



# Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 44 Issue 10, April 2010

## April 19th Membership Meeting

6:45pm at El Chorro Park, SLO Botanical Garden Oak Glen Pavilion  
(Community program to follow)

During the MCAS membership meeting, we will be voting on the following slate of candidates for terms beginning May 1st. Additionally, the Board is fine tuning some changes to the by-laws. Look for these specific changes on the MCAS website beginning in April and plan to vote on these changes at the meeting.

President: Stephanie Little

Secretary: Elinore Cottrell

Conservation Chair: Andrea Jones

Field Trips Chair: Alan Schmierer

Programs Chair: Joanna Iwanicha

Education and Outreach Chair: Aurianna Woodson

Fund Development Chair: nominee still needed

Director-At-Large: nominee still needed

The Fund Development Chair is responsible for planning and implementing membership drives and giving, grant opportunities, donations, bequests, business memberships, merchandise inventory and sales, special events, and other fundraising activities. Help with any one of these tasks would be appreciated. The Director-At-Large is a one year position to be filled by someone new to the Board who will work with at least one committee.

Please consider lending your time and expertise to join the fun-loving Board and committees as leaders in MCAS! Contact Stephanie Little if you are interested (805-610-6229).

## Welcome to Our New MCAS Members!

### *Arroyo Grande*

Shirley Polich

Sally I Stoner

### *Atascadero*

Debbie Frye

Michaela Heinze

Susan Moran

John Moss

Diva Sandrasagra

### *Avila Beach*

Jean Dodson

### *Bradley*

Tim Lyons

### *Cambria*

Cherrie A Waterman

### *Cayucos*

Barbara Heublein

Ronda Hon

Toni Legras

Sharon K Roberts

### *Los Osos*

Beverlee Bradshaw

Julie Camell

Watson Gooch

Wendy Miller

Aaron E Sims

Roberta Thompson

### *Claire & Jack Vogel*

Oliver W Wilcox

### *Morro Bay*

Jane Brechler

Bonnie Brumbaugh

Tracy Hight

Roy W Shank

Linda Lopez

### *Paso Robles*

Michael James Cussen

Michele Roest

Tressa M Ronan

### *Pismo Beach*

Denise Ricca-White

### *San Luis Obispo*

Louise Buck

Virginia Bunnell

Paula J Carr

Jo Currey

Kenneth C Kemp

Katherine O'Clair

Beryl Reichenberg

Roberta Shelton

Sterling Van de Moortel

Sara K Von Schwind

# MCAS 2009-2010 BOARD

## President

Christy Holmes - MCASChristy@gmail.com

## President Elect

Vacant

## Past President

Jan Surbey - 772-7273, jansurbey@earthlink.net

## Treasurer

Bryan Brown - 528-8137, bryanlives@sbcglobal.net

## Secretary

Elinore Cottrell, ehcottrell@gmail.com

## Programs Co-Chairs

Rouvaishyana - 534-9867

Aurianna Woodson - auriannaw@gmail.com

## Publicity Chair

Dick Boyd - 772-3993, dickboyd@charter.net

## Field Trip Co-Chairs

Alan Schmierer - 772-2026, aaschmierer@yahoo.com

Jen Moonjian - jmoonjia@gmail.com

## Hospitality Chair

Nina Richert - 234-0972, ninarich2000@yahoo.com

## Membership Chair

Rosalie Valvo - 772-1429, rvalvo@sbcglobal.net

## Education Chair

Stephanie Little - 610-6229, stephjoy13@hotmail.com

## Lands Chair

Greg Smith - slobird@aol.com

## Communications Co-Chairs

Newsletter: Jennifer Little: jenlittle3@hotmail.com

Website: Mike Stiles - 528-1515, mstiles@calpoly.edu

## Conservation Chair

Andrea Jones - 772-1995, savannarum@hotmail.com

## Fund Development Chair

Vacant

## Directors at Large

Dick Parker - 528-8272, parkerkp47@sbcglobal.net

Dawn Williams - 545-8412, slodawn1@att.net

newsletter layout by Jessie Skidmore, [www.jessieskidmore.com](http://www.jessieskidmore.com)

## Morro Coast Audubon Society Office and Outreach Center

601 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, upstairs in Marina Square  
(805)772-1991 [mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org](mailto:mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org)

Hours: Thursday, 10am-Noon

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay CA 93443

Website: [www.morrocoastaudubon.org](http://www.morrocoastaudubon.org)

Printed on recycled paper

## BULLETIN

### Thank You MCAS Donors!

Kenneth & Rosalie Rathbone

Dirk & Bonnie Walters

Joanne Smalley  
In memory of Jim Barbour

Laurel Viola  
In memory of Dorothy &  
Richard Adams

Rouvaishyana

Central Coast Natural  
History Association

Linda & David Chipping

### Bird Fun Fact

HOW MANY FEATHERS ON A BIRD? There are about 1,000 feathers on a hummingbird and about 25,000 feathers on a swan



*Western gull, courtesy of Alan Schmierer*

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Have an Item you Want to Trade or Sell?

MCAS is taking ad submissions for items you would like to trade or sell. Submissions will be considered for posting in the Pacific Flyway and/or on the MCAS website. Please refer to the rules and guidelines below for details.

#### Rules & Guidelines for Use:

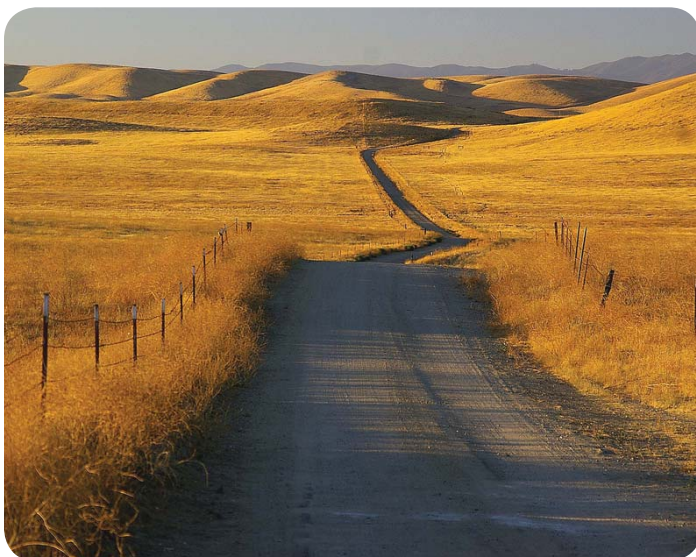
- Listing must be submitted by MCAS members only.
- Purchaser need not be MCAS member.
- No commercial advertising.
- Items should relate more or less directly to birding, nature, and other MCAS activities, i.e. bird books, binoculars, scopes, tripods, cameras, etc.
- Descriptions must be 30 words or less.
- All transactions must be made between seller and buyer; MCAS holds no responsibility or liability in the goods sold or exchanged.
- Send ad info to [mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org](mailto:mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org) by the first week of the month to be considered for posting in the Flyway and/or MCAS website.
- It is suggested that a donation of about 10% of the sale price be made to MCAS.



*Kayaking, courtesy of Mike Baird*

### Solar: New Year's Resolution! *A follow up*

In the February edition of the Flyway, I wrote an article about the benefits of going solar in your home. Please consider reading the article if you haven't already. As concerned citizens and MCAS members, we all have the responsibility to think about our alternative energy options. Article Link: <http://www.morrocoastaudubon.org/pdf/feb10.pdf>



*Carrizo Plain, courtesy of Alan Schmierer*

#### A few highlights:

- At the end of last year, my net PGE electric bill for my 95% electric house was plus \$375. In 2010 PGE will actually have to pay me that in cash!
- Due to tax credits from going solar, my 2009 Federal tax bill was zero!

-Alan Schmierer, MCAS Member

## LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

### Hummingbirds and more!

Sunday, April 11th, 8:00am-10:00am  
Cheryl Lish's yard in Arroyo Grande

Hummingbirds are not as abundant in spring as in summer but there are often more species to be seen. We will help you understand how to identify hummingbirds and other bird species. Expect to see Anna's, Selasphorus (Allen's, Rufous), Black-chinned, possibly Costa's, and if we're really lucky we may have Calliope. Fun for novice and experienced birders! Young birders welcome. Wheelchair accessible.

\*A donation of sugar for the hummingbirds would be appreciated but is not necessary.

Directions: from Hwy 101

Go through the Village of Arroyo Grande until you come to the 3-way stop at Lopez Lake Drive. Take a right toward Lopez Lake, but only go to the second street on the left, which is Stagecoach Road. Follow Stagecoach Road all the way to the end. Turn right on El Sueno Way, go to the end of El Sueno. Cheryl's is the left-most house at the end of the road. Park along El Sueno; leave the driveway for those with limited mobility please.

Other April field trips, which may include hummingbird-watching in Creston, will be announced via MCAS Alert! To be notified of these events, email Mike Stiles at: [mstiles@calpoly.edu](mailto:mstiles@calpoly.edu) to join the list.



*Anna's Hummingbird, courtesy of Mike Baird*

### Featured Bird of the Month: Black Oystercatcher



*Black Oystercatcher, courtesy of Alan Schmierer*

#### BLACK OYSTERCATCHERS

favor rocky shorelines where they feed through the intertidal area searching for mussels, limpets, and chitons. They use their strong bills to dislodge food from rocks and pry shells open. They are often hunting so close to the water's edge that they have to fly up to avoid crashing surf. They nest in small depressions close to the shore where small pebbles and shell fragments are incorporated into the nest.

# Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County -Feb. 2010

The following are some of the most interesting reports gleaned primarily from the Slocobirding listserv and the Cornell labs's eBird project. A total of 210 species were reported (198 to eBird) in SLO County in February. A total of 238 species have been reported to eBird from SLO County in 2010. Abbreviations: CPNM = Carrizo Plain National Monument; MBSP = Morro Bay State Park.

Early spring arrivals: male **RUFOUS HUMMINBIRD** in Atascadero on 25 Feb 2010 (RHZ); a **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** at the Hwy 58 San Juan Creek Bridge on 28 Feb (MLS); and eight **CLIFF SWALLOWS** at the Bitterwater Road Cholame Creek Bridge on 20 Feb (MLS).

**WATERFOWL THRU SHEARWATER:** A **ROSS'S GOOSE** and a **CACKLING GOOSE** were found at a pond along Creston Road in Paso Robles on 28 Feb (TME,MLS). Four **CACKLING GEESE** were also recorded along Hwy 1 at the Hearst Ranch on 23 Feb (RHZ) and one continued at Atascadero Lake through the month (mob). Two male **EURASIAN WIGEON** were still at Morro Bay on 20 Feb (HK) where the species annually winters, but one seen on a pond south of Atascadero from Hwy 101 on 23 Feb was east of the Santa Lucia Range where there is only one other county record (JSR). The winter high count for **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** involved 12 males seen from Northpoint Natural Area in Morro Bay on 12 Feb (TME). The male **BLACK SCOTER** continued off Little Pico Creek where up to two females were seen 13-23 Feb and one was there on 23 Feb (TME). Rare away from saltwater, an adult **RED-THROATED LOON** was on a small pond along Price Canyon Road on 2 Feb (TME). The single **BLACK-VENTED SHEARWATER** reported last month was off San Simeon Cove on 13 Feb (TME).

**OSPREY THRU MURRELET:** A report of two **OSPREY** actively courting at Santa Margarita on 1 Feb (JR) suggest a possible nesting attempt; the last reported nesting in the county was at the lake in the mid-1970's. There were several reports of **MOUNTAIN PLOVERS** around the metal building along Panorama Road, CPNM, with numbers ranging from 23-80 birds (mob). The **RUDDY TURNSTONE** at the San Simeon Creek mouth was present again on 16 Feb (MLS) and seven more were at their traditional winter location along Estero Bluffs State Park on 25 Feb (RHZ). The only **THAYER'S GULL** report was of a first winter bird seen along Moonstone Drive in Cambria on 11 Feb (KP). A first winter **GLAUCOUS GULL** was found at the elephant seal colony just south of Point Piedras Blancas 21-25 Feb (JSR). The **BLACK SKIMMER** found on Morro Bay last month continued through 17 Feb when two were observed (BAB). **MARBLED MURRELETS** continued to be seen along the north coast where 4-6 were recorded from Leffingwell Point to San Simeon Cove (MLS).

**PIGEON THRU THRASHER:** Though often plentiful in the north county, 283 perched in trees at the Chimney Rock Road and Adelaida Road intersection on 20 Feb (TME) is a recent high count. Two **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** continued in the large valley oaks just off Golden Hills Road on the north side of Hwy 46 on 18 Feb (JA). The **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** and the **PYGMY NUTHATCH** wintering on the north side of Black Hill, MBSP, were still present on 21 and 23 Feb respectively (TME). A total of three **SAGE THRASHERS** were found on Simmler and Elkhorn Roads in the CPNM 14-23 Feb (TME,MLS,JSR). Even more impressive were the seven **LE CONTE'S THRASHERS** found in the CPNM along Elkhorn Road, the Van Metre Ranch Cutoff Road, and Panorama Road 14-23 Feb (TME,MLS,JSR).

**WARBLER THRU GOLDFINCH:** Three wintering warblers were present in Morro Bay. A male **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** and a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** continued along Estero Ave through 11 and 25 Feb respectively (KLP). The most interesting bird of the month was the **GRACE'S WARBLER** seen on Black Hill, MBSP, on 21 Feb (TME). Though looked for the previous two winters, this is likely the same bird that wintered here during the 2007-2008 winter. The adult male **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** recorded on San Luis Obispo Creek adjacent to the wastewater plant during the Morro Bay Christmas Bird Count was located again on 11 Feb (JSR). Though elusive this winter, a **NELSON'S SPARROW** was spotted along the bay near the MBSP Marina on 7 Feb (JSR). Nearby, a tan-striped **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** remained in the MBSP Campground 7-10 Feb (JSR,MLS). A wintering female **ORCHARD ORIOLE** photographed on Estero Ave in Morro Bay 9-25 Feb (KLP) provided only the 6th winter record for the county. Joining this bird was a female **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** 11-25 Feb (KLP). Reports of **LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH** declined from last month; a male at a feeder in Arroyo Grande 2-3 Feb (BAB) and one near the Saucito Ranch, CPNM, 25 Feb (KMS) accounted for the only reports.

**OBSERVERS:** Thanks to the many birders who report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Jerry Ambrose, Bill A. Bouton, Tom M. Edell, Howard King, Kathy Parker, Kaaren L. Perry, Jim S. Royer, Jennifer Rycenga, Alan F. Schmierer, Kathy M. Sharum, Maggie L. Smith, Mike D. Stiles, Doug G. Stinson, Roger H. Zachary and mob = many observers. For information about birds mentioned in this report, consult the Morro Coast Audubon publication "The Birds of San Luis Obispo County, California" or contact Tom Edell at (805) 995-1691 or tedell@aol.com

-Tom Edell

## Morro Coast Audubon Society Membership Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PH \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

What type of membership would you like?

**Morro Coast Audubon Society and National Audubon Society combined membership**

(includes the Pacific Flyway newsletter and Audubon Magazine).

\_\_\_ \$15 Students/Seniors

\_\_\_ \$20 New/Intro

\_\_\_ \$35 Renew Basic

Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

**Morro Coast Audubon Society membership only**

(includes the Pacific Flyway newsletter)

\_\_\_ \$20 New or renewal

Make check payable to MCAS.

**MCAS Membership Details**

Please mark all that apply:

\_\_\_ I'd like to receive occasional "MCAS Alert!" email notifications of news and events.

\_\_\_ I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

\_\_\_ I would like to receive information about the MCAS planned giving program.

For questions, contact the Membership Chair. (Contact information on page 2.)

For both membership types, mail form & check to: MCAS, PO Box 1507, Morro Bay, CA 93443

To check the status of your National Audubon Society membership or request changes call 1.800.274.4201



MORRO COAST  
**AUDUBON**  
SOCIETY

**MISSION:**

To promote the appreciation, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on the biological diversity of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, particularly in San Luis Obispo County.

### Morro Coast Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay CA 93443

805-772-1991

[mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org](mailto:mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org)

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