

Volume 40 Issue 4 Morro Coast Audubon Society

September 2005

Our 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"

MCAS SUPPORT DRIVE 2005

Thanks to all who have shown their support for our fundraising appeal. If you haven't given already, please consider contributing to continue the work of Morro Coast Audubon. From our citizen's science Pelagic Bird program to Audubon Adventures for educators, Hi Mountain Condor Tracking, the Loon Study, the Snowy Plover Docent Program and Sweet Springs Preserve, your participation as a financial supporter makes a BIG difference! **We now stand at \$5524 donated. It is not too late to match last year's total of over \$6000.** Questions? Rosalie Valvo at 772-1429, or rvalvo@slonet.org

contributors since July-August Flyway

Ed & Jane Baker
Michael Baxter
Wayne Bickford
Mick Bondello
Richard & Patricia Boyd
Wendi Craig
Tom Edell
Beverly Hardy
Judy Iden
Kathleen Jensen
Steven Jobst
Rich & Prisila Johnson
Roberta Knapp

Ken Levine
Mary & Jerry Lodge
Patrick & Bonnie McKim
Thomas & JoAnne Milburn
John Perkins
Gloria Rasmussen
Kenneth G Rathbone
Georgia & Richard Simpson
Ruth Vasconcellos
Elizabeth Warner
Albert Warren
Jo-Ann Youngner

ANWR

Although oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was not included in the recently passed energy bill, proponents intend to see to that it gets into this year's budget. They believe that they have an excellent chance of accomplishing this in the final budget process in September.

See the letter from the National Audubon Society for what you can do to help oppose this on **page 4**



OFFICERS

President Henry Pontarelli 534-1493
 wisehen@hotmail.com
 President-Elect open
 Past President Dick Parker 528-8272
 rsparkkp47@aol.com
 Treasurer Jim Johnson hm 528-0446
 jw_johnson@msn.com Fax 528-0922
 Chapter Administrator Stephnie Wald 489-9840
 swaldcoho@hotmail.com

CHAIRPERSONS

Programs & Publicity Rosemary Flamion 528-8193
 rflamebird@aol.com
 Field Trips Alan Schmierer 534-9194
 aaschmierer@yahoo.com
 Hospitality Dawn Williams 545-8412
 slodawn1@aol.com
 Conservation Dominic Perello 543-9085
 dperello@calpoly.edu
 Membership Mary S. Adams 474-0147
 mary@rb3.swrcb.ca.gov
 Education Kara Hagedorn 772-3915
 Lands John Perkins 528-0540
 TeleEar@aol.com
 Communications Dick Boyd 772-3993
 dickboyd@charter.net

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ted Pope hm 545-9705
 TNBPope@charter.net wk 547-0242
 Fax 547-0142
 Linda Tanner 534-9919
 Tannerland@Charter.net

RARE BIRD ALERT

Morro Coast Audubon 528-7182
 Monterey 831 375-9122
 Northern California 415 681-7422
 Los Angeles/Southern California 323 874-1318
 Santa Barbara 964-8240
 Pacific wildlife Care 543-WILD


Reporting Marine Mammal Problems

To report a dead sea otter south of Cambria 772-1135
 To report a dead sea otter north of Cambria 927-3893
 To report a live stranded marine mammal (415) 289-7325

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Morro Coast Audubon Society's newsletter *Pacific Flyway* is available in electronic form as a .PDF file that is distributed by e-mail. You must have an e-mail address and you must have the program Acrobat Reader in order to read it. (If you don't have the program, it is easily downloadable for free.)
 The .PDF versions are being archived on the Chapter's Website(see bottom of page). After looking at a .PDF version and if you are a **member of the Audubon Society or otherwise regularly receiving the Flyway in the mail**, and you decide that you wish to no longer receive the printed version, and instead have the PDF version of **each issue** sent to you **automatically** by e-mail, then e-mail Rosalie Valvo at rvalvo@slonet.org with the name that your *Flyway* is mailed to. (Your e-mail address on the message to Rosalie will be used for the electronic subscription). The mailing of the *Flyway* will be discontinued, but your membership will not be otherwise affected.



CHECK IT OUT!

General Meeting Sept 19

Gary Lindquist *Birds & Birding*.....page 3

ANWRpage 4

Hi Mountain Invitepage 5



Our Website
www.morrocoastaudubon.org
 Past issues of the *Flyway* are available at the website
 e-mail:
mcas@morrocoastaudubon.org

MCAS BOARD MEETING

Monday September 12, 2005
(One week later due to labor Day)
6:45 P. M.

The Board Meetings are held at the Los Osos Community Center off of Los Osos Valley Road in Los Osos. All interested members are invited to attend.

GENERAL MEETING



**“All You Ever Wanted to Know About Birds
& Birding”**

Dr. Gary Lindquist, DVM

JUMP START your autumn birding season with **Gary Lindquist** who will use slides and drawings to illustrate the different families of birds. He will explain distinctive qualities and traits about each family. “I have had an interest in anything pertaining to the out-of-doors for as long as I can remember. Birds have gone from an interest to a pastime to what is now an obsession. I am an avid lister with an interest in almost any way to list the birds I have seen.” This presentation will be an excellent introduction to birds and birding for beginners as well as a valuable refresher for those with more experience. Gary is an active member of Tulare Audubon Society and is a field trip co-chair and a trip leader. He is a pen and ink artist as well as a photographer.

POT LUCK DINNER & PRESENTATION

Monday, September 19, 2005 at 6:00 PM
Monarch Grove Elementary School

348 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, CA
Bring a dish to share (salad, side, entree, or dessert)
and utensils. Liquids provided.
Information: Contact Rosemary at 528-8193

BIRDS AT EBB TIDE

Morro Coast Audubon invites visitors and newcomers to our area to come to the Audubon Overlook to enjoy the spectacle. Telescopes, binoculars, and bird field guides are available for your use and Audubon members will be there to help with identification.

Sept 25 at 12 noon
Sept 30 at 1:30 pm.

The Overlook is in Baywood Park and can be reached by turning west on Santa Ysabel-the traffic light on South Bay Blvd., then going west to Third Street. Turn right on Third to the end of the street, turn right again onto a short dirt lane to the Overlook parking area.. For further information call 772-1413. Heavy rain cancels! *Gloria Rasmussen*



SECOND SATURDAY AT SWEET SPRINGS

September 10 2005

9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Come One Come All!

Summer is over and it's time to do some maintenance and cleanup and have some fun.

Meet at the main entrance to the preserve on the 600 block of Ramona in the community of Los Osos. We'll do a little birding afterwards, rain cancels. For more information contact John at 528-0540.

SEPTEMBER 2005 FIELD TRIP

ANNUAL MORRO COAST AUDUBON PELAGIC TRIP

SEPT 10th.

We leave out of Port San Luis and expect to be out for 10-12 hours. We will go wherever the birds are on that day; likely well off shore.

We need a minimum number to go. Please help out by applying **NOW**, so that we can better plan.

Please email me if you need information, details and or an APPLICATION. Thanks!!

Alan Schmierer.

aaschmierer@yahoo.com (preferred) or 772-2026.

Your Help Needed to Save Arctic Refuge!

The fight over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is heating up -- YOUR HELP NEEDED IN AUGUST & SEPTEMBER! Audubon is making a big push to save the pristine wilderness in Alaska from destructive oil drilling, and you can help!

After 25 years of fighting, our last best chance to protect the refuge will be in the House of Representatives on a vote quickly approaching in September. In August, members of Congress that will be casting deciding votes will be back home talking with their constituents – like you! All Audubon chapters and Audubon members around the country will be using this opportunity to weigh in with their members of Congress and fight at this critical time for one of the most pristine places left in America!

Critically important targets in the House of Representatives include: Bradley (NH), Ehlers (MI), Frelinghuysen (NJ), Ferguson (NJ), Smith (NJ), LoBiondo (NJ), Gilchrest (MD), Kelly (NY), Kennedy (MN), Kirk (IL), Gerlach (PA), Reichert (WA), Schwarz (MI), Ramstad (MN), Castle (DE), Bass (NH), Boehlert (NY), Johnson (IL), Shays (CT), Simmons (CT), Johnson (CT), Leach (IA), Saxton (NJ), Fitzpatrick (PA), Walsh (NY), Bartlett (MD), and Inglis (SC).

Even if your lawmaker is not represented above, please make a point to call, write or e-mail your elected officials today! Every member of Congress will be voting on this measure and right now, it's too close to call.

Log on to Audubon's special "Protect the Arctic" website – accessed via www.audubon.org, or contact Desiree Groves in Audubon's public policy office in Washington, DC at 202-861-2242, x. 3038 (dgroves@audubon.org) to find out more about how you can help!

Thanks so much!

*Desiree Sorenson-Groves
Audubon Public Policy Office
1150 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
office: (202) 861-2242 ex. 3038
cell: (202) 549-1033*

Rep. Lois Capps
www.house.gov/capps
1216 State St, Ste 405
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805 730-1710

Sen. Barbara Boxer,
<http://boxer.senate.gov>
1130 O Street, Ste 2450
Fresno, CA 93721
559 497-5109

Sen. Dianne Feinstein
<http://feinstein.senate.gov>
1130 O Street, Ste 2446
Fresno, CA 93721
559 485-7430



Hi Mountain Condor Lookout & California Condor Recovery Program

You Are Invited



To the Fourth Annual Hi Mountain California Condor Campout and Open house at the Hi Mountain Condor Lookout

Come and discover one of the worlds most endangered and largest flying birds. Just over 270 of these majestic birds exist in the world. Approximately 56 of these have been re-introduced into California and can be tracked from Hi Mountain flying between Big Sur in Central California and the Sespe Condor Sanctuary in Southern California. This is a great chance for you to learn more about condors and the effort to return these magnificent birds back to the wild.

Where: Hi Mountain Condor Lookout,
San Luis Obispo County, Los Padres NF
For driving directions visit the website at
www.condorlookout.org

When: Saturday October 15, 2005

What: The Hi Mountain Lookout has been restored as a research and visitor center. The visitor center has California condor and other wildlife display items.

The day will include California condor tracking demonstrations, native plant identification field trip, bird watching, geology overview, and in the evening slide presentations, guest speakers and astronomy talk including telescopic observations of the evening sky.

We will have wildlife posters and other fun stuff to give away. You may purchase tickets for prizes. There will be condor t-shirts for sale with the proceeds going to the California Condor Recovery Fund.

For more information go to www.condorlookout.org. to register for the event please call Steve Schubert 805/528-6138 or e-mail to s_schub@webtv.net





BOARD HI-LIGHTS AUGUST 2005

Attending: John Perkins, Henry Pontarelli, Dick Parker, Dom Perello, Ted Pope, Dick Boyd, Dawn Williams, Jim Johnson, Rosemary Flamion, **Guest:** Katie Gordon

Pelagic Bird Study: Katie reviewed the program elements of the study. She indicated the importance of the study given the “odd” year we’re having regarding lack of up-welling and subsequent potential connection with high numbers of bird deaths.. Henry indicated that group will re-visit on-going support for this program and requested a brief synopsis of findings from last outing for newsletter.

Selenium Dumping: The Marine Interest Group (MIG)

has written a letter expressing opposition to the plan of bringing selenium from Kesterson to Cayucos for ocean disposal and will go out via Dan Berman at the NEP.

Conservation: Dom researched others stance on selenium dumping proposal and could find none including National and Bird Pac.

Lands: MCAS 3rd Street property is in need of willow trimming..

Education: Dawn has 16 classrooms subscribing to Audubon Adventures and two individual subscribers. Cost to MCAS is \$41 per subscription.

Programs: New site for general programs will be Laguna Intermediate School through May 2006 except for this September 19th meeting which will be at Monarch Grove. She reviewed results of survey conducted after Kara’s recent talk and will email to the board. She requested raffle items to be donated. Dick Parker and Henry will review possible candidates for September volunteer award recipients.

Adjournment

Abstracted by the Flyway from the minutes of Steph Wald

Eureka!

cont’d from p 7.

Common Yellowthroat – 3-5 Jul, a male was feeding a recently fledged Brown-headed Cowbird at Cloisters Pond (TME)

Yellow-breasted Chat – 13 Jun, one singing at the Oceano Campground was a late spring transient (MLS)

Western Tanager – 14 Jul, a male high in a pine just down creek from the Cero Alto Campground (MLS,DV) was in one of the few locations in the county where this species occasionally breeds.

Blue Grosbeak – 16 Jul, two family groups of four birds were observed at Whale Rock Reservoir (DV,SJ); on 17 Jul, it was reported that one was recently near the coast at Cambria (fide SCS)

Brewer’s Blackbirds – 7 Jun, the two all white fledglings from Spooners Cove Campground in Montana de Oro State Park showed up at Camp Keep (SCS) and later at the Sea Pines Golf Course on 15 Jun

Great-tailed Grackle – reports for the period included a male at San Simeon Creek 5 Jun-14 Jul (CAM), at least three pairs at the Mens Colony Evaporation Ponds on 24 Jun (MLS), and a fledged young at the Cloisters Pond in Morro Bay (MOB)

Exotics / Escapees

Mute Swan – there was a late report and photos of a nest with eggs at The Lakes development in Atascadero in April 2005. The species has also nested on one of two former waste treatment ponds at Heilmann Regional Park near Atascadero State Hospital (PSH)

OBSERVERS: Thanks to the many birders that report their sightings. The following people are cited above: Mike Baird, Pete Bloom, Bill A. Bouton, Mark Brown, Karen Clarke, Tom M. Edell, Becky Fay, Erin Fienblatt, Katie Gordon, Michael T. Hanson, Marlin D. Harms, Paul S. Highland, Steven Jobst, Dave M. Lawrence, Kelli Levinson, Curtis A. Marantz, Tom Roberts, Donna O’Shaughnessy, John L. Roser, John Sawyers, Alan F. Schmierer, Brad K. Schram, Steve C. Schubert, Gregory P. Smith, Maggie L. Smith, Mike D. Stiles, Judy Szamos(JSz), Deb Villa, Bert Warren, Eric Weir, and Roger H. Zachary. For information about birds or locations mentioned in this report, contact Tom Edell at (805) 995-1691 or tedell@aol.com....*Tom Edell*

Eureka!

THE BIRDS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY – June-July 2005

- Pacific Loon – rare in summer, three were found during the period with birds in partial and complete alternate plumages seen on the 21 Jun Estero Bay survey (BKS) and a basic plumage individual off the Cal Poly Pier in Avila on 5 Jul (MLS)
- Western Grebe – nesting has been ongoing on Whale Rock Reservoir since Apr and continued as of 30 Jul. On 12 Jun, 22 adults, 4 juveniles, and two adults on nests were present, four nests were found on 3 Jul, three nests were observed on 22 Jul, and two nests plus one under construction were there on 30 Jul (TME)
- Clark's Grebe – similar to the above species but in slightly lower numbers, on 12 Jun seven adults, two juveniles, and two adults on nests were at Whale Rock Reservoir, with three nests on 3 Jul, two on 22 Jul, and one on 30 Jul (TME)
- Pink-footed Shearwater – 25 Jul, two were recorded on a seabird survey of Estero Bay (BKS, KG)
- Sooty Shearwater – 21 Jun, surprisingly only two were seen on seabird survey of Estero Bay (BKS)
- Ashy Storm-Petrel – 9 Jul, a fresh dead bird was picked up on Morro Strand State Beach (EF)
- Brown Booby** – 5 Jun-16 Jul, the adult female continued near Point Piedras Blancas (KL, mob) and may still be present
- American White Pelican – four on Grassy Island in Morro Bay on 1 Jul, (MLS) were the first reported this summer; 19 were tallied there on 22 Jul (TME)
- American Bittern – 22 Jun-2 Jul, at least two continue to be heard on Laguna Lake (MTH); this species has never been confirmed breeding in SLO County
- Least Bittern** – 2-24+ Jul, at least one adult and two young at the Cloisters Pond in Morro Bay provided the sixth nesting record for SLO County (BW)
- Canada Goose – 3 Jun, nine at a pond near the intersection of Hwy 41 and Hwy 229 included at least one juvenile (TME); 10 Jun, 7 adults and four older goslings were seen on Morro Bay from the Elfin Forest (MLS); and 24 Jun, it was reported that 20-23 were occasionally seen at Laguna Lake this summer (MTH)
- Brant – 26 Jun-31 Jul, three summered on Morro Bay (TME)
- Wood Duck – 8 Jun, a female with one duckling was at the Atascadero Wastewater Ponds (MLS); 12 Jun, two males were at Whale Rock Reservoir (TME) with a single male there on 3 Jul (MLS) and five males observed on 16 Jul (DV,SJ)
- Ring-necked Duck – rare in summer, 3 males were at Oso Flaco Lake 19 Jun and a male and female were there 11 Jul (MLS)
- Greater Scaup – 5-22 Jun, a female was present at Oceano County Park for the second consecutive summer (MLS)
- Common Merganser – 5 Jun-23 Jul, the male present at Oceano County Park for almost two years was still present (MLS)
- Bald Eagle – 3 Jul, a 3rd year bird was at Whale Rock Res. (TME); 27 Jul, an adult and juvenile were near Harmony (GPS)
- Crested Caracara** – 1-2 Jun, an apparent adult along the Morro Bay Sandspit and at Montana de Oro State Park is assumed to have been wild and would therefore provide the first county record (EF, JS, JSz, SCS). There is one previous record of an adult photographed at the Oceano lagoon on 1 Jan 1967 that was felt to be an escaped bird.
- Virginia Rail – 31 Jul, a juvenile at the Cholame Road wetland provided the county's second nesting record this year (MLS)
- Western Sandpiper/Least Sandpiper – 26 Jun, a flock of ~25 seen flying over Morro Bay were the first fall migrants (TME)
- Wilson's Phalarope – 31 Jul, a juvenile on Morro Strand State Beach provided the first fall sighting (TME)
- Bonaparte's Gull – 19-22 Jun, a sub adult at the mouth of Old Creek in Cayucos likely the same bird seen on Morro Strand State Beach on 19 Jun (TME) and on the beach along Studio Drive on 24 Jun (MLS)
- Ring-billed Gull – 31 Jul, a juvenile at the mouth of Morro Creek was the first reported this fall (TME)
- California Gull – 21 Jul, a juvenile on Morro Strand State Beach was the first for the fall (MDH)
- Western Gull – 27 Jul, three juveniles at the mouth of Morro Creek were the first recorded away from a nest site (TME)
- Glaucous-winged Gull – 7-22 Jun, a first summer bird on the Morro Bay Sandspit (CAM) may be the same individual seen later at the mouth of Morro Creek (TME)
- Elegant Tern – below average numbers were reported. 13 Jul, an adult in basic plumage was at the mouth of Old Creek; 20 Jul, one was off the Cayucos Pier; and 24 Jul, 8 were on drift kelp off the Morro Strand State Beach north point (TME)
- Least Tern – 15 Jun, a high count of 32 was recorded at Oso Flaco Lake (MLS). Apparently 40 nests were near Oso Flaco Lake this year with the first hatching on 29 Jun and two chicks hatched from a nest at the Arroyo Grande Creek Mouth on 6 Jul (fide MLS)
- Black Skimmer – 13 Jun, one was along the Oceano Dunes (BF); 31 Jul, three were seen on Morro Bay (DML)
- Rhinoceros Auklet – 5-6 Jul, four to six in alternate plumage seen close to shore off Shell Beach again suggests nesting in that location though it has never been confirmed (MLS)
- Least Bell's Vireo** – 2 Jul, a male and female found on the Salinas River could not be located on subsequent visits, but certainly suggest the possibility of nesting (PB,TR)
- Winter Wren – A very rare breeder in the county; 6 Jun, two singing along Coon Creek in Montana de Oro State Park follow the May report of fledglings there (CAM) and on 16 Jul, two agitated adults and a juvenile encountered along Coon Creek confirming a second successful nesting this year (JLR) *cont'd page 6*

Morro Coast Audubon Society Membership Application

Yes, I would like to join the Morro Coast Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society, and receive the Flyway and Audubon Magazine. Enclosed is a check payable to the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY in the amount of:

\$15 Students/Seniors \$20 Introductory \$35 Basic(renewal) Other \$ _____

NAME _____ NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ (E-MAIL _____)

Mail check and coupon to: MORRO COAST AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. Box 1507, Morro Bay CA 93443-1507. To check the status of your subscription or request membership changes call 1-800-274-4201

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