

CACHUMA FLYER

ISSUE NUMBER 48

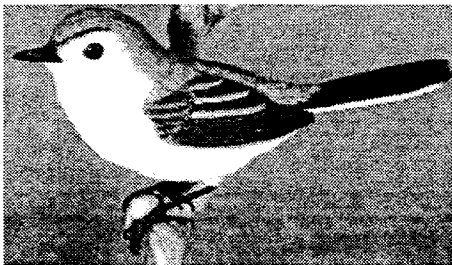
JANUARY 2001

JUST COUNT OUR BIRDS!

The Cachuma Lake area is becoming a popular site for bird counts! In addition to the traditional Eagle Count, the focus was on our area for second year of the annual **Christmas Bird Count**.

On December 27, 20 birders spread themselves across a 15-mile diameter circle to count the number of species that could be located as well as the number of birds in each species. The circle includes most of the lake, except for the extreme east end, and extends northward to the Cachuma Saddle Guard Station, Sunset Valley Rd. to the Davey Brown Campground, Figueroa Summit, and approximately the first mile of the Catway. It just includes the Manzana Campground in the north-east. It also includes Armour Ranch Rd., Happy Canyon Rd., most of Baseline and Roblar Rds. and the Santa Ynez River to about 1/4 mile west of Highway 154

In all, 136 species were identified. Although no "rare" birds were spotted, Linda Taylor found a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, which is classified as uncommon in this inland area.



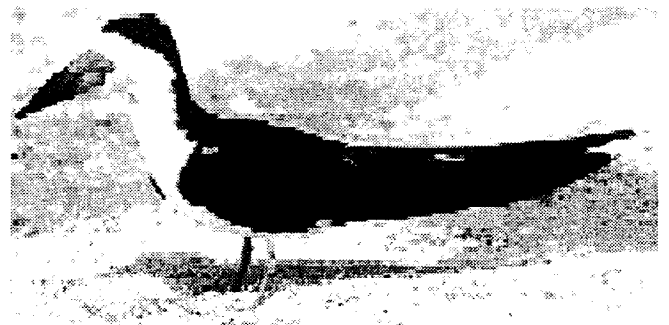
This little tyke is only 4-1/2 inches long.

All areas in the circle were covered, including the lake and lakeshore from a rented boat. Birders participating were the four Abelas, Corrine and Dan Ardoin, John Ayres, Peter Dullea, George and Joan Hardie, Brand Hines, Becky Hoban, Mark Cachuma Lake Nature Center Flyer

Holmgren, Melissa Kelly, Mike Lacey, Mike Palladini, Cruz Philips, Evelyn Putnam, and Rick Skillen. At the invitation of Cruz Philips, a number of birders covered the country north of the lake from her ranch.

The **Eagle Count** took place on January 13, starting in near freezing weather. The 35 birders were dropped off at the edge of the lake at 14 specified points. Several docents participated. Full details will appear in the next Flyer. However, all of the groups saw at least one eagle and several had two or three in sight at one time.

After the count, which lasted from 9 a.m. to noon, all rallied at the Nature Center for a sack lunch. Scrumptious desserts and beverages were donated by Trader Vic's. Although not an eagle, one rarity was sighted - a Black Skimmer.



The Black Skimmer is about 18 inches long and is the only bird with a lower mandible (beak) longer than the upper. With its mouth open, it skims along the water scooping food into its gullet. The black back and crown, white face and underparts are set off by a bright red, black-tipped beak and red legs. Although an occasional visitor to the coast, this is the first recorded inland sighting in Santa Barbara County.

LOOKING UP

WITH HELEN OSENGA



This is the time of year when it seems as if all the brilliant stars are on display. Of course the most prominent display is put on by Orion, the hunter, and the accompanying constellations of Canis Major, Orion's big hunting dog; Canis Minor, Orion's little hunting dog; Gemini, the twins; Auriga, the chariot driver; Taurus, the bull; and the Pleiades (The Seven Sisters) a tiny cluster of stars in the body of the bull. From Orion's belt hangs the faint sword containing the famous Orion Nebula, a mass of glowing gas 26 light years in diameter and about 1,625 light years away, where new stars are being formed.

Distances in outer space are measured in "light years". A light year is the distance that light travels, at 186,000 miles per second, in one year; or approximately 6 trillion miles!! So...if something is 100 light years away from us, it would take us 100 years, traveling at the speed of light, to get there. And of course at this point in time we are not able to travel at the speed of light. Anyone ready to go to the Orion Nebula??

Orion is followed across the sky by his two hunting dogs. Canis Major, the big dog, is dominated by the bright blue-white star, Sirius, which is the brightest star in our sky. Sirius, sometimes known as the dog star, is bright for two reasons: it is fairly close to us at a distance of approximately 9 light years and it is very hot and bright. Also in pursuit of Orion is Canis Minor, the little dog, whose major star is Procyon.

The twin stars Pollux and Castor become the heads of the constellation Gemini the Twins. Castor appears to the naked eye as a single bright star but is seen in the telescope as a system of three stars (called Castor A, B, and C) in orbit about a common center of gravity. Further examination of these stars reveals that each of the three is actually a close pair of similar stars. This is common in our universe, as most stars we see as single stars are actually double or multiple star systems.

Cachuma Lake Nature Center Flyer

The constellation Auriga, the Chariot Driver, adds its bright dazzling yellow star Capella to the winter sky show. Taurus the Bull presents us with the Hyades cluster of stars to form the "vee" of the bull's face with the reddish star Aldebaran as the eye of the bull. The Pleiades are a true cluster of stars, not an accidental alignment. Its stars all lie about 400 light years from the earth.

To access a sky chart on the Internet go to www.skypub.com, click on Monthly Sky Charts-Northern Hemisphere, click on the sky chart image for full size view. For next month and beyond, click on Additional Northern Monthly Charts, etc. To print out a chart, click on "How to Use Our All-Sky Star Charts" for directions on downloading and printing.



DOCENT TRAINING CLASS

Don Wimpress will be leading a Docent training session, Saturday February 17. If you have ever thought about becoming a Docent, now is your chance! The class will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will conclude mid-afternoon. Bring a sack lunch. Dessert and beverages will be provided.

You will receive an overview of the park, the history, purpose, and functions of the CLNC and the Docent Organization and the Nature Center and its programs. After lunch, you will be introduced to the Center and its facilities and equipment as well as how to open, operate, and close the Center, and how to operate the gift shop. After a tour of the park and its facilities, Neal Taylor, Naturalist, will give a brief history of the Cachuma Project, the dam, the lake and the park.

Among the many rewards accruing to being a Docent are the ability to:

- Work on projects that are interesting to you and are a public service,
- Use our research facilities, special classes, library, and computer to further your knowledge of the area,
- Enjoy the comradeship of other docents in work projects and social events,

Contact Don Wimpress at 688-2967 or at donwimpress@yahoo.com for further information.



NATURE CENTER GIFT SHOP NEWS

T-shirts that have been in stock for \$16.00 are now on sale for \$12.00. Balls that were \$3.00 are now \$1.50.

Come in and see our new T-shirts at \$16.00.

Tommie and Annie

CARE AND SHARE

El Rancho Market (Hwy. 246, across from the Santa Ynez High School) has a "Care and Share" program that donates two percent of the buyer's gross amount of purchases to their favorite non-profit organization. When you shop at El Rancho, tell the checkout person you wish to donate to the Cachuma Nature Center. The Center's number is **134**, but if you forget, the checkout person will look it up for you. Keep their donations coming - they count!

SAVE THESE DATES!!!

March 31 - April 1. Our major fundraising event, the Trout Derby. Although the Derby itself is only 2 days, much work goes into the preparation for these two days. By January 31 we will be preparing to mail out the initial registration forms to the 2400 former registrants. Multiply folding each form, adding an address label, closing the flat with a sticky, and affixing postage by 2400 and you can imagine the work that is needed. January 24th and 31st will be busy work days indeed! Any help we can get on these days will be much appreciated.

Every Wednesday thereafter, until March 16, we will be assembling badges, placing them in envelopes with the Derby program, affixing postage and addresses in order to mail the badges back to the registrants. Last year this mailing was about 500 pieces. Many hands make light(er) work. We appreciate any volunteer's time.

May 5. We will be hosting the enormously popular Zoo-To-You event. There will be two performances, one at 11.00 a.m., the second at 1:30 p.m. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy the enchanting live animals and their histories.

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER

Board Officers

Marion Schlinger, Carol Smagala, Co-Presidents
Helen Logan, Vice-President
Lorraine LaFargue, Lynda Williams, Co-Treasurers
(Linda Taylor, Secretary to the Board)

Docent Officers

Evelyn Putnam, President
Helen Osenga, Vice-President
Becky Deutsch, Treasurer
Barbara Gutmann, Bob Runnels, Co-Secretaries

The Nature Center can be reached at 805-693-0691, or clnatctr@sbceo.org. Evelyn Putnam, editor of the Flyer, can be reached at 805-688-5829 or evputnam@silcom.com.

I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ BOX NO. _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

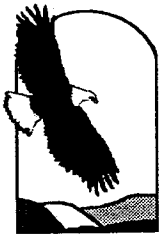
Enclosed is my check for a donation of \$20 ☐ \$40 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other ☐

A donation of \$20 entitles you to all of the Nature Center mailings. A \$100 donation entitles you to all of the mailings, as well as a year-round pass to Cachuma Lake Recreational Area.

Whether or not you decide to make a donation, if you would like to become a Docent or Volunteer, check here ☐.

Mail to: Cachuma Lake Nature Center, Inc., Cachuma Lake, HC 58, Santa Barbara, CA 93105

The Cachuma Lake Nature Center, Inc. is a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation.



**CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER
CACHUMA HC-58
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93105**

Plant of the Month -Mistletoe

Viscaceae sp.

As you drive around the valley near Lake Cachuma at this time of the year, you can't help but notice the large clumps of green growing in the upper branches of the leafless sycamores, cottonwoods, and ashes. These clumps are mistletoe; one of several species in two genera of mistletoe that grow in this area. In the Santa Barbara area, there are some six species in the genus *Arceuthobium*, which grow on the various pines and their kin. There are five more species in the genus *Phoradendron* that grow on all types of trees, but are most noticed on the broadleaf and usually deciduous trees. The species we are particularly concerned with here is *Phoradendron macrophyllum*, which we find on the sycamores, ashes, locusts, and poplars.



Mistletoe is a shrubby plant whose roots grow into the branches of the host plant, and, although they have green food-producing leaves, draw much nourishment from the host plant, thus weakening the host - often to such an extent that the host dies. Mistletoe is a flowering plant and produces little whitish berries that many birds savor. However, this is a good example of why you can't look to see what the wildlife eats to survive in the wilderness; for the mistletoe berries are very poisonous to humans. *Don W impress*