

# 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.*

## What's New at SYVNHS...

by Charlie Stauffer, SYVNHS Board President

This spring marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society. We hope you will join us for our birthday party at Arroyo Hondo Preserve on March 8, details below.

Although our purpose has remained constant over fifteen years, change is inexorable. We say farewell to Barb Huebel and thank her for many years of service as our Membership Coordinator while welcoming Rosey Bishop, who takes over her duties. Also thanks to our volunteers -- Susan Brooks, Marc Kummel, Tim Matthews, and our entire board -- for assembling our field trips and lectures. We are grateful to Margie Popper who has volunteered countless hours handling our finances and other tasks over the years. And thanks to all who have served on the board of directors since our inception.

## Upcoming SYVNHS Lectures and Field Trips

- Mar. 8 SYVNHS 15th Anniversary Celebration!
- Mar. 8 Birding the Arroyo Hondo Preserve (field)
- Mar. 8 Botany Hike in Arroyo Hondo Preserve (field)
- Mar. 21 Butterflies of the Valley (lecture)
- Apr. 11 The Santa Ynez River, an Urban Oasis (field)
- Apr. 26 Aliso Loop - Two Years After Fire (field)
- May 2 Camera Trapping at Sedgwick Reserve (field workshop)
- May 2 Camera Trapping California (lecture)
- May 23 Birding the Sedgwick Reserve (field)
- May 30 Spiders of the Pacific Coast (lecture)
- May 31 Spider Identification in the Field (field)
- June 12-13 Birding and Botany on Mount Pinos (camp, field)

The Society has remade its website at [www.syvnature.org](http://www.syvnature.org), which will facilitate better communication and allow financial transactions. There are also some interesting links for more information on our area's natural history.

## 15th Anniversary Celebration for the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society

Picnic, Hiking, and Free Cake!

Sunday, March 8, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve

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

Reservations are requested for everyone, even those who are not registering for a field trip.

We are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society at beautiful Arroyo Hondo Preserve. Arroyo Hondo, known as the "Jewel of the Gaviota Coast," is part of a historic ranch that was purchased by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County in 2001. Its 782 acres encompass lovely trails, great biodiversity, bold geologic features, and a watershed that remains largely pristine.

We have reserved the picnic area, and lunch will begin at

noon! Come before lunch to enjoy the Preserve on your own or reserve a spot on one of our morning field trips. The Society is offering two moderate hikes with trip leaders Sally Isaacson (botany) and Guy Tingos (birding), both beginning at 9:00 a.m. (The details are below). After lunch, join Susie Bartz and Larry Ballard for an informal hike to explore the geology of the Preserve, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The Society's annual election and introduction of new and returning board members will take place at 1:00 p.m., and this business interlude will be quite brief.

You can bring your own lunch or arrange to have the Society deliver a delicious box lunch from El Rancho Marketplace for \$15.00. There will be various choices on the box-lunch menu, which will be found on our website.  
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When you make your reservation to attend this event, you can indicate if you want to have a box lunch delivered at noon, and if so, let us know your choice of menu item(s). Payment for lunch can be made via Paypal by going to this event listing on our website [www.syvnature.org](http://www.syvnature.org) or by sending a check with menu choice(s) to SYVNHS, PO Box 794, Los Olivos, CA 93441. We'll accept payment for the box lunch up until 8:00 p.m., Thursday, March 5. The Society will have a selection of nonalcoholic beverages available to purchase at the picnic. And there will be a free slice of anniversary cake for everyone! In the event of rain, we will offer a rain date and/or refund your money, depending on your preference.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve is located along Highway 101, 20 miles from Buellton and 27 miles west of Santa Barbara

between Refugio State Beach and Gaviota State Park. Registrants will receive detailed information with directions to the Preserve.



Society members take a break after hiking to this ridge in upper Arroyo Hondo Preserve during a 2008 field trip. Photo by John Everts

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### **Birding the Arroyo Hondo Preserve**

Field trip with Guy Tingos

Sunday, March 8, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve

Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net) or 693-5683 (limit of 20 participants)

Spend a relaxing morning with Guy Tingos exploring the birds of the Arroyo Hondo Preserve. Riparian, oak woodland, and chaparral habitats should yield a good mix of wintering birds and local residents. Participants will need to bring their own binoculars, although some extra pairs may be available.

**Guy Tingos** has been birding in Santa Barbara County since 1979 and has led past trips for the SYVNHS and Santa Barbara Audubon. He is recently retired after 30 years of public service and is looking forward to having more time to spend birding and leading field trips.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve is located along Highway 101, 20 miles from Buellton and 27 miles west of Santa Barbara between Refugio State Beach and Gaviota State Park. Registrants will receive detailed information with directions to the Preserve.

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### **Botany Hike in Arroyo Hondo Preserve**

Field trip with Sally Isaacson

Sunday, March 8, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve

Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net) or 693-5683 (limit of 20 participants)

The 782-acre Arroyo Hondo Preserve is packed with botanic diversity. Come explore this richness during a leisurely botany hike through the canyon with Sally Isaacson. We'll look for early blooming wildflowers as well as unusual species that are tucked away in this scenic Preserve, which supports riparian woodlands, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral.

**Sally Isaacson** has been a botanist, gardener, rancher, and educator on the Gaviota Coast for most of her adult life. She has a M.A. in Botany from UCSB, and was the Education Director during a long career at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. Sally is currently the coordinator of volunteers at Arroyo Hondo Preserve.

Arroyo Hondo Preserve is located along Highway 101, 20 miles from Buellton and 27 miles west of Santa Barbara between Refugio State Beach and Gaviota State Park. Registrants will receive detailed information with directions to the Preserve.

## Butterflies of the Valley and How to Bring Them Into Your Garden

Free Lecture with Mary Jane West-Delgado (suggested for ages 10 and up)

Saturday, March 21, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Solvang Library, 1745 Mission Drive

Join Mary Jane West-Delgado for a high-definition presentation of short videos and photos about the incredible butterflies that are found in the Santa Ynez Valley. She will also describe good habitats in which to find butterflies -- whether out on the trail or amid the foliage in your own backyard. Following her talk, Mary Jane will be joined by her husband Michael and they will show



Photo of Anise Swallowtail by Mary Jane West-Delgado

examples of host plants for butterfly larvae as well as plants that are especially attractive to butterflies for nectar.

**Mary Jane West-Delgado and Michael Delgado** have been raising butterflies in their backyard for over 15 years. Strictly as an observer in the garden – and with camera in hand – Mary Jane has captured an intimate view of several species of butterflies. Many local enthusiasts of garden insects have come to watch majestic monarchs emerge from their chrysalises on a sunny day at their home. They have been active as docents and/or leaders in local organizations such as the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society, UC Sedgwick Reserve, Santa Ynez Valley Botanic Garden, and NatureTrack.



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## The Santa Ynez River, an Urban Oasis

Field trip with Tim Matthews

Saturday, April 11, 9:00 a.m. to noon

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

Participation is limited to 20

Members free/ nonmembers \$20

The Santa Ynez River is the lifeblood of Santa Barbara County. It is the largest and most important drainage in the area, as it supplies most of the water to South Coast cities. In some spots it is quite accessible, such as below Buellton's Avenue of the Flags. Here it is a designated State Important Bird Area, home to a number of birds that are of special concern to scientists. Although rarely seen, beavers make homes in this part of the river.

This trip will be a 2+ mile leisurely stroll along the river, from Avenue of the Flags west to the point where Zaca Creek enters the River. Along the way, we will see beaver dams and other sign of Nature's master engineers as well as a number of interesting plant and animal species. This trip is part of the SYVNHS series based on Joan Lentz's book "A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region" as described in Chapter 9 on Freshwater Wetlands.

**Tim Matthews** is a lifelong naturalist, sportsman, and conservationist. He is a long-time Valley resident with a strong interest in natural history and has led many trips in the past for the Society and other organizations.

### Aliso Loop – Two Years After Fire

Field trip with Larry Ballard and Liz Gaspar

Sunday, April 26, 9:00 a.m. to 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

Join trip leaders Larry Ballard and Liz Gaspar for another Aliso Loop post-fire exploration, now two years after the White Fire of May 2013. We will look for the presence and/or absence of plant and animal species and evidence of succession between 2014 and 2015. The flora of the Aliso Loop Trail area includes just under 300 plant species; for our first trip, in April 2014, over half of them were present. Early season rainfall and mild winter temperatures have boosted growth in early 2015, holding a promise of wildflower abundance and variety. The trail is 3.5 miles with elevation gain of 1400 feet.

For the first half of the hike we'll have many stops and close examination of the flora, the second half will cater to whim, interest, and personal walking pace.

Bring a hat, sun protection, water, sack lunch, and good sturdy shoes, such as hiking boots. Hiking poles are recommended as some sections of the trail are moderately steep.

**Larry Ballard** has an interest in all aspects of the region's natural history, and has led many natural history trips for our organization as well as for other groups and institutions in Santa Barbara County.

**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. Liz led a post-burn hike in the area last year, photos below.



Photos by Marc Kummel and Susan Brooks

### An Afternoon of Camera Trapping at Sedgwick Reserve

Free Workshop with Ken Hickman

Saturday, May 2, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

UC Sedgwick Reserve, Tipton House and in the field  
Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net) or 693-5683

SYVNHS members and Sedgwick docents have priority for reservations (limit of 20 participants)

Join Ken Hickman on a moderate to vigorous hike at Sedgwick Reserve to collect previously placed camera traps and to discuss the camera trapping techniques, goals, and methods used for each set (the "set theory"). You'll then return to the Tipton House to review the captured photos on the projector screen and to discuss the camera trapping and wildlife insights they reveal.

This workshop can be described as an "afternoon in the field with a camera trapper." Camera traps are sensor-triggered cameras that can last in the field for months and "digitally" trap, i.e. photograph, the local wildlife that passes nearby. These capabilities make them an invaluable tool for remote wildlife monitoring and surveying, and open new possibilities in wildlife research, behavioral studies, and educational outreach. They are rapidly being popularized by technology advances and internet sharing of their often amazing wildlife photos.

For more about workshop leader Ken Hickman, see the details about his evening lecture on May 2.

## Camera Trapping California: Wildlife Study Stories from across the Golden State

Free Lecture with Ken Hickman

Saturday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.

UC Sedgwick Reserve, Tipton House

Gates open at 5:30 for those who wish to picnic outdoors before the lecture.

Seating is limited to 90; bring a flashlight for returning to the parking area in the dark.

In this photo-rich evening talk, Ken Hickman will introduce the key concepts of camera trapping, and show its value as a wildlife research and monitoring method by taking us for a photographic tour of the animals and insights captured at his study sites (and pet projects) around California, including the Santa Cruz Mountains, Sierra Nevada, Mono County, and Tehachapis. Ken has been building homemade, high-quality camera traps and assisting and conducting camera trap based wildlife studies with public and private land holders in California for over 5 years. Along the way, his camera trapping has captured

more than 150 species of mammals and birds and assisted in wildlife documentation, behavioral studies, and resource management and conservation planning.

**Ken Hickman** is a naturalist and wildlife researcher with a specialty in camera trapping. He has a B.S. in Physics from UC Santa Barbara, 20 years experience in technology & software development, and has been building high-quality camera traps to study wildlife for over 5 years. Current and past camera trapping projects include: a Coast Rangelands Study on the San Mateo Coast to document wildlife biodiversity around seasonally grazed grasslands; ongoing wildlife monitoring with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District in the Santa Cruz Mountains; wildlife documenting with private land holders in the Tehachapi Mountains and Mono County to help inform ranch development and use of Federal improvement grants; and a 3-year survey on the Chimineas Ranch & Carrizo Plain Ecological Reserve with CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife biologists and California Academy of Sciences Mammalogist Dr. Chris Wemmer. Ken's camera trapping photos and natural history writing can be found at: <http://natureofaman.blogspot.com/>



Photos by Ken Hickman

## Birding the Sedgwick Reserve

Field trip with Fred Emerson

Saturday, May 23, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

UC Sedgwick Reserve

Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net) or 693-5683 (limit of 20 participants)

Join naturalist Fred Emerson for a birding excursion that will entail some moderate hiking along the trails and roads of UC Sedgwick Reserve. With its mosaic of habitats, ranging from grasslands to woodlands and a freshwater pond, Sedgwick offers many opportunities to

view a variety of birds. During this time of year, we can expect to spot resident species as well as late-spring migrants. Participants will need to bring their own binoculars, although some extra pairs may be available.

**Fred Emerson**, M.D., retired, is also a Ph.D. wildlife biologist who has been leading popular birding and other natural history trips in Santa Barbara County for more than 20 years. Dr. Emerson has been a regular trip leader for the SYVNHS since its founding in 2000.

## Spiders of the Pacific Coast: Diversity, Ecology, and Myths Dispelled

Free lecture and book signing with R.J. Adams

Saturday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.

Santa Ynez Valley Grange Hall, 2374 Alamo Pintado, Los Olivos

We are pleased to host a lecture by R.J. Adams, author of the new book, "Field Guide to the Spiders of California and the Pacific Coast States" (UC Press). Over half of the world's spider families live within the three contiguous Pacific Coast states, which is not surprising considering these states comprise a wide variety of habitats, from mountain meadows and desert dunes to redwood forests and

massive urban centers. Adams will give an illustrated talk exploring the diversity of the region's spider fauna with an overview of both the more common and unusual species. After the presentation, he will be available to sign his new book, and light refreshments will be served.

**R.J. Adams** is a special education teacher and wildlife tour guide in Monterey, California. He has a BS in biology from Humboldt State University, California and an MS in biology emphasizing entomology and host-parasite coevolution from the University of Utah. His current projects include an inventory of the spiders of Pinnacles National Park and early-stage research on the terrestrial and freshwater mollusks of California.

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## Spider Identification in the Field

Field trip with R.J. Adams

Sunday, May 31, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

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

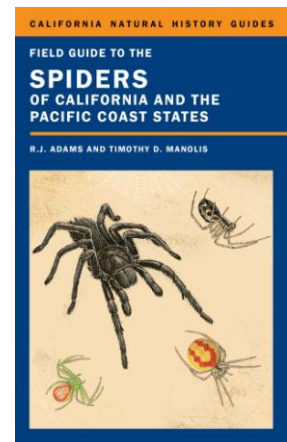
Participation is limited to 20

Members free / nonmembers \$20

Join author and naturalist R.J. Adams for a morning walk to look for and identify spiders at a valley location to be announced. See above for more details about R.J. Adams.



Photo by Michelle Torres-Grant



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## Birding and Botany on our Highest Mountain! An Overnight on Mount Pinos

Field trip with Joan Lentz and Larry Ballard

Friday, June 12, 6:00 p.m. evening, optional

Saturday, June 13, 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., main field trip

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

Participation is limited to 20

Members free/ nonmembers \$20

June 12, Friday – Mount Pinos Campground. Group meet-up and BYO dinner. Birding around the campground and nearby sites.

June 13, Saturday – Main Field Trip Day. Explore Iris Meadow, followed by a 1.5 mile hike along an old jeep road to the summit of Mount Pinos, approximately a 600 ft. elevation gain. Bird watch and botanize along the way, at a leisurely pace.

Mount Pinos, at 8831 feet, is the highest point in our region. A sky island of montane habitat, it is at the junction of the Southern Coast Ranges, the Transverse Ranges, the Tehachapis, and the San Joaquin Valley. These conditions make for interesting plant and bird life. Iris Meadow is the only accessible montane meadow in our region. Walking from the meadow up to the summit brings you into subalpine forest dominated by limber pines and a fell-field community of cushion plants. The mountain is of great ornithological interest for montane birds, those found above 5000 feet and associated with coniferous forest. We will likely see Mountain Chickadees, Clark's Nutcrackers, White-headed Woodpeckers, and the Green-tailed Towhee.

This trip is the capstone trip in the SYVNHS series based on Joan Lentz's book "A Naturalist's Guide to Santa Barbara County" (2013). Mount Pinos and the "Sky Islands" are described in Chapter 8 of this book.

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Camp overnight or stay in nearby motels on the evening of June 12. Alternatively, drive from Santa Ynez Valley or Santa Barbara to arrive Saturday June 13 by 9:00 a.m. for the main field trip.

More detailed trip information will be provided to registered participants or upon request.

**Joan Lentz** is an author, teacher, and research associate at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural

History. For over 35 years, she has been a serious student of the natural history of the Santa Barbara region, concentrating on its bird life. Lentz has written three books, including "A Naturalist's Guide to Santa Barbara County" and "Introduction to Birds of the Southern California Coast."

**Larry Ballard** has an interest in all aspects of the region's natural history, and has led many natural history trips for our organization as well as for other groups and institutions in Santa Barbara County.

## Past SYVNHS Programs:



*(Clockwise from upper left)* Three photos from our Santa Rosa Island trip last September: freshwater springs at the mouth of Water Canyon; hiking down through Torrey Pines toward the Coast Road; and trip leader Steve Junak on the beach. And two photos from our Rancho Arbolado hike with Larry Ballard last October: fine views extend east to the San Rafael Mountains (in background here) and west to the ocean at Hollister Ranch; hairy stems and no petioles on the leaves help identify the endemic La Purisima Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos purissima*). (Photos by John Evarts.)



## Marc's Stumper

Think of the classic surfing beaches heading down the coast – Refugio, Rincon, C-Street, Malibu, and many more. These are all right-breaking point waves. The rocky point gives the surf good shape, and the waves peel off to the surfer's right. You can ride left or right at any beach break and a few reefs like Tarantulas near Jalama, but it's hard to find a left-breaking wave with consistent shape. We get winter north swells from Alaska and summer south swells from Mexico. So why are left-breaking point waves so scarce here in California?

**About last issue's stumper:** Spiders, insects, and all other arthropods have a hard exoskeleton instead of internal bones like us. They have *flexor* muscles to pull their legs in, but no *extensor* muscles to push them out again. Instead, they use hydraulic pressure, pumping "blood" into each limb to push it out, like turning on the faucet unrolls the hose. That's why spiders always curl their legs in when they die. This combo of muscles and hydraulics works very well. Engineers are studying these critters closely trying to build robotic rovers with legs to step over obstacles!

The photo on the left shows an unidentified surfer "going right" at Rincon – which is actually to the viewer's left. The photo on the right shows Razor Blades, the first point break as you go into Hollister Ranch. It's a typical right-breaking point break. I got this photo from the Amtrak train. You pass point after point on the train ride through the ranch, all right-breaking. Why? (Photos by Marc Kummel.)



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