



# MAGPIE CALLS

Newsletter of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society  
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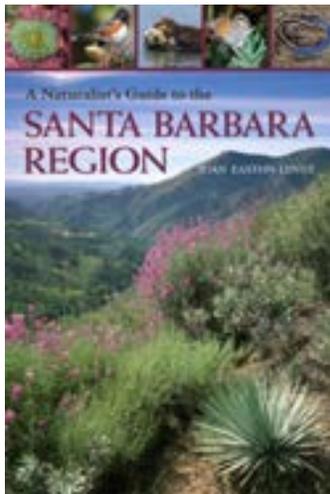
Dedicated to the study, exploration, and appreciation of natural history  
in the Santa Ynez Valley region.

## SYVNHS Kicks Off New Series

by Charlie Stauffer, SYVNHS Board President

As we begin the New Year, the Natural History Society has launched a new series of field trips.

The Society will present trips to the eight habitats that encompass the Santa Barbara region as conceived by author and long-time Society member Joan Lentz in her new book, *A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region*. The book is the first to offer a comprehensive nature guide to our region – a region roughly defined by the boundaries of the Tri-County area.



## Upcoming SYVNHS Lectures and Field Trips

- Feb. 27 Annual Members meeting
- Feb. 27 Wildlife of the Channel Islands (lecture)
- Mar. 15 Exploring Santa Barbara's Coastal Wetlands (field)
- Apr. 5 Rancho San Carlos de Jonata – Gregersen Ranch (field)
- Apr. 25 Water and the California Dream (lecture)
- Apr. 27 Aliso Loop Trail Hike, Post-Burn (field)

On January 26th, the Society visited the beach at Arroyo Hondo with Susie Bartz, thus exploring *The Shore* habitat. Our field trip organizers envision covering all eight habitats over two years interspersed with other offerings.

Additional trips this spring, which will visit habitats from the *Naturalist's Guide*, are the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Complex – including Carpinteria Creek and the harbor seal rookery – on March 15th (*Coastal Wetlands*), and the Aliso Canyon Loop on April 27th (*The Valley*). Details on these and other Society trips can be found in the field trip descriptions below.

## Upcoming Lectures and Field Trips

### Annual Members Meeting

Thursday, February 27, 6:45 p.m.  
Solvang Library, 1745 Mission

Our annual meeting will include the election of board members, a brief report from board President Charles Stauffer, and a financial update from Treasurer Marjorie Popper. This short meeting will be held just before the 7:00 p.m. lecture by Paul Collins.

## Wildlife of the Channel Islands – the Galapagos of North America

Thursday, February 27, Lecture 7:00 p.m.  
(View museum specimens from 6:00 – 6:45 p.m.)  
Solvang Library, 1745 Mission Drive

In recent decades, the Channel Islands have been the focus of intensive conservation efforts and research about their flora and fauna, including interactions between native and nonnative animals and the complex role of humans in managing island ecosystems. One of the scientists who has studied the fauna of the Channel Islands for most of his career is long-time Society member Paul Collins, who first visited the islands in 1975. The public is invited to join Paul as he presents an illustrated lecture about the fascinating vertebrate fauna of the islands. His talk will include a summary of their

diversity, the changes unleashed by the introduction of nonnative species, and the dramatic transition now underway as the island's native fauna and flora rebound with the help of new conservation strategies.

One hour prior to his lecture, Paul will be present to share a selection of museum specimens (not live) of a variety of the animals endemic to the Channel Islands.

**Paul Collins** is the Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He has written and published extensively about the Channel Islands. He has also given popular lectures for the SYVNHS in the past on subjects such as the bats of Santa Barbara County and the relationship between eagles and the island fox.



(Clockwise from top-left) The Island Fox and Island Scrub Jay are two endemic creatures from the Channel Islands; Students hiking into the Santa Cruz Island mountains; Trip leader Michael Benedict led a SYVNHS trip to the islands back in 2009. Michael described this particular canyon as essentially a Pleistocene landscape, and I still imagine pygmy mammoths out there! (Photos by Marc Kummel.)



**Exploring Santa Barbara's Coastal Wetlands:  
Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Dunes and Creek**

Field trip with Andrea Adams-Morden

Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net)  
or 693-5683

Participation is limited to 15

Members free/ nonmembers \$20

We will start at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park where plants and animals of five different plant communities come together. We will then walk to Carpinteria Beach State Park to explore the sand dunes and have lunch in their dune picnic area. Following lunch, a representative from South Coast Habitat Restoration will join us at the Carpinteria Creek Lagoon to describe restoration efforts to increase the habitat of the steelhead trout. We will

then visit Tar Pits Park to view the tar pits, village site, and riparian area, ending with a visit to the nearby Carpinteria Seal Rookery. The field trip will be approximately two and a half miles round trip on level terrain.

Spring weather dictates the need to bring layers for changeable weather. Also hat, sun protection, water, sack lunch, and don't forget your binoculars.

**Andrea Adams-Morden** is a California Naturalist and Master Gardener. She is the steward, volunteer coordinator and docent for the Carpinteria Nature Preserves. Andrea also organizes trips and lectures for the California Native Plant Society.

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**Rancho San Carlos de Jonata – Gregersen Ranch**

Field Trip with Larry Ballard

Saturday, April 5, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Advance Registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net)  
or 693-5683

Participation is limited to 20

Members free/ nonmembers \$20

Rancho San Carlos de Jonata was a Mexican land grant purchased by members of the Buell family in 1867. A portion of the land was later sold to the Rev. Jens Gregersen and two other Danes seeking to establish a Danish community and school, leading to the subsequent founding of the city of Solvang in 1911. The trip will visit dune scrub, oak woodland and chaparral on land that remains in the Gregersen family, much of it undisturbed over the past 100 years.

Much of the area is Careaga sand, the remnant of a shallow marine embayment that once covered most of the Santa Ynez and Santa Maria Valleys. Several rare plants adapted to sandy soils nearer the coast reach their inland limits on the property. We'll see Palmer Oak, a relictual scrub oak known in the county from only a few scattered populations between Solvang and Buellton. The trip will consist of short hikes at three different stops, with lunch under large Valley Oaks. The ranch is located in the Ballard Canyon area of the Santa Ynez Valley.

**Larry Ballard** has an interest in all aspects of the region's natural history, and has led many trips for our organization as well as for UC Sedgwick Reserve, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Western Field Ornithologists, and the Wildling Museum.

## Water and the California Dream

Free Lecture with David Carle

Friday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.

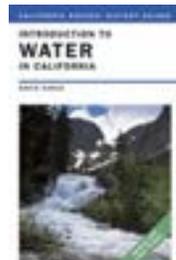
Tipton Meeting House

UC Sedgwick Reserve

The Society is pleased to host this illustrated lecture with David Carle, titled "Water and the California Dream." David Carle is an author, naturalist, and retired State Park Ranger who became intrigued with the subject of water in California long before our most current crisis. This talk will explore the water choices that have shaped California's history and development. He will examine how our compromised natural environment and reduced quality of life can be improved if Californians step away from the historic pattern and embrace limited water supplies as a fact of life. Following the lecture, David's books

will be available for purchase and signing. Seating is limited and we suggest you arrive early.

**David Carle** is the author of 13 books, including *Water and the California Dream*, *Introduction to Water in California*, and his most recent, co-authored with his wife Janet, *Traveling the 38th Parallel: A Water Line Around the World*. He is also the author of *Fire in California* and *Soil in California*, both from UC Press. He was a ranger with California State Parks for 27 years, including 18 years at the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, where he participated in the long effort to protect that Eastern Sierra inland sea from the effects of stream diversions to Los Angeles. He taught biology and natural history courses at Cerro Coso Community College in Mammoth Lakes.



## Aliso Loop Trail Hike, Post-Burn

Field Trip with Liz Gaspar

Sunday, April 27, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Advance Registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net) or 693-5683

Participation is limited to 20

Members free/ nonmembers \$20

We will walk the 3.5 mile Aliso Loop Trail nearly one year after the entire trail burned in the White fire of May 2013, which burned about 1900 acres. As of January 2014, the area is a gray slate cleaned of vegetation, except for blackened oak trees, shrub stumps, and exposed Monterey shale. With essentially no rain, some shrub recovery has already begun with sprouting toyon, chamise, holly-leafed cherry, and yerba santa. Gopher or vole tailings, funnel spider webs, and painted lady butterflies are sparsely present, as are Hairy and Nuttall's woodpeckers and Bewick's wrens. This area burned in 2002, and by

2005 nearly 300 plant species were present. On this post-burn hike, we'll look for fire-following annuals seen there previously—whispering bells, common eucrypta, mariposa lilies, climbing snapdragon. Even if drought continues in our county, this trail offers us the chance to learn what kind of initial recovery will occur after having burned twice in 11 years.

Bring a hat, sun protection, water, sack lunch, and good sturdy shoes, such as hiking boots. Hiking poles recommended as some sections of the trail are moderately steep. Trail is 3.5 mile loop with elevation gain of 1400 feet.

**Liz Gaspar** has worked for many years as a park naturalist at Cachuma Lake. She earned her master's degree from UCSB, where she studied native grasses.

## Past SYVNHS Programs:



(Clockwise from upper left) We had a full house at our showing of Michael Love's film *The Santa Ynez River Wilderness* at the Tipton Meeting House of UC Sedgwick Reserve; Michael Love and Cristina Sandoval discuss the film after the showing; Participants in Jeff Jones' Photography Workshop try their hands at cropping photos; Looking at interesting oaks on West Camino Cielo Road with Larry Ballard; Larry points out a Coldwater Sandstone outcrop in Kinevan Canyon. (Photos by Marc Kummel, John Evarts, and Dennis Nord.)

## Marc's Stumper

Surely the stumper on everyone's mind in this drought year is "What happened to the rain?" Well, what happened? Try a web search on " Ridiculously Resilient Ridge" to get a hint, but that's only the *proximate cause* at best. Hopefully things will improve later this Spring, like the "March Miracle" rains in 1991, but who knows? What unexpected impacts will this drought have on the natural world? Fortunately I don't have to answer this stumper until September, because I surely don't know! Please share any thoughts with me with email to SYVNHS.

**About last issue's stumper:** A happy person makes us happy, their sadness saddens all. Your idea could change the world. One rabbit "*kindles*" her babies, which make more babies... a population explosion. A neutron splits an Uranium nucleus, releasing more neutrons, splitting more atoms... a nuclear bomb. Fire is a similar *chain reaction* between a fuel and oxygen. It needs a spark to get going, but then it is an *exothermic chemical reaction* that releases more heat as it burns to keep spreading as long as fuel and air are available. A match can change the world too!

(Left to right) One consequence of drought is wildfire, and there's very little new growth in Aliiso Canyon after the **White Fire** burned through in May 2013; dying **Coast Live Oak** tree with dying mistletoe growing between the 2nd and 3rd crossings of Paradise; dying **Coulter Pines** on San Marcos Pass, probably killed by the Western Bark Beetle which favors drought-stressed trees like these.



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