



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 45 Issue 3, July/ August 2010

MCAS Business Members Ahead of the Curve

A huge thanks to Lou Bartfield (La Serena Inn) and Jim Wells (Spencer's Fresh Market) for renewing their MCAS business memberships (June 2010-June 2011) without even being reminded! Last year, MCAS began offering business memberships and attracted 12 Charter Business members. MCAS is now in the process of renewing those memberships and adding new business members to the list. For \$100 per year, businesses can let people know they support local conservation efforts, and in return, businesses gain increased publicity and attract customers.

Business members receive:

- Publicity in the MCAS newsletter twice per year
- Ongoing recognition on the MCAS website (including a link to the business website)
- An MCAS Business Member window decal to display at their place of business
- A free subscription to the MCAS monthly newsletter, Pacific Flyway



Morro Strand, photo courtesy of Mike Baird

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

COMPANY NAME _____

NATURE OF BUSINESS _____

CONTACT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

WEBSITE _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

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

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

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BULLETIN



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Thank You MCAS Donors!

Jo Ann Youngner

Sandra Davis Lakeman

David & Christine Braun

MCAS Birdfinding Guide Updated

The MCAS Birdfinding Guide to SLO County has been updated to reflect current conditions. If you find inaccuracies in the future, please direct them to Mike Stiles mstiles@calpoly.edu so that he can keep the guide up-dated. The guide can be viewed here: <http://www.morrocoastaudubon.org/publications.php>

Bird Fun Fact

BIRDS AND HEAT: The internal temperature of birds is similar to that of humans, with some birds, especially the hummingbirds, being slightly higher. If body temperature gets too high, crucial protein enzymes begin to lose their stability and will eventually cease to function, leading to death. The smaller the bird, the faster the heat gain and loss, due to mass to surface ratios. In hot weather small birds will rest in the shade during the "heat of day," feeding actively only in the morning and evening. Raptors may beat the heat by soaring high on the warm-weather thermals into the cooler air. Some birds will be seen with their mouths open on hot days, cooling a little by "panting."



Pipit, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

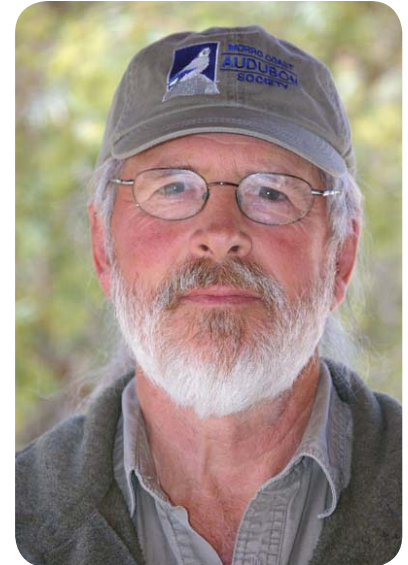
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank You Alan for Your Service to MCAS!

On behalf of the Board, thank you Alan for your service to MCAS! We will miss you and wish you the best on your next adventure to Arizona.

A note from Alan in his own words:

THANKS!!!! I will be leaving the area very soon to move to Patagonia, Arizona. I have been Field Trip Chairman since 2004 (yes It seems that long). During that time I have had help from many of you. Jen Moonjian has been co-chair for the last few years and has been a very big help! Thanks to Tom Edell for doing the Field Trip Chair's job for the past 17 years or so by organizing the Morro Bay CBC birding effort. Thanks to Maggie for taking the burden of Pelagic trip planning off my hands. Thanks to the many birders of the area who have led many, many great trips, and who have taught me so very much! Jen Moonjian is now Field Trip Chair and can be contacted at jmoonjia@gmail.com. Please help her all that you can by suggesting field trips and by volunteering to lead trips. She works full time and has far less time than I did as a retiree. I will miss my many friends here ... come see us when you are down Arizona way!



Welcome to Our New MCAS Members!

Arroyo Grande
Clare Stitz
Sandra Taylor

V A James
Robert Traver

Atascadero
Laura L Green
David & Rosemary Slater

Morro Bay
Barb Ignatius
Mike & Karen Moran

Avila Beach
Jennifer Langford

Paso Robles
Wendy Olson

Cambria
Lynn Moon
Jim Seagle
Carla Swift

Pismo Beach
Mary & Tom Cline

Creston
Bob French

San Luis Obispo
Lois Buschman
Marie M Dickson
Dewitt Greil
John Perrine
John Peschong
Diana K Schmielt

Grover Beach
Darlene Daugherty

Los Osos
Libby Huss

San Miguel
Chuck Campbell

Return of the Snowy Plover Outreach Booth

Memorial Day marked the beginning of summer, as well as the return of Morro Coast Audubon's Western Snowy Plover Outreach. The holiday weekend brought many tourists and locals to learn about Snowy Plover restoration and habitat conservation. Just like last year, the mobile booth is set up every Saturday providing information on the threatened shorebirds' nesting cycle and current efforts implemented by California State Parks. The booth is comprised of a sun-shade canopy, interpretive panel, viewing scope, and various hands-on activities for children of all ages. The booth is staffed by Aurianna Woodson, a Snowy Plover Monitor at Montana de Oro State Park, and is funded through a grant by Sempra Energy. The only major change is the location, which will usually be the parking lot at Morro Rock in Morro Bay; however the booth location might vary over the summer to get the most visibility. The booth will be open to the public mornings and afternoons (typically between 10am and 2pm). Keep an eye out for the booth at upcoming events and festivals throughout the county this summer. For information on current booth location, contact Aurianna at auriannaw@gmail.com or 805-202-9724.

LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

Oso Flaco Birding Trip

Saturday, July 31st at 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Meet leaders Joanna Iwanicha, Environmental Scientist, and Cheryl Lish, Environmental Services intern (both with Resource Dept of Oceano Dunes District, California State Parks) at 8:00 AM 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 new beach overlook and finish at about 12:00 noon. Parking lot fee is \$5 and there is limited parking outside the gate for free.

San Simeon State Park

Saturday, August 7th at 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM

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 south. To carpool: meet at the SW corner of the Morro Bay Spencer's Market parking lot before 7:00 AM. Spencer's Market is on Main Street, a short distance North of Route 41. Those living in north county or north coast area may meet at the Washburn day-use parking lot; about 2 miles north of the last traffic light in Cambria, turn right (east) just before the bridge into the Washburn Day Use Area. Call Eric at 927-1923 for more information.

Hummingbirds and More

Saturday, August 14th from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM

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 (dry grass) along the driveway; leave the driveway itself for those with limited mobility, please. Walk to the right around the garage to the back yard.

Annual Fall Pelagic Trip

Saturday, August 28th from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Leaders Tom Edell and Brad Schram, both expert and experienced pelagic trip leaders, will guide this year's ten-hour trip giving us a better chance to get into deep water and find Cook's Petrel. We will leave out of Port San Luis, Avila, CA heading out 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" and has a hot galley. If you are interested, please contact Maggie Smith at milleniummaggs@charter.net or 805-710-4356 to receive an application. There has been a waiting list the last 3 years so sign up early. We have to be full by July 28th or the trip will be cancelled. Other trips will be announced via the MCAS Alert. To be notified of these extra events email Mike Stiles at: mstiles@calpoly.edu



Nuthatch, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County -April 2010

These are the most interesting reports gleaned from the Slocobirding listserv and the Cornell Lab's eBird project. The total number of species reported in SLO County this year now stands at 292. By the time this column appears in the next Flyway, fall shorebird migration will be presenting new opportunities to add new species to the county's 2010 total. Abbreviations: CBRC = California Bird Records Committee; MDOSP = Montana de Oro State Park; PPB = Point Piedras Blancas.

WATERFOWL: The **ACKLING GOOSE** found on Morro Bay in April continued through 22 May (TME). The bird had a bold white neck ring suggesting the Aleutian subspecies whose population has rebounded in recent years. Lingering ducks reported on Morro Bay were a male **EURASIAN WIGEON** on 7 May, two males and a female **AMERICAN WIGEON** on 31 May, a male and female **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** ON 31 May, and a **GREATER SCAUP** on 22-31 May (all TME). The Eurasian and American Wigeons provided new county late spring dates. To the north, a female **HARLEQUIN DUCK** on 2 May, male **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** on 1 May, and three **BLACK SCOTERS** on 2 May were late migrants seen from PPB (all RAR).

LOONS THRU MOORHENS: An amazing total of five **YELLOW-BILLED LOONS** were reported from PPB 5-22 May (RAR) and if accepted by the CBRC would increase the total number of county records to six. Nearly as rare off our coastline, a **MANX SHEARWATER** flew past PPB on 1 May (RAR). This species has been seen several times in past years from this location. A rare but annual spring migrant, four **WHITE-FACED IBIS** were observed at Oso Flaco Lake on 3 May (MLS) and two were north of PPB at the Arroyo del Corral marsh on 26 May (TME). Two adult **COMMON MOORHENS** at the back of Laguna Lake 14-26 May (JSR) could nest at that location.

SHOREBIRDS THRU ALCIDS: In the running for bird of the month was an **AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** seen from PPB on 24 May (RAR) that likely represents the most northern record for the state. Many of the records north of Mexico involve hybrid with Black Oystercatcher; however based on the observers description this was a fairly pure bird. Two **BLACK-NECKED STILTS** at the Turri Road tidal ponds 7-8 May (TME) were along the coast where this species is rare. Noteworthy gull reports from PPB included a late **MEW GULL** on 9 May (RAR) and the only spring **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** on 3 May (RAR). The first **ELEGANT TERNS** this year were seen on 22 May when three were off PPB (RAR) and three were off MDOSP (JSR). A **LEAST TERN** at Oso Flaco Lake on 3 May (MLS) provided the lone report. A few **MARbled MURRELETS** remained in the county with six in alternate plumage off Pismo Beach

on 17 May (JW) and two flying north past PBB on 19 May (RAR). Other northbound murrelets were a **XANTUS'S MURRELET** off MDOSP on 22 May (JSR) and an **ANCIENT MURRELET** off PBB on 12 May (RAR). Another remarkable record from PPB was five **PARAKEET AUKLETS** seen flying north on 8 May (RAR) that if accepted by the CBRC would represent the second record in two years!

CUCKOOS THRU THRUSHES: Never expected, a **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** heard and later seen at Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground on 27 May provided the county's first May record (RM). There was a strong movement of **BLACK SWIFTS** this spring with hundreds reported in Santa Barbara County. Sixteen were reported in SLO County from 5 to 24 May with a high count of ten over Deer Canyon in Arroyo Grande on 7 May (BKS). Migrant Empidonax flycatchers worth mentioning were **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** at Santa Margarita Lake on 2 May (TME) and along the north coast at San Carpoforo Creek on 18 May (RAR) and a **GRAY FLYCATCHER** drooping its tail at Deer Canyon on 21 May (BKS). An above average number of **BANK SWALLOWS** were reported with four at PPB from 4-21 May (RAR) and one at Oso Flaco Lake on 11 May (MLS). It was a dismal winter for **VARIED THRUSH** in SLO County, which makes a late one at the Los Osos Oaks State Preserve on 23 May (JSR) all the more surprising.

WARBLERS THRU GROSBEAKS: Single female **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS** were at the Pecho Road willows 8-9 May (JSR) and along Coon Creek, MDOSP, on 17 May (JSR). Interesting sparrows along the "Boy Scout Trail" above Cerro Alto Campground included 4-5 singing **BLACK-CHINNED SPARROWS** and many **SAGE SPARROWS** on 15 May (JSR). **BREWER'S SPARROWS** continued to sing and act territorial along the Quail Springs- Padrone Springs "cutoff road" at the Carrizo Plain National Monument on 5 May (AFS). In Los Osos, a slightly blotchy male **SUMMER TANAGER** was in eucalyptus trees near the Pecho Road Willows on 10 May and an adult male **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** was nearby the intersection of Nancy Ave and Binscarth Road 20-23 May (both JSR).

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings including those cited above: Mary Ann Ambrose, Tom M. Edell, Ron Melcer, Richard A. Rowlett, Jim S. Royer, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Maggie L. Smith, Linda Tanner, and Jacob Walker. 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 _____ 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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