



# Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 46 Issue 6, November 2011

## Local Couple Adds 10% of Needed Funds to Open Sweet Springs East *And promise more as additional money is raised*

MCAS wishes to thank Libbie Agran and Guy Fitzwater of Los Osos for their generous contribution of \$10,000 to be used to help raise funds to open Sweet Springs East to the public. When questioned about why they chose to donate at this time, Libbie responded, "This project needs to be finished. By giving this gift at this time, we hope to give others the incentive to follow our lead." Since MCAS is using a bird feeder to help people visualize our goal, this is indeed "seed" money.



*President Stephanie Little adds 10% of needed seed to fill the feeder. Photo courtesy of Jan Surbey.*

Libbie and Guy have started what MCAS hopes will be a successful fund drive that will enable us to reach the estimated \$100,000 goal needed to finance the opening of Sweet Springs East to the public while restoring the habitat and protecting the sensitive biological and cultural resources found there. Libbie and Guy have also promised to match each additional \$10,000 raised with an additional \$1,000 contribution. MCAS urges others to follow in their footsteps by donating at any level. Every grain of seed is appreciated! THANK YOU LIBBIE AND GUY!

## Hooray for Hay Printing! MCAS Business Member Spotlight

The MCAS Strategic Plan goals include supporting locally owned businesses, and, to that end, MCAS has had a long, uninterrupted relationship with Hay Printing in Morro Bay. Hay has been printing the MCAS newsletter, fund drive letters, and providing MCAS with needed stationery for many years and uses recycled materials when available.

Hay Printing celebrated their 30th anniversary of being in business in Morro Bay in 2010. Although the business has undergone many changes in that time, one thing remains the same: the Hay Printing focus of guiding both new and old businesses through the process of getting more "bang for the buck" in their communication and printing needs. In addition to printing anything from single to process-color jobs, Hay offers copywriting, typesetting and design, can help clients set up pre-print files and select appropriate paper and inks. For the client or designer who has their printing files established and wants the convenience of online shopping, [www.hayprinting.net](http://www.hayprinting.net) has a home page with a price calculator, which is great for creating a realistic printing budget with no obligation to buy. Ordering is just a push of the button and an upload of the pdf file.

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# MCAS 2010-2011 BOARD

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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

## BULLETIN

## Welcome to Our New MCAS Members!

### *Arroyo Grande*

Ann Brooks

Mark Miller

Leighton Pratt

Cynthia Runstrom

### *Morro Bay*

Ashala Tylor

F M Wathen

### *Paso Robles*

Teresa Branch

Ava Elliott

Linda Szakakski

### *Atascadero*

Tani Smida

### *Cambria*

Karen Frair

John Stel

### *San Luis Obispo*

Daniel Sears Costello

Mathews Elijah

Holly Naylor

### *Los Osos*

Harry R Holden

Barbara King

G E Knepel

### *Santa Maria*

Christina Korsak

### *Shandon*

James Sinton

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Tom and Mary Hay have felt privileged to have raised their family in Morro Bay and are lifelong nature lovers. Tom has been a surfer since his junior high days, although he attended enough classes to receive his degree in printing management from Cal Poly. Tom and Mary appreciate the work of MCAS, especially in the care of Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, where they are able to take a "stroll among the native flora and fauna and enjoy the spectacular view of Morro Rock and the sandspit" thanks to the work of MCAS volunteers. Tom and Mary are both active in the local community where they support local nonprofits by keeping their printing costs low and donating design and typesetting work when possible. MCAS feels it is a joy to work with Hay Printing and encourages members to patronize the business when printing and related needs arise.

Contact Hay Printing at 772-3947, or visit them at 3118-G Main Street in Morro Bay.

# SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Fund Drive Close to Reaching One Quarter of Our Goal!

As this edition of the Flyway goes to press, MCAS has raised \$24,869. This is almost one fourth of the \$100,000 goal for this fund drive. With Libbie Agran and Guy Fitzwater pledging another \$1,000 for each additional \$10,000 raised (see article on page 1), MCAS hopes to “fill the feeder” to overflowing and raise the funds necessary to open East Sweet Springs to the public while protecting the cultural and biological resources found on the property. Donors this month include:

Hedy Avant  
Michael Baxter  
Kali Beard  
Sheila Blanke  
Marilyn Britz  
Bryan Brown  
Mimi Bull  
Liz Caldwell  
Robin Chapman  
George Daniel  
Sally Equinoa /  
Nature Works /  
Shaklee  
Carol Fulmer  
Patricia Golden  
Gail & Shirley Green  
Nancy Green  
Laurie Haas

Alta Hall  
Marsha Houston  
Bruenecke Jeanne  
Gene & Mimi Kalland  
Jerry Kirkhart  
R Kreps  
James Lawson  
Ken & Gaby Levine  
Ruth Madocks  
Urban McLellan  
& Helen McCann  
Marilyn Moore  
Judy Naylor  
Joan O’Keefe  
James Patterson  
Ron Ruppert &  
Shaunna Sullivan  
Connie & Richard

Schram  
John Severson  
Linda Sewell  
Judy Thompson  
Fred & Marilyn  
Wadsworth  
Norma Wightman  
Pam Wood  
Ann Wride



### East Sweet Springs 'Restoration Party' Deemed Fun and Successful

Nearly one hundred enthusiastic participants joined the effort to begin the restoration of the East Sweet Springs property. On September 24, after short introductory speeches given by Jim Patterson (SLO County Supervisor), Marshall Ochylski (Los Osos Community Services District Chair), Fred Collins (Chumash representative), Vicki Milledge (Los Osos Community Advisory Council Chair), and MCAS President Stephanie Little, participants grabbed shovels and trowels and began removing the ubiquitous veldt grass from part of the property. The results were amazing: The chosen plot was cleared of the invasive species, natives "tagged" and "saved" and a huge mountain of veldt grass awaited removal to the dump. Hungry participants were rewarded with pizza, yogurt, lemonade, coffee and homemade treats thanks to the event sponsors and a few volunteer bakers. Thanks to all who participated!



*Sweet Springs restoration party. Photo courtesy of Devra Cooper.*

### Another Productive Year at the MCAS Plover Booth

If you visited Morro Rock between 10:00am and 12:30pm on a Saturday this summer, you probably saw either Aurianna Woodson or Tamar Carmona educating visitors and locals at the MCAS Western Snowy Plover outreach booth. These friendly ladies provided information about Western Snowy Plover conservation and local natural history and they received many donations from the appreciative public. A total of 624 visitors stopped by the booth at the Rock. In addition to the Rock, the booth has also been present at a variety of events this summer, such as Earth Day, Harbor Festival, and the San Simeon Discovery Fair, to name a few. These events were a great opportunity to reach out to children and adults, and many kids left the booth keen to bring home the little plover chick they painted.

A new addition to the plover booth program this year was the creation of Saturday office hours between 1:00pm and 4:00pm. The new time was very popular, with 160 people visiting our office in the Marina Square Building at 601 Embarcadero Steet in Morro Bay. Numerous people were excited to see the office open on the weekends, and many MCAS logo t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and socks were purchased. October marked the end of the third month of the outreach booth and new Saturday office hours. Rosalie Valvo is also at the office each Thursday from 10:00am to 12:00 noon.

## LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

### MCAS Community Program: The Fascinating and Unusual Creatures of Santa Margarita Lake Regional Park

*Presented by Chuck Woodard*

**Monday, November 21 at 7:00pm**  
**SLO Botanical Garden Oak Glen Pavilion in El Chorro Park (across from Cuesta College)**

Join Santa Margarita Lake's Resident Park Ranger Chuck Woodard as he shares interesting life histories and fun tales of some of the more unusual inhabitants of the park. Chuck has been the Resident Park Ranger at the lake for the past six years and has enjoyed this unique living experience to the fullest. He has had the wonderful privilege of working, exploring and learning about the natural treasures of the park for nearly 10 years.

All MCAS Community Programs are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided; please bring your own mug. As always, all ages are welcome.



*Santa Margarita Lake. Photo courtesy of Justin Middlekauff*

### Carrizo Plain Christmas Bird Count, 2011

**Saturday, December 31 - Save the Date!**

The Carrizo Plain Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 31, 2011. Mark your calendar! More details will be in the December Flyway. What a great way to end the year!

### Oso Flaco Beginning Birding Event with Sierra Club

**Saturday, November 5, 8:30am - 11:30am**

We are excited to be able to collaborate again with our local Santa Lucia Sierra Club Chapter. Meet leaders Maggie Smith and Jennifer Moonjian at 8:30am 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 remaining fall migrants and recently arrived overwintering birds. We will practice efficiently using binoculars and improving techniques for identification of birds. We'll be looking for wrentit, snowy plover and maybe even a virginia rail. We will walk to the beach overlook and finish at about 11:30. Binoculars are highly recommended and will also be available to borrow. Please wear sturdy shoes, layered clothing, and bring water, snacks, and a field guide if you have one. Parking lot fee is \$5 and there is limited parking outside the gate for free. Rain will cancel. If you have any questions, you can contact Jennifer Moonjian at [jmoonjia@gmail.com](mailto:jmoonjia@gmail.com) after October 16.

### MCAS Christmas Bird Count

**Saturday, December 17**  
**Registration due November 27**

Our annual Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 17, 2011, dawn to dusk, rain or shine! It will be followed with our compilation potluck at 6:00pm. This year the popular dinner will be held at the San Luis Obispo Co Botanical Garden, Oak Glen Pavilion. Take the well marked turnoff from Hwy 1 into El Chorro Regional Park. The pavilion is on the right, past the entrance to the Botanical Garden. Park in the lot opposite the pavilion

Our bird count area is a circle 15 miles in diameter, centered at Turri Road and Los Osos Valley Road. Only species and numbers of birds seen within this area may be counted. You can get more count information, look at maps of the count circle, register online, or download registration information at <http://morrocoastaudubon.org/cbc.php>. The online count circle map has been updated and is now a fantastic resource that allows views of each count area in its entirety and the ability to zoom in for finer detail in street map and aerial views.

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# LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS- cont.

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Our success in the national ranking has been the result of having many people in the field sighting birds. 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, which is required by National Audubon for each participant. Checks should be payable to Morro Coast Audubon Society. 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.

The results of over 1,000 counts in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands are compiled by the National Audubon Society and used to ascertain the annual distribution and fluctuation in numbers of North American birds. Each participant who pays the \$5 fee will

receive a copy of this interesting and beautifully illustrated report.

Registration is due November 27 so the area leaders can properly organize for thorough coverage. Early registration makes the job go much more smoothly and makes it possible for you to pre-bird the area and become familiar with it. In early December you will receive your assignment, and your area leader will contact you.

Compiler: Tom Edell - phone: (805) 995-1691  
Count Coordinators: Bert and Elaine Townsend -  
phone: (805) 543-1373  
e-mail: betownsend@sbcglobal.net

## 2011 MCAS Christmas Bird Count - Registration Form

The 2011 Morro Coast Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be on December 17 this year. Sector maps and descriptions are available on line at <http://morrocoastaudubon.org>. Please indicate below how you wish to receive the information. You can also sign up online if you wish.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PH \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

First choice sector # \_\_\_\_\_ OR Wherever needed \_\_\_\_\_

Second choice sector # \_\_\_\_\_

Third choice sector # \_\_\_\_\_

Skill level: Experienced [ ] Intermediate [ ] Beginner [ ] (Beginners will be assigned with a more experienced birder)

Would you be willing to census additional sectors? YES NO

Would you be willing to census your bird feeder? YES NO

Would you prefer to go out with a more experienced birder? YES NO

Experienced birders are **encouraged** to take along a beginner. Are you willing? YES NO

\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive the maps and forms by mail.

\_\_\_\_ I will retrieve them from the website at <http://morrocoastaudubon.org>

\_\_\_\_ I have done the same sector many times and do not need a map or sector description.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Check to be made payable to MCAS and sent to: Elaine and Bert Townsend  
531 Lawrence Dr.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

# Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County- September 2011

The hot birding spots in September were Islay Creek and the campground at Montana de Oro State Park, the Oceano Campground and lagoon at Pismo Beach State Park, and the Pecho Road willows in Los Osos. The total number of species reported to eBird from SLO County in 2011 (<http://tinyurl.com/5rox67z>) now stands at 305, compared to 317 for the same period last year.

Abbreviations: MDOSP = Montana de Oro State Park; and PSBOC = Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground.

**WATERFOWL THRU IBIS: WOOD DUCKS** are generally rare along the coast where single females were at Whale Rock Reservoir on 4 Sep (TME), Islay Creek, MDOSP, on 21 Sep (DGS), and Cayucos Creek on 30 Sep (TME). Two male **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** seen on Morro Bay from the Audubon Overlook on 2 Sep (KLP) were the first reported this fall. A transient male **REDHEAD** was at Arroyo de La Cruz on 30 Sep (RHZ). An eclipse plumaged male **HARLEQUIN DUCK** at Morro Bay on 11 Sep (J&CVB) either moved there from Estero Bluffs State Park or went undetected all summer. The wayward immature **REDDISH EGRET** first located at Pismo Beach on Aug 6, continued to move about on the coast where it was sighted at Cayucos Creek on 7 Sep (MDH) and at Morro Bay on 14 Sep (SCS). In recent years only one or two **CATTLE EGRETS** are reported making one at the Oceano County Park on 13 Sep (MLS) notable. **WHITE-FACED IBIS** were recorded regularly along the coast all month with a high count of 17 at the Arroyo Grande Creek mouth on 2 Sep (EK); the high count away from the coast was 26 at the Chinineas Ranch on 12 Sep (BWS).

**RAPTORS THRU MURRELET:** An intermediate morph adult **SWAINSON'S HAWK** along Hwy 46 just west of Estrella River on 21 Sep (JL) was a rarely encountered fall transient. A very early **FERRUGINOUS HAWK** was seen on the Hearst Ranch pasture from Hwy 1 on 9 Sep (TME). A below average number of **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** were reported this fall; this month juveniles were at Morro Creek mouth on 1-2 Sep (KLP) and Old Creek in Cayucos on 1 Sep (TME). The only **SOLITARY SANDPIPER** of the fall was at Cayucos Creek 26 Sep-1 Oct (BAB). Four more **BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS** trickled through the county with one at Morro Strand State Beach on 11 Sep (DML) providing the latest report. Juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers were present along the coast all month with a high count of two at Morro Creek mouth (mob). A basic plumaged **FRANKLIN'S GULL** at Morro Creek on 29 Sep (MLS) provided only the 12th fall record for the county. Also of interest was a somewhat fresh plumaged juvenile **SABINE'S GULL** along Morro Strand State Beach on 30 Sep (KLP). The only **MARbled MURRELETS** reported were six north of Point Piedras Blancas on 5 Sep (TME).

**VIREOS THRU WARBLERS:** A dull plumaged **BELL'S VIREO** at the mouth of Islay Creek, MDOSP, 18-21 Sep (JSR) was likely of the pusillus race and accounted for the county's fifth fall record. Six species of "eastern" warblers were found in the county, all along the immediate coast at well worked vagrant traps, and the majority were hatch-year birds. Four **TENNESSEE WARBLERS** 16-25 Sep (BAB,JSR,ES), four **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS** 14-30 Sep (MLS,MDS,BAB), three **BLACKPOLL WARBLERS** 11-30 Sep (JSR,MLS,TME), two **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS** 7 and 22-25 Sep (KLP,BAB), and an impressive 10 **AMERICAN REDSTARTS** including three adult males 4-30 Sep (mob). The first orestera race **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** of the fall was along Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria on 5 Sep (TME) and the first "Audubon's" **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** was recorded later than expected on 25 Sep (KLP) at PSBOC. A hatch-year male **MAGNOLIA WARBLER** was at PSBOC on 24 Sep (BAB) and a **PALM WARBLER** was seen and heard calling at San Simeon Creek on 25 Sep (KLP). Very rare in fall, a **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** was at the mouth of Islay Creek on 19 Sep (KLP).

**SPARROWS THRU DICKCISSEL:** The mouth of Islay Creek, MDOSP, is typically a good spot for fall sparrows. This year **CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS** were there 11-12 Sep (TME) and 23-25 Sep (BAB), a **BREWER'S SPARROW** was present on 19 Sep (BAB), and the first **LINCOLN'S SPARROW** this fall was seen on 11 Sep (TME). A **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** in Morro Bay on 13 Sep (KLP) was only the ninth to be found along the coast in SLO County. While not particularly late, a female **BLUE GROSBEAK** on 17 Sep (TME) was possibly the first recorded in fall at PSBOC. One of the rarest birds recorded in Sep was a likely hatch-year male **PAINTED BUNTING** found in the Islay Creek Campground, MDOSP on 23 Sep (BAB,RHZ). Another excellent rarity was a hatch-year **DICKCISSEL** found at a feeder in Los Osos 14-15 Sep (LB) that accounted for only the eighth county record.

**OBSERVERS:** Thanks to the many birders who report their sightings including those cited above: Lara Bertaina, Bill A. Bouton, Tom M. Edell, Erica Krygsman, Dave M. Lawrence, John Luchetta, Kaaren L. Perry, Jim S. Royer, Brad K. Schram, Steve C. Schubert, Maggie L. Smith, Bob W. Stafford, Mike D. Stiles, Douglas G. Stinson, Emilie Strauss, Jim and Chris Van Beveren, and Roger H. Zachary. 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

P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay CA 93443

805-772-1991

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