



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 43 Issue 10, April 2009

Annual MCAS Membership Meeting this Month Monday, April 20, 6:45pm, El Chorro Park, SLOBG Oak Glen Pavilion

While the majority of MCAS business is conducted during the monthly Board meetings, the by-laws state that MCAS must hold an annual membership meeting each April.

MCAS has chosen to stage this BRIEF meeting prior to the Community Program on Monday, April 20th (for location details see inside article). Though the meeting will be brief, it is an important opportunity for members to vote on the slate of candidates for the MCAS Board of Directors and consider changes to the MCAS by-laws. MCAS strives to inform the membership about the business of the organization through newsletter articles, announcements at community programs and the MCAS Alert! email system.

One other component of the April membership meeting includes a review of the program year. In order to expedite the meeting, I would like to review the program year here, as follows. Certainly, our biggest accomplishment was the addition of 8 acres to our existing Sweet Springs Nature Preserve. The September East Sweet Springs Celebration included champagne toasts, tours of the new property, and participation from representatives of the agencies and organizations who worked collaboratively to make this dream a reality.

Our programs throughout the year included a diversity of topics. Although most were bird-related, our June BBQ featured music and dancing, and our recent March program featured rattlesnakes and lizards. Bird topics included Peregrine Falcon migration, bird's eyes and vision, seabird populations, the California Condor tracking program, and close-up encounters with birds of prey.

I am delighted to announce the following slate of candidates for the MCAS Board of

Directors. This truly is the "Most Awesome Board," and as such, I have vowed to share the Presidential responsibilities with Christy.

I ask your participation in the April membership meeting and urge you to step forward as a committee member and lend your time and expertise in any way you feel comfortable. MCAS need YOU!

The MCAS 2009-2010 Board member nominees are as follows:

President: Christy Holmes*

President-elect: Vacant

Past President: Jan Surbey*

Treasurer: Bryan Brown*

Secretary: Holly Sletteland*

Programs co-chairs: Rouvaishyana, Dave Keeling*

Publicity chair: Dick Boyd

Field trip co-chairs: Alan Schmierer, Jen Moonjian

Hospitality chair: Nina Richert*

Membership chair: Rosalie Valvo

Education chair: Stephanie Little

Lands chair: Greg Smith*

Communication co-chairs: Cheryl Lesinski, Mike Stiles

Conservation co-chairs: Andrea Jones, Ron Melcer*

Fund development chair: Sarah Bryant

Directors at-large: Priscilla Akin*, Dawn Williams*

** new in this position*

Just one change to the MCAS by-laws is proposed by the Board, as follows:

"Article VII, Section 4: Checks drawn over the amount of \$3000 shall be signed by two signers or with documented authority from a second signer." The by-laws currently require two signatures on checks of \$1000 or greater.

Questions or comments can be emailed to MCAS President, Jan Surbey, at jansurbey@earthlink.net.

MCAS Contacts

President

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

President Elect

Vacant

Treasurer

Holly Sletteland - 239-3928, hslettel@calpoly.edu

Secretary

Priscilla Akin - 534-0280, pakin@charter.net

Programs Chair

Rouvaishyana - 534-9867

Christy Holmes - christy026@care2.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

Margie Cush - 801-1426, cushes@sbcglobal.net

Membership Chair

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

Education Co-chairs

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

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

Lands Chair

Holly Sletteland - 239-3928, hslettel@calpoly.edu

Communications Co-chairs

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

Conservation Co-Chairs

Andrea Jones - 772-1995, ajones@audubon.org

Greg Smith, slobird@aol.com

Director at Large

Vacant

Fund Development Chair

Sarah Bryant - 528-8215

MCAS Lands Coordinator

Holly Sletteland - 239-3928, hslettel@calpoly.edu

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Morro Coast Audubon Society Office and Outreach Center

601 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, upstairs in Marina Square

(805) 772-1991 mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org

Hours: Tuesday, 1-3pm & Thursday, 10am-Noon

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

Website: www.morrocoastaudubon.org

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Your Scrap Wood is Needed for Bird Boxes!

The MCAS bird nest box program uses all recycled/scrap lumber to build its bird nest boxes. All of the revenue from this program directly benefits the MCAS general fund. The program provides much-needed nest cavities for our breeding birds and much-needed funding for our Audubon programs. We are looking for donations of one-inch boards/wood scraps, at least 5 inches wide. Scraps from fence building are a common source of these scraps. Please let me know if you can help. Email Alan at aaschmierer@yahoo.com or call at 772-2026. Thank you!

New MCAS Members

Arroyo Grande

Nora Anderson

Lorin Brown

Howard Dolinsky

Irene Elliott

Elaine Ellis

Frank Ridge

B J Smith

Christopher Starkman

Jerrold A Vest

Atascadero

Mary Aman

Mishele E Baker

Charles Gleason

Mike Klatt

Laurie Parizek

Stan Sherwin

Lucy Young

Cambria

Robert C Kimble

Cayucos

Alison Luis

Grover Beach

Debra Ugalde

Los Osos

Maria Lucero

Sean A Meara

Kinga Mendoza

James L Murphy

Victoria Schmitt

Kevin Vidal

Morro Bay

Morro Bay Library

Nipomo

M E O'Keefe

Oceano

Nancy Hilyard

Paso Robles

John Consoli

Steven C Mabry

Samantha Maybury

San Luis Obispo

Charlene Abeloe

Gloria H Brown

Bryan M Donald

Sara Egerer

Charles B Fishman

Thalia Hastings

Janet S Kovrakis

William Preston

Santa Fe, NM

Sandra MacGillivray

Santa Maria

Gary Espiau

Shell Beach

Paul & Jackie Kane

LOCAL EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

Community Program: Pacific Wildlife Care with Kathy Duncan

Monday, April 20, 7pm

**Membership Meeting, 6:45pm*

El Chorro Park, SLOBG Oak Glen Pavilion

Join Kathy Duncan, Education Director for Pacific Wildlife Care, as she shares their mission and information about rehabilitating wildlife. Pacific Wildlife Care is a non-profit organization of mostly volunteer individuals trained to rehabilitate sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Wildlife patients include birds, small and medium-sized mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Pacific Wildlife Care strives to educate all, especially children, on how to co-exist with the wildlife.

Come meet Ruby, a red-tailed hawk, and two other educational animals. Learn their individual stories and about their species. Also find out how you can become a member and/or volunteer for Pacific Wildlife Care.

All MCAS Community Programs are free and open to the public. Refreshments are provided. Please bring your own mug!

Field Trip: Las Cruzitas Ranch, Santa Barbara County

Saturday, April 4, 7:45am sharp!

Leaders: Peter Dullea and Cruz Phillips

Meet leader Peter Dullea at the Park & Ride at the junction of Highways 246 and 154 in the Santa Ynez Valley at 7:45am. The caravan to the ranch leaves the Park & Ride at 8am.

Field trip attendees will visit Las Cruzitas, a private 1500-acre cattle ranch including oak grassland and sage-covered canyons. The group will be met by Cruz Phillips, the ranch owner, who will guide the trip. Expect to see Yellow-billed Magpies, Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Rufous Crowned and Lark Sparrows, Band-tailed Pigeons, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Golden Eagles, Roadrunner, at least four types of hummingbirds, and possibly Prairie Falcons and Phainopeplas. At least 35 species are seen from the ranch house bird feeders alone, so folks who cannot walk far can sit in the yard and have a great time birding. Finish at about 11:30am or noon. Bring water and a lunch! **Please RSVP** to Peter at pdullea@hotmail.com or at (805) 350-1304, indicating where you live, to try to arrange carpooling.

4th Annual Birdapalooza at Chimineas Ranch

Bird Survey - Saturday, April 25, 7 am

Optional Camping and Birding - Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26

Bob Stafford of the California Dept. of Fish and Game has invited MCAS for a fourth annual informal survey of the birds at the Chimineas Ranch. Chimineas Ranch is the latest addition to the Carrizo Plain National Monument and represents a great diversity of under-birded habitats.

Survey attendees will meet at the Chimineas Ranch house at 7am on Saturday, divide into teams, and survey sectors of the ranch. Less experienced birders can pair up with more experienced birders.

For anyone who is interested in staying at the Ranch, there are a limited number of beds and plenty

of indoor and outdoor camping space available. Cooking facilities are available and potlucks will be coordinated for Friday and Saturday nights. The survey will continue briefly on Sunday morning if needed, for those wishing to stay.

To sign up, contact Jen Moonjian (MCAS Field Trip Co-Chair) at jmoonjia@gmail.com. When you sign up, please be sure to include which nights you will be attending (Friday, Saturday, or both nights) and whether you would like to be placed on the list for a possible bed or if you will have your own accommodations (i.e. tent, trailer, truck bed, etc.).

Get Ready for the Annual Picnic at Santa Margarita Lake

Come out and join the 4th collaborative Morro Coast Audubon Society and California Native Plant Society picnic on **Sunday, May 3**. This all-day event includes numerous field trips with wonderfully knowledgeable leaders, beautiful scenery, good food and great company. Members of both organizations as well as the general public are encouraged to attend this

family-friendly event. Park day-use fees will be waived for all event participants!

For additional information contact MCAS Field Trip Co-Chair Alan Schmierer (aaschmierer@yahoo.com or 772-2026), or CNPS Field Trip Chair Mardi Niles (mlniles@slonet.org, or 489-9274).

Schedule of Events

River Road Access

8-11am: **BIRDING** with Roger Zachary on an easy 3-mile walk along the Salinas River before it flows into the lake. Appropriate for all experience levels.

White Oak Picnic Area (handicap accessible)

9am: **BIRDING** with Mike Stiles and Alan Schmierer (ALL experience levels)

9am: **DESTINATION HIKE** with Ken Klis (explore seldom-seen portions of the park)

10am: **KAYAK / CANOE** launch with Jack Beigle (bring PFDs, sunscreen, binoculars)

10am: **PLANT WALKS** with David Chipping and other CNPS members

10:30am-Noon: **MINI BIO BLITZ** with Rouvaishyana and friends (all ages count all species of living things found in the vicinity of the picnic area)

11am-Noon: **MOUNTAIN BIKING** with Ken Klis (participants must be at least 10 years of age, helmets required)

11am-1:30pm: **PACIFIC WILDLIFE CARE** on site with live birds giving informal 15-20 minute “visits” with feathered friends

Noon: **PICNIC LUNCH** Bring your own sandwich (or something to grill), a side dish, snack, or dessert to share and your own (preferably reusable) place setting and beverage container. Throw in your picnic tablecloth if possible. Assorted drinks will be provided by MCAS.

1-2pm: **CREATING WITH PASTELS** (wildflowers and plants) with Janine Kirkpatrick (materials provided)

Ongoing Throughout the Day at Various Locations

WATERFOWL AND WOODPECKER WATCH:

Birdwatching around the picnic area

FISHING: Kid’s Cove (for kids only) and shore fishing around picnic area

HIKING: Grey Pine Trailhead located at picnic area

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM: Self-directed activities for school-age children

Bonus Field Trips in April: Hummingbirds and More

Sometime in the first few weeks of April we will have our annual hummingbird outing at Cheryl Lish’s place in Arroyo Grande.

There will also likely be a Birding-By-Ear trip to the Mabel French Boy Scout Camp near Lopez Lake and perhaps other field trips in April.

To get details on these additional April field trips, sign up for “MCAS Alert!” by emailing Mike Stiles at mstiles@calpoly.edu.



photo by Alan Schmierer

Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County - February 2009

ABBREVIATIONS: CPNM = Carrizo Plain National Monument; OFL = Oso Flaco Lake; PSBOC = Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground; and WRR = Whale Rock Reservoir.

WATERFOWL: A small number of GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE continued near the coast with up to 11 in the field between Laguna Lake and Foothill Road 12-16 Feb (JSR). Nine seen in a field near San Bernardo Creek on 2 Feb may have been those seen later near Laguna Lake (TME). Another continued with an immature ROSS'S GOOSE at PSBOC all month (MLS). Also in the field between Laguna Lake and Foothill Blvd 7-13 Feb were up to nine Ross's Geese (NJM,JSR). A minima and two leucopareia race CACKLING GEESE were with the other geese between Laguna Lake and Foothill Road on 12 Feb (JSR). A few MUTE SWANS continue around Atascadero where two adults were seen at Atascadero Lake on 14 Feb (RS). The lone WOOD DUCK report was of three males and three females in a flooded Atascadero drainage seen from Los Osos Road on 21 Feb (TME,RHZ). Three males and a "rufous" morph female EURASIAN WIGEON on Morro Bay 20 Feb provided the first report of a female and the high count for this winter (TME,MLS). Other high counts this winter included 72 BLUE-WINGED TEAL in Baywood Cove on 13 Feb (JLR), 14 WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS seen from the North Point Natural Area in northern Morro Bay on 1 Feb (TME), and 20 COMMON GOLDENEYE at Lake Nacimiento on 15 Feb (KK). A single female HOODED MERGANSER was at WRR on 1 Feb (TME) and two females and a male continued on San Simeon Creek on 9 Feb (MLS).

LOONS THRU GULLS: Rare on freshwater, a RED-THROATED LOON was on the Oceano County Pond on 21 Feb (MLS,DGS) and two HORNED GREBES were at WRR on 1 Feb, with one there 21 Feb (TME). Single OSPREY were at Morro Bay 7 Feb (MLS) and 21 Feb (MDH) and at Santa Margarita Lake 21 Feb (RHZ). An adult BALD EAGLE was at WRR on 21 Feb (TME) and two sub-adults were perched together at Santa Margarita Lake on 21 Feb (RHZ). The lone report of a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was an adult female along Cholame Road 3-4 Feb (MLS). SNOWY PLOVERS concentrated in northern Estero Bay during February where unusually high counts of 94 at Old Creek, Cayucos on 7 Feb (TME) and 150 at Villa Creek on 18 Feb (MLS) were recorded. Other interesting high counts included 172 SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS at Old Creek on 12 Feb (MLS), 350-400 AMERICAN AVOCETS at Morro Bay on 21 Feb (MDH), three first-winter THAYER'S GULLS at Laguna Lake on 13 Feb (TME), and 45 mostly first-winter GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULLS at the elephant seal rookery on 12 Feb (AFS). The elephant seal rookery continues to offer good gull viewing during the puping season, especially for GLAUCOUS GULL, with a first-winter

bird present on 9 Feb and a second-winter bird there on 24 Feb (MLS,AFS-www.flickr.com/photos/sloalan/).

HUMMINGBIRDS THRU PHAINOPEPLA: The wintering BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD in Arroyo Grande provided the county's first winter record while remaining through 14 Feb (CL). The first RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRDS of the spring were at the same location on 23 Feb (CL). An ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD nest photographed at Oso Flaco Lake had two medium sized chicks on 27 Feb (MLS - www.flickr.com/photos/slomaggie). The only LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS recorded this winter were in the Paso Robles area where one was at Barney Schwartz Park on 3 Feb (MLS) and two were along Golden Hills Road north of Hwy 46 on 28 Feb (TME). The female VERMILION FLYCATCHER wintering on private property along the south coast remained in to early February (DAK-www.flickr.com/photos/tedell/). Single CASSIN'S KINGBIRDS were found at Shandon County Park on 3 Feb (MLS) and at Cal Poly on 11 Feb (MDS). A CLIFF SWALLOW and a BARN SWALLOW at San Simeon Creek on 24 Feb were the first this spring (AFS,MLS). A male PHAINOPEPLA found along Elkhorn Road, CPNM, on 1 Feb was in a location where there are few reports (M&JA).

WARBLERS THRU GOLDFINCH: At OFL, the female/immature AMERICAN REDSTART found last month was last reported 1 Feb (RHZ) and a male WILSON'S WARBLER continued through 25 Feb (MLS). Unreported previously this winter, two SAGE SPARROWS were seen on Cuesta Ridge near Cerro Alto Peak on 19 Feb (AFS). The two SWAMP SPARROWS wintering on San Simeon Creek at Hwy 1 were last reported on 9 Feb (MLS). A large flock of 250 TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS was along Hwy 58 near Branch Mountain Road on 4 Feb (MLS). A first-year male BULLOCK'S ORIOLE found at PSBOC on 21 Feb likely wintered there or nearby (MLS,DGS). A male and female LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH found on 21 Feb were the first this year at a remote ranch in the southern CPNM (KS).

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Mary Ann and Jerry Ambrose, Mick Bondello, Tom M. Edell, Marlin D. Harms, Dave Keeling, Kathleen Kent, David A. Kisner, Cheryl Lish, Nancy J. Mann, John L. Roser, Jim S. Royer, Ross Schaefer, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Kathy 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 me, (805) 995-1691 or tedell@aol.com.

- Tom Edell

Morro Coast Audubon Society Membership Application

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

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.

C18
7XCH

MCAS Membership Details

Please mark all that apply:

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

___ I'd like to receive the *Pacific Flyway* newsletter via email (this saves trees and reduces MCAS printing and mailing costs).

___ I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

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

For both membership types, mail form & check to:
MCAS, P O 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

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