



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"

WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL- A SUCCESS STORY - Barbara Burke

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is one of the major activities of our Morro Coast Audubon Chapter and I am pleased to say that it was once again a great success. We offered over 80 scheduled activities including two informative and entertaining evening presentations that filled the Veterans Center. Four hundred people were registered which is very similar to last year's numbers. We have fun recognizing familiar faces since more than half have attended before and some for the fourth and fifth year. We must be doing something right for all these people to come again. I'll share some of the compliments we received from our evaluations. An out of town attendee gave the Festival high marks. "Excellent field trip and workshop leaders, high quality topics, well organized event, helpful/friendly volunteers and I especially liked the low-key, small town feeling." Others said, "I recommended the Festival to nine friends and they all came and will come again." And, "we're going to sign up early to get choices we missed this year—this is an event to repeat many times.

Linda Tanner and Randy Ball, the Co-Chairs of the Vender Faire, made the Community Center come alive with their flare for decorating and arranging booths. Mark your calendars for next year and be sure to visit the Vendor Faire which offers birds and animals artfully crafted out of wood, metal and stone; binoculars and scopes, bird houses and feeders; a wealth of bird books for children and adults; T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats; plants to attract birds and butterflies and a wonderful display of art work from the artists of the Morro Bay Art Association. There were also great displays from our environmental groups. Remember, you don't have to participate in the Festival events to visit the Vendor Faire. We can never say "Thank You" enough times to the 60 Audubon and Museum workshop and field trip leaders. Without you there would be no Festival. Then we have all the behind the scenes folks who help at the registration table greeting guests and answering questions, and those who serve coffee and goodies at 6:00am in the hospitality room, others introduce workshop leaders, scoop ice cream, and make sure all the birders get on the right van trips.

There are special project people who need recognition. Merrily Beck takes care of all our dietary needs by purchasing all the food and supplies needed for the hospitality room and the evening program refreshments and is at the Community Center at 5:30 or 6:00am each day to get the coffee started. Gloria Rasmussen is on the Board of Directors as Treasurer but she never stops at that task. Days before the Festival, she bakes and freezes muffins for hospitality and this year she purchased the goodies for the opening reception at the Museum and if that is not enough Gloria sets up a scope and welcomes birders at the MCAS Overlook each afternoon of the Festival.

Bill Moore deserves special kudos. Bill is our sight and sound man who sets up all the audio/visual equipment for the workshops and evening programs. We often have three workshops taking place at 3 different locations and somehow he always gets the job done. This year he had to make sure we were ready for the new world of digital presentations. There are far too many people to recognize separately, but one more can't be left out. Rosalie Valvo took over the job as Registrar in mid-December when Gerry Fuller, our former "Flyway" Editor underwent a very serious operation. I'm relieved to say Gerry is doing great and making a rapid recovery. We were all so relieved when Rosalie stepped in during the busiest registration period and took over and held down the fort through December and all during the Festival.

The Board and Committees have already met and next year's planning is under way. If you would like to be a part of the exciting event, call Barbara Burke at 528-8662. The Festival Website is www.morro-bay.net/birds

MCAS OFFICERS

President	Michael T. Hanson	541-0272	
	mthanson@calpoly.edu		
President-Elect	David Roark	595-2462	
	rockhopper_penguin@yahoo.com		
Past Presidents	Barbara Burke	528-8662	
	barburke@fix.net		
	Joanna Frawley	528-6527	
	jfrawley@slonet.org		
Rec. Secretary	Norma Wightman	772-7859	
	kia38@charter.net		
Treasurer	Jim Havlena	hm 528-7965	
	havlenas@fix.net	wk 528-6484	
Chapter	Stephnie Wald	489-9840	
Administrator	swaldcoho@hotmail.com		

CHAIRPERSONS

Programs	Elaine Townsend	543-1373	
	etownsen@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	open		
Education	Wendi Craig	543-3868	
	wlcraig1@juno.com		
	Carolina Van Stone	528-4271	
	carolina792@earthlink.net		
Lands	John Perkins	528-0540	
	TeleEar@aol.com		
Publicity	Ted Pope	hm 545-9705	
	TNBPope@charter.net	wk 547-0242	
	Fax	547-0142	
Communications	Dick Boyd	772-3993	
	boyd@poly2.utah.edu	801 278-5642	
	Chris Crescioli	772-0753	
	happycritters@gliderpilots.org		

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Mary S. Adams	mary@rb3.swrcb.ca.gov	995-3741
Dick Parker	rsparkkp47@aol.com	528-8272
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

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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: March 17.. Mike Prather:
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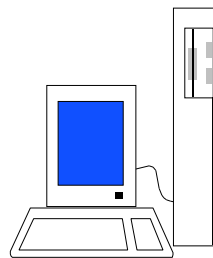
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OUR WEBSITE

www.gliderpilots.org/audubon



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

Coming events



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.

March

Mar. 2, Sun. at 1pm,

Mar. 15, Sat.. at 11:30

Mar. 29, Sat. at 11:30

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*

MCAS BOARD MEETING

March 3, 2003

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

March 17, 2003, 7:30 pm

The Congregational Church
11245 Los Osos Valley Road
San Luis Obispo

Huge Restorations at Owens Lake and the Lower Owens River – it's for the birds, or is it?

Mike Prather

President of Owens Valley Committee

Mike will present for us the history and success of the effort to re-water 62 miles of the Lower Owens River, creating a tremendous riparian restoration resource. He will also show the results of large-scale dust mitigation through shallow flooding of 15 square miles at Owens Lake. This has benefited thousands of migrating shorebirds and also Snowy Plovers. Mike has lived in Lone Pine for 22 years and is a past president of the Eastern Sierra Audubon. You can be sure he will have us considering birding field trips to experience the results of their work.

Be sure to join us this month for this wonderful program, and also to greet old and new friends after the meeting. Bring a friend!

Elaine Townsend, Program chair

For more information, please call Elaine, 543-1373.

SECOND SATURDAY AT SWEET SPRINGS



Saturday

March 6 2003,

9:00 am – 12:00 Noon

Please note the new and extended time. We have applied for a matching grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. If approved the grant will fund the removal of most of the exotic plants that are in Sweet Springs such as veldt grass, nasturtium and Vinca Major. We will replace them with native vegetation. The heavy work will be performed by the California conservation Corps and our volunteers will do the light work. The hours put in by our volunteers will count as “matching funds” needed to fulfill the conditions of the grant. So everyone come on out and give us a hand in light maintenance at the preserve. I don't know what John Nowak has in store for us but it will not be anything too difficult. Meet at the main entrance to the preserve at 9:00 AM on Ramona Ave in Los Osos. Call John Perkins at 528 0540 for more information. Rain cancels.

COMING MCAS FIELD TRIP

Bob Jones Bike Path

Saturday March 8, 2003

9:00-?

Leader: Dave Roark

Meet your leader at the start of the Bob Jones Bike Path. From Highway 101, take either the San Luis Bay Drive exit or the Avila Beach exit, and turn onto Ontario Rd which is the frontage road just west of the highway. The Bob Jones Bike Path parking area is well signed.

You will walk and bird the bike path which will take you through riparian and oak woodland habitat, end at Avila Beach and take the trolley back to the parking area. The walk is moderately long but is along a paved walkway. Bring personal items needed for a long walk and some change in case you need it for the trolley. More information: call Dave Roark 595-2462.



MCAS

Costa Rica Birding Trips

Our 12 day Itinerary visits select areas of the 12 distinct ecological zones, which are home to 850 recorded bird species, 237 mammals, 600 butterflies, and 1,200 orchids. We include visits to: Poas Volcano, O.T.S - La Selva Research Station, Braulio Carillo National Park, Rancho Naturalista, Cerro de la Muerte, Tapanti National Park, Carara National Park, Villa Lapas Skyway, and the Guanacaste Region.

Some of the birds you should see include: Broad-winged hawk, gray headed chachalaca, white-crowned parrot, squirrel cuckoo, mottled owl, many species of hummingbirds, such as snowcap and violet crowned woodnymph, keel-billed toucans, resplendent quetzal, volcano junco, long-tailed silky flycatcher, flame throated warbler, torrent tyrannulet and scarlet macaws.

Trip extensions are also available to Tiskita Jungle Lodge in the Southern Pacific Rainforest, with more than 285 recorded species of birds.

Dates & Costs:

November 19-30, 2003 / \$2,625.00 per person /

Tiskita Jungle Lodge Extension: \$495.00 pp

March 10-21, 2004 / \$2,695.00 per person / Tiskita

Jungle Lodge Extension: \$535.00 pp

Price includes a \$100.00 per person donation to the Morro Coast Audubon Society

For More Information/Itinerary/Registration

Forms Contact:

Costa Rica Connection – (805) 543-8292 / (800) 345-7422

or at Wild Birds Unlimited.

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY MORRO BAY

Birding Walks for Beginners

Docents from the Natural History Museum are leading several bird walks during March that are open to the public and especially suited for beginning and intermediate birders. Join **Freeman Hall** on Tuesday, March 4 at 10 a.m. to observe ducks on the back bay; meet at the intersection of Turri Road and South Bay Blvd.; Freeman will also lead a walk in Montana de Oro along Islay Creek on Wednesday, March 19, at 10 a.m. Meet at the Ranch House.

Joyce Cory leads easy bird walks along the bluffs at Montana de Oro on Saturday, March 22, and Saturday, March 29. Meet at the trail head next to Spooner's Cove at 10 a.m.

Liz Caldwell leads a walk to the heron rookery to watch courtship rituals and other rites of spring on Saturday, March 8, at 10:30 a.m. Meet at the Museum of Natural History in Morro Bay. For more information visit the museum website at www.MorroBayMuseum.org <<http://www.MorroBayMuseum.org>> .



To our newest members

Arroyo Grande

Jay Chalfant
Mr & Mrs Tom Plymale

Cambria

Silas Brewer
L Reynolds

Harmony

Pamela June

Los Angeles

Libbie & Guy Fitzwater

Los Osos

Art Apruzzese
Elinore Cottrell
Marion Irving de Cruz
Emma Mutinda
Nancy Johns
Karen O'Grady
David Schurr
James Strong
Dana Tryde
Arlene Vogele
Kristie Wells

Morro Bay

Les Christiansen
Douglas Ford
John Gray

Nipomo

Donald Burnham

Santa Margarita

Nancy Dalman

Shell Beach

Carol Shaddox

San Luis Obispo

Marilyn Allison
Otto & Sue Davidson
Mr & Mrs Gunkel
Vern Pascal
Anne Power
Ann Schwab
Warren

GIFTS of LASTING SUPPORT



Remembering the Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) in your will or living trust is a thoughtful way to help our chapter continue its programs in habitat conservation and children's environmental education.

Amendments to existing wills and to revocable living trusts can easily be accomplished by an attorney. Bequests of specific dollar amounts or a percentage of your estate can be included in your plans.

The opportunity to leave a lasting gift to MCAS is most needed in the General Fund, where a future Board of Directors could decide how best to use your special gift.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

For more information contact Jim Havlena.
528-6484 havlenas@fix.net



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS February 3, 2003

Board members present: Mary Adams, Barbara Burke, Wendi Craig, Chris Crescioli, Phil Dean, Michael Hanson, Jim Havlena, Marla Morrissey, Dick Parker, John Perkins, David Roarke, Mike Stiles, Linda Tanner, Elaine Townsend, Caroline Van Stone, Norma Wightman; Chpt. Adm. Stephanie Wald; Guests: Henry Pontarelli, Rosalie Valvo
Conservation Report—Marla Morrissey submitted her name for participation in the Coastal Commission's workshop on coastal critical areas; Marla has also participated in the work group discussing a possible marine sanctuary off the SLO coast. Marla and John have met with USFWS and are writing the grant for restoration work at Sweet Springs. The Army Corp of Engineers may be changing the definition of wetlands; MCAS needs to be heard on this subject.

Snowy Plover Project—Marla, Suzanne Laccaro, Judy Neuhauser, Karma Sinjou, Rosalie Valvo, and Cameron Clark have started planning this project. Educational plans include a video to be shown on public access television, press releases, volunteers doing recreational surveys, possible school visits, photo essay tour, and other public relations efforts. A volunteer training manual will also be developed. 600 volunteer hours per year are required.

Old Business

USFWS grant proposal for habitat enhancement at Sweet Springs and the Binscarth property was unanimously supported by the Board.

Committee Reports

Lands—The 1st street boat ramp issue has been put to rest. John will apply for a small MBNEP grant to get the crane sign corrected. The need to trim willows at the Audubon Overlook was also discussed.

New Business

Kern River Preserve --A request for funds to support the Kern River Preserve was approved
Calif. Dept. Parks and Recreation to meet Feb. 6 in regard to off road vehicles and the fencing off of sensitive areas in the Oceano Dunes. Stephanie will write a letter to voice MCAS support and send overnight to meet deadline. **Central Coast Council meeting** hosted by MCAS—date set for March 15. Linda Tanner will check on the MB Community Center for a meeting place. A field trip to Sweet Springs and a program on the Snowy Plover are possible program highlights.

Scholarship for Audubon Environmental Education Workshop—with Board approval Wendi will promote a \$1,000 scholarship to attend an Audubon workshop and extend the opportunity to appropriate depts. at Cal Poly & Cuesta. It would be appropriate to use funds from the Bird Festival for the scholarship. **Botanical Garden Development** Dick Parker will attend a presentation on the garden's long range plan to represent MCAS.
Norma Wightman
Recording Secretary

NOMINEES FOR MCAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2003

The election of Board members for those positions with expiring terms will take place at the April 21st 03 General Meeting of MCAS. The new Board members will assume their duties in May. The slate of proposed candidates as it stands now is given below. It will be published again in the April *FLYWAY*.

Several positions are still open and nomination suggestions are welcome.

OFFICERS

President: David Roarke
President Elect: Dick Parker
Treasurer: Jim Havlena

CHAIRPERSONS

Membership: **open**
Education: **open**
Lands: John Perkins
Communication Co-Chairs: Dick Boyd and Chris Crescioli

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

David Lawrence
Noll Roberts
open

This slate of nominees is presented by the MCAS Nominating Committee: Jim Havlena, Elaine Townsend, Rosalie Valvo, Carolina Van Stone, Chairperson *Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the March 17 or April 21 General Meetings, provided that the consent of the nominee has been secured prior to such a nomination.*

Eureka! *Tom Edell*
THE BIRDS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY – January 2003

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival scheduled another successful pelagic trip to the Lucia Bank on 18 Jan. The bank is located about 30 miles SW of Morro Bay. Trip highlights were an immature Black-footed Albatross, 50 Northern Fulmars, 2-3 Pink-footed and 100 Black-vented shearwaters, 15 Red Phalaropes, 2 Pomarine Jaegers, 12 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 50 Common Murres, 2 probable Xantus's Murrelets, 50 Cassin's and 50 Rhinoceros auklets.

Two January raptor counts offer an interesting comparison. A 3 Jan count along Hwy 1 from Cayucos to San Carpoforo Creek recorded 132 raptors of eight species in 33.5 miles for an average of 3.94 raptors per mile. The most abundant species were American Kestrel (59) and Red-tailed Hawk (52). Another count along Hwy 166 in the Cuyama Valley from the Gifford Creek to Hwy 33 on 8 Jan recorded 61 raptors of four species in 34.5 miles for an average of 1.8 birds per mile. Of particular interest was a concentration of 23 Ferruginous Hawks and 13 Red-tailed Hawks in one mile of alfalfa fields just east of New Cuyama.

American Bittern – 20 Jan, two at Oso Flaco Lake were the only ones reported (JC)

Cattle Egret – 24 Jan, six were in the small pond across from the sports complex at Cal Poly (MS)

Greater White-fronted Goose – fourteen reported during the month: 5 Jan, three continued at a pond off Buckley Road (DT); 10 Jan, 7 on the southeast side of foothill Blvd (north of Laguna Lake) (JSR); 18 Jan, four where Soda Lake first bends south after Hwy 58 (DC), and 20 Jan, an adult in the San Simeon Creek lagoon (TE).

Snow Goose – 1-12 Jan, up to two associating with Sandhill Cranes in California Valley (mob) and 11 Jan, one on at pond along Pozo Road about 0.6 mile before Las Pilitas Rd (FV).

Ross's Goose – 10 Jan, 2 immature birds were on the southeast side of foothill Blvd (north of Laguna Lake) (JSR) while the two adults continued through the month with the domestic waterfowl near the southerly end of the lake (MS).

Canada Goose – 2 Jan, "Aleutian" types were at Laguna Lake (TC); 3 Jan, 110 unidentified geese seen flying north over the SLO Airport were likely this species (DT); 5 Jan, a minima race bird continued at a pond along Buckley Road (DT); and 10 Jan, 156, including 4 *minima*, were on the east side of foothill Blvd (north of Laguna Lake) (JSR).

Wood Duck – 21 Jan, six on Atascadero Creek near the high school (RZ)

Eurasian Wigeon – present on the Morro Bay Estuary all month, a high count of eight was seen on 25 Jan (MS, mob); 16 Jan, male in Los Osos Valley in the flooded field NW of Foothill Blvd (BB).

Blue-winged Teal – 1-31 Jan, up to 6 males and 7 females in Baywood Cove (MH) and 20 Jan, a male was on Oso Flaco Lake (JC).

Canvasback – 1 Jan, ~100 at Oso Flaco Lake was about average for this preferred location (DL).

Lesser Scaup – 28 Jan, an estimated 1100 on Baywood Cove was above average for this preferred location (JLR).

Harlequin Duck – 2 Jan, two males were found north of Piedras Blancas near highway mile post 66.0 (AS), with one present 9 Jan through the month end (mob). The male found along the Estero Bluffs property, just north of San Geronimo Creek, in December was present through Jan (DB).

Hooded Merganser – Sightings this month involved: 4 Jan, a male and female at a pond along Buckley Road (DT); 17 Jan, a male and female on Lopez Lake (MS); and 25 Jan, 2 females and one immature male on San Luis Creek at Avila (MH).

Common Goldeneye – 25 Jan, 5 adult male and 12 female/immature birds were on San Luis Creek in Avila (MH).

Common Merganser – females were found on 1 Jan, at Whale Rock Res. (TE) and 20 Jan, in the S Simeon Ck lagoon (TE).

Osprey – 17 Jan, two were present at Lopez Lake (MS).

Bald Eagle – 1 Jan, third year bird on Carrizo Plain (JW,DS); 17 Jan, 4th year bird on Carrizo Plain near the old solar facility (JS); 19 Jan, adult and sub-adult on Bitterwater Road (DC); and 19 and 24 Jan, adult along Hwy 1 near Harmony (DM).

Ferruginous Hawk – 7 Jan, 25 were seen along Hwy 166 with 23 between highway mile posts 73.5/74.5 (TE).

Sandhill Crane – 10 and 19 Jan, up to 300 on the Carrizo Plains (mob).

Mountain Plover – 11 Jan, ten were at mid-Simmler Road (RZ) and 19 Jan, 98 near W. end of Belmont Tr., Carrizo Pl. (DC).

American Avocet – 19 Jan, somewhat regular on the Carrizo Plain in winter, 90 were on Soda Lake (DC).

Lesser Yellowlegs – 17 Jan, one was with Greater Yellowlegs on mudflat near the Morro Bay SP Marina (BB).

Thayer's Gull – 2 Jan, a "few" first winter and an adult were at Pismo Creek mouth (BS).

Black Skimmer – 2 Jan, one was at Pismo Creek Mouth (BS), 4-17 Jan, up to three were on the Morro Bay estuary (JSR,MH).

Marbled Murrelet – 19 Jan, four were off the north end of Morro Bay at Atascadero Point (BB) and 19 Jan, two were off the mouth of Villa Creek (MH).

Ancient Murrelet – 18 Jan, four were seen from the Montana de Oro State Park bluffs near Coon Creek (JSR).

Rhinoceros Auklet – 1 Jan, a beached immature was resting on the Morro Bay Sandspit (TE).

White-winged Dove – 1-29 Jan, the bird wintering in the vicinity of 1466 16th Street in Los Osos continued through the month (DR,JP).

Short-eared Owl – 19 Jan, One was seen near the Montana de Oro State Park sandspit parking lot road (JSR).

Rufous Hummingbird – 31 Jan, early date, a male in Los Osos (KH).

Cassin's Kingbird – 28 Jan, five were along Arroyo Grande Ck in the "Village" (BS).

Barn Swallow – an unprecedented 20 were found throughout the county. The sightings were: 1 Jan, 3 flying north along Morro Bay Sandspit (TE); 2 Jan, two were one-half mile north of Morro Rock (AS); 2 Jan, one just south of Piedras Blancas (AS); 12 Jan, Carrizo Plain along Simmler Road (MS); 12-19 Jan, at least three at Whale Rock Reservoir (DR); 15 Jan, three at Hazard Canyon, Montana de Oro State Park (AS); 5 Jan, two along Montana de Oro SP bluffs (AS); and 19 Jan, three at Morro Bay State Park (GS).

Savannah Sparrow – 1-19 Jan, up to 4 *rostratus* subspecies birds on Morro Bay State Park Marina spit (mob).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow – 1-19 Jan, one was seen on the south side of the Morro Bay State Park marina spit (mob).

White-throated Sparrow – 2 Jan, one at junction of the Chumash and Los Osos Creek trails, Los Osos Oaks Reserve (AS).

Wilson's Warbler – 18 Jan, one was found along Coon Creek (JSR).

White-throated Sparrow – 5 Jan, one was at a feeder in the Daisy Hill Mobile Home Park, Los Osos (M&PG).

Black-headed Grosbeak – 5-6 Jan, a male was at a Bee Canyon feeder in Arroyo Grande (LM).

Lawrence's Goldfinch – 11-31 Jan, up to 12 at a feeder in Los Osos (M&PC).

OBSERVERS: Bill Bouton, Dick Boyd, Jamie Chavez, Karen Clarke, Dave Compton, Travis Cooper, Michael and Peggy Craig, Tom Edell, Marlin Harms, Karen Havlena, Dave Lawrence, Lach MacDonald, Dennis and Kathy McDonnell, John Perkins, Dave Roark, John L. Roser, Alan Schmierer, John Schmitt, Brad Schram, Steve Schubert, Greg Smith, Mike Stiles, Doug Stinson, Don Tate, Francis Villablanca, Jasmine Watts, Roger Zachary, and mob = many observers. 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.

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