



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 46 Issue 3, July/ August 2011

Join MCAS Business Membership Program

This is the third year Morro Coast Audubon Society has welcomed business members. Annual business memberships run from June to June. In addition to the previously offered benefits, this year MCAS plans to add a spotlight in the newsletter with an article about each business. We currently have 12 Charter Business Members who have been with us since 2009. This year, MCAS is pleased to add Archie's Aloha Pest Management as a new business member, and thanks La Serena Inn; Marshall Ochylski, Attorney at Law; Goofy Graphics; and Science & Environmental Education for their business member renewals. Business memberships require a minimum donation of \$100 and include the following benefits:

For June 2011 - June 2012

- Receive publicity in our newsletter, Pacific Flyway: Twice yearly and a featured business article.
- Receive ongoing recognition on the MCAS website: Includes a link to your website as well as publicity at MCAS programs and events.
- Receive a MCAS Business Member window decal to display at your place of business.
- Receive our monthly newsletter, Pacific Flyway.

If you are a business owner or know of a business that would like to participate, please fill out and return the following reply form:

Yes! I want to become a Business Member of Morro Coast Audubon Society

COMPANY NAME _____

NATURE OF BUSINESS _____

CONTACT NAME _____

FULL ADDRESS _____

WEBSITE _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

I have enclosed a check (payable to Morro Coast Audubon Society) for \$_____ (\$100 minimum)

Please mail the above info & your check to: Morro Coast Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay, CA 93443

2010 - 2011 MCAS Business Members

Earl E. Conaway, Attorney at Law, SLO

Embarcadero Inn, Morro Bay

Goofy Graphics, Morro Bay

Hay Printing, Morro Bay

Jenny Brantlee, Realtor, Morro Bay

La Serena Inn, Morro Bay

Miner's Ace Hardware, Grover Beach

Marshall Ochylski, Attorney at Law, SLO

Science & Environmental

Education, Cambria

Spencer's Fresh Market, Morro Bay

Wild Birds Unlimited, San Luis Obispo

Estero Bay Graphics, Morro Bay

Stepping Stones (EcoSac Shopping

Bag System), Cambria

Tognazzini's Dockside Restaurant, Morro Bay

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BULLETIN

Bird Spotlight: Brandt's Cormorant

Brandt's Cormorant is a marine bird that inhabits the Pacific coast of North America. It feeds on small fish from the surface to sea floor by using its feet for propulsion to dive to depths of over 40 feet. During the breeding season, adults have a blue throat patch. This species nests on the ground or on rocky outcroppings.



Brandt's Cormorant, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

Bird Fun Fact

BRANT? The name is derived from the old English "brent" or "brand" goose. It means burnt goose, likely from the dark colors.

Sign Up Now! Annual Fall Pelagic Trip September 10

Leaders Tom Edell and Brad Schram will guide this year's eight-hour boat trip in search of Cook's Petrel. We will leave out of Port San Luis, Avila at 7:00am and head toward the Santa Lucia Banks, but going wherever the birds are within San Luis Obispo County waters. Expect a good variety of sea mammals also. The 65-foot boat is called "Pacific Horizon." If you'd like to sign up, please contact Mike Stiles at mstiles@calpoly.edu to receive an application. There has been a waiting list the last 3 years so sign up early! Applications must be received by August 10.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

MCAS Business Connection: Marshall Ochylski, Attorney at Law

Thank you Marshall Ochylski for providing ongoing pro bono legal counsel to MCAS. Marshall is the Principal Attorney for the Ochylski Law Group, which is a full-service law firm located in San Luis Obispo with an emphasis on real property and environmental law, and the planning and successful operation of a business. MCAS encourages those with concerns relating to these topics to give him a call. Marshall will dedicate the time, experience, and resources necessary to thoroughly address your needs. "I really appreciate all that MCAS does for our community and area" says Marshall.

MCAS encourages members to thank this environmentally friendly business member when seen "around town" and support him with business should you need legal counsel. Marshall can be contacted at 805-544-4546 or lawgroup@slolegal.com.



Common loon, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

Wintering Loon Study Update

The wintering loon study in Morro Bay still continues onward with the extremely crucial collection of band observation return data (the very purpose for banding and releasing 102 loons at Morro Bay over 6 years). Since loons can live up to 30 years, MCAS will always be happy to intake any band re-observations for live or dead loons. Please send loon band reports directly to Darwin Long via email at darwin.long@briloon.org or call him at 805-750-1294, as he is now responsible for most western and southern North American loon projects.

Welcome to Our New MCAS Members!

Arroyo Grande
Donna L Sterling
Nancy Stites

Atascadero
Lonna Nielsen
Kevin & Susan
Zimmer

Cambria
Abbie Chapman

Creston
Douglas Shinoda

Los Osos
Nathan Everitt
Trinity United
Methodist Church
Phyllis Rosenfeld
Shannon Savage

Morro Bay
David L Thomas

Nipomo
Nancy Longley

Paso Robles
Brian Alexander
Pamela Leal

San Luis Obispo
Michael Chambers
Starr Jenkins

Sun Lakes
Susannah B Johnson

Templeton
David E Snyder

LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

Beginner & Young Birders Event (All Ages)

Saturday, July 16, from 8:30am to 10:30am
Sweet Springs Nature Preserve in Los Osos

We are excited to be holding another beginner and kid's birding event at our very own Sweet Springs. It is for all levels of birding experience. A guided walk through Sweet Springs will begin at 8:30am at the main entrance on Ramona Street where we'll look for birds and other wildlife that use the preserve. You'll get a chance to see first-hand the major efforts Audubon and our stellar group of volunteers have put into improving the preserve for both wildlife and the public. If you have your own pair of binoculars, please bring them, but we will have some to borrow. We'll also have the scopes set up, which is a great opportunity for young birders to see birds up close. Please wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing and bring any water and snacks you might need. For questions, please contact leader Jennifer Moonjian at jmoonjia@gmail.com.

San Simeon State Park Birding

Saturday, August 6, from 7:00am to 12:00noon

Join Eric Brunschwiler on a slow-paced 3 to 4 mile loop thru grasslands, pines and willows at San Simeon State Park. We will be on trails, partly flat, but with several moderate up-grades. This trip is suitable for birders of all levels, including beginners and youth. Bring water, snacks and lunch if you'd prefer to eat before returning home. To carpool: meet at the SW corner of the Morro Bay Spencer's Market parking lot before 7:00am. Spencer's Market is on Main Street, a short distance North of Route 41. Those living in North County or the north coast area may meet at the Washburn day-use parking lot: about 2 miles north of the northernmost traffic light in Cambria, turn right (east) just before the bridge into the Washburn Day Use Area. For more information, call Eric at 805-927-1923.

Hummingbirds and More!

Saturday, August 13, from 8:00am to 10:00am

Join us at Cheryl Lish's yard in Arroyo Grande. Expect to see Anna's, Selasphorus (Rufous / Allen's), Black-chinned and possibly Costa's. This is the time of

year when hummers are abundant. We will help you understand how to identify birds. Fun for novice and experienced birders! Wheelchair accessible. Young birders welcome! A donation of sugar for the hummers would be appreciated, but is not necessary.

Directions: from Hwy 101 - go through the Village of Arroyo Grande until you come to the 3-way stop at Lopez Lake Drive. Take a right toward Lopez Lake, but only go to the second street on the left, which is Stagecoach Road. Follow Stagecoach Road all the way to the end. Turn right on El Sueno Way and go to the end of El Sueno. Cheryl's is the left-most house at the end of the road. Park on the lawn along the driveway; leave the driveway itself for those with limited mobility, please. Walk to the right around the garage to the back yard.



Costa's Hummingbird, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

Oso Flaco Birding Trip

Sunday, August 21, from 8:00am to 12:00pm

Meet leaders Joanna Iwanicha, Cheryl Lish, and Selena Flores of the Resource Department of Oceano Dunes District, California State Parks at 8:00am at the Oso Flaco parking lot. We will walk along the boardwalk trail through the riparian, lake, dune scrub, and shoreline habitats to enjoy the beautiful scenery and look for summer birds. With luck we will see adult and juvenile Least Terns foraging at the lake and see Snowy Plovers at the beach. We may also be able to practice identifying swallows perched close to the lake boardwalk. Children are welcome. We will walk to the beach overlook and finish at about 12:00 noon. Parking lot fee is \$5 and there is limited parking outside the gate for free.

Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County - May 2011

Many of the species mentioned in this month's report are again generated from Richard Rowlett's work at Point Piedras Blancas. In addition, there were a lot of lingering winter visitors and rare migrants noted this spring. Watch for returning shorebirds after mid-June. Hopefully this winter's late rains will keep local creek mouths full through fall. The total number of species reported to eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/ca>) now stands at 281, compared to 286 for the same period last year.

Abbreviations: CPNM = Carrizo Plain National Monument; OFL = Oso Flaco Lake; and PPB = Point Piedras Blancas.

WATERFOWL THRU BOBBY: Late migrant and lingering waterfowl were observed along the coast in May. Three late birds seen from PPB were a **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** on 12 May, a female **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** on 15 May, and an adult female **BLACK SCOTER** on 15 May (RAR). A male and female **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** lingered at Harmony Headlands State Park 2-6 May (RAR) and one was at Cuesta Inlet in Los Osos on 7 May (JSR). Adult and sub-adult **YELLOW-BILLED LOONS** were reported off PPB on 1 May (RAR); these are rare winter visitors to California and all records are reviewed by the California Bird Record Committee. A basic plumaged **RED-NECKED GREBE** at Morro Bay on 26 May (RSa) was unusually late. Single **MANX SHEARWATERS** were off PPB on 1 and 15 May (RAR). This continues to be a rare, but now somewhat regular species off the coast of California. A distant **BOOBY** seen off PPB on 17 May (RAR) could not be positively identified to species.

EGRET THRU SKIMMER: On 31 May, individual **GREAT EGRET** and **BALD EAGLE** nests were firsts at Twitchell Reservoir (WTF). Interesting raptors on the Carrizo Plain included migrant **SWAINSON'S HAWKS** present to 12 May (SF), a very late sub-adult **FERRUGINOUS HAWK** 10-13 May (SF), and an immature **PEREGRINE FALCON** that represented one of few recent records there 6-30 May (BAB). Casual in spring, a **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** was found at a pond in Harmony Headlands State Park on 2 May (RAR). An amazing total of 17 **FRANKLIN'S GULLS** recorded migrating north past PPB this spring included nine more this month with the last on 24 May (RAR). Two interesting gull sightings involved a very late **MEW GULL** at Old Creek in Cayucos on 11 May (MDH) and 16 **CALIFORNIA GULLS** on Soda Lake on 22 May that represented the first May record for the CPNM (TME,DGS,MLS). Apparently two second-year **GLAUCOUS GULLS** were seen from PPB with one present 4-18 May (RAR) and another that flew past the point on 26 May (RAR). An adult **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** seen from PPB on 13 May was only the second one reported this spring. Completely unexpected, were four **LONG-TAILED JAEGERS** off PPB on 29 May that provided the county's first spring record and first time this species has been

seen in the county from land. Three **ELEGANT TERNS** off PPB on 21 May were the first of the year and two **ARCTIC TERNS** on 23 May (RAR) were the first from there in many years. A single **BLACK SKIMMER** on 1 May (JSR) and two 7-12 May (MLS,DGS) were at Morro Bay.

ALCID THRU FLYCATCHER: Two **XANTUS'S MURRELETS** off PBB on 7 May (RAR) were of the expected scrippsi subspecies that breeds on the Channel Islands. A single **ANCIENT MURRELET** was heading in the wrong direction as it flew south past PBB on 18 May (RAR). In Nipomo, a **COMMON GROUND DOVE** was heard calling from an orchard along Dana Foothill Road on 5 May (MLS). **BLACK SWIFTS** moved through the county from 9-23 May with a high count of 11 at OFL on 23 May (MLS). Given the high number seen last month it was not surprising that more **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRDS** were reported in May with a male and female at Cerro Alto Campground on 8 May (RSc) and two more along Hwy 58 at Hwy 229 on 9 May (MLS,DGS). Empidonax flycatchers continued to move through the county in May. A **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** was in Morro Bay State Park on 1 May (JSR) and three **WILLOW FLYCATCHERS** were at CPNM on 22 May (TME,MLS,DGS) and a lone one was on the Monument near the KCL Campground on 29 May (PG).

RAVEN THRU GROSBEAK: A single **RAVEN** at Whale Rock Reservoir on 29 May (TME) was the first to be recorded there and indicates a continuing increase along the north coast. Two migrant **BANK SWALLOWS** flew past PPB on 13 May (RAR), while at OFL two were present on 17 May and one was there 19-20 May (MLS). An **AMERICAN DIPPER** found several miles up San Carpoforo Creek from Hwy 1 on 21-22 May (EB) suggests the possibility of breeding, which has never been documented in the county. Probably a scarce breeder in southeastern county, a **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** was at Quail Springs, CPNM on 31 May (MLS). Male **BALTIMORE ORIOLES** at PPB on 14 May (RAR) and in Arroyo Grande on 7 May (PP) provided the 11th and 12th spring records for the county. A female **EVENING GROSBEAK** at a feeder along Park Hill Road 4-7 May (RB) though always unexpected was less so because of the influx into California this winter.

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings including those cited above: Ray Boche, Bill A. Bouton, Eric Brunschwiler, Tom M. Edell, Sam Fitton, Wes T. Fritz, Peter Gaede, Marlin D. Harms, Patricia Price, Richard A. Rowlett, Jim S. Royer, Rick Saval(RSa), Ross Schaefer(RSc), Maggie L. Smith, and Douglas G. Stinson. For seasonal status 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 _____ PH _____

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

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.

For questions, contact the Membership Chair. (Contact information on page 2.)

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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