridge Replacement project.
- Oil development projects in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura counties.
- Work with the More Mesa Preservation Coalition monitoring More Mesa.

The committee, under Steve Ferry and Scott Cooper's able leadership, is currently working in coalition with other environmental organizations in Santa Barbara County to curtail development of the 14-acre Shelby property currently zoned for agriculture. **Read Steve Ferry's excellent op-ed detailing why this foothill property should be preserved, rather than paved over with 60 plus closely spaced luxury homes.** Steve writes, "If you agree that farmland should not be re-zoned for expensive housing on the Shelby property, please email the Goleta City Council. It will only take you a couple of minutes. A sample letter and Council email address are included in the op-ed."

Resource Needs

For advocacy on many environmental issues, the Committee needs further funding to support legal advice and representation.



Photo by Kevin Scott

The Committee needs more volunteers to tackle the numerous environmental issues facing our community, as well as a volunteer to represent SBAS on the Naples Coalition Board.

For complete article and Steve Ferry's op-ed go to www.santabarbaraaudubon.org

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR RESIGNS, MOVING TO SACRAMENTO

Virginia Gardner, our Conservation Committee Co-Chair for the last year, is resigning from that position. She writes, "I'm delighted, excited, and a bit sad to report that I've accepted a post with the Delta Stewardship Council in Sacramento, starting the second week of March." Virginia hopes to stay connected to SBAS and our activities. Co-chairing with Darlene Chirman, Virginia and her committee have worked hard to stay abreast of the many challenges currently confronting us as we work to maintain bird habitat in our region. She has a wealth of experience in that area which she will no doubt put to good use in her new work. Thank you, Virginia!

DOGS AND SHOREBIRDS

by Cris Sandoval, Director, Coal Oil Point Reserve

Birds perceive dogs as dangerous predators and react to them much as they would to a coyote or a bobcat. Snowy Plovers, such as those at Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR), run away from people who are within 20 feet of them but *run away from dogs that are closer than 100 feet*. Although many dog owners contend that their dogs would not hurt Snowy Plovers, two Plovers, a flightless chick and an adult, were recently killed by dogs at COPR. Dogs can trample nests and chase young and adult birds, exhausting energy reserves and affecting Plovers' survival and ability to migrate.

Because Western Snowy Plovers are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, land and natural resource managers are required to protect this species from harassment and death. As a consequence, in order to protect Snowy Plovers, many agencies, such as State Parks and Navy bases, don't allow dogs on their beaches.

At COPR, diligent docents patrol the beach every day, educating the public about our program and asking dog owners to leash their dogs so that they will not chase, injure, or kill Snowy Plovers. The docent program has improved compliance with Santa Barbara County leash law from nearly zero to 60%. However, 40% of the dogs on COPR's Sands Beach are still unleashed, with the potential to harass or kill birds. Non-compliant, unleashed dogs have killed birds. Enforcement of the leash laws is difficult because often both dogs and their human companions are no longer on the beach by the time police officers arrive.


In 2001, we established a goal of no "take" by dogs as part of our plan to protect and restore Snowy Plover populations at COPR. "Take" is defined under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as killing or harassing a listed species, which is prohibited by ESA. When a take occurs, such as the two Plovers killed by dogs at COPR, more restrictive policies are often required to prevent further take. At Surf Beach in Lompoc, after 50 "take" violations, the beach is closed to people through the rest of the Plover breeding season, and further violators could be fined up to \$5,000.

Temporary, complete beach closure to protect Plovers would probably not be a good solution for COPR, because the docents' education program over the last 15 years has informed and sensitized neighbors and beach users to Plover issues. Compliance with avoiding Plover nesting and resting areas has increased. This friendly embrace of Plover conservation by local residents is an essential step to sustaining this species at COPR. In addition, complete closure of the beach would affect users, such as surfers, walkers, and sunbathers, who do not have



dogs. A more direct solution to end take by dogs would be to prohibit dogs at Sands Beach during the **Plover resting and nesting season (March through September)**, a move that would require associated information and enforcement programs. This solution would allow COPR to comply with ESA and protect Snowy Plovers, but people with dogs would need to find alternative routes for their jogs or walks. Alternatively, more hours of police presence on the beach could improve compliance, since we noticed that many dog owners unleash their dogs if the police are not present.

I also own a dog but only took her to the beach once. I noticed that parent Plovers reacted to my leashed dog by pretending to have a broken wing, a trick that Plovers use to distract predators from their nests, emphasizing the sensitivity of the birds to the presence of dogs. As a consequence, I no longer walk my leashed dog at Sands Beach during the nesting season.

Conservation often entails sacrifices from all of us to reduce or remove problems that cause endangered or threatened species to decline. Declines in Western Snowy Plover populations have occurred because of loss of breeding habitat and disturbance by beach recreation. Our docent and conservation programs at COPR have allowed Snowy Plovers to breed at Sands Beach for the first time in over 30 years, but further action is apparently necessary to ensure compliance with the law and to protect this species from human activities. My eventual hope is that we can construct the right balance to allow both Plovers and humans to share Sands Beach, without further declines in this threatened species. 

WHAT IS THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON CHAPTER TO ME?

By our newest Board Member, Marsha Macdonald

Well, it is a number of things. I see it as caring for the wild animals and championing their habitat. Being cognizant of one's actions, through travel or purchasing power. But, also taking the time, energy, and effort to make an impact on society by joining with others

in order to create open space, by voting credible people into office to draft/write appropriate laws onto the books that will protect our environment, our oceans, and our creeks. As well as protecting the land and the animals that rely on them, by restricting abuse of the environment as much as possible!

I have always enjoyed nature: the out-of-doors, fuzzy or feathery faces, gardening--digging in the dirt, or walking on the beach or in creek beds, looking under rocks. But then it helps to be a tomboy at heart, I guess! :)

AUDUBON CHAPTER CONTINUED ON P.4

THE SB AUDUBON TREE SWALLOW NEST BOX PROJECT AIR BNB AUDUBON STYLE

By Steven Senesac

INTRODUCTION

The Tree Swallow is a cavity nester that naturally nests in tree cavities (often made by woodpeckers). Human development frequently removes many trees and those that remain are often groomed in a way that minimizes dead branches (most appropriate for cavity nests). Such habitat disturbance is the likely reason why Tree Swallows dropped to the status of being an uncommon breeder around Santa Barbara and Ventura.

Jan Wasserman was instrumental in reversing this in Ventura beginning in the 1980s and continuing into this century. Santa Barbara Audubon took inspiration from her efforts and began its own nest box program in 2005. Dave Eldridge and Don Schroeder were two of the people instrumental in developing the program that I inherited in July 2015 when I became the current Science Chair for the Santa Barbara Audubon Society. At that time there were 31 boxes: 11 at LLC (Lake Los Carneros) and 20 at COPR (Coal Oil Point Reserve).



Photo by Steven Senesac

RESULTS SUMMARY

In analyzing the previous four years of data, a number of fascinating facts and trends emerged. For instance, one-third of the boxes produce two-thirds (66%) of the successful fledges, and the lowest one-third of the boxes produce less than 5% of the fledges. Additionally, the number of successful fledges per year has been relatively flat over the past four years, and of total number of fledglings, 60% successfully fledge (i.e., there is a 40% mortality rate).

We can be contacted through: Science@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

For full article <http://santabarbaraaudubon.org/the-sbas-tree-swallow-nest-box-project/>

SBAS LIBRARY

by Lee Moldaver

How many Audubon supporters know that we have an active library with over 600 volumes on birds, birding, eco-tourism, hiking, camping, nature--covering not only the central coast and California, but all of North America, and much of the world--free for research, examination, or checking out, right in the chapter office at the Goleta Community Center?

Planning a trip? Trying to properly ID that "peculiar" looking bird you saw or photographed? Helping a student research a school project or term paper? Just curious to learn more about the dinosaurs' closest living modern relatives? It's all there, in SB Audubon's care.

Our chapter library's core was a generous bequest from young '80s Super Birder Dean Bazzi, a popular SB Audubon member in the era of Paul Lehmann, Jim Greaves, Brad Schram, Louis & Wendy Bevier, Joan Lentz, Ron Hirst, Rob Lindsay, et al. When Dean was killed in a car accident [swerving off the road to avoid hitting an animal] his significant book collection on birds, birding, and ornithology, was left, in perpetuity, to "the members of the SB Audubon Society," where Dean had enjoyed many of his most exciting field trips and nature experiences.

The question is: Is there still Interest or Need for such a private Audubon library? Use of our chapter library has diminished the last few years. Is that from lack of awareness or lack of interest? Our Audubon chapter board and office volunteers are wrestling with the future of the library right now.

What do you think? What do you want? Keep it? Promote it better? Thin it out? Donate it somewhere? Sell it, and reinvest the proceeds to support the chapter?



Photo by John O'Brien

If you have any ideas, thoughts, or sentiments about our chapter Bird Library, please share them at vp@santabarbaraaudubon.org so we can decide the Audubon Bird Library's future.

AUDUBON CHAPTER CONTINUED FROM P.2

In the 80s, I remember taking a SBCC Biology Class–Birding! Unfortunately, I do not remember the instructor’s name—but, he left an impression on me: enjoyment for seeing the wild things which are all around us, all the time, if we just pay attention! :) During this Biology Class, we went on a field trip to the Goleta Slough one afternoon. The instructor brought his scope, and I borrowed a pair of binoculars for the outing.


That day I saw my first Green Heron, crouching at the water’s edge, waiting patiently for a small fish to swim by for his supper. His arched back and long needle-sharp bill were fantastic to view. I stared at a Belted Kingfisher on the high wire over the slough’s water. I was so enthralled! I watched these creatures for as long as they allowed, before flying away, getting their individual “GIST” for each species.

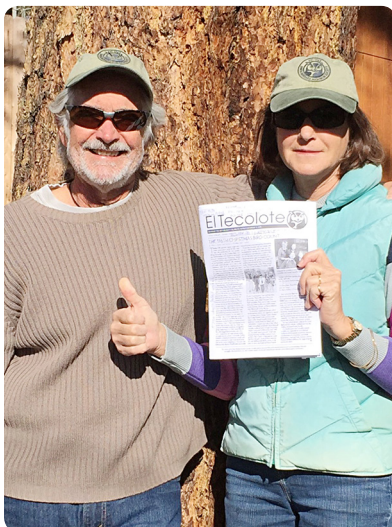
The class as a whole walked along the beach, past the end of the slough and back again. It was a great day, sunny, with a slight breeze. It was wonderful to be alive and awake in the world! :) On our walk back to our cars the instructor became extremely excited as he was looking up into the Eucalyptus trees that are perched on the cliffs just above the slough. He was looking up, adjusting his scope and was so animated, smiling and grinning while he was setting up his telescope. He had spotted a Peregrine Falcon up in the Eucalyptus trees, sunning herself. He made sure all of his students saw this magnificent bird. And, what a thrill it truly was!

To this day, I have a fond affection towards Peregrine Falcons! I used to handle Sedona, the Peregrine Falcon with EITS, a few years back. Their intense eyes, quick brains, and sharp talons and beak command respect.

I feel it is important to complement my enjoyment of nature by working with an organization that can assist in educating and influencing our elected officials to make sound, wise decisions with regard to land use, building permits, and other important matters that affect our natural surroundings.


Furthermore, I am continually amazed at the number of people who in our “relatively” small community have been SBAS Board Members, Past Presidents, or filled some role in the creation of this Audubon Chapter. And you know what? Many of these same people are continuing to support SBAS through working on rehabilitation projects, researching conservation issues, leading birding classes, or writing books that prove how valuable this area is. And, demonstrating that it and other areas need to be protected for others who are not yet aware of what a wealth of enjoyment awaits them by discovering the natural world.

I’m happy to meet so many different people with the same goals in mind. I am happy to give of my time and energy for a few years to help keep the awareness up, the money available, so others can do good work--and see where these efforts lead us all! :) 



John O'Brien and Marsha Macdonald model new Audubon caps

NEW AUDUBON BASEBALL CAPS

New Audubon baseball caps are available at our programs, bird walks, and events. Your \$20 donation supports our work--thank you! 

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Thanks to the 31 members and 5 friends who filled out the Questionnaire at our January program or at “Bringing Back the Wild.”

Q. As an Audubon member, are your needs being met?

(5 is perfect, 3 is OK, 1 is negative) Seventeen people gave the chapter “5”; one gave “4-5”; eight gave “4”; one gave “3-4”; one gave “3”; one gave “2-3”; seven did not provide a rating.

Q. What would make SBAS better?

Four responses: three wanted more about birds/bird walks/instruction; one wanted colorful hats and accessories.

Q. What has the Board not heard or understood from you?

Three individual answers: “Not much”; “More information on what Board and committees are accomplishing....”; “They have been very understanding.”

Q. Are you aware of SBAS’s budget?

Twenty-four were not aware of our \$130K budget. Eleven answered Yes, and one did not respond.

Q. How do you suggest the Chapter raise money?

Ten people voted for a Birdathon; four would like one big fundraiser per year; nine individuals suggested: grants, asking donors, private tours, a raffle, event for family & birding, wine & appetizer event, films, fun small events, passing the hat at programs, and “Any way possible.”

Q. How to get members involved and participating?

Two people suggested more personal interaction like phone calls, contact via Facebook and e-mail, and two suggested varying the day and time for birdwalks (not always on Friday morning). Individuals recommended free/reduced price birding for members; having a party now and then besides monthly meetings; events aimed at groups like children, students, working people, retirees; inviting your friends.

Twenty people want more emphasis on birding and suggested trips to Santa Cruz Island, More Mesa, private ranches, schools, and area “hot spots.”

Nine people thought there should be more emphasis on conservation; two thought there should not, and one said “enough now.” Overall, people said they’d appreciate knowing what the projects are, what we’ll engage in in the future, and ideas on how to participate.

Annual Picnic. Three people enjoyed the silent auction, others suggested Glendessary Jam, games, a beach party, varying the venue, having birds there, a raffle, holding it at a winery or brewery....

Twenty-four people rated the monthly programs as enjoyable. Suggestions for the future emphasize birds: bird ID, bird rehabilitation, SB/Channel Islands bird population and seasonal nature, bird instructors, what’s being done to protect birds: bird films, Peregrine person at Morro Bay, and birds of prey. One person suggested starting earlier at 7:00 p.m..

THANKS AND SIGN UP TO HELP BRING THESE IDEAS ABOUT!

NEWS FROM EYES IN THE SKY

By Judy Hogan

On February 27, some of our newest volunteers attended an orientation and training session hosted by Gabriele Drozdowski, John O'Brien and Rebecca Coulter. Dolores Pollock, SBAS President, and Cherie Topper, SBAS Executive Director, greeted the volunteers and spoke about EITS as a key program in fulfilling SBAS' education mission. Rebecca, SBMNH Volunteer Manager, reviewed requirements, safety procedures, the benefits of volunteering (fun, fulfillment, and free passes!), and how to converse with the public. Gabriele and John presented EITS' history, stories of each raptor, aviary procedures, and bird handling protocols (e.g., making jesses, "hook-up", weighing, feeding). See photo by Betsy Mooney of the volunteers who participated in this training.



Photo by Judy Hogan

In early March, Gabriele along with several senior Shift Leads was hosted at the Zoo by Rachel Ritchason, Curator of Birds. EITS and

the Zoo have been collaborating on protocols to guard against avian influenza and sharing strategies for bird enrichment, mews environments, food/feeding, etc. After our meeting, Rachel gave a behind-the-scenes tour of their raptors and facilities. Thank you to Rachel and the Zoo for this great collaboration.

March and April are busy months for Gabriele, with help from volunteers, as a local foundation approved a grant which funds science programs in three 1st grade and two 2nd grade classrooms at McKinley School. Each program, 5 weeks in length, includes lots of fun, with colorful learning materials along with games in the classroom, coupled with outdoor birding walks. The 1st graders are introduced to "Twelve Most Common Neighborhood Birds" and 2nd graders learn about "Raptors". One of EITS' rap-



Photo by Betsy Mooney

tors is part of each classroom session which brings lots of "oohs and aahs" and giggles from the active and interested students.

If you know of a school, after-school program, senior center, youth camp, or a community or company event who would like to book an EITS raptor program, please call Gabriele at 805-259-1446 to discuss fees and schedule.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



Photo by Dolores Pollock

Libby Patten, Dolores and Bill Pollock, Nancy States, and Cherie Topper. Audubon invited these stalwart volunteers to a private birding trip as a "thank you."

Further jobs related to membership outreach await an enthusiastic person who would like to tackle them. If interested, contact President@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

Fifteen Audubon folks addressed, stuffed, sealed, and stamped 2000 letters to "lapsed" SBAS members and had fun doing it. Thanks to all for their efforts: Barbara Ahlman, Gayle Hackamack, Judy Hogan, Debbie Konkel, Andy Larson, David and Janice Levasheff, Marsha MacDonald, Chris Mersey (pictured), Jan Oetinger,

ONGOING EXHIBIT: SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY *Audubon's Birds of America: The Whole Flock*

A Centennial Exhibit in Three Parts
at the Museum in the John & Peggy
Maximus Gallery

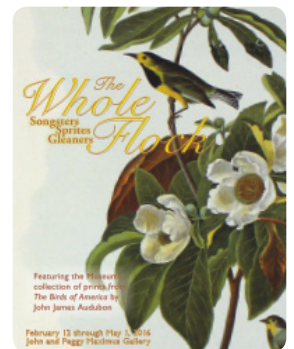
Songsters, Sprites, and Gleaners:

February 12-May 1, 2016

Waterbirds: June 10-September 5, 2016

Birds of Prey, Game Birds, Nocturnal Hunters:

October 14, 2016-January 8, 2017



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT UPDATE

by Rebecca Coulter

This just in: we have added one species to our final CBC total, Common Ground-Dove. We finally discovered that the location in Ellwood Canyon is just inside the count circle. This brings us to 212, nationally ranked behind Mad Island, Guadalupe River Delta, and San Diego; we were formerly tied with Freeport at 211.

SBAS: **EVENTS RECAP**

THE YOUNG BIRDERS OF LAKE LOS CARNEROS

by Betsy Mooney photos by John Ahlman, Betsy Mooney, Joan Murdoch, and Dolores Pollock



On a cool morning after a welcome night of rain, the second annual Winter Bird Count for Kids (WBC4Kids) got underway. Raindrops still clung to branches under gray clouds, but the birds of Lake Los Carneros were out and singing. The morning air was suffused with the freshness of wet grass and earth as kids donned new sky-blue WBC4Kids T-shirts generously donated by the City of Goleta. In colorful rain gear and sporting binoculars provided by SBAS, the kids followed a plethora of experienced guides, each group taking a different route around Lake Los Carneros, clipboards and bird lists in hand. This year 77 young birders took part in this outdoor experience, more than twice as many as last year!

Of the 112 species featured in the book *The Birds of Lake Los Carneros*, these young birders, with help from their guides, encountered 66 species of birds. Both Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds were spotted, along with Downy and Acorn Woodpeckers, a Red-breasted Sapsucker and a Northern Flicker. The kids marked Black and Say's Phoebes on their lists, as well as Cassin's Kingbird.

Our youthful birders were also introduced to the numerous duck species that frequent Lake Los Carneros: Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Ruddy Ducks, Gadwalls, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and American Wigeons. Along with Pied-billed Grebes and Lesser Yellow Legs, there were at least 50 Coots and several Canada Geese. Herons and egrets stalked the waters looking for fish.

Excited to see raptors, the kids spotted Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, and Cooper's Hawks. Turkey Vultures glided on thermals. One highlight was an American Kestrel diving and catching prey. She flew to the top of a tall leafless tree with her meal, clearly visible in the scope for young birders to make a positive ID.

By noon, some sun was penetrating the clouds. While reading bird facts on colorful bookmarks, the kids enjoyed energy and fruit bars, plus water, thanks to Judy Blue and Karen Schroeder, and string cheese from Trader Joe's, who also made a donation. Andy Lanes, Program Director, read



SBAS: **EVENTS RECAP**



out the name of each bird on the list: “Did anyone see a California Towhee? What about a Spotted Towhee? Kids enthusiastically raised their hands, calling out, “Yes, I did!” Andy continued down the list, from blackbirds to waxwings, bluebirds to starlings, sparrows to warblers.

Many thanks to the hardworking SB Audubon committee who made this event happen: Barbara Ahlman, Joan Cotich, Andy Lanes, Mary D. Thompson, and Co-chairs Karen Schroeder and Judy Blue; thanks also to Janice Levasheff, Dolores and Bill Pollock, and Cherie Topper. SBAS thanks the City of Goleta for providing substantial support to make this event possible.

Group Leader Rob Lindsay summed up the second WBC4Kids: “That was the best experience I ever had birding with kids!”



SBAS: TRIP REPORT

SANDHILL CRANES OVERNIGHT TRIP

story and photo by Dika Golovatchoff

Over the Presidents' Day weekend about twenty people took part in the free Audubon field trip to the southern San Joaquin Valley. Participants provided their own transportation and stayed either at the Allenworth State Campground or in motels in nearby Delano. Jack Sanford, the trip's organizer and leader, camped in a camper as did Jeff Hanson and his wife Peggy Kearns who shared their expertise with the group. A young couple recently arrived from Australia tent camped--as did I. The campground was surprisingly pleasant--just 15 sites with sheltered picnic tables--five flush toilets and two hot showers. We were serenaded by the melodious Western Meadowlark and I was visited by a Loggerhead Shrike. There were also several Red-tailed Hawks in the area.



The first of the birds we expected to find on this trip to the Central Valley was the Burrowing Owl. We did indeed find as many as eight shortly after assembling at the Allenworth State Campground. This diminutive diurnal owl, barely larger than a robin, is active during the daytime although it hunts mainly after dusk. It hides in burrows, which may have been built by prairie dog--not the owls. Jack told us that the numbers of these owls had greatly diminished over the years. In the past the campground had been full of them.

At our first stop of the afternoon at the Atwell Islands Wetland there were numerous Teal and other ducks too distant to view except through a spotting scope from the special viewing platform. In previous years when water levels were higher more birds were observed and were much closer--according to some who had taken the trip before.

The highlight of this trip was viewing the Sandhill Cranes in their wintering habitat. They will migrate to Alaska, Canada, or Siberia where they will breed. The young chicks will be old enough to fly back with their parents in late September. Sandhill Cranes have been utilizing Pixley NWR since as far back as 1964. During 2014-2015 winter surveys, the peak numbers for crane were 6,435. Cranes are monogamous and return each year to the same location to spend the winter. They are very large long-necked and long-legged birds with a wing span of 4 to 6 feet. They were best viewed from various roadside locations in the late afternoon en route to the Pixley Wildlife Refuge. After walking a half mile or so to the viewing platform we waited until sunset around 5:40 to watch the cranes fly into their roosting location. They flew in by the hundreds to spend the night in the safety of the shallow water on one of the ponds. Truly a magnificent spectacle to behold--along with Avocet, Black-necked Stilts, countless Coots and Killdeer, and one White-faced Ibis we saw from the viewing platform.

It was already very dark when we returned to the campground and although we sat around a campfire for a short time it was an early-to-bed night for all. An endlessly-long train rolled by several times on the nearby tracks, but otherwise it was quiet. At night it fogged over so the morning was chilly and damp.

On Sunday morning we proceeded to the Kern Wildlife Refuge - which consists of a series of ponds artificially created for wildlife - primarily, it seems, to satisfy hunters. Hunting season concluded at the end of January and we had the place virtually to ourselves. We drove in separate vehicles from one location to another stopping wherever there seemed to be interesting birds. We were greeted by a large flock of Violet-green Swallows at our first location as well as Ruddy Ducks, Redheads, Western and Eared Grebe. Later on we saw both male and female Northern Harriers, Savannah and White-crowned Sparrows, Long-billed Curlews, Snowy and Great Egrets, as well as a rookery of Black-crowned Night Herons. Some of us also spotted the Wilson's Snipe which blended well into the rushes. All-in-all a very successful trip. For me it was 503 miles round trip and a bit under four hours each way driving.

Many thanks to Jack Sanford who for years has organized this very enjoyable Audubon trip.

PREMIER TRIP REPORT: VENTURA DUCK CLUB

by Bruce Hollingworth

The trip to the Duck Club was important to me for a couple of reasons. I work out of state so I have not been there in at least 10 years. This was also the first field trip that required walking about three miles since I had my knee replaced in November.

The day was calm and clear. It started a little cool but warmed up into the seventies. We had 74 species. We did very well with ducks as would be expected. There were ten species of ducks, including Blue-winged Teal. We saw a couple of Allen's Hummingbirds. One male was very cooperative and posed for a long time; everyone had excellent views. A couple of Loggerhead Shrikes perched where we could scope them. There were Marsh Wrens everywhere and also good numbers of peeps and shorebirds. We frequently heard the Long-billed Dowitchers calling. There were a few Wilson's Snipes. Eventually we found a cooperative one. Mixed in with about 350 Tree Swallows were White-Throated Swifts. Sometimes the light was right for good, detailed views. Other interesting species found were White-faced Ibis, Virginia Rail, Sora, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Everyone enjoyed an amazingly large "colony" of American Avocets in one of the back ponds. We didn't see some of the "usual" rare birds like Yellow-headed Blackbird or Reddish Egret, but we still had a great field trip.

SBAS: BIRDING BRUNCHES

APRIL BIRDING BRUNCH

Sunday, April 17, 7:30 a.m. - 12 noon

Location: Home of Janice and David Levasheff

Enjoy brunch and birding in a comfortable setting with large windows viewing a bird friendly habitat.

Species seen in past years included California Quail, Spotted and California Towhee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Wilson's Warbler, and Hooded Oriole. At last year's brunch we leisurely viewed five different species of hummingbirds at the feeders. That was a special morning! Join us this year for good food, good coffee, and fun at a great birding spot. Who knows what new and exciting birds will show up?

Cost: \$55 **Register now:** <https://sbas-april-birding-brunch.eventbrite.com>

MAY BIRDING BRUNCH

Saturday, May 14, 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Location: Home of Susanne and Carroll Barrymore

Join a dozen lucky birders at the Barrymores' home up in the hills of the Trout Club.

There are feeders in the back yard and a large viewing deck in front. This is a wonderful woodland setting with birds not usually seen in town. They usually have Steller's Jays at the feeders. Also seen over the years have been Hermit Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Western Kingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Phainopepla, Juncos, and White-throated and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Feeders attract Hooded and Bullock's Orioles as well as Black-chinned Hummingbirds. Come join us and celebrate International Migratory Bird Day at a delicious brunch in this unique and private mountain community! **Cost:** \$55 **Register:** <https://sbas-may-birding-brunch.eventbrite.com>

SBAS: FIELD TRIPS

Everyone is welcome! These trips are fun for both beginning and expert bird lovers. Trips are free unless noted.

Please contact Jack Sanford at: birdsandtennis@hotmail.com for details or questions.

RANCHO LA VINA

4455 SANTA ROSA ROAD (BETWEEN BUELLTON AND LOMPOC)

Saturday, April 16 (9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon; 8:00 a.m. at carpool location)

Target Birds: Spring migrants, songbirds, woodpeckers, etc. **Leader:** Paul Keller

We will carpool at 8 a.m. from the upper corner parking lot of the Sears Shopping Center; \$8 gas money to drivers.

Directions: Hwy 101 to Santa Rosa Road off-ramp just before Buellton. We will park and meet at #4455 Santa Rosa Road at 9:00 a.m. Bring water and a snack; wear shoes that are comfortable for 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 14 (9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon; 8:00 a.m. at carpool location)

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

Leader: Rob Lindsay

We will carpool at 8 a.m. from the upper corner parking lot of the Sears Shopping Center; \$8.00 gas money to drivers. We will take Hwy 101 north to the Nojoqui Falls turnoff (the next turnoff after a large truck parking area). We will hike to the falls (an easy walk) and then bird the entire park. If you plan to meet us there, we will park and meet at the parking area nearest the falls at 9:00 a.m. Bring water and a snack or lunch.

SBAS: FRIDAY BIRD WALKS...

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

ENNISBROOK NATURE TRAIL **APRIL 8 (8:30 - 10:30 a.m.)**

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

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

SBAS: ...FRIDAY BIRD WALKS

TUCKER'S GROVE AND KIWANIS MEADOWS **APRIL 22 (8:30 - 10:30 a.m.)**

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

Directions: Take Hwy 101 and exit Turnpike Road off-ramp. Turn towards the mountains and cross Cathedral Oaks Road and enter San Antonio County Park (Tucker's Grove). We will park and meet near the playground restroom area.

UCSB CAMPUS LAGOON **MAY 13 (8:30 - 10:30 a.m.)**

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 Avenue off-ramp and head towards the ocean. Follow Fairview Avenue, which turns into Fowler Road, and 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 AND OPEN SPACE **MAY 27 (8:30 - 10:30 a.m.)**

Target Birds: Hummingbirds, woodpeckers, songbirds, maybe even an owl, etc.

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

SBAS: PROGRAMS

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BEES PRESENTED BY ANNA HOWELL

Wednesday, April 27, 7:30 p.m. (Doors open 7:00 p.m.)

Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Scientists estimate that one-third of the world's food crops and four-fifths of its flowering plants depend on some form of insect pollination, mainly by bees. Yet honeybees and native bees around the globe are declining in numbers. Discover the fascinating world of bees and its impact on the ecosystem.

Anna Howell works as a Staff Research Associate with the Ventura County University of California Cooperative Extension office. Ms. Howell received a Master's Degree in Entomology from the University of Arizona.

Her graduate research focused on the conservation of native bees in the Sonoran Desert and how habitat fragmentation is affecting their populations. More recently she has been focusing on population status of native bees and how they will be affected by increased urbanization and habitat destruction. She is passionate about sharing her knowledge of native pollinators.



ROADSIDE GEOLOGY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

PRESENTED BY DR. ARTHUR SYLVESTER & LIBBY O'BLACK GANS

Wednesday, May 25, 7:30 p.m. (Doors open 7:00 p.m.)

Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Within an eight-hour drive of any point in Southern California, you can see the results of any kind of geologic process, from desert erosion to glaciation, from volcanism to landsliding; any kind of rock from Precambrian gneiss to the latest sandstone stratum. Southern California has ancient and recent volcanoes and besides the San Andreas, it has many other active and inactive faults. "Roadside Geology of Southern California" will guide you to see and understand these and many other geologic features so nicely displayed along southern California highways.

Arthur Sylvester is a native Southern Californian whose eyes were opened to geology by high school biology class trips to the Colorado Plateau. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in liberal arts at Pomona College. Graduate study at UCLA was interrupted by a one-year Fulbright Fellowship in Norway. He returned to UCLA to complete his Master's thesis and then a PhD dissertation about the emplacement of Papoose Flat pluton in eastern California. After working for Shell Development Company as part of a team of geologists and geophysicists studying the tectonic history of the Pacific margin of the United States, he joined the faculty at UC Santa Barbara where he taught courses in structural geology, field geology, and petrology. His academic research focused on structural, seismic, and igneous rock problems in the Colorado and Mojave Deserts, the Transverse Ranges, and the Lake Tahoe region, as well as in Norway and southern Italy. He received the UC Presidents Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research Mentoring in 1994, the UCSB Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award in Mathematical, Life & Physical Sciences 1996-97, and the Dickson Emeriti Fellowship 2015-16. He retired from active teaching in 2003.

Libby O'Black Gans holds a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from UC Santa Barbara, where she was introduced to plenty of great southern California geology, as well as to the art of map making. Shortly after graduation, Libby started Gans Illustrations and began working on maps and scientific illustrations for publication, eventually becoming the first digital artist of the Dibblee Geological Foundation. She continues to work on geologic map making and scientific illustration projects, with her work most recently appearing in Science, in Tectonics, and in Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems (G-Cubed), as well as in posters at AGU and GSA national meetings. Libby is currently employed at Santa Barbara City College in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

BROWN PELICAN SURVEY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SATURDAY, MAY 7, FROM 5-7:00 P.M.!

We need people to survey Santa Barbara Harbor/Breakwater/Jetty, Coal Oil Point, Bird Island, and the mouth/estuary of the Santa Maria River. The goal is to define the distribution and abundance of Brown Pelicans and track shifts in population structure.

Roost surveys will consist of counting juvenile and adult birds, aging juveniles (when possible), taking photos, and entering the data and photos into the eBird portal. Observers will count birds and record results to data sheets and to eBird (www.ebird.org).

Libby Patten has graciously offered to be our Santa Barbara co-ordinator. If you would like to volunteer, please contact her at pelicanroost@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org. For more information on this important project, please go to <http://ca.audubon.org/birds-0/objectives-and-methodology>

SPRING IS HERE! DONATE TO SBAS

**CLEAN YOUR BOOKSHELVES AND DONATE
TO THE BOOK SALE ON JUNE 18 AT THE SBAS
PICNIC/MEMBERSHIP GET TOGETHER!!!**

If you have any books that you have read and are willing to give away, please consider giving these books to either John O'Brien or Marsha Macdonald (805 962-7799) for the SBAS Book Sale

Type of books or "subject matter" that we are interested in is as follows:

- Anything regarding Birding
- Birding in various locales, Bird Science, Birding for Kids
- Nature, Plants, Hiking, etc.

SBAS recently received a number of great books from its membership. Your donation will add to this collection

Clean out your bookshelves, closets, or garages of books you no longer need and donate them to share with others!

THANK YOU

- **Darlene Chirman** for gathering door prizes for movie night February 24
- **Callie Bowdish, Michael Love, and Kate Yarbrough** for donating door prizes to the premiere of "Bringing Back the Wild"
- **Cat & Bird Clinic** for providing discount bird care over the years
- **Doris Day Foundation** for generously supporting Eyes in the Sky
- **Bill's Copy Shop** (Arrellaga & State) for ongoing generous service and discounts
- **Darlene Chirman** for donating \$285 in honor of the 285 species Glenn Kincaid saw in 2015!
- **UCSB Coastal Fund** for \$1000 to continue restoration work at Coal Oil Point.
- **Marsha Macdonald** for her idea of including a hat in each Birdathon registration
- **Richard Figueroa**, former Board member, for our new logo design
- **iDWorks** in Santa Barbara for beautifully executing our hat order in less than one week
- **Janice Levasheff** for ordering and picking up the hats
- **Trent Watanabe** of *Montecito Journal* and *SB Sentinel* for the layout of El Tecolote

BIRDATHON 2016

As you may already know, the 2016 Birdathon will occur between October 1 and October 12. The compilation/number crunching will be completed between October 13 through 15, in order to announce our results at the October 16 EITS Open House Fundraiser!



Due to the time of year change for this event (normally held in the spring, this time in the fall with many migratory birds available) it will be an interesting experiment to review the data from this Citizen Science event! The procedure will be to Bird for those 12 days, recording your results each time you go birding, then choosing your best 24 hour period for competition.

So, create your teams or be your own team, choose a fancy/funny name, write to your friends, family, neighbor, etc. and get their encouraging sponsorships/donations, now! Registration begins at 8 a.m. on September 1, with the Birdathon beginning on October 1, 12:01 a.m.

There will be more information soon on the SBAS website to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to contact Marsha at 805 962-7799.

Let's see if we can match the 2014 Birdathon number of 202 species or beat it! Come join us.



CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Join or Renew)

COST: \$26 per year for a family

To subscribe electronically, visit:

SantaBarbaraAudubon.org/join-sbas/

- You may pay with a Credit Card or your PayPal account

To subscribe by mail:

- Complete and mail this membership form with your check to
Santa Barbara Audubon Society, to:

Santa Barbara Audubon Society

P.O. Box 5508

Santa Barbara, CA 93150

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: (____) _____

- _____ I prefer to download my El Tecolote newsletter from SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
- Although Chapter Membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society, SBAS is a chapter of National Audubon and fully values the work they do. Most of our financial support comes from members like you.
- Renewal notices are sent from the local Santa Barbara Chapter
- Note, we do not share personal information with other organizations
- Membership applications received between
October & March renew 6/30 of the following year
April & September renew 12/31 of the following year

***Santa Barbara Audubon is an independent 501(C)3 non-profit organization
Your membership and any additional donation are tax deductible***



El Tecolote
Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.
PO BOX 5508
Santa Barbara, CA 93150

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE EXPEDITE

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SANTA BARBARA, CA.
PERMIT NO. 125

or current resident

SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY

805-964-1468

santabarbaraaudubon.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cherie Topper

805-451-1389

Director@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

EYES IN THE SKY DIRECTOR

Gabriele Drozdowski 805-259-1446

eyes-in-the-sky@cox.net

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS

President	Dolores Pollock	805-681-8661	President@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Vice-President	Lee Moldaver	805-964-1468	VP@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Secretary	Steve Wiley		Secretary@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Treasurer	Steve Beal	805-964-8503	Treasurer@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Programs	Aaron Kreisberg	805-679-1578	Programs@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Conservation	Scott Cooper		Conservation@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Science	Steve Senesac	805-907-0861	Science@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Education	Andy Lanes	805-674-3994	Education@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Publicity	Janice Toyo Levasheff		Publicity@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Governance	Peter Thompson	612-280-9482	Governance@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Development	Marsha Macdonald	805-962-7799	Development-1@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
At Large	Kris Mainland White		

BOARD APPOINTED POSITIONS

Birdathon	Marsha Macdonald	805-962-7799	Birdathon@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Eyes in the Sky	John O'Brien	805-962-7799	EITS@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Field Trips	Jack Sanford	805-566-2191	FieldTrips@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Membership	Julia Kosowitz	805-450-5392	Membership@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Newsletter	Betsy Mooney		Newsletter@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org
Webmaster	David Levasheff	805-967-8767	Webmaster@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

Santa Barbara County Birding • <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sbcobirding>
Officers and Chairs meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month September thru June. Members are welcomed to attend.

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 16TH, SATURDAY

Visit our Earth Day Booth at Alameda Park

JUNE 18TH, SATURDAY

SBAS Membership Get Together, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 1ST, THURSDAY

Registration begins on-line for Birdathon 2016

OCTOBER 1 - 12TH, SATURDAY - WEDNESDAY

Birdathon: "Let's Go Birding"

OCTOBER 16TH, SUNDAY

Eyes in the Sky Open House & Fundraiser

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
AND COME ENJOY THE FUN!**