



# MAGPIE CALLS

Newsletter of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society  
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## Drought or Deluge?

by Marc Kummel, Magpie Calls editor

It's like a young child wondering how tall she or he will be when they grow up. It's not like they can do anything about it, and in time it ceases to matter so much. Thinking about the upcoming winter and the change in the seasons is like that. Will it be a wet winter and a fabulous spring, because we need it and it's due? Or will it be another drought year, three in a row, and this one will have some consequences. At this point near the end of summer, all we can do is wonder and hope. And in time, it too will cease to matter so much. We'll do what we can, like we always have. Drought or

## Upcoming SYVNHS Lectures and Field Trips

Sep. 20	The Santa Ynez River Wilderness
Oct. 2	Forty Years of Endangered Species
Nov. 2	Lower Santa Ynez River Natural History
Nov. 14	A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region
Nov 23	Fall Color along Kinevan Road
Dec. 7	Photography Workshop at Lisque Mesa
Jan. 26	Beach Walk: Arroyo Hondo to El Molino Point

deluge, there's always something interesting to see and photograph in our local mountains. These hikes and lectures sponsored by your Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society will help you find it!

## Upcoming Lectures and Field Trips

### The Santa Ynez River Wilderness

Free screening with filmmaker Michael Love  
Friday, September 20, 7:00 p.m.  
Tipton Meeting House, UC Sedgwick Reserve

Join writer and film director Michael Love for the valley premiere of his documentary, *The Santa Ynez River Wilderness*. The cinematography conveys a deep appreciation of the mosaic of habitats along the river and includes wonderful footage of the area's diverse plant and animal life. The film's poetic imagery is coupled with commentary by some of Santa Barbara County's leading experts in biology, anthropology, and geology who are familiar with this watershed. Love will answer audience questions following the screening and will be joined by Dr. Cristina Sandoval, a UCSB biologist and researcher who was extensively interviewed for the film.

Society members and their guests are welcome to come to the Reserve early to enjoy a picnic supper under the oaks before the program. The gate will be open by 5:00 p.m.

**Michael Love** grew up in Mexico City and attended University of the Americas and the California Institute of the Arts, where he received a BA in music composition. His credits as a screenwriter include the Oscar and Golden Globe nominated *Gaby a True Story* (1987) and most recently, the historical epic, *For Greater Glory* (2012). Love also writes screenplays in Spanish and wrote the two theatrically released Spanish language films *La Leyenda del Tesoro* (2011) and *Extranos Caminos* (1993). *The Santa Ynez River Wilderness* is Love's third feature documentary as director and is the winner of the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival CCF Best Documentary Award.

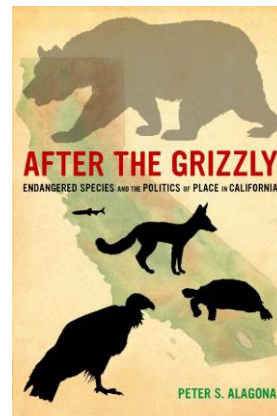
### **Forty Years of Endangered Species: Conflict and Conservation in California and Beyond**

Free lecture and book signing with Peter S. Alagona  
Wednesday, October 2, 7:00 p.m.  
Solvang Library, 1745 Mission Drive

The landmark federal Endangered Species Act—the most powerful and comprehensive U.S. environmental law and most ambitious biological conservation statute ever enacted by any country—turned forty in 2013. Is this anniversary a cause for celebration or despair? What have we learned during the past four decades? Why is endangered species conservation so complicated? And why do efforts to preserve endangered species often result

in so much controversy? This talk will address these questions, place them in a broader historical context, and discuss some of the challenges and opportunities for biodiversity conservation in the twenty-first century. Following the lecture, Dr. Alagona will be signing his new book from UC Press, *After the Grizzly: Endangered Species and the Politics of Place in California*.

**Peter S. Alagona** is an associate professor of history and environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He received his PhD from UCLA in 2006, and before joining the UCSB faculty worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard and Stanford universities.



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### **Lower Santa Ynez River Natural History**

Field trip with Fred Emerson and Tim Matthews  
Saturday, November 2, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Advance registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net)  
or 693-5683  
Members free/ nonmembers \$20

This trip will be a 2 mile leisurely stroll along the river, starting at the Alisal Bridge in Solvang. We will observe and discuss many aspects of natural history as we explore this riparian corridor, Santa Barbara County's major drainage.

**Dr. Fred Emerson** is a retired M.D, with a PhD in wildlife management. He leads popular birding and natural history field trips for many organizations and institutions in Santa Barbara County.

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

### **A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region**

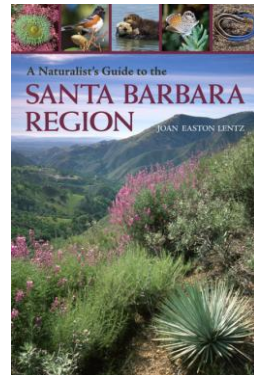
Free lecture and book signing with Joan Lentz  
Thursday, November 14, 7:00 p.m.  
Solvang Library, 1745 Mission Drive

Join us in celebrating the publication of *A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region*, which is authored by long-time SYVNHS member Joan Easton Lentz. This new book combines lucid and evocative nature writing—including on-the-scene journal entries—with a rich array of photos and illustrations, creating a highly personal and scientific handbook. The first comprehensive nature guide to our area, her book takes readers on a



journey from tidepools to mountain peaks and pinyon-juniper woodlands. Following an illustrated presentation about the project, Joan will be signing her book.

**Joan Easton 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 *Introduction to Birds of the Southern California Coast* (University of California Press, 2006).



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### **Fall Color along Kinevan Road**

Field Trip with Larry Ballard  
Saturday, November 23, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Advance Registration required at [synature@west.net](mailto:synature@west.net)  
or 693-5683  
Members free/ nonmembers \$20

Located just below the summit of San Marco Pass, Kinevan Road is one of the wettest places in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Winter rains are funneled upslope through the pass, while summer fogs approach from either side of the mountain. Even mid-summer sunlight rarely penetrates the tree canopy along Kinevan's north-facing slope. The year round moisture helps account for the

exceptional tree diversity in such a small area. Six of the ten native tree species here are deciduous, as are three of the non-native trees, making for spectacular fall color.

This will be a mostly level hike along a 3/4 mile stretch of paved road. Readers may enjoy this informative link to the history of the pass:  
<http://www.rain.org/~ekummel/eksmp.html>

**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, and Western Field Ornithologists.

### Photography Workshop at Lisque Mesa

Field trip with Jeff Jones

Saturday, December 7, 1:00 to 5:00 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

This workshop will explore composition – the part of the big picture on which you choose to focus. Jeff will discuss selecting and composing an image, and how to use natural light to best advantage. We will meet on location, at Sedgwick Reserve's Lisque Mesa, which for the season and time of day, should offer exceptional lighting. Being out in the late afternoon gives us the opportunity to be ready for the seasonal low-angled sunlight at sundown. Potentially, the location will provide opportunities for quite striking sunset coloration of the grasslands and vegetation. Bring your camera, snacks, and a warm jacket.

**Jeff Jones** has been working on his photographic vision for more than 25 years, honing his craft primarily in the Sierra Nevada, Alaskan arctic and mountains of Santa Barbara County. He and Laurie Hoyle, his wife, have mounted several touring exhibitions, and co-authored *Arctic Sanctuary* (University of Alaska Press, 2010). Their work has been shown in numerous galleries and museums, including locally at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Wildling Museum. Jeff had the honor of being selected as the photographer whose work comprised the nationally traveling exhibit which celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Visit Jeff's website, [lumnos.com](http://lumnos.com), to view a gallery of his work and listen to his Tedx talk on the value of wildlands and their continued protection.

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### Beach Walk: Arroyo Hondo to El Molino Point

Field Trip with Susie Bartz

Sunday, January 26, 2014, 9:30am to 4:00pm

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

Participation is limited to 20

Members free/nonmembers \$20

Additionally, a minimum \$5 donation to the Land Trust is requested, to be collected at the start of the trip.

This is a round-trip beach walk at low tide, accessing the beach from Arroyo Hondo Preserve and walking west about 2 miles toward El Molino (Poison Oak Point). While passing through the access culvert, the Society will participate in a steelhead count on both the ebbing and rising tide. Exploring the seldom frequented stretch of coast, we'll view the unusual and beautiful aspects of the sea cliff, explore surfline rocks, tectonically uplifted marine terraces, and the delights of tidepools.

Winter weather dictates warm clothing in case of wind. Also hat, sun protection, water, sack lunch, and good sturdy shoes. Due to exposed bedrock, hiking poles are strongly suggested.

Please note the all day (9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) length of this field trip. Because of the special permission granted to the Society by Arroyo Hondo Preserve, all participants must stay together for the duration of the trip.

**Susie Bartz** worked at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History to publish the maps of legendary geologist Tom Dibblee. Currently she assists community organizations to help bring an awareness of earth science to children, teachers, and the general public.



## Past SYVNHS Programs:



(Clockwise from upper left) Rattlesnake found at the Sedgwick Reserve by Matt Holding, who presented the rattlesnake lecture for SYVNHS the night before; On Zaca Ridge, Susie Bartz shows us an outcrop of Obispo volcanic tuff from a pyroclastic eruption; Our bluebird nest-box building workshop at the Solvang Library was very popular, Dennis Beebe presiding (and helping); The lightly visited beach west of Arroyo Hondo will be the focus of the January 26th beach walk; Larry Ballard sharing information about a small stand of California Black Oak on Zaca Ridge. (Photos by John Evarts.)



## Marc's Stumper

Look at the beautiful summer-dry mountains that surround us here in the Santa Ynez Valley. A single careless match (or more likely a hot car muffler) could start a wildfire to consume it all. But a single ice cube won't start an ice age, a single drop doesn't start a flood, and picking up one piece of litter won't clean the highway. (Or could they?) What is it about fire that is so different that it can spread out of control? Fire is a fact and a symbol. What other natural and cultural processes work the same way - where a small start kindles a great result?

**About last issue's stumper:** *Introduced species* were first brought here, intentionally or not, from all around the world. They arrived without the natural predators that control their growth in their home range. The weeds favor disturbed areas like roads and fields. This is a new habitat that humans have created with agriculture, grazing, and building roads and houses. The native plants have no advantage here, and the invaders have won the competition. With the increase in world trade and travel, introduced species are a growing threat to the world with real economic and ecological costs.

Wildfires have been disturbingly common in our mountains lately. (Left to right) After the **White Fire** in Aliso Canyon (May 2013); singed Valley Oaks after the **Olive Fire** (May 2013); air tanker doing a Phos-Chek fire retardant drop on the **Lookout Fire** last year (Oct. 2012). What makes it so easy for wildfire to spread out of control?



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