

# El Tecolote



NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Volume 59, Issue 2 / December 2020 – February 2021

[www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org](http://www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org)

## THE 121ST AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

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

**To quote Sherlock Holmes: the game is afoot!**

After careful consideration by coordinators, Santa Barbara Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, January 2, 2021, is going forward!

A few weeks ago, National Audubon issued guidelines for compilers debating whether to hold CBCs this season, considering Covid-19 restrictions. We studied our state and local restrictions for gathering and debated the pros and cons. And we kept coming back to this: while the social aspect of the event—the gathering to celebrate our birding community—will be different, the data collection is still possible.

A decent fall migration season brought some bright spots. It appears we may have a “montane year,” where mountain species such as Pine Siskin and Red-breasted Nuthatch occur along the coast, adding the tantalizing possibility that other interesting species may show up. The tipu and eucalyptus trees seem to be attracting larger numbers of birds this year than last, due to the presence of the insects that often infest them. Empty parking lots at a Goleta business park became a birding hotspot with the discovery of a Mourning Warbler, seen by many. For some, this rarity chase was the first time in months we've seen birding friends. We navigated the new subtleties of gathering: rushing forward to embrace friends in a hug but holding back at the last minute; wanting to huddle together to see the bird, then remembering to maintain distance and masks. But enjoying this and other sightings together was returning to something we have missed: sharing the passion for birds with others.



Photo by Janice Levasheff

This year's CBC will be different, mainly that there will be no noon or evening gatherings in person. We're working on virtual versions of these events. Still, the basics are the same: birders assigned to sites to record their observations. In the end, though the compiling may take a bit longer than usual, we will have the 121st Santa Barbara CBC in the record, 2020 behind us, and looking ahead to a brighter 2021. Take that, Covid-19!

**More information:** [www.santabarbaraaudubon.org/santa-barbara-christmas-bird-count](http://www.santabarbaraaudubon.org/santa-barbara-christmas-bird-count).

The count circle's center point is the intersection of Cathedral Oaks Rd and Highway 154, and radiates out 7.5 miles in all directions. Before Count Day, you can help by keeping eyes open and ears tuned during your outings within these boundaries. Let us know about the following interesting or unusual birds:

Blue-winged Teal

Greater Scaup

Mountain Quail

Virginia Rail

Wilson's Snipe

Greater Roadrunner

Any owls other than Great Horned or Barn

White-throated Swift

Any hummingbirds other than Anna's or Allen's

Sapsuckers other than Red-breasted

Horned Lark

Any swallows

Rock or Pacific Wrens

Common Raven

Any warbler species except Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, or Common Yellowthroat

Any tanagers

Any grosbeaks

Lark Sparrow

Any orioles

Lawrence's Goldfinch

PLUS: these montane species: Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Townsend's Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Brown Creeper, and Cassin's Finch.



Photo by David Levasheff

## NO COMPILATION DINNER THIS YEAR

Unfortunately, our compilation dinner cannot happen this year, but we are expecting to have a compilation event via Zoom. Please check for details on our website, <https://santabarbaraaudubon.org/santa-barbara-christmas-bird-count/reminders/>.

*Santa Barbara Audubon Society protects area birdlife and habitat and connects people with birds through education, conservation, and science. While we continue to champion birdlife and its importance to a healthy and vital ecosystem, we do so fully aware of and engaged in doing our part to address the pandemic, attendant economic hardships, and systemic racism. We are committed to bringing opportunities to all community members to enjoy nature and birds regardless of skin color, age, gender, mobility, religion, and economic and cultural background.*

## LOCAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

**Cachuma: Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020**

*Info:* Peter Schneekloth, [peterschneekloth@yahoo.com](mailto:peterschneekloth@yahoo.com), (805)450-6839  
<https://cachumacbc.wordpress.com/>

**Carpinteria: Saturday, December 19, 2020**

*Info:* John Callender, [jbc@jbcsystems.com](mailto:jbc@jbcsystems.com), (805)455-0053

**La Purisima: Sunday December 20, 2020**

*Info:* Alex Abela, [abela@lightspeed.net](mailto:abela@lightspeed.net), (805)934-2873

**Santa Barbara: Saturday, January 2, 2021**

*Info:* [infocbc@santabarbaraaudubon.org](mailto:infocbc@santabarbaraaudubon.org)  
<https://santabarbaraaudubon.org/santa-barbara-christmas-bird-count>

**Santa Maria/Guadalupe: Sunday, December 27, 2020**

*Info:* John Deacon, [iseekbirds@verizon.net](mailto:iseekbirds@verizon.net), (805)314-8201



Photo by Katherine Emery

## (WINTER) BIRD COUNT 4 KIDS POSTPONED DUE TO COVID

By Judy Blue

This year, our Winter Bird Count 4 Kids, traditionally held on the last Saturday in January, has been tentatively rescheduled for the last Saturday in April, due to social distancing requirements made necessary by the Covid-19 pandemic. Joan Cotic, co-leader, will send out a reminder note to our faithful leaders and volunteers to save the new date, April 24. This free event, in its eighth year, invites children and parents to participate in a field trip around Lake Los Carneros led by experienced birders. Numbers of participants have increased yearly as more parents become aware of this fun event. We hope circumstances will allow us to join together once again on April 24 to teach children why birds are important in nature and our environment.



SANTA BARBARA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Winter Bird Count 4 Kids

Introducing Young People to the Fun of Birdwatching

Tentatively Rescheduled to April 24

- ✓ A free birding basics event for kids 8-16 with a responsible adult
- ✓ Take a guided walk around the lake with an experienced naturalist



Meet at the Stow House Parking Lot  
304 N. Los Carneros Road, Goleta

Sponsored by Santa Barbara Audubon Society with support from the City of Goleta

## GET MORE INVOLVED WITH AUDUBON

Our active chapter depends on leadership by members who step up to work at the Board level. Many of you have done that over the years, and we salute you. Right now, we have Board openings in Development (fundraising), Volunteer organizing, and Science. If you're interested and/or have questions, contact Dolores Pollock at [President@santabarbaraaudubon.org](mailto:President@santabarbaraaudubon.org) or Katherine Emery at [Director@santabarbaraaudubon.org](mailto:Director@santabarbaraaudubon.org). Make this your New Year's resolution and help Santa Barbara Audubon grow even stronger.

## IN MEMORIAM

Nancy L. King, former Santa Barbara Audubon Board member, has left us. She served as Secretary in the 80s and 90s. Her son, Everett King, was president of the chapter for a short time. Our sincere condolences to the family.



Photo by Teresa Fanucchi

"Taking Ivan and the other birds out on their Tuesday field trip into nature always feels like such an honor. Sharing that important time with them as they scan the distant horizon, vocalize at other raptors and literally feel the wind beneath their wings has truly been a gift. Even after more than 10 years of volunteering with EITS, it is still something I look forward to each week." Zoe Stevens

# WE NEED YOUR VOTES

Because the pandemic prevented us from holding our annual Member Meeting this year, we request that all members please vote on SBAS Board membership and proposed changes to our Articles of Incorporation.

Please vote in either of two ways:

- use the paper ballot below and send it to SBAS. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.
- go online to cast an electronic ballot at <https://santabarbara-audubon.org/vote/>

Your "Yes" votes approve the Board Slate and proposed changes to our articles of incorporation. Your "No" votes indicate disapproval.

## PAPER BALLOT

### 1. VOTE FOR SBAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

Yes

☐

No

☐

#### SBAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

##### OFFICERS

President	<b>Dolores Pollock</b>
Vice-President	<b>Lee Moldaver</b>
Secretary	<b>Kathleen Boehm</b>
Treasurer	<b>Chris Mersey</b>

##### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

At Large	<b>Ron Hirst</b>
At Large	<b>Rob Lindsay</b>
At Large	<b>Scot Pipkin</b>
Communications Chair	<b>Mo McFadden</b>
Conservation Co-Chair	<b>Jessie Altstatt</b>
Conservation Co-Chair	<b>Lori Gaskin</b>
Education Chair	<b>Dotti Pak</b>
Field Trips Chair	<b>Peter Thompson</b>
Membership Chair	<b>Janice Levasheff</b>
Programs Chair	<b>Teresa Fanucchi</b>

### 2. VOTE FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Approved by SBAS Board November 2019.

Yes

☐

No

☐

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

##### Current Language:

**Article II. (16)** To carry into effect any one or more of the objects and purposes hereinabove set forth and to that end to do any one or more of the acts and things aforesaid, and likewise any and all acts or things necessary or incidental thereto; and, in conducting or carrying on its activities, and for the purpose of promoting or furthering any one or more of its said objects or purposes, to exercise any or all of the powers hereinabove set forth in this ARTICLE, and any other or additional power now or hereafter authorized by law, either alone or in conjunction with others, as principal, agent or otherwise; provided, however, that this corporation shall not have the power to, and shall not, carry on propaganda, or otherwise attempt, to influence legislation or to participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

##### Proposed Language:

**Article II. (16)** To carry into effect any one or more of the objects and purposes hereinabove set forth and to that end to do any one or more of the acts and things aforesaid, and likewise any and all acts or things necessary or incidental thereto; and, in conducting or carrying on its activities, and for the purpose of promoting or furthering any one or more of its said objects or purposes, to exercise any or all of the powers hereinabove set forth in this ARTICLE, and any other or additional power now or hereafter authorized by law, either alone or in conjunction with others, as principal, agent or otherwise; provided, however, that this corporation shall not have the power to, and shall not support or oppose, carry on propaganda, or otherwise attempt, to influence legislation or to participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office or any political party.

**PLEASE MAIL YOUR BALLOT OR VOTE ELECTRONICALLY BY DECEMBER 31, 2020.**

## FROM THE DESK OF KATHERINE EMERY, Ph.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SBAS is actively working on many projects related to our three main focus areas: education, conservation, and science. This column will be updated regularly with an overview of selected current projects and goals (project list is not all-inclusive). Likewise, the goals summarize what each SBAS committee is working toward with occasional opportunities for member involvement.

Photo by David Levasheff



CURRENT PROJECTS	GOALS
<b>Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing new adapted socially distant education &amp; outreach programs to serve community during Covid.</li> <li>• Creating new Learning &amp; Additional Resources webpages with education materials: videos, birdcalls &amp; field guides.</li> <li>• Bringing Eyes in the Sky (EITS) raptor ambassadors to local schools via Zoom for 30- to 45-min. presentations. (Contact Hannah for pricing.)</li> <li>• Providing adapted monthly Evening Programs.</li> <li>• Reintroducing redesigned in-person raptor outreach at Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate SBAS Learning Resources and EITS video. <a href="https://santabarbaraadubon.org/learning-resources/">https://santabarbaraadubon.org/learning-resources/</a></li> <li>• Provide new interactive online Meet Your Wild Neighbor (MYWN) curriculum to 12 local 1st-3rd grade classrooms in the 2020-21 school year.</li> <li>• Adapt and deliver new SBAS Zoom outreach program to retirement communities and other audiences.</li> <li>• Continue work with UCSB Goleta Coast Audubon.</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with agency decision-makers, providing public comments, and signing local conservation letters to promote bird, habitat, and biodiversity protections.</li> <li>• Using science to inform decision making for bird protections and habitat for Goleta creeks and watersheds and City of Santa Barbara Community Wildfire Protection Plan.</li> <li>• Reminding agencies that fuels reduction (trimming &amp; removal of vegetation/trees/habitat) should occur during non-breeding times, specifically during months ending with "r": September, October, November, December. (<i>Sent 80 Tree Trimming letters Oct. 2020</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build advocacy to protect local open spaces, wetlands, bird habitats, and ecosystems.</li> <li>• Collaborate with Goleta Parks &amp; Open Space Manager, SB County Flood Control staff, and others to preserve birdlife and habitat at regional open spaces (e.g., Lake Los Carneros [LLC] &amp; Ellwood), creek corridors, and Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR).</li> <li>• Continue promoting the use of Santa Barbara County Breeding Bird Study records as a tool to inform land management and resource planning.</li> <li>• Work with City of Goleta to consider the use of raptor perches at LLC to control pests and prevent use of rodenticides.</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring community science outreach about Nest Box monitoring at LLC: study of Tree Swallows (TRES) and Western Bluebirds (WEBL) breeding.</li> <li>• Processing aquatic invertebrate data for COPR and North Campus Open Space to provide quantitative data in support of understanding and evaluating ecosystem health.</li> <li>• Processing White-tailed Kite breeding data from February through September; 11 nesting events produced a minimum of 14 young.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan 2021 Nest Box monitoring &amp; related outreach.</li> <li>• Promote 2021 Winter Bird Count For Kids community science event at LLC. (Moved to April.)</li> <li>• Explore research and conservation fund to protect Purple Martins.</li> <li>• Welcome more volunteer Kite Watchers to assist tracking kites and other raptors in open spaces in 2021. (Contact Mark Holmgren.)</li> </ul>

## OUR ANNUAL APPEAL

You have probably just received our Annual Appeal letter, asking for your support. Whether you are a new or long-time member of Santa Barbara Audubon, you might ask why annual giving matters so much. The answer is that the Annual Appeal is our single most important fundraising effort. Each year, we create an annual budget to support the highest quality Audubon experience, being mindful of the cost to our members. We include tax-deductible opportunities like the Annual Appeal for unrestricted giving to support all our activities. Gifts to the Annual Appeal are directed wherever the need is greatest, giving Audubon the flexibility to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to respond to unanticipated needs and challenges. Every gift, big or small, is important and much appreciated. Our Board leads the way with 100% participation. Thank you all! (**Send a check to Santa Barbara Audubon Society, PO Box 6737, Santa Barbara, CA 93160 or visit our Website at [santabarbaraadubon.org](https://santabarbaraadubon.org) to donate.**)



# SBAS: NEWS

## THE RETURN OF TWO PRESIDENTS, A LESSON IN SERVICE

Some people step right up upon hearing the call to service, and we are lucky to have two such gentlemen in our chapter. Ron Hirst and Rob Lindsay have both served as president of SBAS, and both recently came forward to fill At Large positions on our Board. What's more, between their turn as president and their return as At Large Board members, both have gone right on serving SBAS.



Rob Lindsay's environmental advocacy began with the Oil Spill of 1969, when he journeyed here from Los Angeles to help contain the oil. He later enrolled at UCSB and completed a degree in Environmental Studies. He worked for a time as a field observer for Jan Hamber in the California Condor Recovery Program, and he taught biology at Carpinteria High School for over 30 years. Rob was SBAS President for three years in the early '80s, a period he describes as "transition from a birdwatching club to a serious environmental advocacy group." He recalls that during his tenure, SBAS acquired its first office and worked actively to prevent a housing development project on More Mesa. In addition to his presidency, Rob spent four years as editor of this newsletter, and he has planned and led countless SBAS field trips. As At Large representative, he expects to give most of his attention to the Field Trips and Education committees, but he is eager to turn his energies "in whatever direction seems to create the most good for the chapter."

Ron Hirst was fascinated by nature and wildlife as a child, and when he completed graduate school, observing birds became his primary hobby. He says he became an environmentalist "by learning about birds and how they are dependent on habitats." He was SBAS president from July 1990 through June 1992, and he remembers: meeting with our Congressman about wetlands, endangered species, and national energy policy; guiding SBAS focus to conservation, education, and field trips; meeting with EPA Administrator William Riley; supporting national initiatives in wetlands, ancient forests, and endangered species. He now advocates "the protection and increase of habitats for birds and other fauna and flora, the need for community and regional parks, and environmental education in general." In addition to his term as president, Ron served At Large for 3 years, chaired the Conservation committee for 3 years and Field Trips for 3 years, and edited *El Tecolote* for a year. Returning to At Large service, he plans to "support chapter priorities and programs that emphasize increasing the protection and appreciation of birds and nature."



As it turns out, Ron and Rob are not returning, but continuing service to SBAS that has never ceased. Thank you, Ron and Rob.

## THANK YOU!

**Carroll and Susy Barrymore, Darlene Chirman, and Julie Kummel** for exceptionally generous donations to Audubon this fall. Such leadership gifts are more needed now than ever!

**Alex Loos**, stepping down as Communications Chair on the Audubon Board but continuing to do the layout for this newsletter. Thanks for sharing your talent, Alex!

**Scott Cooper** of our Conservation Committee for lending extensive time and expertise to many issues related to our mission. We are especially grateful that he recently represented SBAS on the Technical Advisory Committee for the development of Goleta's Creek and Watershed Management Plan.

**David Levasheff**, our Webmaster, who generously lends his IT expertise to us at Santa Barbara Audubon in a multitude of additional ways.

**Jamie Chavez** for thoughtfully moderating the SBCOBirding.groups.io listserv for 21 years and for maintaining his excellent SBCOBirding.com website. Jamie has also been one of our county editors for eBird for many years, including several years as our only county eBird editor.

**Karen Dorfman, Tom Edson, Cristina Hernandez, and their team** for leading the way on bird protections at Encina Royale.

All local bird photographers who lend photographs to our publications. Thank you!

To all our members for supporting our mission!

## CONGRATULATIONS AND HEARTFELT THANKS TO JAN HAMBER

**A**udubon, the quarterly magazine of the National Audubon Society, dedicated a fascinating article in its fall issue to the remarkable career of Jan Hamber, local resident and one of the founding members of SBAS.

Opening with a photograph of a California Condor adjacent to one of Jan holding a condor feather, and titled "This Bird Survived Because She Never Quit," the article tells the story of a career of over 40 years, in which Jan was instrumental in the complicated effort to save the California Condor from extinction. Often working in physically arduous back-country conditions and enduring the slights of male colleagues who did not take women scientists seriously, she remained focused and dedicated. It was she who made the tough call in April 1987 to capture AC9, the last remaining wild male condor and bring him into the captive breeding program. With her work and that of others, the California Condor population has

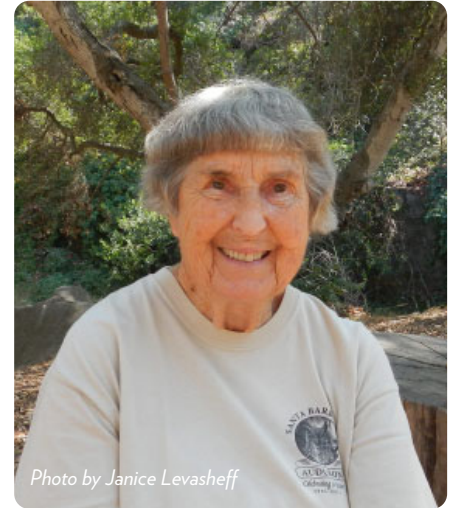
grown from 22 in 1987 to over 500 today. Along the way, Jan has mentored numerous women scientists, helping them to succeed and gain stature, thus increasing the ranks of environmental scientists.

More recently, Jan established the Condor Archives at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, where she remains actively involved.

Visit <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2020/this-bird-lives-because-she-never-quit> to read the complete Audubon article.

We are proud of Jan Hamber and indebted to her.

AC4 (AKA 20) is special to Jan and to Santa Barbara because, following his return home to the Santa Barbara backcountry in 2015 after nearly 35 years in a preserve near Bakersfield as part of the captive breeding program, he sired the first new chick born in our backcountry in over two decades.



## SO MANY WAYS TO GIVE...

**G**ift a **Chapter Membership!** It's the gift that gives all year to your giftee and local birds! Chapter memberships are separate from National Audubon memberships. With a Chapter membership, 100% of your dues goes to work locally towards our efforts in education, conservation, science, and advocacy. A Membership Application can be found at the end of this newsletter or go to our website at <https://santabarbaraaudubon.org/join-sbas/>.

**Smile!** Remember to do all your online shopping through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Register once and select Santa Barbara Audubon Society as your charity. Thereafter, every time you shop through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase amount to SBAS all year round and at no extra cost to you!

**Double down for the birds!** Many corporations have a program where they will match their employees' donations to charity. Consider asking your employer if they have such a program.

### Information for Donor Advised Funds and Other Financial Institutions

Please note: Our address has changed, and we now have a street address, if your financial institution prefers that over a P.O. Box:

SBAS EIN:	23-7051362
Organization:	Santa Barbara Audubon Society
Mailing address:	P.O. Box 6737, Santa Barbara, CA 93160
Physical address:	130 S. Patterson, #6737, Santa Barbara CA 93160
Actual Person Name:	Katherine Emery, Ph.D.
Phone Number:	(805) 964-1468

## A NEW AUDUBON CHAPTER NEARBY

By Conor McMahon, President, Goleta Coast Audubon Society

**G**reetings from Goleta Coast Audubon Society (GCAS)! We are a new Student Chapter of the Audubon Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara. GCAS is excited to partner with SBAS to protect and conserve the wildlife of our region.

As young people, we are keenly aware that the world we live in today is very different environmentally and climatically from that described by our parents, and we recognize that it will be even more different by the time we retire. We want to make sure that there are still birds left when we do.

Many young birders have faced difficulty reconciling an interest in birding with a desire to form and join communities of peers from our own demographic groups, who are often underrepresented or even absent from local birding organizations. For some birders, this out-of-placeness can even be dangerous – hundreds of birders have recently shared stories of harassment experienced while birding.

Goleta Coast Audubon Society was formed to address these needs. We want to make the world a better place for birds and a safer and more comfortable place for birders, too. We also hope to bring more young people into the worlds of conservation and birding. As students, we believe we are in a unique position to advocate for a greener future among the populations who stand to have the longest and greatest impact on that future.

The pandemic has presented interesting challenges for our organization, but we have found ways to stay actively involved on and around campus. Recent projects include a window strike monitoring study at UCSB and efforts to secure greater protections for the Snowy Plovers at Coal Oil Point Reserve. We look forward to continuing these and other socially distanced efforts in the future, and to resuming more normal operations once it's safe to do so again.

Please reach out if you're interested in getting involved!



Goleta Coast Audubon Society students tour the vertebrate collections at the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity & Ecological Restoration, pre-Covid.

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## ON DISTANCE, MEMORY, AND EXPERIENCE: SOLO DEEP LISTENING AT HOME AND AWAY AT UCSB

By Ruth Hellier

**M**y teaching plan in March was simple: take a class of 11 undergraduate students for a deep-listening, experiential, and collaborative field trip along the Gaviota coast, away from the UCSB campus. Listening to bird sounds and experiencing birds in action was to be a core part of the course. As a professor of creative arts and music, I named this short 1-credit course Aqua Rising: exploring sonic, visual and movement arts for ecological sensitivity.

However, stay-at-home and social distancing orders in March required a change in design. All teaching in the spring took place remotely, via the internet, as students either dispersed to their hometowns or remained in Isla Vista, unable to travel.

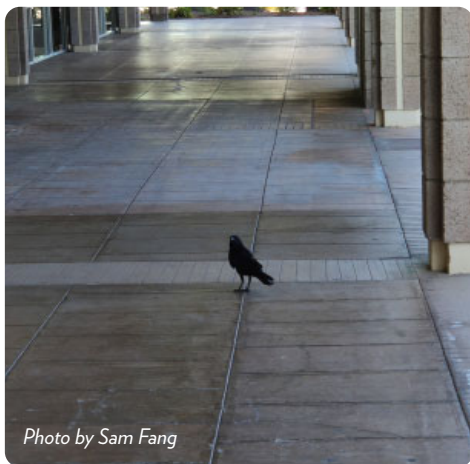


Photo by Sam Fang

In place of the field trip, I set four tasks for the students to carry out using their own backyards and local spots—urban and rural—as their field sites. I asked them to use their deep listening experiences to consider soundscape ecologies, sensory memories, and sonic environments comprising the more-than-human and the human. They all generated creative and artistic responses (photos, audio and video files, poems and prose) and shared these with one another. Their responses involved ducks by the Washington Capitol, hummingbirds in a vineyard, shore birds, and a crow in an almost deserted residence hall.

In that sudden and unexpected moment of dispersion and distance, of absence and of disconnection, their creative responses were profound and inspiring. Their acute listening experiences indicated their connections to space, place, and borders; they offered a heightened consciousness of the world of sounds and showed a renewed energy. Deep listening to birds allowed these students to be artistically creative and ecologically sensitive – even in a distanced environment of a global pandemic.



## GETTING RID OF RATS THE NATURAL WAY, A GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD PROJECT

By Lily Solano, High School Senior

As a Girl Scout for nine years, I have taken on many challenges, from selling cookies to backpacking. Now, as a senior in high school, I'm challenging myself to earn the Girl Scouts' highest honor, the Gold Award, for which I must create a positive, lasting difference in my community in a subject that I am passionate about.

From the start, I knew I wanted to create a unique experience for local students and aid the preservation and wellbeing of Santa Barbara's wildlife. After intense brainstorming, I decided to teach Franklin Elementary School 5th-graders about bioaccumulation (the gradual and often lethal buildup of toxins, typically rodenticides) in owl populations, and encourage them to take part in increasing the number of owls in Santa Barbara by teaching them how to build owl boxes for their backyards and local Santa Barbara parks. I contacted Katherine Emery, Executive Director of Santa Barbara Audubon, to learn more about raptors and rodenticides.

When it comes to rodent control, most choices are either effective but environmentally harmful (like poisons) or inefficient but relatively safe (like traps). Environment-friendly Santa Barbara chooses the latter: Santa Barbara's Park Manager Mathew Parker told me that the primary method of rodent control is to place traps in areas with high rodent populations.

Knowing that a single owl family eats several thousand mice and rats a year, I decided to help increase the local owl population. I coordinated with Franklin School science teacher, Mr. Carroll, and garden teacher, Ms. Robins, to create a tutorial video on how to assemble owl boxes, which can be placed in Santa Barbara's rural parks to attract more owls to those areas with an overpopulation of rats. The owls will act as a natural equalizer to control the number of rats in a way that is both safe and effective, protecting Santa Barbara's clean parks from harmful rodenticides.

For the other part of my project, I want to educate local students about the importance of avoiding the use of harsh pesticides. To do this, I am creating a playful and entertaining skit, along with Mr. Carroll and Ms. Robins, to teach the class what bioaccumulation is and how it affects owls in Santa Barbara and many other predators worldwide.

I coordinated a meeting with Mr. Coronado's 5th grade class and Hannah Atkinson, Eyes in the Sky Director. As students are currently doing distance learning, Hannah introduced

Athena, the Audubon Society's Barn Owl, to the students via Zoom. Students asked questions about Athena's diet, her beautiful feathers, and her sleep schedule. Many students were fascinated with Athena's talons and how she used Hannah's leather glove as a perch. It was exciting to see that so many students were curious about one of Santa Barbara's very important birds.

I truly hope this project will help our local owls prosper and create a positive impact on the Franklin students even after I graduate.



Photo by Daphne Maskrey





## BIRDSONG: NATURE'S PLAYLIST – A PRESENTATION FOR THE BRAILLE INSTITUTE

By Coni Edick

On November 6 I had the great pleasure of presenting Santa Barbara Audubon Society's "Birdsong: Nature's Playlist" in a webinar to the Braille Institute. Twenty bird enthusiasts attended the presentation.

On its website, the Braille Institute describes itself as "a nonprofit organization whose mission is to positively transform the lives of those with vision loss." In addition to their many free services, the Braille Institute provides online workshops and classes for their clients. An audio-rich presentation on birdsong was a good match for the Braille Institute's program lineup, and a great outreach opportunity for Audubon.

Developed as a basic introduction to the auditory aspect of birds, "Birdsong" explores the variety of ways birds communicate, how they make their sounds, why they are sounding off, and what all this racket can tell us about what's happening in the world around us. It offers an auditory sampler of some local passerines, suggests local hot spots and methods to find birds, and provides resources and tools for birding by ear. Special features include audio clips and photographs from the extensive Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, YouTube videos from NPR, BBC and CGTN, and stunning photos from local bird photographers Brad Hacker and Will Adler.



A recording of the webinar is available at <https://youtu.be/KDvKMq7mypl>.

Many thanks to the following folks for their assistance in this program: Katherine Emery, Dotti Pak, Janice Levasheff and David Levasheff, all from Santa Barbara Audubon Society; Brianna Pettit from the Santa Barbara Braille Institute; Briana Sapp Tivey from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; and Vanessa Powell from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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

John Altman\*  
Jane Anderson\*\*  
Talya Anter-Engel\*  
Jean Archer\*\*  
Deb Artz\*\*  
Susan Bartz\*\*\*  
Ruth Bodine\*\*  
Chris & Kelly Brand\*\*  
Suzanne T. Brown\*\*\*  
Ron Bruns\*\*\*  
Jayne Burton\*\*  
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**Many thanks to those of you who have recently joined or renewed. Your chapter membership is key to our success!**

### Questions about Membership?

If you have 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](mailto:Membership@santabarbaraaudubon.org).



## A SESSION OF MEET YOUR WILD NEIGHBOR (MYWN)

By Patti Smart, MYWN teacher

Last month, Santa Barbara Audubon's MYWN program "zoomed" into Jessie Smart's 1st-grade classroom at Brandon School. It exceeded our wildest expectations for introducing young students to their feathered neighbors online. No surprise, the highlight of each session is when EITS Director Hannah Atkinson brings a live bird into the classroom, via Zoom, greeting us from the aviary at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Students were tickled to meet Puku, Ivan, and Max and hear their stories.

Online sessions continued with the same thematic vision introduced in classrooms last year. We help students see that the attributes they recognize in their human friends are some of the same attributes that they will learn to recognize in their wild friends. We know what our human friends look like, what they like to eat, where they hang out, and how they act. We can recognize them by how they sound even when we can't see them. So, we help students notice these things about the rich wildlife we hope they will befriend in their backyards, in parks, at the beach, wherever they go.

The lesson explores the ways in which ancient cultures, scientists, engineers, artists, authors, and poets have marveled, studied, written about, and learned from birds. We read *Some Birds* and gather vocabulary to describe bird behavior and ask students to see how many of those behaviors they can observe in their wild neighbors before our next session.

In our second session, students presented their observations on slides they created on SeeSaw (an online learning platform). Each student had documented an observation, written, illustrated, and recorded in his/her own voice. Our budding birders made us proud! To lead into our next activity, we note which behaviors involve a bird using its feet. And...what do bird feet look like anyway? Students are then asked to create their best-guess version of bird feet from three pipe cleaners. Then we share diagrams of various bird feet. Students can adjust their models while we introduce further vocabulary such as: climbing feet, grabbing feet, and perching feet.

In our last session, we share excerpts from the picture book, *Bird Talk*, to learn what birds might be communicating in their calls. We then listen to some real birdcalls, and students are asked to pick from several of the bird cards in their packets which bird might be "talking".

I saw a bird chirping ..



Ms. Smart gave us feedback on our three weeks together, writing:

*My class is obsessed with birds! They ask almost daily when Patti and Hannah are coming back. I remind them it was a three-session learning segment and that we are now life-long birders who can continue this work on our own. But they want more. The excitement is real, and for me it is so cool to see what a love of birds you imparted.*

*One student went to the Natural History Museum over the weekend and was excited to share that he saw Puku and Ivan. He reported that Puku was so much smaller in real life. One student spends recess researching birds and reports back... with pictures. She saw a nest on a walk the other day and has spent the week researching nests and what birds use to make them.*

*Many students just spontaneously share...when they see birds on breaks. Their details are so clear, and they are so eager to describe everything about the birds they have seen.*

May our young birders continue to grow in wonder and appreciation for their wild neighbors!

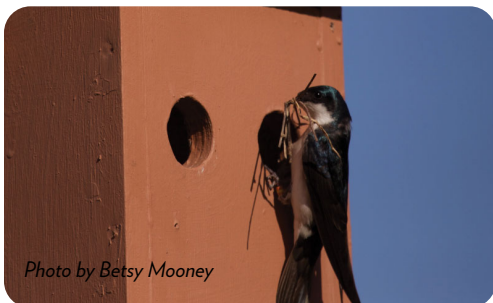


Photo by Betsy Mooney



Photo by Betsy Mooney



Photo by Betsy Mooney

# SBAS: PROGRAMS

By Teresa Fanucchi, Programs Chair

Our monthly programs have gone virtual. As each date approaches, look for an email – or consult our website or social media – for a connection link. If you are new to Zoom, Programs chair Teresa Fanucchi can help you get started. Call or email her: (805)705-3796; [programs@santabarbaraaudubon.org](mailto:programs@santabarbaraaudubon.org). All programs are on Wednesdays, beginning at 7:30 p.m.: January 27 and February 24. Recordings of our September, October, and November programs are available on our website (under Activities, then Programs).

## BIRDING COLOMBIA

Presented by Santiago M. Escruceria

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 7:30 p.m. via Zoom** (link will be posted on our website and social media as date approaches)

Join us for a colorful international birding experience from your home! Colombia has 20% of the world's bird species—some 1,957 known species. Environmental educator, birding guide, photographer, and fellow Audubon member Santiago Escruceria will share his beautiful photos and discuss geographical, ecological, and political insights on birding in Colombia.



Photo by Santiago Escruceria



Photo by Santiago Escruceria

A Colombian-born American citizen, Santiago has lived in California for the past 41 years. He has taught environmental education in Spanish and English for 30 years, 21 of those with the Mono Lake Committee. At Mono Lake he manages the Committee's Outdoor Education Center program for Los Angeles youth and adults, and for student groups from all over California. Santiago is an avid birder and bird photographer, leading birding adventures in Colombia during the winter ([guadualitobirdingtours.com](http://guadualitobirdingtours.com)) and walks for school groups in the Mono Basin during the rest of the year. He is currently President of the Eastern Sierra Audubon Chapter.

## ESTUARIES-CALIFORNIA'S MARINE NURSERIES

Presented by Andrea Jones

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 7:30 p.m. via Zoom** (link will be posted on our website and social media as date approaches)

Something special happens when a river meets an ocean. Freshwater rivers and streams flow from inland to mix with salty ocean water, creating a unique habitat called an estuary. Estuaries, and the wetlands and bays that surround them, are some of the most productive areas in the world for birds, other wildlife, and humans. Join us as Andrea Jones discusses California's coasts and estuaries, which are part of the Pacific Flyway, the migratory bird highway stretching from the Arctic to Patagonia, supporting nearly a billion birds.

Andrea Jones is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California. For the past 13 years, she has worked with staff and the network of Audubon chapters across the state to implement conservation projects at high priority Important Bird Areas. She has worked especially on conservation efforts along the coast and in estuaries, focusing on restoration, advocacy and engagement. Her work has also included providing



science expertise and negotiating conservation agreements at saline lakes, including Owens Lake and Salton Sea. She oversees efforts in priority bird species and serves as the spokeswoman for bird conservation across California. Prior to California, Andrea worked at Massachusetts Audubon, where she served as the Director of the Coastal Waterbird and Grassland Bird Programs.



Photo by Alex Loos





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*Santa Barbara County Birding* <http://sbcbirding.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



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

I'll be a Chapter-Supporting Member! ☐ New ☐ Renewing

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Chapter memberships are separate from National Audubon memberships. 100% of your dues stay local and keep SBAS strong and sustainable so we can protect birds and their habitat now and into the future. You enable us to continue sharing the joys and importance of birds with all.

We urge you to join SBAS and invite friends, colleagues, neighbors, and 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!**

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Contact [Membership@santabarbaraaudubon.org](mailto:Membership@santabarbaraaudubon.org) if you prefer to receive your newsletter electronically and/or to gift a membership to someone.

**Mail membership form with check to:**

**Santa Barbara Audubon Society, P.O. Box 6737, Santa Barbara, CA 93160**

If you prefer to join/donate electronically, visit: [santabarbaraaudubon.org/join-sbas](http://santabarbaraaudubon.org/join-sbas)

SBAS does not share personal information with other organizations.

To join the National Audubon Society, visit: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)