



Pacific Flyway

Newsletter of the Morro Coast Audubon Society

Volume 45 Issue 5, October 2010

Early Birds Lead the Way for the 2010 Fund Drive

A heartfelt thanks to each and every donor who has already contributed to the MCAS annual fund drive. Within the first two weeks of receiving the fund drive requests in the mail, and even prior to the official "kick off" at Sweet Springs on September 19th, the fund drive total stands at \$3,705.

Donations can be designated for a specific program or project (Sweet Springs, Hi Mountain, Winter Loon Survey, education and outreach, etc.) or given without a restriction



Common Loon, photo courtesy of Alan Schmierer

"where it is needed most." Contributions of any amount are appreciated and may be made on-line by visiting the MCAS website (www.morrocoastaudubon.org) or by mail (MCAS, P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay, CA 93443). Providing MCAS with your email address will allow MCAS to send your donation receipt electronically, saving resources and postage costs, and allowing MCAS to put more money directly into conservation, programs, projects, and educational outreach.

Donors thus far include:

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BULLETIN

Hi Mountain Updates - Keep Informed

Visit the Hi Mountain website www.condorlookout.org to read about the latest updates and view photos from recent activities. MCAS members interested in receiving information about upcoming events and wildlife sightings, join the emailing list by sending your email address to: Hi_MountainCondor-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



Bird Fun Fact

Sooty Shearwaters hold the record for having the longest migration pattern. They migrate nearly 40,000 miles a year, flying from New Zealand to the North Pacific Ocean every summer. You can view thousands of Sooty Shearwaters right now in the Avila Beach bay!



Sooty Shearwater, photo courtesy of Mike Baird

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Dates!

Planta-palooza at Chimineas Ranch November 6th - 7th

Two years ago, 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. In 2009, another Audubon group helped to plant willows and cottonwoods. This year we will be planting yet another fenced-in water source to promote clean freshwater and riparian vegetation for birds and other wildlife.

If you are interested, please join us at the beautiful Chimineas Ranch. The planting will begin Saturday morning (Nov. 6th), but many folks arrive on Friday to enjoy a potluck and the good company. We will be spending the night and sharing a meal on Saturday after the day's work. There are sleeping arrangements for over 15 people and plenty of indoor and outdoor camping space available. Look for the detailed announcement and sign-up information in the November *Flyway*, or email Jennifer Moonjian (jmoonjia@gmail.com).

Christmas Bird Count December 18th

The 2010 Christmas Bird Count and annual pot luck dinner will be conducted by MCAS on December 18, 2010. Look for more information in the November *Flyway*.

Carrizo Plain Christmas Bird Count January 1st, 2011

For more information go to: www.morrocoastaudubon.org/maps.htm.

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival January 14th - 17th, 2011

The 15th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival will offer a new Family Day full of nature activities for children of all ages. Specific information about these events is available from the website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org. Information and the 2011 festival brochure are also available from the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce (805) 772-4467 or (800) 231-0592.

Welcome to Our New MCAS Members!

Arroyo Grande

Sharon French
Joann Gutierrez
Colleen Harmon
Paula Lowe
Michael Marek
Dick & Patsy Rayburn

Atascadero

Donald Hammers
Cherry Harsh
Jill Kiel
Ruby & Mike Klatt
Paul Mitchell
Cara O'Brien
Doris Reynolds
Ellen Safranek
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Mary H Hanto
Elliot Klaw
Sally Payne
Margaret Przybylski
Karen Sharp
Lois Thompson
Paul Wolff

San Miguel

Cindy Benson

Templeton

Daniella Sapriel

Woodland Hills

Bob & Robbie Revel

LOCAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS



Hi Mountain Lookout Project and the California Condor Recovery Program Announces the 9th Annual Hi Mountain Condor Lookout Campout and Open House Event

Saturday, October 9th (all day event) at Hi Mountain Lookout, SLO county, Los Padres National Forest

Join Steve Schubert and discover one of the largest and most endangered flying birds of North America. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about condors and the effort to return these magnificent birds back to the wild. The Hi Mountain Lookout

Project is a collaboration between Morro Coast Audubon Society, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Cal Poly Biological Sciences Department, Ventana Wildlife Society, and Pinnacles National Monument.

The open house event will include condor radiotracking demonstrations, native plant identification, bird watching field trips, and a local geology walking stroll. Join us for complimentary serving of wine by staff from Saucelito Canyon Winery, cheese tasting, and a potluck dinner while enjoying the sunset watch. Overnight camping is optional. For driving directions, a schedule of events, and other information go to www.condorlookout.org. To RSVP please call Steve Schubert at (805) 528-6138 or e-mail at s_schub1@msn.com.

Community Program: Monarch Butterflies - Monitoring of Overwintering Coastal Populations in San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties *With Jaime George*

Monday, October 18th at 7pm El Chorro Park, SLO Botanical Garden Oak Glen Pavilion (across from Cuesta College)

Jaime George, a monarch butterfly field researcher, will present data on monarch butterfly population fluctuations, as well as a long-term decline that is leading to a decrease in the California population of western monarch butterflies. Monarch Alert, in collaboration with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, have been conducting weekly population counts in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties over the past nine years. The monarch butterfly counts for San Luis Obispo during the past winter 2009-2010 will be discussed. Come and learn more about this important Monarch Alert Project.



Monarch butterfly, photo courtesy of Jaime George

Annual "Big Sit" at Elfin Forest

Sunday, October 10th

Join Jim Royer at the Elfin Forest Big Sit is part of an international green one-day event where people count all the birds they hear or see from their chosen seventeen foot diameter circle. We count in one hour shifts and welcome any experienced birders to sign up for a shift or two. We have had over 100 species from this location on the day of the Big Sit and we have had unusual species in the past such as Sabine's Gull, Palm Warbler, Eurasian Wigeon, Blackpoll Warbler, White-faced Ibis, Pectoral Sandpiper, Black Rail, and Red-throated Pipit. Less experienced birders can just come out to the overlook at any time after 8:00 AM. If you'd like to participate contact Jim with a preferred time for a shift. Please meet at Bush Lupine Point (the overlook straight out from the north end of 13th in Los Osos, north off of Santa Ysabel). For more information contact Jim Royer at 748-7895 or email at jcadroyer@aol.com. Big Sit website: <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php>

Eureka! The Birds of San Luis Obispo County -August 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 to eBird from SLO County this year now stands at 307. Vagrant eastern landbirds began arriving in August and will continue through November. Most are found along the coast at locations regularly mentioned in this column such as PSBOC, the Pecho Road willows, Montana de Oro State Park, Morro Bay State Park, and Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria. Abbreviations: PSBOC = Pismo State Beach Oceano Campground; WRR = Whale Rock Reservoir.

Fall Boat Trip: This years Morro Coast Audubon boat trip out of Port San Luis on 28 Aug assembled an impressive group of leaders in Todd McGrath, Jon Dunn, Wes Fritz, Brad Schram and Tom Edell. Conditions started out a bit rough, but calmed through the day as the boat made its way out 35 to 40 miles offshore. A couple of fish oil slicks laid down by Wes brought birds close to the boat for excellent viewing and photos. Highlights were four **BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS**, 17 **BULLER'S SHEARWATERS**, 42 **BLACK STORM-PETRELS**, 4 **SABINE'S GULLS**, ONE **SOUTH POLAR SKUA**, and 43 **LONG-TAILED JAEGER**S.

WATERFOWL THRU IBIS: Each year a small number of summer waterfowl are found in the county. The **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** continued in the Chorro Creek drainage at Morro Bay on 14 Aug, where there were three seen on 20 Aug (TME). Other ducks that are rare in summer were a female **REDHEAD** at the Atascadero Wastewater Ponds on 7 Aug (AF), the continuing male **RING-NECKED DUCK** and male **LESSER SCAUP** at WRR 1-20 Aug (TME), the male **HARLEQUIN DUCK** at Estero Bluffs State Park 1-26 Aug (mob), and the male **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** at San Simeon Cove through 22 Aug (MLS). A high count of eight **WHITE-FACED IBIS** were at the Arroyo Grande Creek Mouth 19-29 Aug (MLS) and three more were at Oso Flaco Lake on 20 Aug (MLS).

RAPTORS THRU SHOREBIRDS: After a couple of speculative years, **BALD EAGLE** nesting was finally confirmed at WRR this year when an adult and two juveniles were seen there on 14 Aug (TME). The nest is reported nearby and hidden on private property. Juvenile **SWAINSON'S HAWKS** were reported near their nesting locations in the Cuyama Valley to 11 Aug (BAB) and near Shandon to 5 Aug (MLS). The bird of the month was a juvenile **BAR-TAILED GODWIT** of the expected Siberian race along the Morro Bay Sandspit 28 Aug-1 Sep (JSR). This is the first record for this species in SLO County; photos are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/billbouton/> and <http://www.flickr.com/photos/marlinharms/>. A total of four juvenile **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS** was above average for the month with one at San Geronimo Creek 21 Aug (RHZ), up to two at Old Creek

21-22 Aug (JSR), and one on Morro Bay near Pecho Road on 28 Aug (JSR). A total of five **BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS** from the Arroyo Grande Creek mouth and Morro Bay 23-29 Aug (mob) was about average for the month.

TERNS THRU DOVE: Although a few **ELEGANT TERNS** passed through the county in May, the first fall birds arrived about a month later than expected on 1 Aug when 25 were at Morro Bay (TME) and three were at Arroyo de La Cruz (MLS). Rare nearshore in fall, two juvenile **COMMON TERNS** were along the shoreline at Oso Flaco Creek on 3 Aug (MLS) and one was at Morro Bay 22 Aug (JSR). There are few records of **LEAST TERN** away from South County, so a juvenile off Moonstone Beach in Cambria on 10 Aug (MJ) is definitely noteworthy. Following up on the July reports, up to six **BLACK SKIMMERS** (26 Aug, JG) were recorded at Morro Bay 25-30 Aug (mob). A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** seen roosting with Eurasian Collared Doves in Morro Bay on 25 Aug (KLP), was within the expected fall period for this species.

NUTHATCH THRU SISKIN: Reports of six **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES** along the coast and at Cerro Alto 19-29 Aug (mob) could be an indicator of more to come this winter. Arrival dates for western warblers included a first-fall female **NASHVILLE WARBLER** at PSBOC on 24 Aug (MLS), a male Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cerro Alto on 27 Aug (RHZ), two Hermit Warblers at PSBOC on 31 Aug (BKS), and a Townsend's Warbler at the Pecho Road willows in Los Osos on 22 Aug (RS). More impressive were an early after hatching-year male **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** found in the Pecho Road willows 21-29 Aug (MDS) and a male **AMERICAN REDSTART** at Cerro Alto 27-28 Aug (RHZ). The first **WESTERN TANAGER** of the fall was visiting a water drip in Atascadero on 5 Aug (RS) and the last **BLUE GROSBEAKS** noted at breeding sites were along Toro Creek and at WRR on 2 Aug (MLS). **PINE SISKIN** is casual in the county during summer, so two in residential Morro Bay 20-21 Aug (TME,MLS) was a surprise; this species has bred in the county, however there was no evidence that these birds were breeders.

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders who report their sightings including those cited above: Bill A. Bouton, Tom M. Edell, Andrew Farnsworth, Wes T. Fritz, John Garrett, Marshall J. Iliff, Kaaren L. Perry, Jim S. Royer, Brad K. Schram, Ross Schaefer, Maggie L. Smith, Mike D. Stiles, and Roger H. Zachary. 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 _____

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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).

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(includes the Pacific Flyway newsletter)

___ \$20 New or renewal

Make check payable to MCAS.

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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
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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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