



Volume 41 Issue 8 Morro Coast Audubon Society

February 2007

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"



NEW SWEET SPRINGS INFORMATION BOARD

A new information board has been installed at the Sweet Springs Overlook to assist birders in the identification of various ducks, geese and other birds that can be observed from the platform. Applicable pages from a bird book are displayed on a three by four foot board, covered with plexiglass and supported by a heavy wooden frame mounted on concrete. The original idea was from past Lands Committee Chairman, John Perkins, and the final arrangements were supervised by Dawn Williams. John Novak and his crew installed the board.

MCAS Audubon is very grateful to all of these folks for their role in expanding the appeal and natural world outreach that our "Crown Jewel", Sweet Springs, represents. *Dick Parker*

Mark your calendars: on Saturday, March 3rd, there will be a ceremony to dedicate the bench honoring Maurie and Dougie Weir. The bench is between the two bridges at Sweet Springs. The Weir sisters invite all Audubon members, even if you did not know their parents, to join them at 2:00 P.M. on that Saturday.

OFFICERS

President	Henry Pontarelli wisehen@gmail.com	528-4587
President-Elect	Jan Surbey jansurbey@earthlink.net	772-7273
Treasurer	Ted Pope hm TNBPope@charter.net wk	545-9705 547-0242
Secretary	Priscilla Akin pakin@charter.net	534-0280

CHAIRPERSONS

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Field Trips	Alan Schmierer aaschmierer@yahoo.com cell	772-2026 801-3701
Hospitality	Cheryl Lish cheryl-lish@earthlink.net	481-8945
Membership	Rosalie Valvo rvalvo@kcbx.net	772-1429
Education	Dawn Williams	545-8412
Co-chairs	slodawn1@aol.com Stephanie Little stephjoy13@hotmail.com	610-6229
Lands	Trevor Keith TKeith@rinconconsultants.com	458-0479
Communications	Co-chairs	
Flyway	Dick Boyd dickboyd@charter.net	772-3993
Website	Mike Stiles mstiles@calpoly.edu	528-1515
Christmas Bird	Tom Edell	995-1691
Count Compiler	TEdell@aol.com	
Conservation	Andrea Jones	772-1995
IBA Coordinator	ajones@audubon.org	

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Barbara Burke	barburke@sbcglobal.net	528-8662
Cheryl Lesinski	clesinski@mbnep.org wk	772-3834
<u>CHAPTER ADMINISTRATOR</u>	Emily Jagger ejagger@charter.net	

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

To report a sick or injured wild animal including birds:

Pacific wildlife Care 543-WILD

Reporting Marine Mammal Problems:

To report a dead sea otter south of Cambria 772-1135

To report a dead sea otter north of Cambria 927-3893

To report a live stranded marine mammal (415) 289-7325

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.

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REDUCE WASTE, SAVE TREES

The MCAS board voted unanimously to begin having the Flyway printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper. YOU can help further our efforts (and save mailing costs) by subscribing to the Flyway via Email rather than receiving the newsletter through the mail. The electronic form is sent as a .PDF file; you must have an Email address 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.) You should also be aware that if you use a dial-up modem it is likely that it will be fairly slow to download. An average issue will take 3 minutes or so.

If you are a member of the Audubon Society and you decide to have the PDF version of each issue sent to you automatically by Email, please Email Rosalie Valvo at rvalvo@kcbx.net with the name that your Flyway is mailed to. The mailing of the Flyway will be discontinued, but your membership will not be otherwise affected.



photo page 3 by Dick Boyd

Our Website

www.morrocoastaudubon.org

Past issues of the *Flyway* are available at the website

e-mail:

mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org

General Meeting
Morro Coast Audubon Society
presents...



Morro Bay National Estuary Program
with Dan Berman

Dan Berman, director of the Morro Bay National Estuary Program will discuss the origins and goals of the NEP, its role in the community and current projects including, habitat restoration and protection in the Morro Bay watershed. Dan's presentation will include breathtaking aerial photographs of the watershed, and "before and after" images of restoration projects.

Monday, Feb 19, 2007 at 7:00 pm
Laguna Middle School – multi-purpose room
11050 Los Osos Valley Rd, San Luis Obispo

Information – Call Cheryl Lish 481-8945 or
Cheryl-lish@earthlink.net, or see
www.morrocoastaudubon.org

MCAS BOARD MEETING

Monday February 5

6:45 PM

MCAS office, Marina Square Bldg. Morro Bay. All interested members are invited to attend.



BIRDS AT EBB TIDE

Gloria Rasmussen, with over 35 years of observing birds in the field, will host viewing/educational sessions at the beautiful 4th St Overlook in Los Osos. This season, thanks to a generous donation from one of our members, we will have a *Celestron* spotting scope available during these sessions.

See the MCAS website:

www.morrocoastaudubon.org
for the February schedule.

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*

New Chapter Administrator

MCAS has hired a new Chapter Administrator. Emily Jagger, a young enthusiastic and well qualified candidate. was introduced at the January 8th board meeting. Thanks to Cheryl Lesinski, Barbara Burke, and Rosalie Valvo for taking on the committee search duties, conducting interviews, and selecting Emily as our next administrator.

NOMINEES NEEDED

The nomination committee is seeking nominees for the following board positions with terms beginning in May 2007: President elect, Treasurer, and Programs chairperson. For more information, contact committee chair jansurbey@earthlink.net.

FEBRUARY 2007 FIELD TRIPS

FEB 10-11th (SAT-SUNDAY): LOS BANOS: We will meet in the parking lot at the Los Banos Wildlife Area at 9 a.m. on Saturday Feb.10 (on Henry Miller Ave/off of N. Mercy Springs Rd). The drive is about 2 hr. 45 min. from Atascadero. We will bird the Wildlife Area and then drive over to Merced National Wildlife Refuge to bird that afternoon. We usually return to our motel in the late afternoon and share appetizers/drinks in someone's room. There is no formal dinner. The next morning we arise early and drive over to San Luis Wildlife Refuge. We bird that area until after lunch then go our own way home. Bring extra food and whatever you think you might need. Two-way radios are helpful so bring them. We usually get about 100 species of birds over the weekend and the waterfowl displays at some of the areas are spectacular. We stay at Best Western Executive Inn in Los Banos (209) 827-8891 or there's camping nearby and other motels. This trip is limited because of the number of cars caravanning and driving through the refuges. I would like to limit the vehicles to a total five-I'm flexible. Some folks can carpool from San Luis area. Rain cancels. Call me if you would like further information (805)466-6222. Email rzachary@charter.net
Roger Zachary

FEB 3rd (SATURDAY): DINNER and OWLING:

Leader: Jim Royer. Meet at 4:30 PM for dinner and owling around the San Luis Obispo area. Finish at about 10:00 PM. Wind / rain may cancel. Number limited. Reservations only: call Jim at 528-8933.

MOBILITY IMPAIRED: Welcome to Linda Sewell who has graciously volunteered to assist me as Field Trip Liaison to those with Limited Mobility. Linda is an MCAS member and resident of Arroyo Grande. She is filled with energy and optimism, and does not allow her disability to limit her joy of birds and nature. I hope to work closely with her in identifying local birding areas, in better describing and organizing field trips and acting as a consultant in all matters regarding those with mobility limitations. Please contact her with your interests, ideas, questions and concerns at LMS1@PGE.com or 801-5095. NOTE: Please pass this information on to non-MCAS members ... they are welcome at all MCAS field trips! Thank you Linda!!

ALAN SCHMIERER, FIELD
TRIP CHAIRMAN

CONSERVE!! SUBSCRIBE TO THE FLYWAY ELECTRONICALLY

Each of you who switches from hard-copy issues of the FLYWAY to the electronic version effectively DONATES to Audubon and our conservancy cause! Please read these reasons to switch:

In effect you donate \$8.00 per year to Audubon by subscribing electronically. Doesn't sound like much? Each year MCAS spends about \$7000 to \$8000 to produce and distribute the FLYWAY. That is 40% of your first year dues and 23% of your dues thereafter. Because currently a percent of your dues goes to National Audubon, the net effect on MCAS is much greater. Wouldn't that money be better spent on conservation?!

You help in the effort to conserve paper and thus help conserve our forests!
You receive your FLYWAY up to two weeks earlier, making planning easier and gives you a greater chance to attend limited-number events and field trips.

Photos generally will appear in color and clearer and more appealing

But I like a copy for the coffee table! Just start a new file on your computer, and store each issue as it appears. You can retrieve them any time that you want. You can print them or print them in part any time that you wish. There is no shelf space taken in your home and they are organized and at your fingertips at any time.

But I need them as a reminder! Maybe ... but mark your calendar as you read the issue. The small inconvenience is worth the conservation effort!

It is easy! I hear some of you say that that you are not computer gurus and that you do not know how to do it. All you have to do is email Rosalie Valvo at rvalvo@kcbx.net and ask her to send you the FLYWAY electronically. It will be sent to you each month via an email attachment. It is opened on your computer by an Adobe PDF Reader program. If you do not have this program, go to www.adobe.com, and under "solutions and products" left click on the red symbol "Get Adobe Reader", and follow the install instructions. It is free. Subsequently, your issues will open automatically. You should be aware that if you use a dial-up modem it is likely that it will be fairly slow to download. An average issue will take 3 minutes or so.

IN MEMORIAM

We have lost three great personages in the past few months. John Perkins was a sitting board member and a community activist. John McDonald was a great birder and very active with the chapter until a few years ago. Mary Coffeen was not a birder, but she was one of the most celebrated MCAS members in the larger community of local nature lovers. We are printing their obituaries over several issues.

John McDonald

John McDonald was one of Morro Coast Audubon Society's best birders. He died in Washington State on October 29, 2006.

John was born in Baltimore, Maryland. As a young man, he joined the Marine Corps and spent some time on a Pacific island near Okinawa. He married Anita, whom he had met in Baltimore, while he was stationed at Mojave, California. After his discharge, they lived in Woodland Hills, where John worked for 33 years with Pacific Bell as a technician and a manager. A co-worker introduced John to birding.

After John retired in 1979, he and Anita moved to Los Osos, where he immediately became involved with MCAS. John was Field Trip Chair 1980 to 1982. He was also compiler of the Christmas Bird Count 1980-1987. According to Tom Edell, his successor on the CBC, "He took the count to a new level, and during his tenure the count had its highest count of 212 species." While he was holding these posts, he established a new checklist card for the CBC, presented Bird Study programs for beginning birders at the museum, held a seat on the steering committee for the Breeding Bird Atlas project for SLO County, and led three to five field trips a month. He also helped put together the original MCAS bar graph checklist.

John pursued birding with a passion. He kept state and county bird lists, and he made regular trips to Texas in the winter to bird. John was a mentor to many local birders in the 1980s. Tom Edell says he spent many enjoyable hours birding with and learning from John as John was a patient teacher on field trips.

In the 1990s, John shifted his focus to plants and became involved with the gardens at the museum and the botanical garden. In 2004, John and Anita moved to Stanwood, Washington, to live with their daughter. Anita died shortly after. Now we have also lost John. Remembrances may be made to San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden or the Morro Coast Audubon Society. *submitted by Rosalie Valvo*



A "NOVEL" idea: A book for birders of the Central Coast

"The Californiad" by Vince Donovan; A Book Review by Ron Bast

Wayne Bremmer knows birds. He also knows bugs and animals and plants and ecosystems. What he doesn't understand is people. As a biologist with an uncanny eye for discovering endangered critters, Bremmer fumbles and stumbles his often alcoholic way across the California landscape on a Quixotic quest for understanding. He thinks he's searching for the holy grail of all California ecologists: a complete map of the ecological relationships of every specie in the species-rich state. Or as Bremmer puts it: "What eats what and when." What Bremmer finds instead is a landscape far larger and more complex than he imagined, a universe filled with relationships driven primarily by people, the one specie he understands the least. He speaks fluent California quail but usually can't find the human words required to fit in with his own kind. Everyone seems to hate him. His boss, who runs a crooked environmental engineering firm, hates him because Bremmer finds endangered species in places he's paid to find nothing. His ex-wife hates him, sort of, because he's so weird. His ex-mother-in-law, a renegade developer bent on paving over the Central Coast, hates him because Wayne knows way too much about the sensitive environment she wants to destroy.

Even his best friend gets tired of chasing his buddy all over the countryside trying to rescue him from himself while secretly lusting after Bremmer's ex-wife and Bremmer's single-minded pursuit of Truth. Nazi surfers, psycho security guards, rabid Republicans, demented developers and even his ex-wife pursue Bremmer as he weaves his way through the state from the high Sierra to the Central Coast in his stolen Land Cruiser, fitting the ecological pieces together one by one to finally arrive at a truth that looks a lot more like philosophy than biology.

Novelist Vince Donovan grew up on the Central Coast and weaves his intimate knowledge of the area together with a broad science education and a fine sense of humor into a satisfying tale of love, adventure and Paradise Lost. *The Californiad*, Donovan's first novel, offers a rich view of the myriad creatures that inhabit our world, a humorous look at the people who devote their lives to watching them, and a cautionary tale about what happens when people forget they are only one small strand of an extraordinarily complex web of life. It is recommended reading for bird watchers, ecologists, hikers, Central Coast inhabitants, and anyone who cherishes the land and the diverse life it supports.

You can't find *The Californiad* at Barnes & Noble. You can find it, however, at the following local independent bookstores for \$18.95: Chelsea Bookshop in Paso Robles, Coalesce in Morro Bay, Ye Olde Book Shoppe in Atascadero and Novel Experience in San Luis Obispo. It's also available online for \$19.95 at www.thecaliforniad.com. Donovan donates a portion of the proceeds to the National Audubon Society.



To Our Newest Members

Arroyo Grande
Pierre Arquin
Peter Fagan
William Grider
Glenn Hamilton
Mr & Mrs Michael
Kroviou
Gail Luske
Atascadero
Norman Hubbs
Janet Black
Diane Shervem
Debbie Buckheim
Jenny Kjono
Kam Lawrence
Cambria
Bill Robinson
Joanne Aasen
Lynne Harkins
Christy Lynch
Penny Fitzgerald
Cayucos

Lenny Chambers
Cougar, WA
Charles Sitton
Grover Beach
Virginia Ellis
A F Maliszewski
Betsy Ehrier
Los Osos
Larry Lupo
Orchid Outfitters
Bryan & Molly Brown
Henry Taratusky
Roy Bayly
Sam Mednick
Lois Cleworth
Jim Manock
Marie Gordon
David & Linda Chipping
Sara Bryant
Alex Thomas
Morro Bay
Kenneth Thompson

Michael Baird
R Maytum
Elizabeth Caldwell
Elizabeth Klinzman
Nipomo
Bree Bell
Jeane Walsh
Phillip Mountrose
Paso Robles
Michael Tyner
Annette Grieco
B L Brickman
Pismo Beach
Kenneth Sikes
San Luis Obispo
F Mesler
Elizabeth Scott-Graham
Grace Washer
Adele Anderson
Janet Taylor
Judith Bartels
Dave Bourne

William Bouton
Meredith Boyd
Candi Roethier
Rev Milton Andrews
Steven Marx
Nancy Lagrille
Dale Kleinfelter
Ms Harris
Jared Bigler
San Miguel
Shannon Hatter
Santa Margarita
Marhjorie Burkhardt
Teri Rogers
Jill Myers
Shell Beach
Keith & Clarice Griffin
Templeton
Mary Gandsey
Suzanne Dutra
Andrea Cheszek



Meet the Members: Paul Andreano Mosaic and Mystique of the Music Man

Paul and peregrine falcon
at Padre Island (photo by
Brian Latta)

by Jan Surbey

This former percussionist with the local band Mozaic has created a truly mosaic life for himself here on the Central Coast. Fitting various pieces of his life into a rather grand “design”, artist / musician / biologist Paul Andreano is a most colorful and talented member of MCAS. Pieces of this mosaic include condors, birds of prey, loons, and GUTPILES! Exchanging native plants for the birds after taking his first ornithology class at Cal Poly, Paul became the *FIRST* student intern at the Hi Mountain Condor Lookout Project. While the lookout building was being restored, “Hi Mountain Paul” gained field experience, learned radio telemetry skills tracking California Condor movements and made personal contacts which allowed him to pursue his goal of making a living doing field work with his biology degree.

As a result of his skills and contacts he gained as a Hi Mt. intern, Paul was hired by the Santa Cruz Predatory Research Group (where he is currently employed) as a field biologist in 2002. His work with the Bird Group has taken him to the Channel Islands, Sierra Nevada, and the Mohave Desert. Most recently, Paul spent two weeks banding and sampling peregrine falcons for avian influenza on South Padre Island, Texas. And finally, there is Project Gutpile. Paul is a co-founder of this program that promotes non-lead ammunition and fishing gear while raising awareness in the hunting and angling communities. Lead is a toxic substance with proven, often deadly, effects on humans and wildlife. Hunters in the range of the CA Condor are encouraged to bury gutpiles from deer and other animals shot to prevent the condors from accidentally ingesting toxic lead bullet fragments. Additionally, Paul is currently initiating a lead-sinker exchange program for local fishermen. Loons are particularly at risk in lead-contaminated habitats, hence, Paul’s interest in our MCAS Winter Loon Survey where he frequently “captains” our loon research vessel during trapping expeditions.

If you desire to meet Paul in person, catch his next appearance as “DJ Android” at one of the Winter Loon Survey’s “fun-raisers”. For more information on Paul’s programs, check out these websites:

www.condorlookout.org www.morrocoastaudubon.org www.projectgutpile.org www.morrobayloons.org

Eureka!

THE BIRDS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY – November/December 2006

The following are the rarest birds reported during the months of November and December 2006. An expanded version of this column with additional sightings is available at: <http://www.morrocoastaudubon.org/eureka.htm>.

- Eurasian Wigeon – 11 Nov-31 Dec, up to two males were on the Morro Bay Estuary (MDH)
Harlequin Duck – the male found off the Northpoint Natural Area (north Morro Bay) in Oct was present to 4 Nov (TME)
Black Scoter – 4 Nov, a female was off the Northpoint Natural Area (north Morro Bay) (TME) and up to two females and a first winter male there 23-31 Dec (RHZ)
Long-tailed Duck – 13 Nov, a female south of the San Simeon Pier provided the only report (RHZ)
Pacific Loon – 3-4 Nov, one at Atascadero Lake provided the County's second record east of the Santa Lucia Range (AJ)
Red-necked Grebe – first winter birds were on Morro Bay 23 Nov-28 Dec (TME) and at Port San Luis on 4 Dec (BKS)
Black-vented Shearwater – 1 Nov-31 Dec, this species was present offshore all period (mob)
Cattle Egret – 13 Nov, one in a field east of Hwy 1 just north of San Simeon (RHZ) accounted for the only report
Rough-legged Hawk – 10 Dec, one perched in a dead tree on the northeast flank of Black Hill provided the first SLO County coastal sighting in several years (MLS, KC)
Merlin – 30 Dec, a very rare prairie, or *richardsoni*, race bird was on the Carrizo Plain Christmas Bird Count (DGS)
American Golden-Plover – 1-13 Nov, the juvenile found last month continued at the mouth of San Simeon Creek (MLS,DV)
Pigeon Guillemot – 23 Nov-31 Dec, a juvenile was near the harbor mouth at Morro Bay (TME)
Marbled Murrelet – 1 Nov, two were seen off the Estero Bluffs during an Estero Bay seabird survey (TME) and 25 Dec, one was off the Northpoint Natural Area in north Morro Bay (TME)
White-winged Dove – 23 Nov, one was with a flock of 61 Eurasian Collared Doves along Ocean Ave in Cayucos (TME) and 8-16 Dec, one was along Mission Street in San Luis Obispo (TME)
Lewis's Woodpecker – 21 Nov, one was 13.7 miles from the intersection of Hwy 58 and Pozo Road across from the Flying LB Ranch (MLS) and another was along Pozo Road about 2 miles east of Hwy 58 on 26 Dec (MLS)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – single adult males were along Mission Street in SLO between Almond and Chorro on 8 Dec (TME,MLS) and in the eucalyptus grove along the Horse Camp Road in Montana de Oro State Park 16-31 Dec (P&RJ)
Red-naped Sapsucker – 5 Nov-31 Dec, the adult male continued in the pepper trees at the Cal Poly Library (mob)
Eastern Phoebe – 16-31 Dec, one was found at Cal Poly on the Morro Bay Christmas Bird Count (JMC)
Sage Thrasher – 31 Dec, one was along Soda Lake Road south of the Washburn Ranch and Panorama Drive Road (KI,TK)
Black-and-white Warbler – 4 Nov, one was at Spooners Cove Campground in Montana de Oro State Park (DG) and 1-6 Nov, a male continued along Santa Rosa Creek adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Cambria (BAB)
Canada Warbler – 21-23 Nov, a likely first year male was at the Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground (BKS)
Summer Tanager – 22 Nov-26 Dec, a female was near the ranger residences at Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground (MLS)
Clay-colored Sparrow – 6 Nov, one at Arroyo Laguna was the latest of the fall (BAB)
Savannah Sparrow – 4 Nov-31 Dec, a banded "large-billed" race bird was on the estuary side of the Morro Bay State Park Marina (TME)
Fox Sparrow – 24-31 Dec, a red race bird, likely of the eastern *zaboria* race, was at a feeder in Los Osos (MDS)
Swamp Sparrow – 22 Nov-25 Dec, one was about 30 feet to the right of the Coolidge/Norswing entrance at the Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground (MLS) and another was on the inside of the Morro Bay Sandspit on 12/16 (TM)
Golden-crowned Sparrow X White-throated Sparrow – 2 Dec, a bird believed to be of this parentage returned for its third winter in Deer Canyon, northeast Arroyo Grande (BKS)
Black-headed Grosbeak – 9 Nov-29 Dec, a wintering male was at the Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground (BKS)
Orchard Oriole – 19 Nov-31 Dec, an adult male is wintering in western Arroyo Grande (MS)

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Bill A. Bouton, Jamie M. Chavez, Karen Clarke, Tom M. Edell, Dan Guthrie, Marlin D. Harms, Kathleen Intorf, Allan Joachim, Priscilla and Rich Johnson, Tony Kent, Tom Maloney, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Mitch Siemens, Maggie L. Smith, Doug G. Stinson, Mike D. Stiles, Deb Villa, 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*

10th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 16-19, 2007

What mid-winter activity is fun, easy, free, and helps bird conservation? This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record."

Join with thousand of others to find out how many birds are being seen in your area and across the continent this winter. By participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count, you help document where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds this winter.

The Backyard Bird Count a great event for several reasons: (*cont'd overleaf*)

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It's free and no pre-registration is required.

All ages and skill levels are welcome.

You can track results in real time online.

You can count birds in your backyard, balcony, schoolyard, park, or wildlife refuge.

For more information, and to view results, go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

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 1507, Morro Bay CA 93443-1507. To check the status of your subscription or request membership changes call 1-800-274-4201

Check box if you are interested in volunteering or need more information

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