



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 44 Issue 6, November 2009

A Season of Giving- MCAS 2009 Fund Drive

October is nearly over already. With a chilly breeze in the air, orange and red leaves falling from trees, and the sun setting early, I'm reminded that winter is just around the corner. One current trend in gift-giving that I love is the idea of donating money in a loved one's name to an organization which supports their passions - what a meaningful gift! Might you consider a donation to MCAS as a gift for those special ones in your life?

We'll make it easy for you - in the coming weeks, you will find our 2009 Morro Coast Audubon Society Fund Drive letter in the mail. As a member of MCAS, you are a supporter of our programs and important conservation work. Now is the time to show your support! Whether it's a donation from your own generous spirit or as a gift to a loved one, it will greatly benefit our organization.

We won't let you down - big things are happening in the Morro Coast Audubon Society this year! Together

with our amazing membership, MCAS continues to restore Sweet Springs and is also bringing its new East Sweet Springs Property up to speed. We will present free monthly programs and birding field trips (including those for beginners); sponsor the MB Winter Bird Festival; support research programs; and publish monthly newsletters to keep you up-to-date on projects, events, and issues. In the coming year, MCAS also plans to expand its public outreach. We will continue to be a voice for the environment and comment on important environmental issues within the county, state, and nation.

We greatly appreciate your generosity and help! A tax-deductible donation in any amount from you, our members, will help ensure that we can continue to accomplish great work on your behalf. 'Tis the season for giving.

-Christy Holmes, MCAS President

Important Action Item for All Members

As has been announced in recent months, this issue of the Pacific Flyway is the last to be printed and mailed to all members. In an effort to save resources, both natural and financial, we are moving to an electronic version that is posted on our website.

If you would like to receive an announcement via email when each issue is published on the MCAS website, you must sign up for this service at www.morrocoastaudubon.org/onlinenewsletter.htm or e-mail a note to rvalvo@sbcglobal.net.

If you do not have Internet access, or if you otherwise need a hardcopy, you may opt to continue receiving paper copies via the mail. The aforementioned web site allows you to do that. Or you may send a note to our office at PO Box 1507, Morro Bay, CA 93443.

After this month, printed newsletters will only go to people who have requested them. We hate to leave anyone behind, so please let us know your preference.

-Rosalie Valvo, Membership Chair

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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

Annie Fernandes

Stanley R Fisher

Robert Imes

Mark Miller

Los Osos

E M Atkins

Morro Bay

Nelleke Mongin

Atascadero

Pat Alvino

Linda Bell

M Cornelius

Rex Hendrix

Kristi Hervig

Madeline Wilson

W V Wyngaarden

Paso Robles

Robert Chambers

Mitchell Wyss

San Luis Obispo

Lorraine A Akelian

Kelly Caddy

B Cochrane

Carole Geile

Pamela Graham

Theodora Jones

Teri Moore

Sharon & Eugene

Peters

Emily Segal

Ed Sherman

Jerry D Smith

Kathleen J Waddell

Cambria

Donna Bower

Amanda Dall

Anita Hubscher

Linda Nedleman

Creston

Karen Shirey

Fresno

David Britz

Grover Beach

Joan Neufeld



Black-crowned Night-heron
Courtesy of Mike Baird

Planta-palooza at Chimineas Ranch

Saturday and Sunday, November 7-8

Last year, a hard-working group of Audubon volunteers helped to install a barbed-wire fence to exclude cattle and promote riparian vegetation at a natural spring on Chimineas Ranch. Other volunteer groups helped to fence off similar aquatic habitats around the ranch with the goal of re-vegetating them in 2009. During the weekend of November 7-8, we are going to be planting willows, cottonwoods, and other native riparian vegetation within the newly-fenced-off areas. The work will consist of digging small holes and planting tree cuttings. The work is likely to be moderately strenuous and we are going to get pretty dirty, but it'll be fun work with great company!

Please join us at the beautiful Chimineas Ranch, which is the latest addition to the Carrizo Plain National Monument and represents a great diversity of natural habitats. The planting will begin Saturday morning, but many folks arrive on Friday to enjoy a potluck and good company. There are beds (limited) and plenty of indoor and outdoor camping space available. Cooking facilities are available, and we will coordinate potlucks on Friday and Saturday nights. We'll work hard on Saturday, but you can enjoy a scenic trip back home on Sunday morning, birding or wildlife watching as you go.

To sign up or for more information contact Jen Moonjian at: jmoonjia@gmail.com. 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.). Rain will cancel.



*Lawrence's Goldfinch at Chimineas Ranch
Courtesy of Alan Schmierer*

MCAS Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 19, dawn to dusk

Potluck dinner, 6pm, Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School (please note the new location)

Please join us for this annual event. Our success in the national ranking has been the result of having many people in the field sighting birds. To participate in the CBC you must register by November 28th.

As shown on the enclosed sign-up form and map, our Bird Count area is a circle 15 miles in diameter, centered at Turri Road and Los Osos Valley Road. Please look over the map of the count area, select your favorite spot or select "no preference", and send in your registration along with the \$5.00 registration fee (required by National Audubon). Audubon membership is not required, but National rules will not permit us to accept a count from an unregistered observer. The \$5.00 fee goes toward the compilation and publication costs of the data in the American Birds Magazine.

Registrants will receive assignments in early December, and your Sector Leader will contact you.

Directions to the Potluck Dinner

*Please note, the potluck is not at the SLOBG Oak Glen Pavilion.

From Highway 1 turn into Education Dr. (opposite the northern entrance to Cuesta College). Bear left in front of the SLO County Office of Education building. Continue on the road (it becomes Pennington Creek Rd.) and watch for the Rancho El Chorro buildings on the right hand side.

Bert and Elaine Townsend, CBC Coordinators
(805) 543-1373, betownsend@sbcglobal.net

Community Program: Friends of the Carrizo Plain, and Solar Projects

with Craig Deutsche and Cal French
Monday, November 16, 7pm
El Chorro Park, SLOBG Oak Glen Pavilion
(across from Cuesta College)

Join Friends of the Carrizo Plain's Craig Deutsche, volunteer coordinator, and Cal French, volunteer. Craig will introduce you to the mission, values, and vision of Friends of the Carrizo Plain. He will share with you all the organization is doing to benefit this unique, amazing piece of our county and let you know how you can get involved with all that they do. Cal will update and inform you on the multiple solar projects proposed for the Carrizo Plain. Be sure to catch this informative meeting!

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



*American Kestrel on the Carrizo Plain
Courtesy of Alan Schmierer*

Thanks Go Out to the Following Donors

Anna Marie Bovill Lea

Bev & Bill Moylan

Carrie Pardo
in memory of Al Pardo

Sally Gupta
in memory of
Dorothy Bianche Krebsbach

Sweet Springs Fall Planting Party

Saturday, November 14, 9am

You know it's fall on the California coast when the poison oak turns red, the goldenrod blooms yellow and the acorns start blasting from the trees. Those are also our cues that it's time to get native plants in the ground. And we have plenty of trees, shrubs and smaller plants ready and waiting for us. Can you help us free them from their pots?

We need LOTS of volunteers for our fall planting party scheduled for Saturday, November 14th at 9am. We'll have scores of plants that need to be dug in, watered and mulched. Last year we had over 50 volunteers and no one ran out of things to do.

As always, we'll have munchies and drinks to keep you energized, and we will be raffling off some free tee shirts and caps. So grab your gloves and a shovel if you have one and come join us! If you need more info, call Holly at 239-3928 or find directions to the preserve at www.morrocoastaudubon.org/spdirection.htm.

Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County -Sept. 2009

The number of species reported to eBird in SLO County during September increased by 23 from last month to a total of 214 species. The following are some of the most interesting reports gleaned primarily from the Slocobirding listserv and eBird. Abbreviations used below are: CPNM = Carrizo Plain National Monument; MDOSP = Montana de Oro State Park, PSBOC = Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground; and SCC = Spooners Cove Campground, MDOSP.

WATERFOWL THRU IBIS: A flock of 22 **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** flying over Deer Canyon on 27 Sep (BKS) were the first this fall. The Aleutian **CACKLING GOOSE** continued through the month at Laguna Lake (TME). A flock of 2,180 Storm-Petrels was encountered by a research vessel near the Lucia Bank on 11 Sep (MF,SW) included an amazing 80 **WILSON'S** (previous high count for SLO was 5 on 22 Sep 1984) and 100 **LEAST STORM-PETRELS**. Very rare away from the immediate coast, a immature **BROWN PELICAN** swimming with White Pelicans at Atascadero Lake 28-29 Sep (RHZ) provided only the second county record east of the Santa Lucia Range. Small numbers of **WHITE-FACED IBIS** continued to move through the county with two juveniles seen over Oceano County Pond on 11 Sep (RHZ), nine at Estero Bluffs State Park 17 Sep (MDH), and one at Atascadero Lake 28 Sep (RHZ).

HAWK THRU MURRELET: Now almost an annual occurrence, an adult **BROAD-WINGED HAWK** was photographed as it flew south along the north ridge of Deer Canyon in northeastern Arroyo Grande (BKS). An immature **COMMON MOORHEN** was observed on the lagoon at PSBOC (MLS). The rarest shorebird for the period was a juvenile **RUFF** photographed at Whale Rock Reservoir on 7 Sep (TME) that provided the 19th county record. Two adult and two juvenile **LEAST TERNS** at Oso Flaco Lake on 24 Sep (MLS) remained later than expected. A research vessel recorded a **SOUTH POLAR SKUA** about four miles off Cambria on 11 Sep (RAR). **MARBLED MURRELETS** remained along the north coast where three were off the old Point Motel on 5 Sep (MLS) and 6-8 were seen from the San Simeon Pier on 27 Sep (GPS).

DOVE THRU NUTHATCH: A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** was photographed on Lodge Hill in Cambria on 1 Sep (DF). The most interesting flycatchers reported were a **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** along Morro Creek on 13 Sep (TME) and a **TROPICAL KINGBIRD** at the Pecho Road willows on 13 Sep (JSR). One of the highlights in Sep was a **LEAST BELL'S VIREO** found at the Pecho Road willows in Los Osos 12-13 Sep (JSR). Photographs showing the bird's leg band allowed it to be identified as a nestling banded this summer at Camp Pendleton. A well described **PLUMBEOUS VIREO** at PSBOC 22-25 Sep (MLS) provided the ninth county record. The lone report for **BANK SWALLOW** was from Oso Flaco Lake on 6 Sep (MLS). Up to three **PYGMY NUTHATCHES**

continued on the north side of Black Hill in Morro Bay State Park (mob)

WARBLERS: Most of the Warbler activity was at PSBOC and SCC. A first fall **TENNESSEE WARBLER** 21-22 Sep (BKS) was at PSBOC and a first fall **VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** was at SCC on 15 Sep (BAB). Two **NORTHERN PARULA** at PSBOC were a first fall female 6-14 Sep (MLS) and a first fall male 20-27 Sep (MS). Three **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS** were reported with singles at PSBOC on 16 Sep (MLS) and 22-27 Sep (MLS) and a female at SCC on 27 Sep (SCS,MDS). A male **BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** was at SCC 19 Sep (MDS). Regular in small numbers each fall, three **BLACKPOLL WARBLERS** were seen between 18-27 Sep (AFS,GPS,TME) and three **AMERICAN REDSTARTS** were found between 16-29 Sep (MLS,BAB,RHZ). An immature female **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** was photographed at PSBOC on 14 Sep (RHZ) and a first fall **PINE WARBLER** there on 25 Sep (BKS) will constitute the earliest fall record for the State if accepted by the California Bird Records Committee. A **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** lingered along the northern shoreline of the PSBOC lagoon 11-20 Sep (RHZ).

TOWHEE THRU ORIOLE: A **GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** on Black Hill, Morro Bay State Park, 6 Sep (TME) and another at Islay Creek, MDOSP, on 23 Sep (JC) provided the 16th and 17th county records. Four **CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS** were reported; one found on the southern CPNM 30 Sep (MLS) provided the first record for the monument. **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** is proving to be regular in fall at Quail Spring in the CPNM where up to seven were recorded 1-30 Sep (AFS). At least two immature male **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS** were seen in several locations at PSBOC 4-11 Sep (TME,MLS,RHZ). Very rare in Sep, a second year male **BLUE GROSBEAK** was photographed at the Pecho Road willows (LT). Three **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** flying over Oso Flaco Lake on 6 Sep (MLS) provided the only report. A female/immature **ORCHARD ORIOLE** was found at SCC on 19 Sep (JSR); this small oriole can be difficult to separate from our breeding Hooded Orioles.

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Bill A. Bouton, Joyce Cory, Tom M. Edell, David Feleay, Michael Force, Marlin D. Harms, Richard A Rowlett, Jim S. Royer, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Steve C. Schubert, Mitch Siemens, Gregory P. Smith, Maggie L. Smith, Linda Tanner, Sophie Webb, 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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