



Santa Barbara Audubon Society

Eyes in the Sky

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2009

2nd Issue

Dear friends,

Welcome to our second quarterly newsletter edition. First, a heart-felt thank for your ongoing support. A special thank you to Café del Sol, our first annual business partnership sponsor.

In spite of the current economy, we keep moving closer to our goal of building and moving into new quarters at the SB Museum of Natural History. When we started our Birds of Prey Capital Campaign in mid-June, we had raised \$74,000 of the \$150,00 we need. In just a few weeks we have received an additional \$18,000, bringing us up to \$92,000. Additionally, if we raise just \$7,000 more before Labor Day, an anonymous donor will contribute another \$10,000.

On July 11th, we had our “official” Capital Campaign kick-off event at the building site. The event gathered much publicity, as we took the front pages of SB News Press, Daily Sound and Noozhawk.

We need to complete the project before the rainy season begins this winter. This is important, as building during rainstorms presents numerous problems, and construction in the spring would disturb birds nesting nearby. We would have to postpone building until summer of 2010.



MAX FOSTERS ORPHANED OWLETS



This year, Max fostered four owlets, three of which were sent to the Ojai Raptor Center for flight and hunting training before release back into the wild. The fourth, unfortunately, did not make it. It had fallen from the nest during a wind storm, and had sustained serious head injuries.

Picture of Max receiving his first orphaned owlet. As always, he was ready—welcoming the youngster with a mouse 30 seconds after its arrival.

RECENT EYES IN THE SKY PROGRAMS

Seven first and second grade classrooms at McKinley finished the popular “Meet Your Wild Neighbor” 5-week science series. MYWN introduces students to the most commonly seen local birds. It includes live bird visits, colorful curriculum learning cards, worksheets, a bird sounds CD, two field trips with species check lists, a nature journal and a pre- and post-assessment tests. The learning curve is steep.

Pre-test results show that on the average, students could identify 4.9 of the 12 bird species by generic name (gull, crow, duck, etc.), and identify 3.9 of the 12 bird sounds. By the end of the series, students’ average rose to 10.6 bird species, and 8.0 bird sounds. Not bad for first and second-graders. Not only that, the children are now going around educating their families and friends about the birds they have learned about, as the program genuinely sparks their interest and love for birds. They’re no longer just abstract feathered objects, but true “wild neighbors”. They love hearing about the long sticky wood-pecker tongue that wraps around their skull, and love watching them climb up telephone poles right near their school.

(cont'd)

The McKinley school MYWN program was made possible by a grant from the *High Tide Foundation*.

Seventeen 4-H Club home-schoolers also learned about the 12 most common species after school and on the weekends. Parents who participated learned right alongside the children. This fall they will sign up again, this time learning about seabirds.

Three third-grade classrooms at El Camino school and 50 children at two local Boys and Girls Clubs learned about local seabirds. They studied herons, gulls, plovers, sandpipers, loons, pelicans and cormorants. The highlight was an all-morning field trip to Coal Oil Point where they could observe many of the birds they had been studying, including just-hatched Snowy plovers.



The seabird MYWN program was sponsored by the *Coastal Fund*.

Other EITS programs took place at Lotusland, Camp Whittier, Monroe school, Hollister School, Cliff Drive Care Center, Lou Grant Parent-Child Workshop, and the SB Museum of Natural History.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: FRED ENNERSON



Fred and Max in 1999

Fred started volunteering here when I first started rehabilitating seabirds in 1991. Fred has befriended more birds around here than I can even remember, including our resident Black-crowned night herons, our local Scrub jay, and even gophers. Fred was here when Max and Ivan arrived 12 years ago, and handled Max for several years before Max decided he only wanted one handler. Fred, however, is one of two volunteers trained to handle him anyway in case of an emergency.



Fred and resident Scrub Jay



Fred with Squirt, the Red-shouldered hawk

Fred was essential in helping establish the SBAS/SBMNH partnership, as it was his idea to take the birds to the museum free of charge many years ago. One day, Dr. Hutterer, Executive Director of the Museum, approached Fred to explore the idea of us housing the birds at the Museum, and today we're almost there.

And no, if you are looking for a great dedicated volunteer, you can't have him.

*Gabriele Drozdowski
Eyes in the Sky Program Director*



Resident Black-crowned night heron, Fred, and Kachina, the American kestrel

EYES IN THE SKY •

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