

**THE MONO LAKE NEWSLETTER**  
**Summer 1984**                      **Vol. 7, No. 1**



Larry Ford

**Promoting Visitation vs. Preserving Wilderness**  
**Gulls Have Poor Year**  
**Scenic Area Advances**

# THE MONO LAKE NEWSLETTER

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**ON THE COVER:** Is Mono becoming another roadside attraction? Does increasing visitation have to destroy the lake's wilderness qualities? See page 8.



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*Mono Lake is a holy place with lessons for future generations of Americans.*

...Congressman Richard Lehman

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# Mono Lake Watch

## Silent Streams



Most of Mono's streams have been silenced. Lee Vining and Parker creeks are dry below the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's diversion dams. Most of Rush Creek has also been diverted. Denied this water, Mono Lake itself has fallen half a foot since spring.

On a hot July day, we traced the trickle down Rush Creek. Over a century ago, John Muir followed this stream "through gentian meadows and groves of rustling aspen to Lake Mono." We passed by dead and dying trees and parched rocky banks. What was once California's premier brown trout stream has become a sterile wash. Before we reached the lake, the water disappeared beneath the cobbled creek bed.

Silent streams testify to DWP's taking of all the water it can. Since the aqueduct was extended into the Mono Basin, DWP has not allowed a drop of divertable water to reach Mono Lake.

If Mono is to survive, this must change. A balance must be reached, as the California Supreme Court decreed over a year ago, between DWP's water-gathering activities and the public interest in preserving "an economic, recreational and scenic resource."

Perhaps that balance can be struck outside the courtroom. In the wake of last spring's successful Mono Lake conference, the Mono Lake Committee and the DWP have begun to talk to one another about our needs and positions. We are working together with the California Department of Fish and Game on funding Mono Lake research.

Concerning the gravity of the situation, however, we are still miles apart. According to DWP aqueduct engineer LeVal Lund, "Scientific studies have not indicated that by changing the [Mono Lake's] water level there has been any impact on the environment."

No impact? What about 15,000 acres of exposed, alkali-encrusted lake bottom? What about dust storms that violate emergency air quality standards? What about the loss of Negit Island and its gull colonies?

Just as serious are intangible impacts. At its low ebb, the lake looked "like a prone patient being bled to death on an operating table."<sup>2</sup> It was a maimed landscape, as



Rebecca Shearin

inspiring as Yosemite might be if its waterfalls were diverted into hydroelectric dams.

During the past few years, the Mono Lake landscape has begun to heal. Wet winters and high runoff have forced DWP to reduce diversions. The lake has risen nine feet, water has covered some of the alkali, and Negit is again an island.

But will it remain an island? Will trees and trout return to lower Rush Creek? Will our children know a living, beautiful Mono Lake? With your continued help, the answer can be "yes."

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in *The Review*, Mammoth Lakes, May 10, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>Gray Brechin, quoted from the *Mono Lake Guidebook*, p. 105.

# Negit Coyote Keeps Gulls at Bay; Chick Count Down

On July 5-6, an "interagency census team" consisting of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Bureau of Land Management and the Point Reyes Bird Observatory estimated only 5,500 chicks on Mono's islets, the second lowest count since censuses began in 1976. Last year 16,300 chicks were tallied; in 1976, 35,800.

Low chick numbers cannot be attributed to fewer breeding adults. According to Point Reyes biologist David Shuford, about as many gulls attempted to nest this year as last. For some reason, however, fewer chicks survived.

Nor was the cause lack of food. Brine shrimp numbers in May and June were the highest since 1979, and brine flies were also numerous.

There was, however, less nesting habitat and consequent crowding. At least one coyote remained on Negit Island, preventing gulls from reoccupying the areas where approximately 28,000 gull chicks fledged in 1976, 1977 and 1978. Biologists believe the animal was marooned last year by Mono's rising waters.

Moreover the rising lake level eroded or inundated most of the islets west of Paoha Island, forcing thousands of gull refugees onto the Negit Islets. The result was exceptionally high nesting densities. Overcrowding is known to result in increased egg and chick predation.

Parasites and heat may also have played significant roles. Ticks infested many of the chicks on some of the islets. Hotter-than-average temperatures in early summer may have stressed chicks already weakened by tick infestations.

DWP, however, was quick to twist an unfortunate situation to its own advantage. It claimed in a news release that the rising lake was harming the gulls, but made no mention of why the birds could not return to Negit, or of the other factors that undoubtedly contributed to the high chick mortality.



*The gull colony on Negit Island, photographed in the 1930s. The presence of at least one coyote prevented gulls from nesting on Negit this year.*

Point Reyes Bird Observatory biologist David Shuford cautioned that neither side should attempt to gain a political advantage by oversimplifying the reasons for changes in the gull population. He stressed that "chick production can go up and down over a series of years even if a major factor such as lake level remains constant . . . many interacting factors are involved."

Once biologists have had time to analyze and reflect on their data, the picture will become clearer. But it has not been a good year for Mono Lake's gulls.

*Join us at Mono Lake on Sat.  
Sept. 1, for our annual  
Bucket Walk, Picnic, Meeting  
see page 13*

# Mono Scenic Area Piggybacked Onto Wilderness Compromise; Passage Expected

The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area moved closer to reality June 28 when California Sens. Pete Wilson (R) and Alan Cranston (D) included the measure in a major wilderness compromise.

Most environmental groups praised the Wilson-Cranston package, which would preserve 1.8 million acres of California wilderness, protect the Tuolumne River from hydroelectric dams, and establish the Mono Scenic Area. Adoption by Congress and signing by the president are virtually assured, probably before the end of summer.

The scenic area began as a Mono Lake National Monument bill, H.R. 1341, authored by Congressman Richard Lehman (D-Sanger). Lehman's legislation skirted the lake level issue, but was nevertheless attacked by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power on the grounds it would weaken the city's legal position and jeopardize its diversions from Mono Lake's tributary streams. Siding with DWP were the Reagan administration, California Gov. George Deukmejian, Sen. Pete Wilson and 14 Southern California congressmen.

With this high-powered opposition, the national monument proposal appeared doomed. But DWP's objections proved more semantic than substantive. DWP did not oppose protecting Mono's islands, shore lines and volcanic features, providing they were not elevated to national monument status.

The result was a compromise that differs from the original monument in little more than name. To satisfy DWP, Lehman and Congressman John Seiberling (D-Ohio) negotiated amendments that changed the designation from Mono Lake National Monument to Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, deleted a water use study, and added language clarifying that water rights would not be affected one way or the other.

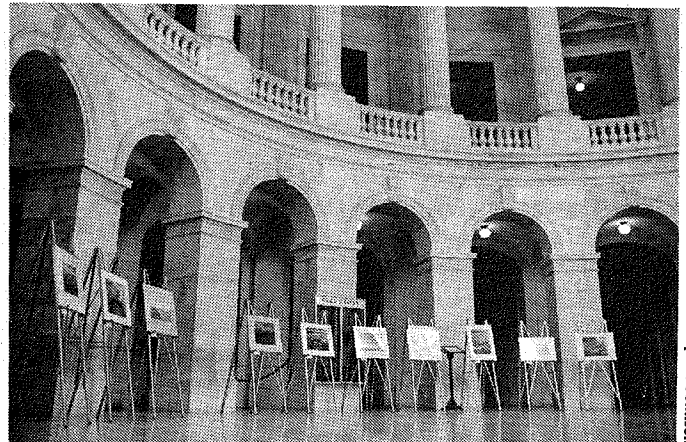
With Los Angeles' blessing, the Mono Scenic Area sailed through the House on a unanimous voice vote last July. Reversing positions of opposition, Sen. Wilson and Gov. Deukmejian joined Sen. Alan Cranston, Mono County and the Mono Lake Committee in backing the measure before the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Reserved Water at a May 14 hearing. Even Los Angeles Councilwoman Peggy Stevenson testified in support, telling subcommittee chairman Malcom Wallop (R-Wyoming), "I am pleased to report to you that we are in accord with our neighbors to the north" and "are committed to working together as we have done in developing H.R. 1341."

With that level of support, the Mono Scenic Area would have sailed through the Senate were it not for objections from the Reagan administration. The U.S. Department of Agriculture assistant service chief, F. Dale Robertson, told the Senate subcommittee that the "additional directions and authority contained in the bill are not necessary to achieve coordinated resource management." Robertson testified that expenditures for a visitor center, management plan and ecological studies are "not justified in terms of overall national priorities." Moreover he objected to allowing condemnation of state lands proposed for development "in a manner detrimental to the integrity of the scenic area," and prohibiting geothermal development. Robertson proposed 17 amendments that would have gutted the protections in the bill and left a "scenic area" in name only.

Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of Congressman Lehman and the Mono Lake Committee, Wilson and Cranston rejected most of the administration's amendments. Substantive changes give the Forest Service leeway in constructing a visitor center, but strengthen restrictions on grazing.

What will a Mono Scenic Area accomplish? In brief, it will protect the aesthetic and ecological values of Mono Lake's islands, shores, most of the Mono Craters, Black Point and part of the adjacent Sierran escarpment from geothermal development, timber harvesting, expanded mining operations and other forms of industrial intrusion. It will prohibit sale of these federal lands to Los Angeles at \$1.25 an acre, repealing a 1936 special-interest law. It will authorize construction of a visitor center and development of campgrounds, trails and interpretive facilities. While it will not reduce DWP's diversions, it will introduce hundreds of thousands of visitors to Mono's natural beauty, winning the lake new friends and supporters. More details in our next newsletter!

## Mono Photos in Washington



An exhibit of Mono Lake photographs by Ansel Adams, Brett Weston and other artists graced the Senate rotunda in Washington, D.C., the week of June 7-11. The exhibit was arranged by California Senators Pete Wilson and Alan Cranston's staffs, who were impressed by the photographs we brought to the May 14 Mono Scenic Area hearing.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the Mono Lake Committee hosted a reception that was attended by senators, congresspersons, congressional staff people, and representatives from National Audubon, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and The Wilderness Society. Among the participants were Congressman Richard Lehman, author of the Mono Scenic Area legislation, and Sen. Pete Wilson, whose support virtually assures its passage. Ed Grosswiler, our former executive director, volunteered his time to represent the committee.

Stephen Johnson, curator of the *At Mono Lake* photographic exhibition, traveled to Washington to organize the display. Joy Oakes and Tom Cassidy of the National Audubon Society helped Johnson arrange the reception.

# DWP Trying to Nix Mono ACEC Designation

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has filed a 25-page appeal protesting the Bureau of Land Management's designation of 16,000 acres around Mono Lake as an "Area of Critical Environmental Concern."

The protest followed a meeting between DWP officials and BLM State Director Ed Hastey. At that meeting, DWP argued that the ACEC designation places greater value on the Mono Basin environment than on Los Angeles' water rights, weakening the city's position in the public trust lawsuit. DWP also maintained that (1) the ACEC is based on outdated and erroneous information and analyses, and (2) BLM did not provide an adequate period for public comment.

BLM responded by reopening the Mono Lake ACEC to public comment and review, despite the voluminous input that had already been considered. The original ACEC proposal, which included all 160,000 acres of BLM-administered public land in the Mono Lake watershed, received over 150 letters in support and fewer than five in opposition. It was backed by the California Resources Agency, many legislators, the Mono Lake

Committee and environmentalists. Earlier this year, BLM decided to establish a smaller ACEC that included Mono's islands, tufa groves, Panum Crater, Black Point and lands exposed by the declining lake level. Now even that proposal is in jeopardy.

DWP was not satisfied by BLM's decision. It wanted the ACEC scuttled, not just reopened to public comment. To this end it appealed the state director's decision to BLM's Washington, D.C., headquarters.

The ACEC requires "special management attention" to protecting and preventing "irreparable damage" to "important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or natural systems or processes." Mono Lake's unique, extraordinary geological, ecological and scenic values warrant and require this focused management. They need to be protected from over-zealous tourists, off-road vehicle abuse, grazing, mining, other incompatible uses, and the inevitable adverse impacts of a declining lake level. The ACEC would not affect DWP's water diversions.

*Special thanks to everyone who responded to our action alert and wrote BLM on behalf of the Mono Lake ACEC. Your letters do make a difference!*

## Public Trust Lawsuit: Still Waiting

We are frequently asked, "What's happening on the public trust case"? The answer is very little.

Five years have passed since the Mono Lake Committee joined the National Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth and other plaintiffs in filing suit against the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for lowering Mono-Lake and harming its "public trust" values. Eighteen months ago the California Supreme Court ruled that "some responsible body ought to reconsider the allocation of the waters of the Mono Basin" based on the public trust doctrine. A year ago, federal Superior Court Judge Lawrence Karlton heard arguments on whether the case should be heard in state or federal court. Since that time, virtually nothing has happened.

In March of this year, our lawyers wrote Judge Karlton, pointing out that DWP had resumed diversions from Mono Lake's tributary streams, and urging him to expedite the case. Karlton has asked DWP for information on its diversion plans, but has taken no further action. There is still no hint on when the judge will finally rule.

Even Karlton's long-awaited decision may not remove the final barriers to trial. The court which has jurisdiction may still refer the case to the State Water Resources Control Board if it determines that "the nature or complexity of the issues indicate that an initial determination is appropriate" (quote from Supreme Court decision). The SWRCB is a political body appointed by the governor, and is unlikely to be a sympathetic forum. Moreover a detour to the board is apt to delay the case up to several years.

While litigation is slow and expensive, it is still our best and

possibly only hope for saving Mono Lake. The California Supreme Court decision, which mandates a "better balance" between DWP's water-gathering activities and the public interest in preserving "an economic, recreational and scenic resource," was a major victory. Eventually the courts are likely to order some reduction in DWP's diversions.

## Sheep Trial Scheduled

The problem of sheep grazing within the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve comes before the Mono County Justice Court on July 31.

Last September the state reserve cited Joseph Mendenborough, one of California's largest wool growers, for allowing 1,600 sheep to graze near Simon's Spring on Mono's southeastern shore. Sheep were trampling delicate tufa formations, wreaking havoc on spring-fed marsh and meadow habitats, and threatening nesting waterfowl, shore birds and other wildlife.

This spring the sheep were back. State rangers threatened impoundment, and Mendenborough finally agreed to move the animals elsewhere. He procrastinated, however, until the end of June. According to ranger David Carle, the sheep remained at Simon Springs "longer than we wanted." Mendenborough plans to fight the case in court, and has requested a jury trial.

Sheep are legally grazed all around Mono Lake, but only above the 1940 shore line. Both the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the state reserve have barred grazing on the relicited lands exposed by Mono's decline. But wool growers have persisted in allowing their flocks to trespass into these sensitive areas.

## Governor Signs Research Bill, Who Gets Funded?

A bill that provides \$250,000 for a three-year "scientific study of the effects of water diversions on the Mono Lake ecosystem" was signed into law by Gov. George Deukmejian on May 7. Authored by Assemblyman Norman Waters (D-Plymouth), A.B. 1614 authorizes the California Department of Fish and Game to contract with the University of California and other public and private institutions or individuals to evaluate the effects of declining lake levels, increasing salinity and other changes on brine shrimp, flies, algae, birds, dust storms, groundwater inflow, evaporations and springs. The funds will be available in January 1985.

A.B. 1614 does not affect water diversions. Unless the coming winters are extraordinarily wet, Mono Lake's level will decline while the studies are conducted.

The question now is who gets funded. On July 9, the Mono Lake Committee and DWP met with Fish and Game Director Jack Parnell and Southern California Regional Manager Fred Worthley. Fish and Game agreed to keep us informed of its plans, and intends to meet with scientists later this summer.

## MLC Lobbies Successfully for Water Conservation Funds

The Mono Lake Committee joined Friends of the River in lobbying for water conservation funds in California's 1984-85 budget. As a result, the legislature earmarked \$200,000 for the development of a pilot landscape irrigation program using moisture-sensing devices. These devices, called *tensiometers*, indicate when lawns and other vegetation need watering. The funds, which have Gov. Deukmejian's approval, will be administered by the Office of Water Conservation through the Department of Water Resources.

The use of tensiometers is one of the most promising new water conservation technologies. In a park in the desert community of Palm Springs, their use reduced water consumption by 50 percent, and saved thousands of dollars. The city of Los Angeles is one of the areas targeted for the pilot program.



## New Geothermal Assessment Slights Water Consumption

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management seem intent on giving geothermal power developers a free reign regardless of the amount of water that may be required for cooling purposes.

While the Mono Lake Committee supports the development of geothermal power with environmental safeguards, we are concerned about increased water consumption in a region already suffering serious impacts from water exports. In 1983 we joined the Sierra Club in protesting the lease sale of 85,000 acres of public land in southern Mono County on the grounds that water consumption had not been adequately considered. The Interior Board of Land Appeals agreed with most of our concerns, and overturned the lease sale.

Now the Forest Service and BLM are attempting to skirt the IBLA decision through a new *Supplemented Environmental Assessment* that is speculative, virtually unreferenced and entirely inadequate. The *Supplemented EA* is deficient in the following areas:

(1) *Water consumption is minimized.* The *Supplemented EA* asserts that water consumption will not exceed 6,200 acre-foot/year for a 200-megawatt development. This estimate contradicts water-demand figures from other studies, which average 20,000 acre-foot/year for a 200-MW development.

(2) *Development potential is minimized.* The *Supplemented EA* predicates its discussion of water consumption on an estimated 200-MW geothermal development, yet the United States Geological Survey estimates a 2,100-MW potential. The *Supplemented EA* asserts "this [USGS] potential is now

considered too high," but relies on "proprietary information" from the Union Oil Co. to arrive at 200 MW as the "most probable size of the potential geothermal development." This procedure is unacceptable. Industry has a vested interest in minimizing development potential to discourage competitors and minimize impacts. Bids on the lease sale amounted to twice the dollar amount that had been anticipated, indicating that industry believes the potential is substantial. Clearly the impact of more extensive development needs to be evaluated.

(3) *Impacts of water consumption are not evaluated, and no mitigation or limitations on water use are proposed or required.* For example, the maximum water consumption estimated in the *Supplemented EA*—6,200 acre-foot/year—is dismissed as only "three times the amount of water consumed by the town of Mammoth Lakes each year." Yet even this amount of water, if taken from the Mono Lake watershed, would lower the lake level substantially. And, as noted above, water consumption could be many times higher. If the USGS estimate of a 2,100-MW potential were realized, and wet cooling required 100 acre-foot/year, water consumption could reach 210,000 acre-foot/year—over twice the average annual diversion from Mono Lake's tributary streams. Even if this "worst case" scenario is unlikely, it still requires thorough evaluation prior to leasing.

The Mono Lake Committee has conveyed these concerns to the Forest Service and BLM. It is hoped that our public land stewards will listen this time around.

# MONO LAKE: Another Roadside Attraction?

## *Promoting Visitation vs. Preserving Wilderness*

*We the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are 40 freedoms without a blank spot on the map.*  
...Aldo Leopold

Aldo Leopold would have valued Mono Lake for its wilderness qualities. You can wander its shores without knowing what to expect around the next bend. You can hike to tufa groves, beaches and springs that are unnamed on any map, yet are more wonderful than those "developed" for visitors. You can discover Mono's wonders for yourself.

Yet Mono's shores are not as wild as they were a few years ago. The activities of the Mono Lake Committee have directly or indirectly lured tens of thousands of visitors. We have catalyzed national and international publicity, opened a visitor center, led thousands of field trips and supported legislation to establish the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve and the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. The Tufa State Reserve was formed by legislation in 1981, and two years later attracted approximately 115,000 visitors. Passage of the Mono National Scenic Area is certain to bring thousands more.

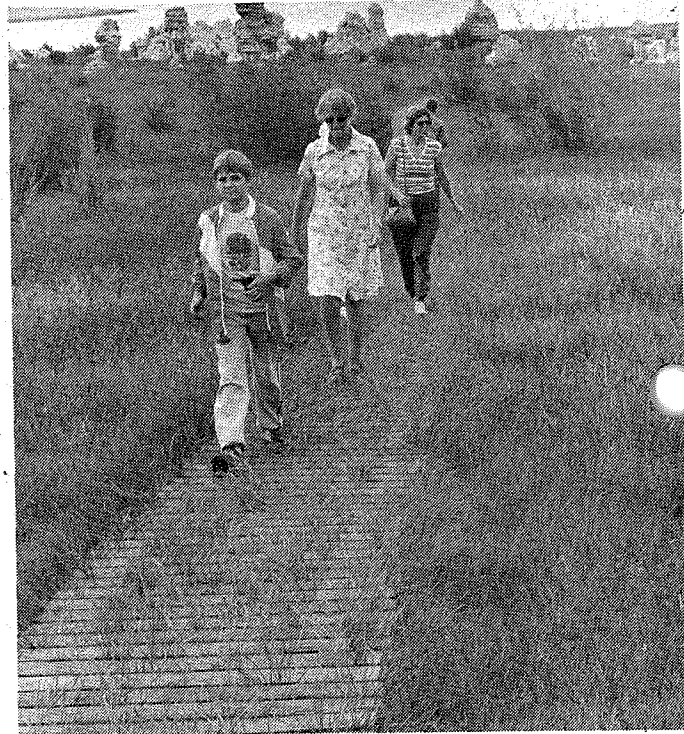
Recently, some of Mono Lake's friends and supporters have raised concerns about increasing visitation and the construction of visitor use facilities. One critic has complained about the "Disneyland atmosphere" and the "sacrifice of South Tufa," where the state and the Bureau of Land Management have sited parking lots, a signed interpretive trail, informational kiosks and outhouses.

On the one hand, the Mono Lake Committee believes we should introduce as many people as possible to Mono Lake and its plight. The lake is a national treasure that deserves to be known to all Americans. Broad public support is crucial to convincing Los Angeles to share the water the lake needs. The Mono Lake situation symbolizes the connection between our wasteful use of resources and the deteriorating health of our land. That message must be spread to as many people as possible.

On the other hand, a place can be loved to death. Before the state and BLM closed the south tufa area to vehicles, prohibited camping, established marked trails and began patrolling, tufa were being used for campfire rings and collected for souvenirs, vegetation was being trampled, and roads were proliferating in all directions. Something had to be done.

In fact, the state and BLM have done an excellent job of protecting the resource. Visitors now stay on marked trails, eliminating the impact from vehicles and random roaming. Vegetation has recovered phenomenally well. Damage to tufa has declined to low levels.

What's been lost is the wilderness experience. The visitor to South Tufa, the Mono Lake County Park, Panum Crater or



Larry Ford

*At the Mono Lake County Park, construction of a boardwalk by the Tufa State Reserve enables visitors to reach the tufa without getting feet wet. More importantly, it prevents those feet from turning meadows into quagmires.*


Black Point can no longer imagine he has left civilization behind. Simply the presence of a trail or sign destroys the requisite sense of discovery.

Does an increasing stream of visitors have to eliminate Mono Lake's wilderness qualities? Should other parts of the lake be developed like South Tufa? Or should undeveloped areas be left as wild as possible?

The time is apt to reassess our policies, keeping in mind the words of Aldo Leopold: "Recreational development is a job, not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still-unlovely human mind."

*Your comments on the visitation vs. wilderness conundrum would be appreciated! Please write or contact our Lee Vining office.*





*Reflections Over Mono Lake at 31,000 Feet*

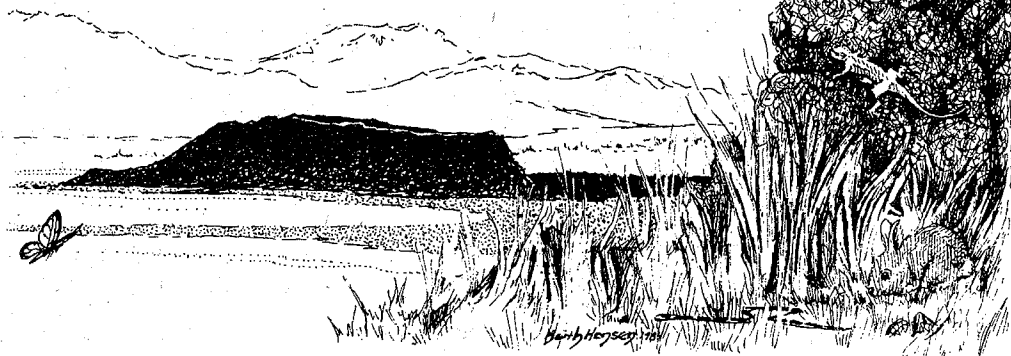
A dying land waits patiently  
for its final knell.

Soon, as stars count time,  
the land will resurrect  
in a new geologic age.

Will it remember, then,  
the creatures who scarred  
its tired body?

I think not; for in our haste,  
we paused too briefly by the reflecting pool:  
noting naught but ourselves,  
forgetting who held the glass.

*Michael Slater*  
June 11, 1984



*Michael Slater is president of Friends of the Earth Foundation.*

## The Mono Naturalist

Summer is Mono Lake's tropical thunderstorm season. The first spectacular storms wandered north from the gulf in mid-June. Lightning played around Black Point, but there was little rain. Wetter storms arrived in July, drenching some localities with up to four inches of precipitation in just over an hour! The downpours spawned floods in Lee Vining Canyon, closing roads and forcing midnight evacuations from campgrounds. Some of the runoff topped the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's diversion dam, giving Mono Lake an unexpected drink.

The rains greened meadows and rejuvenated wildflower gardens that were already beginning to wither. Unlike the past two years, snow vanished from most of the high country early in the summer. By mid-July, things were even getting dry at 10,000 feet, and many flowers, such as the red mountain heather, had already bloomed and faded. The summer rains reversed this trend, swelling streams, soaking the earth and watering the flowers. At the end of the month, hikers in Lundy Canyon were still ecstatic over the profuse displays of white and red columbines, larkspurs, monkshoods, cinquefoils, fireweed, paintbrush and other colorful corollas.

Mono's shores, too, responded to the rains with many summer blooms. A remarkable quarter-acre of rein orchid appeared along the new boardwalk below the Mono Lake County Park. The white orchids were beautifully complemented by golden monkeyflower and groundsel. In drier areas, the large blooms of white prickly poppy and yellow blazing star called attention to themselves.

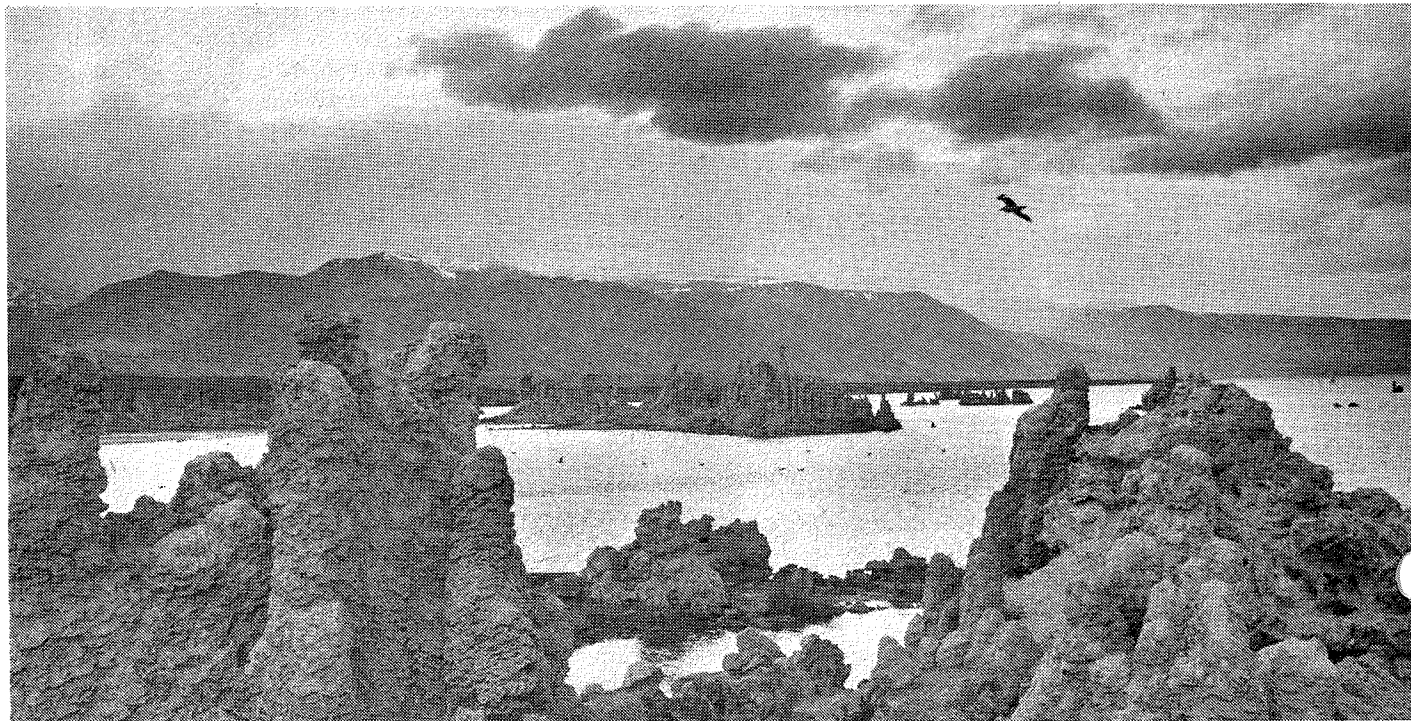
Nesting among this flowery luxuriance were several uncommon birds. Northern harriers, previously called marsh hawks, set up housekeeping along Mono's west shore. Nearby a pair of Canada geese raised half a dozen goslings. At the opposite end of the lake, near Simon's Spring, marsh wrens and pintail nested successfully, a first record for this duck.

Also in this area were breeding American avocets and black-necked stilts. In the uplands, a pair of plain titmouse raised young in a vertical drain pipe, and bushtits nested among the pinon pines in at least two localities; both are new breeding species in the Mono Basin.

The "fall" migration began on the first day of summer. On the solstice, large flocks of southbound Wilson's phalaropes materialized along Mono's north shore. These early migrants were colorful adult females which had left their mates behind to incubate eggs and care for chicks. In phalaropes the stereotypical sex roles are reversed: females wear the stunning breeding plumage, compete for nesting sites and males, and leave chick-rearing duties to their husbands. Most of Mono's Wilson phalaropes are adult females, although males and immatures do arrive in mid-July. They stay two to three weeks, relying on the lake's abundant food for the energy to molt worn feathers and grow new ones, and to fatten for non-stop flights to South America.

Every summer sees its share of rare birds, and 1984 was the year of the rare sparrow. Black-throated sparrows, a desert species common to the south, returned to breed for the first time since 1978. Black-chinned sparrows appeared for the first time since 1976. The most exciting find was a drab Mexican species—the Cassin's sparrow. For several weeks a lone male haunted the greasewood near the South Tufa parking area, compensating for its plainness with pleasing, skylarking songs. This is the first Cassin's sparrow ever found on the mainland of Northern California (it has reached the Farallon Islands off San Francisco!).

Other rare avis included the black-and-white warbler, ovenbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, common tern and a new species for the lake, the oldsquaw. This northern duck was found dead on Mono's shores, and had probably perished many months previously.



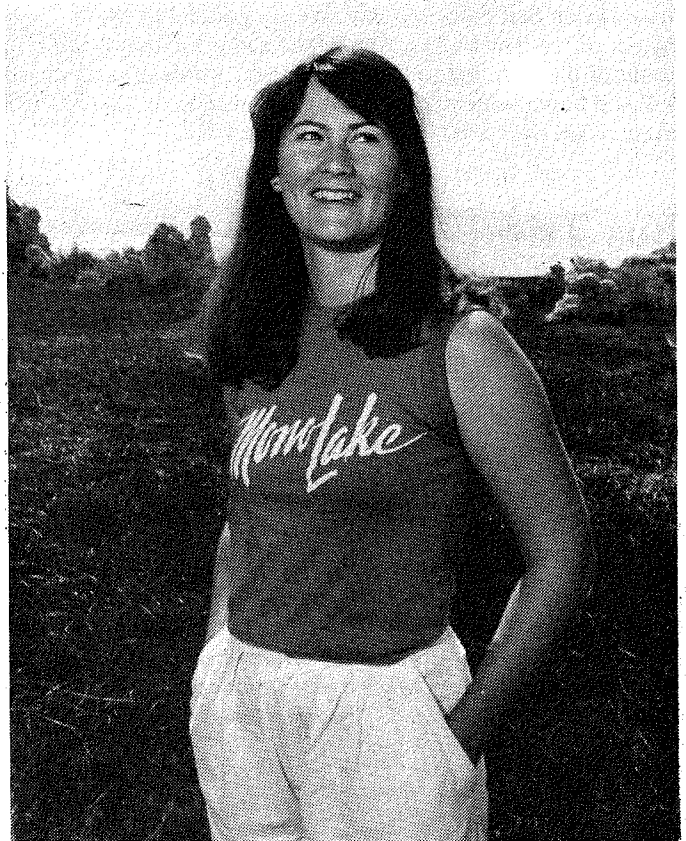
# MLC News

## Martha Davis Accepts Executive Director Position

The Mono Lake Committee has an outstandingly qualified executive director in Martha Davis. She succeeds Ed Grosswiler, who left the committee in March after two highly successful years. For the past four months, Davis has been doing two jobs extremely well. As legislative representative, she has been largely responsible for the success of the research bill and the Mono National Scenic Area. As acting executive director, she has inspired our staff, interns and volunteers to work hard and effectively.

Prior to joining the Mono Lake Committee last year, Davis worked for Greenpeace Pacific Southwest as coordinator of wildlife issues. She has extensive experience in administration, lobbying, public speaking, media, campaign planning and grassroots organizing. Davis is a graduate of Stanford University, where she studied environmental policy and land-use planning. She also possesses a master's degree from Yale, where she focused on environmental conflict management and ecosystem analysis.

Davis plans to move from Sacramento to Los Angeles, where she will work out of our Westwood Boulevard office. "It is crucial," she believes, "that the committee's executive director be based in Los Angeles, for that is where Mono's fate will probably be decided."



*MLC's new executive director, Martha Davis.*

## Ed Grosswiler Joins MLC Board

Our former executive director, Ed Grosswiler, will continue to counsel the Mono Lake Committee as a member of our board of directors. Grosswiler's political, organizational and financial savvy will be a tremendous asset.

MLC's nine-member board of directors determines the committee's policies and positions, approves budgets, and hires the executive director. Members hail from Los Angeles, Orange County, the Bay Area and Lee Vining, and serve without compensation.

## MLC Participates in County Government Meeting

The Mono Lake Committee played a major role in the June 22-23 meeting of the Southern California Association of County Governments, which focused on the water problems of the Eastern Sierra and Southern California. We had the opportunity to discuss Mono Lake and our position with influential Southern California supervisors and government officials. Acting Executive Director Martha Davis and legal assistant Tim Such reviewed our legislative and legal efforts, and Board Chairman David Gaines presented a slide show and led a field trip to the lake. Most of the participants were clearly impressed. Special thanks go to Mono County Supervisor Andrea Lawrence, who arranged our participation.

## Busy Summer at the Lake

Our Mono Lake Information Center in Lee Vining has been humming since Tioga Pass opened at the end of May. Many thousands of visitors have learned about Mono's plight from our updated exhibits and slide programs. Through the sale of T-shirts, books, posters and other items, we have also raised thousands of dollars for the lake's defense.

Never have we led so many tours and field trips! We have found that first-hand exposure to Mono's magic is the best way to win the lake new friends and supporters.

Helping us staff the center, lead tours, present talks and keep up on office work are a fine flock of hardworking, dedicated interns and volunteers. Joining old-timer Emily Harris, who was with us last summer, are interns Sally Miller, Jim Parker, Daria Walsh and John Whorff. Our favorite volunteer, George Larrimore, returned for the third straight summer, and Anita Benett donated a week of her time to help out.

## Used Books Wanted

We can recycle those used paperbacks and other books cluttering your shelves, and raise funds to save Mono Lake. Send them to: Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541. Thank you!

## Bay Cruise Fund-raiser

About 75 people enjoyed a Fourth of July cruise, dinner and fireworks on San Francisco Bay. We are grateful to Mark Palmer of the Sierra Club, who talked about the health and future of the bay, and to Mildred Bennett, whose organizational skill and boundless enthusiasm assured a wonderful time. The cruise raised over \$800 to help save Mono Lake.

## Bus Trip Filled

Our Mono Lake luxury bus tour to Mono Lake and Yosemite, made possible by California Parlor Car tours, is sold out with a lengthy waiting list. We would like to thank everyone who supported this exciting new venture, and hope to offer similar trips next summer.

## Free Mono Lake Camera Walks

The Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve is sponsoring free camera walks at Mono Lake's South Tufa Grove. Led by Richard Beebe, photography instructor for the Livermore recreation and parks district, these informal sessions will be geared to photographers of all levels. Composition and esthetics will be emphasized. The camera walks are scheduled for Sept. 2, 6:00 to 8 p.m. and Sept. 3, 8 to 10 a.m.

## Accolades

For many years Jean Dale and fellow monophiles have been spreading the word at fairs and similar events in Ventura County. This year they raised public awareness, as well as over \$100, at the July 4 Ventura Street Faire. This type of volunteer help will continue to be invaluable.

Many artists helped stock our Mono Lake Information Center with new and salable items. Thelma Prescott donated handmade pot holders. Cherry Frankling continues to keep us supplied with bird Christmas ornaments. Bill Neill let us use one of his stunning photographs for a deluxe postcard. Keith Hansen designed great new stationery. Charlotte Cooper donated artwork for gull notecards.

We are also grateful to the Mammoth Chamber of Commerce for dispensing our literature and bumper stickers, and to Jenny Swing and *Adventure 16* in San Diego for their support.

## Thank You, Yosemite Park and Curry Company!

The Mono Lake Committee would like to thank the *Yosemite Park and Curry Co.* for its continuing support for Mono Lake. Over the years, YPCC has generously supported our Mono Lake Grand Auction, L.A.-Mono Lake Bike-a-Thons, Luxury Bus Tour and other fund-raisers. In addition, YPCC President Ed Hardy has testified effectively on Mono Lake's behalf at legislative hearings.

## Mono Lake Research Library Reorganized

Researchers and individuals seeking information on the geology, biology and history of Mono Lake and DWP's water diversions can now avail themselves of a relatively comprehensive, well-organized research library at our information center in Lee Vining.

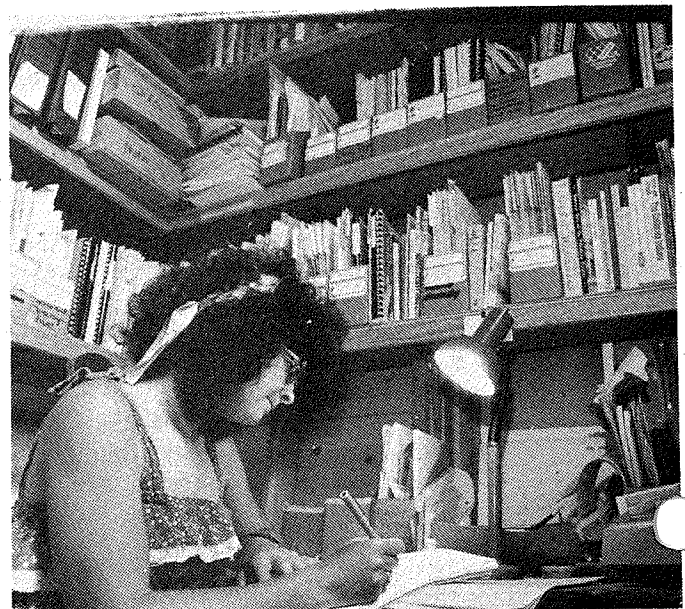
Weeks of cataloguing by MLC interns Dennis McCauliffe and especially Mary Kozak have turned our chaotic collection into a useful research tool. The library includes virtually every book, scientific paper, thesis and newspaper and magazine article concerning Mono Lake. In addition, there are unpublished pamphlets, government reports, theses, letters and historical photographs. Among the subjects covered are climatology, hydrology, geology, physical limnology, algae and plankton, brine shrimp and flies, birds, anthropology, mining and settlement history, grazing, the Los Angeles aqueduct, water supply and water conservation. Eventually we hope to expand the library to include the Sierra Nevada, Great Basin and saline lake ecology.

We are still searching for copies of the following publications, and would gratefully accept donations from our readers:

- (1) *Animal Life in the Yosemite*, by Grinnell and Storer.
- (2) *Pioneers of the Mono Basin*, by Margaret Calhoun.
- (3) Limnology texts, especially R.G. Wetzel's *Limnology*.
- (4) *Complete Report on Construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct*, by DWP (1916).

We would also appreciate donations of books, papers and other material pertaining to Mono Lake, the Sierra Nevada, the Great Basin, saline lakes and related topics.

The Mono Lake research library may be used by all MLC members as well as other serious researchers. While the materials are not available for loan, they may be copied on our copy machine for 15 cents per page (MLC members 10 cents). If you would like to use the library, please make an appointment through our Lee Vining office.



MLC Information Coordinator Ilene Mandelbaum hard at work in our newly organized research library.

# Join Our Bucket Walk!



Larry Ford

Join Mono Lake's friends on Saturday, Sept. 1, for our fifth annual bucket walk, meeting and picnic. We will each fill a container of water above the Lee Vining Creek diversion dam, and tote the water to Mono Lake.

On the same day the L.A.-to-Mono Lake Bike-a-thoners will arrive with water from downtown Los Angeles. Let's welcome them with hundreds of people!

After watering the lake, we will gather at the Mono Lake County Park for a picnic and the Mono Lake Committee's annual meeting. This is your opportunity to meet our staff, interns and volunteers, and to discuss our strategy and

progress.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Old Marina (parking area just east of U.S. 395 one mile north of Lee Vining. We will provide shuttles to the beginning of the walk. Bring snacks, signs with appropriate slogans, and a small container for carrying water.

The picnic begins at the Mono Lake County Park at 1 p.m. Our annual meeting follows at 2:30, and will feature reports on our legal, legislative and educational activities. Afterward there will be contra, square and circle dancing (no experience necessary!), as well as music and storytelling. Bring your own food and libations. See you there!

## Conservation: A Christian Perspective

*Father Christopher Kelley*

*Father Christopher Kelly, vicar of St. Timothy's Church in Bishop, is an articulate, impassioned and inspiring defender of creation. Again this year he will lead our Sept. 1 bucket brigade from the Lee Vining diversion dam down to Mono Lake's shores. This article is excerpted from Grace Notes, a publication of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, May 27, 1984.*

Just before we celebrate the ascension of our Lord, the church directs our attention earthward. Unlike sects that reject the material creation as worthless, the creed teaches that creation is God's primary work of love. The word was made flesh to redeem and transfigure this material world. To the Christian, matter matters.

If we take this to heart, the earth—God's work—is indeed something holy, sacramental—an outward and visible sign of God's love. This applies also to air, fuel and water. We are to love God *IN all things* as well as *above all things*.

It may be observed that, "As a society treats creation, so will its members inevitably treat one another." If the earth's resources are treated as something to be raped, rape will become the norm of that society's behavior. If water is habitually squandered, lives, too, become cheap.

It comes down to practicalities for Christians. If we can conserve water (or soil, or air or fuel), we must. Not to do so is a sin. Los Angeles only typifies an attitude toward creation that all of western society has indulged for far too long.

The biblical concept of property is that we are trustees, stewards (-sty-wardens, who look after the animals, their feed, their whole environment), not owners. *God is the owner*. Our tithes are his; if we do not return them to him, they are stolen from their rightful owner. As Christians we must learn and practice radical conservation of earth, air, fuel and water on the Christian moral principles implied in the Nicene Creed's first article. If Christian stewardship does not begin with reverent care for God's creation, it never truly begins at all.

# MONO LAKE

## '85 Alaska Cruise

*(Of Last Frontiers, Totem Poles, Bald Eagle, Whales, Glaciers, Mountains, Ships and Things!)*

By Mildred Bennett  
MLC Volunteer and Alaska Cruise Coordinator.

We are getting more and more excited about the MLC-sponsored 1985 Alaska Cruise. Our itinerary and dates have been changed a little since the last newsletter, so here is the update.

On Friday, June 14, 1985, Sitmar's luxurious *TSS Fairsky* will sail through the Golden Gate to Vancouver, Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, Prince Rupert and Victoria, returning to San Francisco at 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 26. Each port of call has its special cultural background, present-day activities and historical significance. Each is a meeting place of Indian, American and European heritages. There will be plenty of time to explore by foot or bus, or flight-see the surrounding wilderness. Shopping for Alaskan artifacts, such as scrimshaw, soapstone sculpture, masks and gold nugget jewelry, is another fascinating activity. Midway, we spend a full day in Glacier Bay National Park, where park rangers tell us about its ice-age wonders. In all, we spend six of our days "out" visiting places on land that, in many cases, can be reached only by plane or boat. Even while cruising we are also sight-seeing, for the "inside passage" is a most scenic waterway bordered by magnificent snowcapped mountains. We will also be on the look-out for whales, bald eagles and other wondrous creatures.

Another big plus is the time of year. June has the highest temperature (still not hot), lowest precipitation and the most daylight.

Besides plenty to see and do, there will be people of similar interests. The cruise will be profitable in friendships as well as adventures! Our group will be escorted by "Monophiles" who will tell us about the "state of the lake" and the birds and marine mammals we see along the way.

On board the *Fairsky* there is something to satisfy everyone's recreational taste, including bridge, cribbage, bingo, dancing, deck tennis, swimming, ping-pong, casino games, movies, stage shows, live music, and more. There is even a jogging track! Of course, there is always an array of delectable foods to tempt the palate—at meal times, tea times, in-between times and at the ultimate midnight buffet each night. One of Sitmar's specialties is a bountiful assortment of fresh seafood.

As for room accommodations, they are among the best. We have reserved inside and outside cabins on three decks to permit a range in prices. Each cabin has twin beds, ample drawer and closet space, TV, and bath with shower. Some have pull-down bunks for third and fourth persons. The cabins are all alike except that the outside cabins have windows.

Prices are the greatest, too. Sitmar's discount to our group makes it possible for our fares to be 86 percent of the regular tariff with approximately 12 percent being a tax-deductible donation to help save Mono Lake. Fares for double occupancy

range from \$1,967 per person for inside cabins to \$2,589 per person for outside cabins (remember, about 12 percent is tax deductible). Singles are available. If you have children to consider, Sitmar has a youth center. Children under two years of age are free, and children under 18 in a cabin with two adults are \$489 each.

Besides the discount cruise fares, round-trip air transportation to San Francisco from over 120 cities may be obtained for an additional \$100 per passenger. For those wishing to spend an extra day or two in S.F., there are "cruise plus" packages available, too. So you see, this could be one of your great vacations!

To make it come true, a deposit of \$350 per person (excluding third and fourth persons in a cabin) must be received *before Dec. 1, 1984*. After that date, fares will be higher. Space is limited and will be assigned in order of receipt of deposit. Final payment must be received by April 1985. Full refunds will be made if requested in writing to Sitmar before that date.

If you would like a brochure with more details, please send a self-addressed, stamped 4"-by-9½" envelope to ALASKA '85, c/o M. Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708. MLC offices in Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco and Lee Vining have the brochures as well.

The Alaskan cruise could be a super way to celebrate an anniversary, reunion, birthday or honeymoon, or make it an elegant wedding, Christmas or graduation present for someone special. Or it could be a nice gift from you to yourself! We hope to see you on board!!

## Long Live Mono 10K

Join us Sunday, Sept. 30, for an enjoyable 10K benefit run on Mono Lake's beautiful north shore. The run will begin at the Mono Lake County Park five miles north of Lee Vining at noon. Times will be given at one, three and five miles, and water provided at three and five miles. We'll have awards for the top three runners in each division, and T-shirts for everyone. Refreshments will include beer, cookies, soft drinks, oranges and more!

To enter, please send \$7 (\$9 day of race) to the Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541. For more information, call race directors Dennis J. Yamnitsky, P.O. Box 699, Yosemite, CA 93589, phone (209) 379-2786, or James Rodrigues, P.O. Box 789, Yosemite, CA 93589, phone (209) 379-2338.

Late September is a great time to visit the lake . . . and a great time for running. The aspens will be in full autumn splendor, and conditions should be clear, crisp and beautiful. So bring family and friends, and help us raise funds for saving Mono Lake!

# FUN(D) RAISERS



One of the original Bike-a-Thoners, MLC mail clerk Sally Gaines, with the L.A. water she cycled back to Mono Lake.

## Fifth L.A.-to-Mono Lake Bike-a-Thon

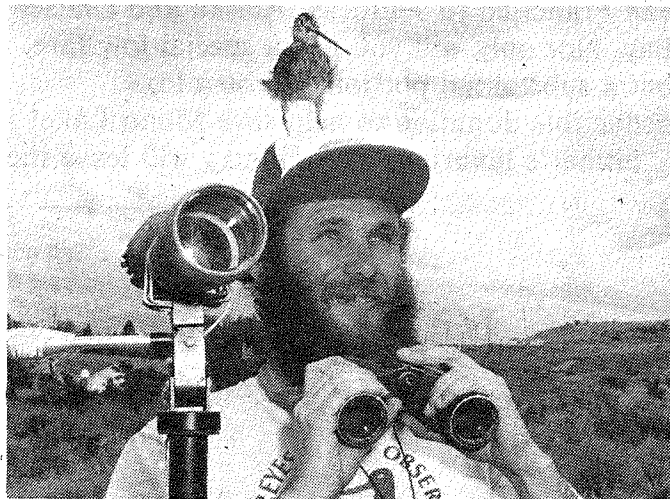
On Aug. 27, a band of cyclists will depart from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's downtown skyscraper, small vials of water strapped to their bicycles. For six days they will battle gravity to return the water to its natural destination—Mono Lake.

You can join the Bike-a-Thon by cycling along, or in spirit by pledging support to MLC'er Steve Osgood or the rider of your choice. Please clip the form at the bottom of the page and send it to our Lee Vining office.

If you would like to join the cyclists, please contact Osgood in Los Angeles at (213) 477-5754 or 477-8229. This year the following prizes have been donated for the six riders who raise the most money: Raleigh Mountain-tour all-terrain bicycle; three days at Oregon's Salishan Resort; Alice Krueper Custom Bike-Solo Tent; three days on a Lake Shasta houseboat; rafting trip on the American River; and an outing with Wilderness Bicycle Tours.

The Bike-a-Thoners raise both funds and awareness. Last year 51 riders secured over \$19,000 in pledges. Their departure from Los Angeles was covered by four television stations and the Associated Press.

The Mono Lake Bike-a-Thoners deserve your support. Please pledge whatever you can. Every cent will further the fight to save Mono Lake.



MLC chairman and ace bird-spotter David Gaines will be counting on this year's Bird-a-Thon. Why don't you join him?

## 1984 Mono Bird-a-Thon

For the fifth year the Mono Lake Committee is joining the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in a major fund-raising event—the 1984 Bird-a-Thon. PRBO is a non-profit research group that has been studying Mono's bird life since 1977.

The rules are simple. You ask friends to pledge a nickel, dime, dollar or whatever they can afford for every species you tally on Saturday, Oct. 13. For example, if you see 50 species and a sponsor has pledged 50 cents per species, you have raised \$25!

Or, if you don't wish to count, you may sponsor our bird-brained founder and chairman, David Gaines, who aims to tally about 70 species, all within the Mono Lake watershed. Dave welcomes fellow counters; if you would like to join him for an exciting day of bird watching, contact our Lee Vining office. To sponsor Dave, please clip the coupon at the bottom of the page, and return it to Lee Vining.

All counters receive a free Mono Lake or PRBO T-shirt, and are eligible to win spotting scopes, books and other exciting prizes. For more information, please contact: The Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Box 321, Bolinas, CA 94924, or the Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

I pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_/mile to help save Mono Lake for every mile (up to 350 miles) bicycled by Steve Osgood or proxy on the 1984 L.A.-Mono Lake Bike-a-Thon.

I pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_/species to help save Mono Lake for every species tallied by David Gaines on the 1984 Bird-a-Thon.

# ALASKA, Here We Come!

*MLC Fund-raising Cruise June 14-26, 1985*

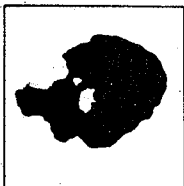


You are invited to join fellow Mono Lake Committee members on a 12-day cruise from San Francisco to southeast Alaska and Glacier Bay. Not only will you pay a special low fare, but a substantial portion will be a tax-deductible donation to help save Mono Lake! Sitmar's luxurious *TSS Fairsky* will leave the

Golden Gate on June 14, 1985, and return on June 26. Stops at Vancouver, Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, Prince Rupert and Victoria will allow plenty of time for sight-seeing, including a full day in Glacier Bay National Park. By reserving space now, MLC members can obtain an additional savings. For details, see p. 14.

## JOIN US!

Still not a Mono Lake Committee member? Join us, and increase our strength and effectiveness. We will keep you informed, through our quarterly newsletter and action alerts, of what's happening and how you can help. Regular membership is \$15/year (\$25 Sponsor, \$50 Supporting Member, \$100 Monophile, \$500 Monomaniac, \$8 "I Can't Afford More"). Checks should be payable to the Mono Lake Committee, and are not tax deductible.



**The  
Mono Lake  
Committee**

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