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THE 119TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Rebecca Coulter, Liz Muraoka, Joan Murdoch, & Libby Patten

ach year, compilers are required by National Audubon to conduct their annual CBC between December 14 and January 5. The Santa Barbara CBC is held on the last Saturday of that period, and this time the last Saturday fell on the *last day* of that window. No postponing if we had to cancel, no second chance. After last year's catastrophic fires and floods, we couldn't help but wonder if we'd have to adjust at the last minute, as other nearby CBCs had to do last year. But for busy compilers, this late date is actually a benefit: the bulk of the holiday bustle is behind us and those who travel during that season have returned home to participate.

While the CBC is about data—trends and the historical context of bird populations around the country—Count Day itself is also about the birding experience. January 5 came storming in with the first of the winter weather. The mountain teams birded in dense fog, rain, and clouds forcing birders to rely on hearing alone to find the elusive Mountain Quail, listening for its "Quark!" call to travel up



the slopes of West Camino Cielo through the clouds. On La Cumbre Peak, high winds made hearing impossible, bringing birding to a standstill. Down below, by noon it became clear that the boat crew was in difficulty, with a dead engine off Arroyo Burro in rough seas. We breathed a sigh of relief to hear the crew had returned to safety, towed in by the Harbor Patrol. And yet, over 200 birders spread out around the count circle, taking a careful census of everything they observed. Along the way, they made discoveries that brought many bright spots to the gloomy day.

For the third year in a row, we found a new species to add to our CBC, this time a surprise **Dusky Flycatcher** at Laguna Blanca. Two **Long-eared Owls** turned up in a pepper tree at Lake Los Carneros, only the second time this species has been recorded on our count (the first was in 1982). As the day and its stories unfolded, there were other highlights: the return of the **Tufted Duck** at Lauro Reservoir, here for its sixth winter; **Surfbirds** at East Beach; an **Ancient Murrelet** seen from Butterfly Beach; **Lewis's Woodpeckers** on both sides of the Santa Ynez range; and a **Lucy's Warbler** in Santa Barbara. Another surprise was a female **Black-headed Grosbeak** gorging on pomegranates at Fairview Gardens, giving its breast a pink bib that made it look like a Rose-breasted. We had eight species of owl: **Barn, Long-eared, Great Horned, Spotted, Northern Saw-whet, Burrowing, Western Screech,** and **Northern Pygmy**. Wintering orioles were somewhat scarce in the lead-up to Count Day, but we ended up with **Bullock's** and **Orchard**. (The **Baltimore** seen the day before was hunkered down and missed on Count Day.)

Other notable misses this year were **Common Murre** (if only we could have counted the deceased one at Goleta Beach!); **Rhinoceros Auklet** and **Bonaparte's Gull** were among the seabirds missed due to poor boat conditions. A **Williamson's Sapsucker**, found just before Count Day, was undetectable in the high winds at La Cumbre Peak—hard to hear gentle tapping on tree trunks when the wind is howling around you! **Palm Warbler**, present in good numbers through fall and winter, was not found anywhere on Count Day.

A week later, when we got down to compiling totals across the circle, it became clear that waterfowl counts continued to be low, as did White-crowned Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Townsend's Warbler and Yellow-rumped Warbler, some mirroring a South-

(THE 119TH AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT continues on p. 2)

ern California trend of low counts for these species. Noticeable declines such as these—over relatively short periods—ask us to take a hard look at the causes, and our long-term drought is undoubtedly at the top of that list. Foul weather on Count Day also affects species numbers. When entering data at the national level, we give a detailed description of weather conditions so that the species counts for that year can be studied alongside all the factors that might have affected them. For this reason, we also collect effort data—how much time and mileage are spent by how many people. These factors are all part of the calculations used by regional and national compilers to determine population trends on a larger scale.

As always, we are grateful to the teams of birders of all ages who give their time and energy to plan, scout, and participate in our CBC. Your dedication makes it all possible. You can find all the individual species totals on the Santa Barbara CBC website, casbbirdcount.org, Latest Count Results.

SBAS: **NEWS**

MEET YOUR AUDUBON BOARD: DIEGO PEREZ, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

A SERIES INTRODUCING BOARD MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF OUR CHAPTER

y name is Diego Perez, and I am currently a senior at Santa Barbara High School. Growing up, I have always had a strong passion for the natural world, and I have been able to pursue my interests through a number of organizations in Santa Barbara, including the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.

For the past six months, I have had the opportunity to serve as Santa Barbara Audubon's Student Representative. In my time on the Board, I have been able to encourage more young people to interact with nature through volunteering, and I hope to continue to strengthen the link between high schools, youth organizations, and Santa Barbara Audubon. In addition, I have been exposed to the



My short time at SBAS has informed my goals as a young scientist, and I know that I will carry my knowledge of the importance of conservation and connection to biodiversity as I transition to college and beyond.



SCIENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Steve Senesac, Chair

udubon's very active Science Committee is a loose confederation Aof project holders: Mark Holmgren and Adrian O'Loghlen look after the Breeding Bird Survey. They also keep track of the White-tailed Kite status. Steve Ferry tracks the Snowy Plovers at Coal Oil Point Reserve. Rebecca Coulter and crew manage the Christmas Bird Count. I look after the Nest Box Program at Lake Los Carneros and the Aquatic Invertebrate and associated water quality monitoring at Coal Oil Point Reserve and North Campus Open Space.

The Aquatic Invertebrate Program has finished its second year. It has grown from one undergraduate intern and myself, with Prof. Scott Cooper's mentorship, to twelve undergraduate volunteers and two in-



terns. The program is set to expand further, monitoring various vernal pools in the area at the direction of Dr. Lisa Stratton with the technical assistance of Prof. Scott Cooper and Sheila Wiseman.

Additionally, UCSB Prof. Hillary Young and one of her graduate students will be assessing the viability of using a particular DNA sequencing approach to better identify specific invertebrates and their relationship in the environment.

Besides the specific scientific data our various projects are collecting, one important aim is to give undergraduates experience in the spectrum of tasks involved in scientific research, from data collection and management to project coordination.

SBAS: **NEWS**

HOW SWEET IT IS!

By Betsy Mooney

B Audubon's annual Winter Bird Count 4 Kids (WBC4Kids) opened with a Red-breasted Sapsucker spotted in the pepper trees near the Stow Park Train Depot, which started off our count before our young observers had even graduated from Binocular Boot Camp! This is SB Audubon's fifth year hosting this popular event. We had 60 young birders from 21 schools, and we are now having returning participants. We hope all young naturalists will continue birding into the future.

After signing in and donning WBC4Kids sky-blue T-shirts, birders aged eight to sixteen set off in groups. With the help of our exceptional leaders, 58 species of birds were spotted and marked off in the revised WBC4Kids checklist booklet. There were Mallards and Ruddy Ducks; egrets and a Great Blue Heron; Spotted Towhees and numerous American Robins. And, of course, our local raptors: Red-tailed, Red-Shouldered, and Cooper's Hawks, along with White-tailed Kites.

Young birders learned that Red-breasted Sapsuckers and other birds in the sapsucker family drill horizontal holes around the trunk of a tree, then feed on the sweet sap. Group leaders also showed kids one of the nest boxes set up for Tree Swallows and Western Bluebirds. Currently the boxes are empty, but come spring, these nest boxes will be fought over, claimed, and filled with nesting birds, eggs, and finally, chicks!

Among our volunteers were five teens from local high schools, including one exchange student from China. Leaders and volunteers helped kids listen, look for movement, and spot birds. Several group leaders brought spotting scopes that gave our young naturists a closeup view of birds, starting with the Red-breasted Sapsucker. Other birds viewed in a scope were Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shovelers, a Black-crowned Night-Heron, and a Glaucous-winged Gull.

This event was co-chaired by Judy Blue and Joan Cotich. When asked about their hard work creating this event, Judy replied, "It has been such a rewarding experience. I'm game for our 6th annual event!"

HELP NEEDED

By Dolores Pollock, President

ur strong Board has just grown stronger with the addition of Alex Loos, new Publicity Chair. That leaves our greatest need in the area of Development/Fundraising.

We can split this job into three, with one person to chair the Annual Appeal, a second to help with grant writing (training provided), and a third to organize events like the annual membership picnic. Please help us get even stronger by volunteering for one of these important jobs. Our chapter thanks you! To volunteer or get more information, e-mail President@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to everyone who has joined our Chapter, or National Audubon, or both!

Amanda Sparkman** Amante Mangaser* Angela Rauhut* Barbara Keating** Barbara Meyer³ Barbara S. Massey** Bart Dickens* Betty Watt** Bonnie Burgess** Bridget Lewin* Charlotte Mountain* Courtney Andelman* Cynthia Grant* David Dodson** Deirdre Hade Arntz**

Diane L Green** Elaine Dodson** Elaine Gibson** Elaine Tan* Elizabeth Butcher** Gillian Christie** Hilary Lapidus** lan Sheshunoff* James Cummins** James Venturino* Jan Campbell* Jessica Lohr** John Serbia** Jonathan Handy** Kerry Katch*

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* - Chapter Member

** - NAS Members *** - Chapter and NAS Member

Questions about Membership?

If you have any questions about your membership status, or want to know more about the difference between national and chapter memberships, please contact Janice Levasheff, Membership Chair, at Membership@SantaBarbaraAudubon.org.

SBAS: **EITS NEWS**

MEET OUR NEW EITS DIRECTOR

By Cherie Topper

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Hannah Atkinson as our new director of Eyes in The Sky. She started January 2 and has already been working with our six permanently disabled raptors and our 40+ volunteers, as well as setting up programs and reorganizing the aviary.

Hannah, who is a graduate of UCSB's College of Creative Studies, is a licensed and experienced falconer who brings not only expertise and knowledge in raptor care, but also direct experience with the birds of EITS, having served as a volunteer in the program prior to the retirement of our previous director and founder, Gabriele Drozdowski. In her spare time, Hannah cares for and practices falconry with her own Red-tailed Hawk, "Val" (short for Valkryie). Hannah also brings administrative and grant-writing experience gained in her work with the County of Santa Barbara.

Photo by John Thomason

SBAS is grateful to interim director Chris Mersey, who is working with Hannah to ensure a smooth leadership transition. His successful interim administration of EITS between August and January allowed SBAS the time to interview and select Hannah from a pool of capable and gualified candidates.

Hannah has this to say about her new position: "I am very excited to continue the work begun by Gabriele and our long-standing team of dedicated volunteers. The birds of Eyes in the Sky have a special ability to bridge the gap between people and wildlife, and to spark awe and enthusiasm for the natural world all around us. The program is an asset to the Santa Barbara community, and I'm honored to take a central role in that."

Welcome, Hannah!

CONDOR MILESTONE IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

ate last year, the Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service posted this announcement on its Flickr page:

"For the first time in more than three decades, an endangered California condor chick has successfully fledged from a cliff-side nest in Santa Barbara County. Last month, condor number 933 took its first short flights after six months being raised by its parents in the northern Santa Barbara backcountry of Los Padres National Forest.

The chick, known as condor 933, hatched in late April and was raised by six-year-old female condor 654 and 38-year-old male condor 20, more popularly known as AC-4. The chick is the first second-generation wild fledgling in Southern California and is AC-4's first offspring to successfully take flight from its nest in the wild."



For more details about this exciting news, please go to the article on the Los Padres Forest Watch website here: https://lpfw.org/wild-california-condor-chick-fledges-in-santa-barbara-county-for-first-time-since-1982/

THANK YOU!

Hardworking CBC organizers: Rebecca Coulter, Liz Muraoka, Joan Murdoch, Libby Patten CBC Dinner team: Gayle Hackamack, Nancy States, Kris Mainland White Joan Kent for the homemade chocolate chip cookies for all at the CBC dinner WBC4Kids Co-Chairs Judy Blue and Joan Cotich and their team South Coast Railroad Museum for help with WBC4Kids

Trader Joe's for providing snacks for our young birders, the City of Goleta for a generous grant, Nothing Bundt Cakes for a sweet dessert, and Smart and Final for bottles of water.

All Audubon volunteers: we tallied 16,000 volunteer hours last year!

All EITS volunteers for their flexibility, endurance, and hard work during 2018

Trent Watanabe of the Montecito Journal and Santa Barbara Sentinel for crafting this publication so professionally.

SBAS: **PROGRAMS**

AN ALTERNATIVE TO RODENTICIDES: VENTURA COUNTY'S RAPTOR PILOT STUDY FOR LEVEE PROTECTION

Presented by Karl Novak

Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 7:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:00 p.m.—join us for refreshments) Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (WPD) maintains 56 dams and over 40 miles of levees which are highly susceptible to burrow damage from ground squirrels. WPD developed and completed a Raptor Pilot Study to determine if owls and hawks can be attracted to a flood-control levee and provide better protection from ground squirrels than traditionally applied rodenticides. Join us to learn more about the exciting findings of the 17-month empirical study-that the damage at an area where raptor perches were installed was significantly less than damage at a similar reach where traditional anticoagulant bait stations were used.

Dr. Karl Novak is a civil engineer and Deputy Director with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. He served as Director of the Raptor Pilot Study.



FEATHERS AND FLIGHT: A JOURNEY TO THE NEW WORLD TROPICS

Presented by Benjamin Isaac Jacobs-Schwartz

Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 7:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:00 p.m.—join us for refreshments) Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

elving into topics of migration, tropical speciation, and bio-diversity, Benny Isaac Jacobs-Schwartz will share his dazzling photos, videos, and animated story-telling to bring a slice of the tropics to California. This media-rich journey will highlight some of the fascinating and unique birds that inhabit the new-world tropics. Sure to both educate and entertain, this presentation will leave you with a deeper understanding of tropical ecology and knowledge about where some of our backyard birds spend their winters.



Benny Isaac Jacobs-Schwartz works seasonally as a naturalist, expedition leader, and international bird guide, most recently in coastal Alaska, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Ecuadorian cloud forest. While at home base in Los Angeles, he leads public and private birding adventures to urban hotspots, inspiring others to conserve the open spaces around them and look up more often from their phones. He is a passionate photographer, specializing in birds. He is owner and operator of BIRDS by BIJS (pronounced Bee-jus).

THE CONDOR IN CAPTIVITY: BREEDING A SPECIES ON THE EDGE

Presented by Teodelina Martelli

Wednesday, May 22, 2019, 7:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:00 p.m.—join us for refreshments) Location: Farrand Hall, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

oin us for an evening with Teodelina Martelli, a most impressive high school senior, when she will discuss the conservation and management methods that rescued the California Condor from extinction, including the riveting history about how these methods were developed just in time. Teodelina will report on her experiences in the field and update us with news on the current state of the condor.

Teodelina Martelli spent the past two summers as a field intern and volunteer researcher with the California Condor Recovery Program. She is an aspiring ornithologist, composer, and artist. She has been fascinated with birds since the age of 3 and intends to pursue a lifelong career in ornithology, particularly focusing on the behavior, evolution, and courtship of birds.



SBAS: FIELD TRIPS

Everyone is welcome! These trips are fun for both beginning and expert bird lovers. Trips are free unless noted. Please contact ThisisRobLindsay@gmail.com for details or questions.

RANCHO SANTA BARBARA

Saturday, March 16, 2019, 8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (7:30 a.m. carpool location)

Target Birds: Geese, Common Goldeneyes, Wood Ducks, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Clark's Grebes, American White Pelicans, other

waterbirds and passerines **Leader:** Rob Lindsay

Directions: We will carpool from the corner of the upper Sears parking lot at 7:30 a.m. The Rancho Santa Barbara is located at 4001 Hwy 154. If you are not going to carpool, we must all meet at the Rancho SB entrance gate at 8:00 a.m. and enter as a group. Wear walking shoes. Binoculars and spotting scopes are useful. Bring water and a snack. Enjoy ranch owners Lee and Charles Carr's hospitality at one of the best inland birding areas in the county.

NORTH CAMPUS OPEN SPACE

Saturday, April 6, 2019, 8:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Target Birds: Waterbirds and spring migrants

Leader: Rob Lindsay

Directions: From Hwy 101, go toward the ocean on Storke Rd. Turn right on Whittier Dr (just before Storke narrows to one lane) and park on the street at the first intersection (with Whitman St). We will meet on the ocean side of this intersection in the remains of the parking lot of the old Ocean Meadows Golf Course. This area is part of a very large restoration process and is a habitat in progress which has already become a noteworthy regional birding spot. Here's a great chance to explore this new habitat if you haven't done so already.

NOJOQUI FALLS COUNTY PARK

Saturday, May 18, 2019, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon (Carpool time: 8:00 a.m.; \$8 gas money)

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

Directions: We will carpool at 8:00 a.m. from the corner of the upper Sears parking lot, taking Hwy 101 north to the Nojoqui Falls turnoff (the next turnoff after a large truck parking area). The hike to the falls is an easy walk. We'll then bird the entire park. If you plan on meeting us there, park and meet at the parking area nearest the falls at 9:00 a.m. Bring water, a snack, or lunch.

SBAS: FRIDAY BIRD WALKS

Due to trail conditions, some of these locations are subject to change. Please check our website for updates.

FARREN ROAD

March 8, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Target Birds: Western Bluebirds, hummingbirds, sparrows, etc.

Leader: Peter Thompson

Directions: From SB area take Hwy 101 north. Take the Winchester Canyon Rd exit. At the end of the ramp go straight (Calle Real), pass the stop sign at the bridge and continue to the end of the road. Continue until Farren Rd is on your right. We will park on the side of the road at the beginning of Farren Rd.

ELINGS PARK

March 22, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Target Birds: Raptors, songbirds, juncos, warblers, finches, Hutton's Vireos, California Thrashers, etc.

Leader: Peter Thompson

Directions: From Hwy 101 take the Las Positas off-ramp and head toward the ocean. Look for the Elings Park entrance sign and turn left on Jerry Harwin Parkway. Proceed to the Battistone Foundation soccer parking lot in front of the park office building. We will meet there and bird the area.

SBAS: FRIDAY BIRD WALKS

ENNISBROOK NATURE TRAIL

April 12, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

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

Leader: Peter Thompson

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

TUCKER'S GROVE AND KIWANIS MEADOWS

April 26, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

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

Leader: Peter Thompson

Directions: From Hwy 101, take the Turnpike Rd off-ramp. Turn toward the mountains, cross Cathedral Oaks Rd, and enter San Antonio County Park (Tucker's Grove). We will park and meet near the playground restroom area.

UCSB CAMPUS LAGOON

May 10, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Target Birds: Grebes, herons, dowitchers, ducks, godwits, plovers, etc.

Leader: Peter Thompson

Directions: Coming from the south on Hwy 101, take the Ward Memorial Blvd exit. Take the Goleta Beach County Park exit and park at the west end (nearest UCSB campus) of the Goleta Beach parking lot. Coming from the north on Hwy 101 take the Fairview Ave off-ramp and head toward the ocean. Follow Fairview Ave, which turns into Fowler Rd, 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 & OPEN SPACE

May 24, 2019, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Leader: Peter Thompson

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

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



Our President, Dolores Pollock, met former SBAS President, Chris Benesh, while looking for the Red-flanked Bluetail in Los Angeles in January. Chris now lives in Arizona and works with Field Guides.

THINKING AHEAD

- Visit the SBAS Earth Day Booth on Saturday, April 27, in Alameda Park.
- Come to our annual Membership get-together at Stow Park on Sunday, June 23. Yes, it's on a Sunday this year!
- Consider leaving a legacy for future generations. You can make a bequest to Santa Barbara Audubon Society and preserve what you cherish. If you have already included a bequest to SBAS in your estate plan, THANK YOU. You have the option to be recognized as a member of our Tecolote Circle. If you choose to do so, please let us know.



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

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BOARD APPOINTED POSITIONS

Field Trips Rob Lindsay
Bird Walks Peter Thompson
Newsletter Joyce Carasa
Webmaster David Levasheff
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Santa Barbara County Birding http://sbcobirding.groups.io/g/main Officers and Chairs meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month September through June Members are welcome to attend. Call 805-964-1468

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join or Donate to Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS)!!

Please fill out this form and mail it with your check to the address below. Make checks out to: Santa Barbara Audubon Society.

☐ Enroll me as a Chapter-Supporting Member.

I am: ☐ New ☐ Renewing

□ \$26 Basic □ \$50 Sponsor □ \$100 Sustaining

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Support SBAS and your local birds - become a Chapter-Supporting Member! SBAS depends greatly on its Chapter-Supporting Members. We collaborate with National Audubon Society (NAS) on issues of mutual concern, but very little of our funding comes from NAS. Your Chapter-Supporting Membership ensures we can continue our local restoration and conservation efforts and provide you with educational and enjoyable programs because all of your chapter-supporting dues stay with SBAS.

If you're not already a Chapter-Supporting Member, we urge you to join SBAS and invite your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us, too.

Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, EIN 23-7051362. Your membership and any additional donation are tax deductible.

Thank you and welcome!

Phone: (____)____

☐ This is a Gift Membership for:

Name: _______ Address: ______ State: ____ Zip: ______ Email: _____

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Mail membership form with check to:
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