



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 44 Issue 3, July/August 2009

Celebrate 4th of July in Morro Bay Bird and Environment Friendly Laser Light Show at Tidelands Park

We're excited to share with you that Morro Bay is making history by having the "first ever on the Central Coast" Laser Light Show to celebrate the 4th of July! Morro Coast Audubon Society is endorsing the City of Morro Bay's effort to have a creative, safe, and eco-friendly alternative to fireworks.

The laser light show will have minimal impact on wildlife, will have no associated smoke, and can be seen up to two miles away. The show is expected to last approximately 30 minutes and it will be a colorful display of lasers and images. Nesting snowy plovers on the Montana de Oro Sandspit and all the other birds and animals in the bay will no doubt appreciate not being disturbed this year by the loud and smoky fireworks display (...and our dogs and cats will too). Please show your support for this eco-friendly event.

We're hoping it is well attended so that the City continues to promote the needs of the environment and the nesting snowy plovers. To get an idea of what the laser show will be like, visit www.morrobay.org/cm/Chamber/Home.html



Snowy Plover, courtesy of Mike Baird

Help Us Go Paperless and Save Resources

Did you know that printing and mailing *Pacific Flyway* newsletter costs Morro Coast Audubon Society thousands of dollars every year? Join other members in switching to an email subscription and you will help redirect thousands of MCAS dollars towards conservation.

Simply send an email request to Rosalie Valvo at rvalvo@sbcglobal.net. Your paper subscription will be canceled and each month you will receive an email with our newsletter attached in Adobe Acrobat PDF format (the file size is usually under 500 KB).

Our GOAL is to print at 50% fewer copies of the newsletter by the end of 2009. You are the key to

reaching that goal by making the switch to an email subscription of the newsletter.

Need a few other reasons to make the switch?

- You will be helping conserve our forests.
- You will receive the newsletter up to two weeks earlier, making planning easier and giving you a greater chance to attend limited-number events and field trips.
- Our electronic newsletter includes color photos.
- And with a click of the mouse, you can store your copy for future reference.

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Morro Coast Audubon Society Office and Outreach Center

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Hours: Thursday, 10am-Noon

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

Website: www.morrocoastaudubon.org

Printed on recycled paper

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

Arroyo Grande

Stanley Rosch

Los Osos

Paul Hammond

Atascadero

J H Goldstein

Morro Bay

Maryanne D Goede

Stephen M Rine

Cambria

John & Diane Hood

Paso Robles

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Thanks Go Out to the Following Donors

Ellen Perryess

Beverly De Witt-Moylan

Gerry Montgomery

Allison Hershey

"In memory of Julia Mendoza"



Long Billed Curlews, courtesy of Mike Baird

Hi Mountain Condor Lookout Project Fundraiser, July 19th

The Hi Mountain Condor Lookout Project, with its volunteers and interns, works to monitor movements of the endangered California Condor population from the strategically placed Hi Mountain Lookout on the crest of the Santa Lucia Mountains. The program is supported by many organizations including the Morro Coast Audubon Society, the US Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (with the Ventana Wildlife Society and Cal Poly Biological Sciences as collaborators).

Beginning in 1996, the retired US Forest Service fire lookout has been restored and now functions as an

educational visitor center and a biological research station with emphasis on radio-tracking California Condor movements by summer college interns.

To support these efforts, the Hi Mountain Project is planning a fundraiser on July 19th (see insert). Please join the fun while supporting MCAS! More information is available at www.condorlookout.org.

Beginning Birders Walk Along Morro Bay

Saturday, July 25th, 8am - 11am

Leaders: Stephanie Little, Christy Holmes, and Jennifer Moonjian

We had such a great turn out at the first Beginner's Bird Walk that we thought we'd offer another one. This field trip is for all levels of beginning birding, for those who are just starting out and for those who may want some additional tips or hints that will improve their birding experiences. This will be a great opportunity to get familiar with binoculars (MCAS will have binoculars and field guides to loan out), to identify birds using a field guide, and to ask LOTS of questions.

Meet at the MCAS Office and Outreach Center at 601 Embarcadero in Morro Bay. It is located upstairs in the Marina Square. We will meet at 8am for a brief indoor lecture. Then we will head out to Morro Rock and Morro Bay, enjoying waterfowl, seabirds, shorebirds, possible Peregrine Falcons, and others along the bay. Please bring comfortable, warm clothing and walking shoes.

If you plan to come, please be sure to sign up with Jennifer Moonjian at jmoonjia@gmail.com. Pre-registration will help ensure that we have an adequate number of leaders and can provide binoculars and field guide books to anyone that may need one.



Peregrine Falcon in Morro Bay, courtesy of Mike Baird

Be "Alerted" to Additional Summer Field Trips

There will be other field trips July and August to San Simeon State Park and to several hummingbird locations. These trips will be announced via the "MCAS Alert!" system.

To be placed on this email notification system, please email Mike Stiles at mstiles@calpoly.edu. In addition, we will list these trips under Field Trips on our website at www.morrocoastaudubon.org.

Visit and Support Our New MCAS Business Members

Just last month we announced that local businesses now have the opportunity to join MCAS as Charter Business Members. Several local businesses have already joined and shown strong support for the important work that MCAS does to promote conservation of wildlife habitat and educate the community. Please visit our business members and thank them for their support.

If you happen to know of a business owner who may be interested in joining, let them know about our new membership opportunities. Each business member is entitled to the following benefits:

- Publicity in the MCAS newsletter via a Business Members insert twice a year.
- Ongoing recognition on the MCAS website (including a link to their business website) from June 2009 through June 2010.
- A Charter MCAS Business Member decal to display at their place of business.
- A free subscription to the MCAS monthly newsletter.

Business membership dues are \$100. For more information, visit www.morrocoastaudubon.org

2009-2010 MCAS Charter Business Members

Embarcadero Inn, Morro Bay
Gallery at Marina Square, Morro Bay
Hay Printing, Morro Bay
Jenny Brantlee, Realtor, Morro Bay
Los Osos Rexall, Los Osos
Seven Sisters Gallery, Morro Bay
Spencer's Fresh Market, Morro Bay
Wild Bird Unlimited, San Luis Obispo

Please visit our new business members as often as possible and thank them for their support.

New Snowy Plover Outreach Booth at Local Beaches

Saturday, May 23rd, marked the premier of Morro Coast Audubon's Western Snowy Plover Outreach Booth on Morro Strand State Beach. The holiday weekend brought 55 tourists and locals stopping by to learn about plover nesting cycles and current habitat conservation efforts.

Funded through a grant, the booth is comprised of a table, scope and signboard, and is staffed by Aurianna

Woodson, a Snowy Plover Monitor at Montana de Oro State Park. In addition to providing adults with maps and other local beach information, the kiosk has a build-a-nest box allowing the children to design their own Snowy Plover nest. Perhaps the biggest draw to the booth is the viewing scope aimed at an active nest, allowing for a close-up view of a female incubating her three egg clutch.

Although the exact location of it will change over the summer, expect to see the booth and Aurianna every Saturday from 10am-2pm out from the Morro Strand Campground.



Aurianna Woodson tends new Snowy Plover Outreach Booth.



Snowy Plover, courtesy of Alan Schmierer

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

ABBREVIATIONS: PPB = Point Piedras Blancas Light House; and OFL = Oso Flaco Lake.

WATERFOWL THRU FULMAR: The resident **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** and **ROSS'S GOOSE** continued at Oceano County Park and the nearby State Park campground all month (MLS). A late male **LESSER SCAUP** was at OFL on 28 May (MLS). Reports of a male **HARLEQUIN DUCK** in the power plant outflow channel at Morro Rock 8-9 May (MO,SCS) were followed by a report of a male and female at the harbor entrance on 16 May (Ro). Rare on fresh water, a **RED-THROATED LOON** was near the dam at Whale Rock Reservoir on 16 May (TME). A late **RED-NECKED GREBE** was seen from the cliffs near the Shell Beach tennis courts 1-2 May (JL). Counts of 350 **EARED GREBES** along the kelp bed off Estero Bluffs State Park on 2 May (TME) and 66 **NORTHERN FULMARS** on an aerial survey between Point Piedras Blancas and Morro Bay on 11 May (JD) were very high numbers for May.

BITTERN THRU MOORHEN: A rare breeder in SLO County, an **AMERICAN BITTERN** at Laguna Lake on 16 May (CC) suggests it continues to breed at this favored location. **SNOWY EGRETS** are nesting again in the eucalyptus trees in front of the Morro Bay power plant where young were being fed by parents on 16 May (MLS). At least 29 **WHITE-FACED IBIS** were reported along the coast 7-16 May (mob), plus one was inland at a residential pond along Hwy 58 and Tule Elk Lane (Carrizo Plain) on 1 May (BAB). For the third year **SWAINSON'S HAWKS** have been found in the Cuyama Valley in May. This year up to three birds near the Hwy 166/33 intersection were present 3-5 May (NG,NL,MLS); another was seen over the City of San Luis Obispo on 13 May (GPS). The first **COMMON MOORHEN** report this year comes from OFL on 16 May (MDH).

SHOREBIRD THRU TERN: An alternate plumaged **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** with a Greater Yellowlegs allowed for a nice size comparison at Whale Rock Reservoir on 16 May (TME). A few **WHIMBREL**, and sometimes flocks, are found inland in May; however a large flock of 485 in the Cholame Valley on 1 May (TME,MLS) far surpassed previous spring counts. 8 May was a big day for **RED KNOTS**, with "frequent flocks, some numbering 50-100 individuals" passing low over PPB (RAR). Also seen passing PPB, but on 12 May (RAR), was a flock of 20-25 **SABINE'S GULLS**; a few individuals were seen from San Simeon Point on 9 and 12 May (AFS,MLS). The two **FRANKLIN'S GULLS** during the month involved an adult at Arroyo Grande Creek mouth on 14 May (MLS) an a first-year bird at the elephant seal rookery along Hwy 1 on 24 May (TME,MLS). Well above average numbers of migrating **GLAUCOUS GULLS** continued to be seen from

PPB with nine reported 1-10 May (RAR). Spring is a good time to find a **BLACK TERN** along the coast and this year two in breeding plumage were at OFL on 7 May (MO).

DOVE THRU TANAGER: Another first for the year was a **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** seen along Los Osos Valley Road in Los Osos on 20 May (PG). Twelve **BLACK SWIFTS** reported between 1-22 May included a flock of ten over Cal Poly on 11 May (EW,DGS). Following up on last month's **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** "invasion" was a single female in Deer Canyon, Arroyo Grande on 1 May (BKS). The lone **BANK SWALLOW** report involved two birds at OFL on 20 May (MLS). A flock of 12 **PHAINOPEPLA** at Deer Canyon on 15 May (BKS) was exceptional for west of the Santa Lucia Range. **YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS** were found along the Salinas River above Santa Margarita Lake 3 May (TME,RHZ), in a yard in Arroyo Grande 3 May (MS), and one was at the Filiponi restoration site on 21 May (MLS). First-spring male **SUMMER TANGERS** were located at the Cerro Alto Campground on 17 May (JSR,RS) and at Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground on 22 May (SG).

SPARROWS THRU SISKIN: The latest **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** reported was near Hollister Peak through 2 May (AFS). An influx of **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS** (7) during the last two weeks of May involved first-spring males near Hollister Peak on 20 May (AFS), Coon Creek 22 May (PG), near Hollister Peak (with an adult female) 31 May (AS), and at Morro Bay 31 May (NW), and two unaged males were in SLO 30 May-2 Jun (MM). The only **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** observed in May were one in Los Osos 9 May (LT) and two adult females at OFL 11 May (MLS). A **SCOTT'S ORIOLE** seen along the Caliente Ridge access road on 11 May (AFS) provided the most northwesterly record known for the Temblor Range. A lingering **PINE SISKIN** was at Deer Canyon 14-15 May.

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Bill A. Bouton, Cornelia Carrier, Jeff Davis, Tom M. Edell, Peter Gaede, Noah Gaines, Susan Grimaud, Marlin D. Harms, Jeri Langham, Nick Lethaby, Mike Multari, Mark Osokow, Rouvaishyana(Ro), Richard A. Rowlett, Jim S. Royer, Alan F. Schmierer, Anna Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Steve C. Schubert, Ross Shaefer, Mitch Siemens, Gregory P. Smith, Maggie L. Smith, Doug G. Stinson, Linda Tanner, Eric Weir, Norma Wightman, Roger H. Zachary and mob = many observers.

For information about birds mentioned in this report, consult the Morro Coast Audubon publication "The Birds of San Luis Obispo County, California" or contact Tom Edell at (805) 995-1691 or tedell@aol.com

-Tom Edell

Morro Coast Audubon Society Membership Application

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

What type of membership would you like?

Morro Coast Audubon Society and National Audubon Society combined membership

(includes the Pacific Flyway newsletter and Audubon Magazine).

___ \$15 Students/Seniors

___ \$20 New/Intro

___ \$35 Renew Basic

Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Morro Coast Audubon Society membership only

(includes the Pacific Flyway newsletter)

___ \$20 New or renewal

Make check payable to MCAS.

MCAS Membership Details

Please mark all that apply:

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

___ I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

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

Please send me *Pacific Flyway* via:

___ E-mail (preferred)

___ Mail

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

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



MORRO COAST
AUDUBON
SOCIETY

MISSION:

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

Morro Coast Audubon Society

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