



Volume 38 Issue 8 Morro Coast Audubon Society

February 2004

Our 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"

The Condors are Coming, The Condors are Coming



Morro Bay Natural History Museum Hosts Condor Exhibit

The Condors are Coming, The Condors are Coming is a photo essay on the California condor recovery project that has increased the population of condors in the wild from zero to more than 40. Seven large photo panels tell the story of the condor's plunge to near extinction, the captive breeding program that assures their survival and the monitoring of the birds to keep them healthy in the wild.

The condor exhibit is on display now **through February 29** in the museum auditorium. Visitors will be able to stand against a condor silhouette to compare their height with the nearly 10 foot wingspan of these huge birds and view condor artifacts as well as the photo panels.

Biologist Steve Schubert will give a free illustrated talk on **Sunday, February 15, at 2 p.m.** in the museum auditorium on the Condor Recovery project. Schubert was instrumental in establishing the Hi Mountain Condor Lookout in eastern San Luis Obispo County that is a joint project of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service and the Morro Coast Audubon Society and he continues to monitor Condors there along with other volunteers.

For more information call the museum at 805 772-2694.

MCAS OFFICERS

President	David Roark	595-2462
	rockhopper_penguin@yahoo.com	
President-Elect	Dick Parker	528-8272
	rsparkkp47@aol.com	
Past President	Michael T. Hanson	541-0272
	mthanson@calpoly.edu	
Rec. Secretary	Norma Wightman	772-7859
	nwrightman@charter.net	
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	hm 528-7965
	havlenas@fix.net	wk 528-6484
Chapter Administrator	Stephnie Wald	489-9840
	swaldcoho@hotmail.com	

CHAIRPERSONS

Programs	Elaine Townsend	543-1373
	etownsend@slonet.org	
Field Trips	Mike Stiles	528-1515
	mstiles@calpoly.edu	
Hospitality	Linda Tanner	534-9919
	Tannerland@Charter.net	
Conservation	Marla Morrissey	528-4955
	savedunes@aol.com	Fax 528-0641
	Gale Kordowski	773-0398
	gakbirds@yahoo.com	
Membership	Mary S. Adams	995-3741
	mary@rb3.swrcb.ca.gov	
Education	vacant	
Lands	John Perkins	528-0540
	TeleEar@aol.com	
Publicity	Ted Pope	hm 545-9705
	TNPope@charter.net	wk 547-0242
	Fax	547-0142
Communications	Dick Boyd	772-3993
	boyd@poly2.utah.edu	
	Chris Crescioli	772-0753
	happycritters@gliderpilots.org	

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

David Lawrence	dlawrence@chw.edu	541-0822
Laura Brewer	lbrewer@slcusd.org	544-0827
Phil Dean	phil_slo@yahoo.com	788-0126

RARE BIRD ALERT

Morro Coast Audubon	528-7182
Monterey	831 375-9122
Northern California	415 681-7422
Los Angeles/Southern California	323 874-1318
Santa Barbara	964-8240
Pacific wildlife Care	543-WILD

PACIFIC FLYWAY is published ten times per year. Deadline for copy submitted is the 1 st Monday of the Month. Printed at Hay Printing, Morro Bay, on recycled paper. Labeled & mailed at Achievement House. **Subscriptions are available to non-members at \$12 /yr. Send check payable to The Morro Coast Audubon Society, P. O. Box 160, Morro Bay, CA 93443-0160**

Electronic Subscription

Morro Coast Audubon Society's newsletter *Pacific Flyway* is available as a download on our web site, www.gliderpilots.org/audubon. It is a PDF file, and you must have the program Acrobat Reader in order to read it. (If you don't have the program, it is easily downloadable for free.)

After looking at the .PDF version and If you are a **member of the Audubon Society or otherwise regularly receiving the Flyway in the mail**, and you decide that you wish to no longer receive the printed version, and instead have the PDF version of **each issue** sent to you **automatically** by e-mail as soon as it is posted, e-mail Rosalie Valvo at rvalvo@slonet.org with the name that your *Flyway* is mailed to. (Your e-mail address on the message to Rosalie will be used for the electronic subscription). The mailing of the *Flyway* will be discontinued, but your membership will not be affected.



CHECK IT OUT!

Next General Meeting: February 16.
Eilef Paulson, who teaches children at Camp KEEPpage 3

Condor Exhibit and Recovery Program, Natural History Museum, thru Feb 29; talk by **Steve Schubert** Feb 15. cover

Snowy Plover Programs:page 7

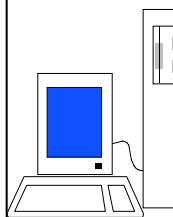
Christmas Bird Count resultspage 8

Mildred Comar Memory Bench page 9

OUR WEBSITE

www.gliderpilots.org/audubon

The current and recent past editions of the **PACIFIC FLYWAY** are available as .pdf downloads at this site.



Coming events

MCAS BOARD MEETING

February 2 , 2004

MEGA Office near corner of 2nd St. and Santa Ysabel in Baywood Park. 6:45 PM. All interested members are invited to attend the board meeting.

GENERAL MEETING

Monday
February 16, 2004, 7:30 pm

The Congregational Church
11245 Los Osos Valley Road
San Luis Obispo

Every year MCAS provides a scholarship for an educator to attend Audubon Camp in Maine. This is an outstanding experience in environmental education. Last year's recipient was **Eilef Paulson**, who works teaching children at Camp KEEP. He will be our featured speaker this month. It is sure to be an interesting evening, to hear him share his experience with us, and also to learn how he has been able to share his knowledge with the children.

Invite friends to join you, and stay afterward for refreshments and sharing.

Elaine Townsend, Program chair
For more information, please call Elaine, 543-1373.

BIRDS AT EBB TIDE

Morro Coast Audubon invites visitors and newcomers to our area to come to the Audubon Overlook to enjoy the spectacle. Telescopes, binoculars, and bird field guides are available for your use and Audubon members will be there to help with identification.

February- April

Wed. Feb 18 12:00 noon
Fri Mar 5th 12:30 pm
Sun Mar 7th 1:00 pm
Thur Mar 18 11:30 am
Sun Mar 21 1:30 pm
Fri April 2nd 11:30 am

The Overlook is in Baywood Park and can be reached by turning west on Santa Ysabel-the traffic light on South Bay Blvd., then going west to Third Street. Turn right on Third to the end of the street, turn right again onto a short dirt lane to the Overlook parking area.. For further information call 772-1413. Heavy rain cancels! *Gloria Rasmussen*



SECOND SATURDAY AT SWEET SPRINGS

14 Feb 2004
9:00 AM till 12:00 Noon

Come one come all to the Second Saturday at Sweet Springs. We will do a little light work, perhaps plant some of the new plants John Nowak has secured for us. The first winter rains have come and the recent plantings appear to be doing fine. Remember that we received a matching grant from USF&WS and our hours at Second Saturday count as part of our contribution.

Sweet Springs is now the home of another federally endangered plant, the marsh sand wort (*Arenaria* sp.). The plant now occurs naturally only in the Black Lake area of Nipomo Mesa. Before the loss of habitat it was found in fresh water marshes from Washington to Southern California. On Oct the 8th John Nowak and Jay Bonestell, under the advice of David Chipping of the Native Plant Society, planted 20 of the plants in the eastern most portion of the large pond. Join the rest of the volunteers and afterwards check the new residents of the preserve. On a recent visit from Kate Symonds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service an inspection of these plants was made and most of them appear to be thriving. Additionally at this time we saw what appears to be a new and unwanted resident of Sweet Springs. We observed a non-native red fox stalking mallards in the marsh. The animal noticed us and froze, just staring back at us. It finally gave up the hunt and retreated back to the area east of the preserve. Let's hope that he does not decide to remain.

Meet at the main entrance to your preserve on Ramona St. in the community of Los Osos. The shore birds and water fowl may have returned so bring you guide books and binoculars and we'll do a little birding afterwards and maybe see "our" fox. .

For additional information contact John at 528 0540.

COMING MCAS FIELD TRIP

Saturday, Feb 7
North SLO Coast
Time 7:30 am

Meet at 7:30 in the parking lot of Spencer's Market in Morro Bay. Spencer's is located on the Highway 1 frontage road just north of the Hwy 41 exit. We will carpool and stop at various locations along the north coast such as San Simeon Campground, and pullouts along the highway to near the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse and Elephant Seal parking lot.

Call Mike Stiles at 528-1515 for more info.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Nine of us earlybirds arrived at the north end of the Carrizo Plains at about 0715 this morning (11/22/03) and birded until about 1430. The day started out frosty, but very pleasant in the sun. There was lots of bird activity. As the morning progressed, the wind picked up and the windchill, if not the actual temperature, dropped into a range that was uncomfortable even on the lee side of the cars! As the wind picked up, the bird activity slowed down to nothing.

We had a total of 33 species. Raptors were pretty good, with 1 Golden Eagle, 3 N Harriers, 10+ Red-tailed Hawks, at least 8 Ferruginous Hawks, 10+ Am Kestrels, and 3 Merlins. We had one Burrowing Owl, on the west side of Soda Lake Road, just north of the old tractor (parked near the east side of the road, between Rte 58 and the fire station (?). We had 2 Black Phoebes; good for the Plains. Lots of Mt Bluebirds. 100++ Savannah Sparrows. About 10 Vesper Sparrows, I believe all on the road that goes west off Soda Lake Road just inside the north entrance to the Carrizo Nat Monument.

Notable misses were: Mt Plover (VERY windy by the time that we got to the usual Simmler Road location for them), Sage Sparrow (we didn't look too hard and I think that they were all hunkered down out of the wind), and Prairie Falcon.

All in all, a fun day and good company!

Alan Schmierer and Mike Stiless

MORRO BAY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY State Park Docents Lead Bird Walks

State park volunteers will lead a number of walks to the Heron Rookery near the museum in February to watch courtship rituals and nesting habits of Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets and other residents of the rookery in Morro Bay State Park.

Meet at the museum on these dates and times:

Sunday, February 1, at 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, February 7, at 10:30 a.m., and Sunday, February 22, at 1 p.m. Walks last about one and a-half hours.

On **Sunday, February 15**, Freeman and Worth Hall will lead a walk along Morro Strand to sort out the plovers, small sandpipers and larger sandpipers that feed at the water's edge. Meet at the parking lot at the end of Azure Street, north of the Cloisters development at 10 a.m. The same couple will lead a walk at the Morro Bay State Park Marina on **Tuesday, February 24, at 2:00 p.m.** to view feeding and flocking behavior of shorebirds and waterfowl in the estuary. Meet at the east end of the Marina parking lot. Both walks last about two hours.

In San Simeon State Park, Phil Adams will lead a bird walk in multiple habitats including shore, creek, wetlands, chaparral and pine forest on Saturday, **February 2, at 9 a.m.** Meet Phil in the Washburn day use parking lot north of Cambria on the east side of Hwy 1, just south of San Simeon Creek. Expect to be out for two and a-half hours for this two-mile walk.

For more information call the Museum of Natural History at 772-2694.



To our newest members

Arroyo Grande

Paula Lowe

Cambria

Rhoda Albanese
Dorothy Fontanella
Jan Meshkoff
Cynthia Nakane
Valerie Tacker

Cayucos

Kelly Borchard
Bonnie Mallor

Grover Beach

Ann Webb

LosOsos

Marcianne Fast

Rosemary Flamion

Ruth Sansaricq
Charles Sitton Jr

MorroBay

Ted Beacom
Philip Fritch
G W Johnson
Gary Owens

Morong Valley

Linda Bailey

Nipomo

James Dunham
Lyndon Mueller

Oceano

Diane Dolden

San Luis Obispo

Vivian Arnold
George Baldwin
George Carpenter
Corene Darney
Robert Hutchinson
Marc Linsky
Miriam Mantsch
Carole Maurer
Bradford Parkinson
Nancy Lee Ruda
Mary Showers



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Morro Coast Audubon Board Minutes December 1, 2003 @ MEGA Office

Board members present: Dick Boyd, Chris Crescioli, Jim Havlena, David Lawrence, Dick Parker, John Perkins, Ted Pope, David Roark, Mike Stiles, Linda Tanner, Elaine Townsend, Norma Wightman; Chpt. Adm. Stephnie Wald

Meeting called to order by President Roark. Minutes of the November meeting were approved. **President's Report:** The president complimented board members who put together the explanation of the gift possibilities in the last *Flyway* and also expressed appreciation of the excellent Christmas Bird Count maps.

Special Item: Laura Brewer has resigned from the board.

Committee Reports:

Lands—Jim announced that there was a change in investment firms and the Sweet Springs account was moving from American Express to Edward Jones in Los Osos. **Fund development**—Stephnie went to a planned giving seminar and will incorporate ideas into the work of the fund development committee.

Old Business

Condor Recovery—A proposal to underwrite the cost of mounting the Condor Recovery exhibit at the Museum of Natural History up to \$300 was approved. The exhibit will be on display from January 10 through February 2004. **Audubon**

Priorities—The president explained that the request for input on priorities for National Audubon was for a sanction and ranking on already established priorities. The local issues discussed will be used at the retreat to be held in February to establish chapter priorities. **Shade-grown Coffee**—Ted Pope developed a beautiful large banner on shade grown coffee that can be used at events. **Bird Count**—Elaine reported that more folks are needed for the bird count. Assignments will be mailed next week.

continued next page

continued from previous page

New Business

Nominating Committee—The slate of officers needs to be established by the March Board meeting.. Board members who volunteered to be involved were Dick Parker and Jim Havlena. Several other potential nominating committee members were suggested. Please give Dick and Jim suggestions for officers and board members. **Backyard Bird Count**—Ted Pope will cover publicity on this as Wild Birds Unlimited is a corporate sponsor. Check the website for more information on this Feb. 13-16, 2004 event.

Morro Coast Audubon Board Minutes
January 5,2004 @ MEGA Office

Board members present: Dick Boyd, Chris Crescioli, Jim Havlena, David Lawrence, Dick Parker, John Perkins, Ted Pope, David Roark, Mike Stiles, Linda Tanner, Elaine Townsend, Norma Wightman; Chpt.Adm. Stephnie Wald

Meeting called to order by President Roark.

Minutes of the December meeting were approved.

President's Report: Happy New Year

Treasurer's Report (Presented in handout)

Jim noted the December raffle netted \$146 and that there were items to sell in the future.

Committee Reports:

Conservation—Marla announced that the MEGA office space is paid through March 2005. The new office name is Partners for Conservation of Coastal Dunes. s. The Plover program will continue to use the office space. The Marine Interest Group (MIG) has had encouragement from the Packard Foundation to move ahead with a formal grant proposal to do studies on fish species utilizing recent Cal Poly research and historic data from Fish and Game to compare changes. This might also be done with pelagic bird species. Marla asked for help in judging the Share the Beach with Plovers contest entries (essay or artwork) for children sometime in March. Chris, Mike, Dick Parker and Mary volunteered to help. **Hospitality**—Linda announced that additional art work and books of value were still available for fund raising. It was decided to charge the Fund Development Committee with recommending the best way to sell these donated items of significant value.Linda showed the 3-fold display board she designed to highlight the Audubon Overlook, Sweet Springs and Hi Mt. Lookout. **Fund development**—Dick Parker explained that the committee is narrowing down priority strategies for fund raising and will bring these to a future meeting. A future need may be a brochure that lists the various MCAS funded projects that need donations.

Membership—Mary announced that "we miss you" letters were sent to about 130 people in early December along with an issue of the *Flyway*.

Old Business

Nominating Committee—Dick Parker, Jim and Marla are the nominating committee. The positions open include pres-elect, recording secretary, program, field trip, conservation, publicity, hospitality and education chairs and directors-at-large. Please give the committee suggestions for officers and board members. **Nominations are needed by the March Board Meeting. Backyard Bird Count**—Ted will cover publicity on this as Wild Birds Unlimited is a corporate sponsor. Check the website for more information on this Feb. 13-16, 2004 event.

Retreat—This event was discussed at length. It was decided to postpone the retreat until the new Board has been installed in order to coalesce the new group. The new date is Saturday, May 1, 2004 and will combine the May Board meeting with the retreat. New and old board members to attend. Dick Parker will check on a meeting site.

abstracted by the *Flyway* from the minutes of

Norma Wightman

Recording Secretary

"Share the Shore" Creative Contest for Children to Help The Western Snowy Plover Recovery Program

The Morro Coast Audubon Society is holding a creative contest for children to promote the Western Snowy Plover recovery program through a **Share the Shore** message.

Six \$200 cash prizes will be awarded. Winners will be selected in each of two grade-level categories K-6th and 7th -12th in the three categories of: written essay, strategies or artistic signage. Each essay or art submittal should answer the question, "*Why is it important to share the shore with the western snowy plover?*" Each strategy should describe an activity that would help achieve the **Share the Shore** goal. Teachers who forward student entries for consideration will be eligible for a \$50 gift certificate for school supplies.

Entries must be postmarked by February 25, 2004.

The selection of winning entries will be finalized at the MCAS April 1 board meeting. Winners may have their work featured in Morro Coast Audubon materials, webpages and outreach efforts.

A committee of the Morro Coast Audubon Society consists of Dick Parker, Chris Crescioli, Mike Stiles and Mary Adams. And additional judges are welcome. If interested, contact Marla Morrissey at 528-4955.

The contest is timed to coincide with the western snowy plover breeding season, which begins in March.

The Morro Coast Audubon Society is dedicated to protecting birds, wildlife and our shared environment.

Information and entry forms may be downloaded from www.westernsnowyplover.org or call 528-5708.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP PROTECT OUR LOCAL SNOWY PLOVERS

Interested in combining birding with conservation? Want to help the Western Snowy Plover while you enjoy the Sand Spit? Learn what you can do. **There will be a presentation on the Snowy Plover Volunteer Watch Program at the April 19 general meeting of Morro Coast Audubon Society.**

If you would like to volunteer, there are several training sessions planned. The first one will be **Saturday, February 21, 9-11am, at 1218 2nd Street in Los Osos.** . A lunch will be provided and followed by a field training tour 1-3pm with Marla Morrissey of MCAS and Vince Cicero of State Parks. Please call voice mail 528-5708 and leave your name and phone number Other training dates will be announced later.

Volunteers can take recreational use surveys, keep fencing and signs up, and/or answer questions about the conservation efforts of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. You will be able to bird watch or just relax while working to conserve the plover, of which only about 1500 exist today in California, Oregon, and Washington. There are also opportunities for volunteers to take slide shows to local schools, for installing the Western Snowy Plover Photo Essay at new locations, and ... well, you tell us YOUR ideas.

2003 Morro Bay Christmas Bird Count Totals

Red-throated Loon	12	American Coot	493	Steller's Jay	61
Pacific Loon	25	Black-bellied Plover	70	Western Scrub Jay	419
Common Loon	32	Snowy Plover	6	Yellow-billed Magpie	7
loon, species	10	Semipalmated Plover	60	Common Raven	1
Pied-billed Grebe	30	Killdeer	206	American Crow	1569
Horned Grebe	79	Black Oystercatcher	30	Horned Lark	87
Eared Grebe	78	American Avocet	391	Tree Swallow	7
Western Grebe	47	Gr. Yellowlegs	21	Violet-green Swallow	13
Clark's Grebe	3	Willet	2382	Barn Swallow	2
Western/Clark's Grebe	20	American Avocet	391	Chestnut-bkd Chickadee	271
Northern Fulmar	1	Spotted Sandpiper	9	Oak Titmouse	41
Black-vented Shearwater	1	Whimbrel	20	Bushtit	845
American White Pelican	43	Long-billed Curlew	432	White-breasted Nuthatch	11
Brown Pelican	212	Marbled Godwit	1800	Pygmy Nuthatch	2
Brandt's Cormorant	391	Black Turnstone	71	Brown Creeper	3
Double-crested Cormorant	517	Surfbird	1	Rock Wren	15
Pelagic Cormorant	334	Red Knot	1	Canyon Wren	1
cormorant sp.	20	Sanderling	195	Bewick's Wren	134
Great Blue Heron	90	Western Sandpiper	695	House Wren	19
Great Egret	64	Least Sandpiper	1021	Winter Wren	1
Snowy Egret	39	Dunlin	250	Marsh Wren	9
Green Heron	1	Peep sp.	370	Golden -crowned Kinglet	2
Black-crowned Night Heron	41	Short-billed Dowitcher	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	562
Turkey Vulture	492	Long-billed Dowitcher	10	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	29
Gr. White-fronted Goose	1	dowitcher species	384	Western Bluebird	86
Ross's Goose	2	Wilson's Snipe	22	Hermit Thrush	177
Ross's x Snow Goose	2	Parasitic Jaeger	1	American Robin	328
Canada Goose (large)	50	Heermann's Gull	76	Wrentit	226
Brant	2840	Mew Gull	11	Northern Mockingbird	152
Wood Duck	1	Ring-billed Gull	444	California Thrasher	105
Gadwall	15	California Gull	137	European Starling	2647
Eurasian Wigeon	6	Herring Gull	2	American Pipit	201
American Wigeon	873	Western Gull	603	Cedar Waxwing	420
Mallard	406	Glaucous-winged Gull	6	Orange-crowned Warbler	35
Blue-winged Teal	27	Glaucous Gull	CW	Nashville Warbler	1
Cinnamon Teal	32	gull sp.	22	Yellow-rmp(Myt)Warbler	46
Northern Shoveler	629	Caspian Tern	29	Yellow-rmp(Aud)Warbler	1203
Northern Pintail	820	Royal Tern	33	Yellow-rumpWarb(form?)	414
Green-winged Teal	534	Forster's Tern	81	Townsend's Warbler	91
Canvasback	1	Rock Dove	349	Hermit Warbler	1
Ring-necked Duck	40	Band-tailed Pigeon	9	Common Yellowthroat	85
Lesser Scaup	411	Eurasian Collared-Dove	98	Wilson's Warbler	2
Surf Scoter	1781	Mourning Dove	670	Summer Tanager	1
White-winged Scoter	1	Barn Owl	7	Western Tanager	2
scoter sp.	2020	Western Screech Owl	16	Spotted Towhee	207
Bufflehead	625	Great Horned Owl	23	California Towhee	297
Common Goldeneye	2	Northern Pygmy Owl	1	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	24
Hooded Merganser	6	Burrowing Owl	2	Lark Sparrow	19
Red-breasted Merganser	26	Spotted Owl	5	Sage Sparrow	10
Ruddy Duck	484	Long-eared Owl	2	Savannah Sparrow	160
Osprey	1	Short-eared Owl	2	Savannah "large-billed"	2
White-tailed Kite	49	Northern Saw-whet Owl	CW	Nelsons Shrp-tld Sparrow	1
Northern Harrier	16	White-throated Swift	31	Fox Sparrow	123
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	Anna's Hummingbird	334	Song Sparrow	238
Cooper's Hawk	11	<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	20
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	6	Belted Kingfisher	25	Swamp Sparrow	CW

Red-shouldered Hawk	67	Acorn Woodpecker	56	White-throated Sparrow	2
Red-tailed Hawk	114	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	White-crowned Sparrow	2359
Ferruginous Hawk	3	Red-naped Sapsucker	1	Golden-crowned Sparrow	824
hawk sp.	1	Red-breasted Sapsucker	15	Dark-eyed(Oregon)Junco	345
Golden Eagle	6	Nuttall's Woodpecker	44	Red-winged Blackbird	1829
American Kestrel	126	Downy Woodpecker	33	Tricolored Blackbird	5
Merlin	4	Hairy Woodpecker	17	Western Meadowlark	661
Peregrine Falcon	7	Northern (R-S) Flicker	187	Brewer's Blackbird	2683
Prairie Falcon	3	Northern (Y-S) Flicker	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	554
Wild Turkey	129	Willow Flycatcher	1	Purple Finch	116
California Quail	623	Black Phoebe	226	House finch	1502
Black Rail	1	Say's Phoebe	119	Pine Siskin	5
Virginia Rail	9	Cassin's Kingbird	5	Lesser Goldfinch	344
Sora	7	Loggerhead Shrike	25	American Goldfinch	458
		Hutton's Vireo	40	House Sparrow	328

TOTAL SPECIES: 194 TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 51,598 Count Date Dec. 20, 2003

Thanks to the 80+ volunteers that contributed to the success of the 2002 Morro Bay Christmas Bird Count. A special thanks to Bert and Elaine Townsend who coordinated the count, and the sector leaders Alan Schmierer, Mike Stiles, Jim Royer, and Bill Bouton for organizing the participants. There were approximately 40 parties covering the count circle again this year. Together the parties spent 54.25 hours driving 315.8 miles, 201 hours walking 136.75 miles, 6.75 hours paddling 5.25 miles (canoe & kayak), and 12.75 hours and 21.8 miles owling (foot & car). The total of 51,598 individuals was 3,909 greater than the past 22 year average and the total species seen was four shy of the 22 year average of 199. Willow Flycatcher was new for the count and brings the cumulative (1948-2003) count total to 308 species.

MILDRED COMAR MEMORY BENCH

The Comar family is happy to inform the SLOCo birding community of the placement of a "memory bench" in honor of Mildred Comar on the Southeast edge of Atascadero Lake. This area will soon become a grassy picnic area off Lake View Drive.

The bench was made possible by the kind and thoughtful contributions in Mildred's name to the SLOCo Breeding Bird Atlas project. The family wishes to thank all of Mildred's friends and fellow birders for their generosity. They hope that many of you will find time to visit Atascadero Lake and sit for a moment on the bench, enjoying the view and the many birds that congregate along the shore and in the reeds nearby.





DONATIONS



The Morro Coast Audubon Society would like to thank the following for donations received recently:

MCAS GENERAL FUND:
Carolyn & Jack Robison
Mr & Mrs Harry Tow
Costa Rica Connection Travel
Duke McPherson
Dave Lawrence

MCAS MEMORIAL FUND:
In memory of Gene Graves
from Don & Jo Parham
Reg & Kay Falk

HI MOUNTAIN CONDOR PROJECT:
Bill Davies

SNOWY PLOVER FUND:
Allen & Susan Minker

If you would like to contribute to one of our funds (such as Education or Hi Mountain Condor Lookout), please send your check, payable to: Morro Coast Audubon Society, PO Box 160, Morro Bay, CA 93443-0160. Contributions are tax deductible under IRS Code 501(c)(3). Thank you!

EUREKA!

THE BIRDS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY – November -December 2003 *by Tom Edell*

- American Bittern – 22 Nov, one seen at Oso Flaco Lake was the only report (DL).
Turkey Vulture – 3 Nov, a wing-tagged bird (B5) from a 1995/1996 study was in Los Osos (JLR).
Greater White-fronted Goose – 20 Nov-31 Dec, an adult was associating with Canada Geese at Laguna Lake (TME).
Snow Goose – one was grazing in a field near the intersection of Huasna Rd and School Rd., east of Arroyo Grande. (JMC).
Snow Goose – 1-5 Dec, one was at the mouth of Pismo Creek (AFS); 11 Dec, 25 flew over Cal Poly (MDS).
Ross's Goose – Eleven were reported during the period: 1 Nov-31 Dec, two adults at Laguna Lake (mob); 1 Nov-31 Dec, the resident adult at Oceano County Park was joined by two immature birds on 29 Nov (TME); 27 Nov, an adult and immature were at Whale Rock Reservoir with the immature remaining thru 3 Dec (TME); 28 Nov, an adult flew over the mouth of San Geronimo Creek (TME); 1-5 Dec, two were at the mouth of Pismo Creek (AFS); 3-4 Dec, an immature was at the mouth of San Simeon Creek (KJZ); and 27 Dec, two immature and one adult were on the ponds along Buckley Road (DT).
Ross's x Snow Goose hybrids – 18 Nov-19+ Dec, two apparent hybrid immature birds were found at Laguna Lake (DT).
These birds had the head and bill shape of a Snow Goose but were the size of a Ross's.
Canada Goose – 10 Nov-3 Dec, two small subspecies juveniles were on Whale Rock Reservoir (MA).
Brant – 11 Nov, arrival date, a flock of 64 on Morro Bay (JLR); 13 Dec, one was in a cove just north of Cayucos and San Geronimo Creek (TME).
Tundra Swan – 28 Nov, an adult was on Whale Rock R. (DL); 28 Nov, a swan on Laguna Lake may have been this sp. (CC).
Wood Duck – numbers increased all period on the Atascadero Wastewater Ponds with a low of six recorded on 11 Nov (AFS) and a high of 81 on 24 Dec (KJZ); 1-9 Nov, up to four males and four females on Whale Rock Reservoir (TME).
Eurasian Wigeon – 1 Nov-31 Dec, high count of six males and a female on the Morro Bay Estuary on 17 Dec (AFS).
Blue-winged Teal – 1 Nov-31 Dec, high count on Morro Bay was 17 off 3rd Street in Los Osos on 28 Nov (MDS); 11-21 Nov, a male and female on the Atascadero Wastewater Ponds (AFS); 19 Dec, a male at the SLO Wastewater Plt (CAM).
Redhead – 1-27 Nov, three males and two females were on Whale Rock Reservoir (TME).
Harlequin Duck – 11 Nov-13 Dec, a male was just north of Cayucos off the mouth of San Geronimo Creek (DK); 2 Dec, a "pair" was seen 0.4 miles north of the Piedras Blancas Motel (AFS).
Hooded Merganser – 1-30 Nov, two males and two females were on Whale Rock Reservoir (TME); 10 Nov, 14 (4 adult males) were on a small pond off Buckley Road near the SLO Airport (TME); and 4 Dec, very rare on saltwater, a female was seen off the Morro Bay SP marina point (FH).
Common Merganser – 22 Nov, last date for the female found at Oceano County Park on Oct 5 (DL).
Osprey – after the strong fall showing its not surprising above average numbers continue to be seen: 9-17 Nov, one was seen on the beach at the end of San Jacinto in Morro Bay (LM); 13 Nov, two were at Lopez Lake (AFS); 29 Nov, one was at Port San Luis (TME); 3-13 Dec, one was seen on Morro Bay (SCS); 6 Dec, one was at S. Margarita Lake (RHZ).
Bald Eagle -- 3 Nov, two along Pozo Road between the Hwy. 58 turnoff and Santa Margarita Lake (BKS); 6 Dec, a second year bird was at Santa Margarita Lake (RHZ); 15 Dec, adult and juvenile were at Lopez Lake (KB).
Rough-legged Hawk – 26 Dec, one was reportedly seen near Point Piedras Blancas by BKS (per MDS).
Chukar – this introduced bird is hard to find in eastern SLO County - 8 were in S. Elkhorn Scarp area, 3-7 Nov (AFS).

Mountain Plover – 3-7 Nov, 18 on Simmler Rd, 4.5 miles from Soda Lake Rd (AFS); 8 Nov, last date for the six in the field SW of the Oso Flaco Road and Hwy 1 intersection (DS).

Black-necked Stilt – 29 Nov-5 Dec, one was at the mouth of Pismo Creek (TME).

Lesser Yellowlegs – 3 Dec, one on the Morro Bay Estuary by the Morro Bay SP marina spit (KJZ).

Glaucous Gull – 19-22 Dec, a first winter bird was in the Morro Rock parking lot (TME,CAM).

Elegant Tern – This species normally departs by mid-November. The presence of an estimated 3000 in the kelp beds off Cayucos Point on 1 Nov (TME), 200 on the Morro Bay Estuary on 16 Nov (TME), four at the mouth of Old Creek on 3 Dec (KJZ), and two at the mouth of Old Creek on 28 Dec (MM) was very unusual.

Marbled Murrelet – 3 Dec, two were seen in offshore kelp 0.5 miles past the bridge over Pico Creek (AFS).

White-winged Dove – 16-27+ Dec, one was at a feeder at 846 North Second Street in Grover Beach (CT).

Ruddy Ground Dove – 26 Dec, two were seen in a field across the street from 166 Dana Foothill Road in Nipomo (PW).

Long-eared Owl – 3-7 Nov, four were at a roost in Carrizo Plain area (AFS).

Short-eared Owl – 3 Dec, one seen flying over the Elfin Forest 5 minutes before sunset (MDS).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 22 Dec, a juv. male in a walnut tree along Adobe Road just off San Luisito Crk Rd (TME,CAM).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 20-22 Dec, the juvenile female was in the pepper tree in front of the Cal Poly library (MB).

Northern Flicker – 1 Nov, a “yellow-shafted” bird was at Whale Rock Reservoir (TME).

Willow Flycatcher – 20-21 Dec, one on Morro Creek upstream of Hwy 1 (KAH,CAM,TME) provided one of the few winter records for California..

Cassin’s Kingbird – 8 Nov, one was along Arroyo Grande Creek in “Old Town” Arroyo Grande with a high of eleven there on 29 Nov (BKS); 18 Nov, one flew past Deer Canyon, AG, this morning (BKS); 22 Nov-14 Dec, one on the Varian Ranch in southern Edna Valley (DL).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – 20-28 Dec, a young male was south of Point Piedras Blancas at the elephant seal viewing parking area (SG).

Red-eyed Vireo – 15 Nov, one along Arroyo Grande Creek in “Old Town” Arroyo Grande was extremely late and may have been the bird found there in late October (BKS).

Barn Swallow – 12 Dec, one was with a flock of swallows at Laguna Lake (AFS).

Common Raven – 22 Nov, rare west of the Santa Lucias, two were seen along Hwy 101 south of Nipomo (JMC).

Pygmy Nuthatch – 10-20+ Dec, up to two were seen in Morro Bay SP (GPS).

Golden-crowned Kinglet – 5 Dec, one at Oceano SP campground (KJZ); 12 Dec, 2-3 were in the Morro Bay SP campground (AFS); 30 Dec, nine were in the Spooners Cove Campground (AFS).

Brown Thrasher -- 14 Nov, one was reportedly seen in the Las Pilitas area (RB).

Tennessee Warbler – 1 Dec, one was at the Oceano SP campground (JA).

Nashville Warbler – 28 Nov, one was in a yard in Cayucos (CWE).

Magnolia Warbler – 2 Nov, one was seen at the Dana Adobe in Nipomo (CA).

Black-throated Gray Warbler – 29 Nov, a male was in a yard in Los Osos (RF).

Blackpoll Warbler – 2 Nov, one was seen eating emerging termites at Morro Bay SP (BKS).

Palm Warbler – 21 Dec, one along shoreline just S. of Point Piedras Blancas at the elephant seal viewing area (BAB).

Pine Warbler – 12-14 Dec, an adult male was found on the Morro Bay Golf Course (TME,AFS).

Wilson’s Warbler – 5 Dec, one at Pismo State Beach Oceano campground (KJZ).

Prothonotary Warbler – 23 Nov-2 Dec, male was on the beach at the mouth of San Geronimo Creek (MN,JD).

Summer Tanager – 3-31 Dec, a female was in the row of eucalyptus between the Morro Bay SP marina and State Park Drive (KJZ); 9 Dec, an adult male was in the yard in Cayucos (CWE).

Western Tanager – 3-12 Dec, one in the row of eucalyptus between the Morro Bay SP marina and State Pk Dr (KJZ).

Black-headed Grosbeak – 9 Dec, an adult male was in a backyard in Cayucos (CWE).

Dickcissel – 20 Nov-31+ Dec, one was found at a feeder in Shell Beach (SM).

Clay-colored Sparrow – 8 Nov, one was with a flock of 5 Chipping Sparrows at Heilman Park in Atascadero (MSM).

Brewer’s Sparrow – 27 Dec, one was on the Saucito Ranch during the Carrizo Plain CBC (BAB).

Savannah Sparrow – 22 Nov-31 Dec, up to five “large-billed” subspecies were on the Morro Bay SP Marina spit (TME).

Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow – 1 Nov-31 Dec, up to two were seen on the MBSP Marina spit at high tide (TME).

Fox Sparrow – 6-20 Dec, an eastern “red” subsp was in the back loop of Spooners Cove Campgrnd, Mont de Oro SP (KJZ).

White-throated Sparrow – the six reported during the period were: single adults at a feeder in Atascadero on 9 Nov and 23 Dec that were believed to be different birds (RHZ); one at a home in Los Osos on 12 Nov (WT); an adult was at a feeder in Los Osos on 18-23 Nov (AFS); one at the end of the lake front road at Laguna Lake on 12-17 Dec (AFS); and one was at a feeder on the Varian Ranch on 14 Dec (DL).

Bullock’s Oriole – 5 Dec, male at Oceano SP campground was late and may be wintering in that area (KJZ).

Escapes and introduced Birds Reported

Mandarin Duck – 13 Nov, a male was at the Atascadero Sewage Ponds (KAK).

Helmeted Guinea Fowl – 14 Nov, 6 young were with a flock at the Mid-State Bank on Broad Street in SLO (RF).

Peach-faced Lovebirds – 13 Nov, 2-4 were regularly seen at a residence in Nipomo with a high of 17 in Sept (DM).

OBSERVERS: Mary Adams, Jerry Ambrose, Corrine Ardoin, Ray Boche, Bill A. Bouton, Kristin Brewster, Mark Brown, Jamie M. Chavez, Chuck Clarke, Karen Clarke, Neil Clipperton, Claudia Collier, Dave Compton, Travis T. Cooper, Joe Donaldson, Chris W. Edell, Tom M. Edell, Rosemary Flamion, Shirley Green, Freeman Hall, Marlin D. Harms, Karen A. Havlena, Dave Keeling, Dave Lawrence, Lynda Merrill, Steve Miller, Margaret Nash, Kevin A. Knight, Donna MacCarley, Michael McQuerry, John Perkins, Jim S. Royer, Mike San Miguel, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Steve C. Schubert, David Schurr, Greg P. Smith, Mike D. Stiles, Don Tate, Wendy Thackery, Carol Thorpe, Pat Wells, Roger H. Zachary, and Kevin J. Zimmer. For information about birds or locations mentioned in this report, contact Tom Edell at (805) 995-1691 or tedell@aol.com....*Tom Edell*

Morro Coast Audubon Society Membership Application

Yes, I would like to join the Morro Coast Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, and receive the Flyway and Audubon Magazine. Enclosed is a check payable to the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY in the amount of:

\$15 Students/Seniors \$20 Introductory \$35 Basic(renewal) Other \$ _____

NAME _____ NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ (E-MAIL _____)

Mail check and coupon to: MORRO COAST AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. Box 160, Morro Bay CA 93443-0160. To check the status of your subscription or request membership changes call 1-800-274-4201.

Morro Coast Audubon Society
P.O. Box 160
Morro Bay CA 93443-0160
Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
San Luis Obispo CA
Permit No. 26
