



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Birdwatchers tour Pasatiempo Golf Course on a recent Saturday morning. Pasatiempo is the first local course to be certified by the Audubon Cooperative Sano-

On course for a birdie

Birds

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PASATIEMPO — Sometimes, the grass really is greener. After a decade of retooling its maintenance practices, the Pasatiempo Golf Club has become certified by Audubon International for its commitment to improving the course's 80 acres of turf and surrounding wildlife habitat.

"We have worked long and hard to achieve the status for our course and see it as a win-win situation for the environment and us," said Dean Gump, Pasatiempo's superintendent. "We are also very proud to illustrate that with careful management and plan-

On the Net

AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL

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BRUCE BARRETT'S WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

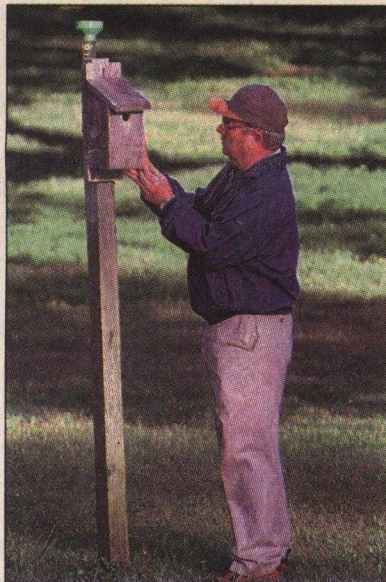
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ning, our golf club can be a benefit to our native birds, wildlife and the entire community."

Pasatiempo is the first course in Santa Cruz County to become certified in the Audubon International Cooperative Sanctuary System — a 10-year effort that at times was like watching grass grow.

To qualify, Pasatiempo had to meet the following requirements: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, outreach and education, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation and water quality management.

"Pasatiempo Golf Club has shown a



Vern Johnson checks one of the bird houses for a hatching count.

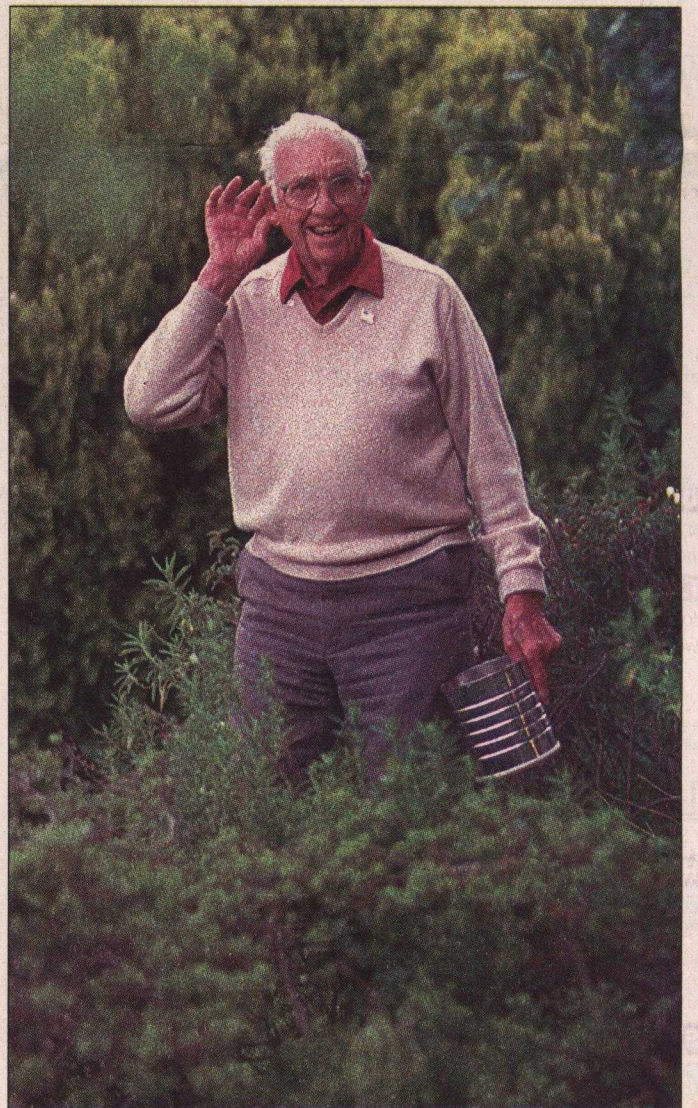
strong commitment to its environmental program," said Joellen Zeh at the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. "They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property."

Pasatiempo is the 17th course in California and 378th in the world to receive the sanctuary status. In March, Golf Digest magazine touted Pasatiempo one of the most desirable places to play golf, giving it a 4.5 out of a possible 5-star rating.

Critics, however, say the sanctuary program is largely a public relations effort by the golf industry to portray itself as good environmental stewards, and that the Audubon International name is misleading.

Audubon International is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society, an organization founded in 1905 that aims to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

"Whatever the motive, a result has definitely been confusion between the National Audubon Society and Audubon International," said John Bianchi, spokesperson for the National Audubon Society. "Since its inception in 1991, Audubon International, in collaboration with the United States



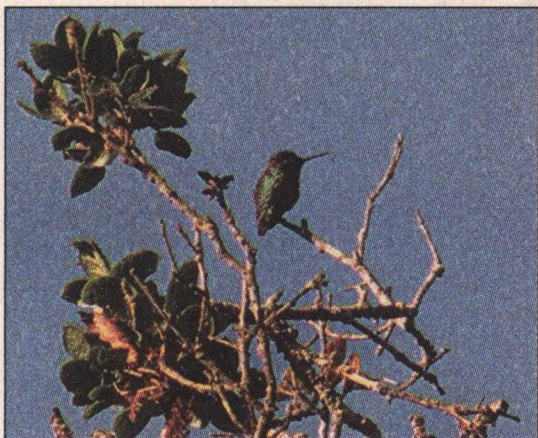
Golf Association, has been certifying golf course developments. There is also no question that there are people on municipal planning boards who have, in their confusion, assumed this to be a program of Audubon's, and acted accordingly."

Despite Audubon International's close ties with the golf industry, local wildlife experts support the changes at Pasatiempo.

"It is certainly PR, but it has some good components and does not do harm," said David Suddjian of the Santa Cruz Bird Club. "I would not say

Edward Langebartel, with his can of bird seed in his yard that borders Pasatiempo's 17th fairway.

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Birders spot a hummingbird on the course.

Birds

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that (golf courses) are good for the environment, as much as offsetting and minimizing impacts."

Francine Moody, Pasatiempo's landscape manager who does the lion's share of running the sanctuary program, said much of their success is thanks to volunteer efforts.

Edward Langebartel, whose home overlooks the 17th fairway, has been monitoring a handful of Pasatiempo's approximately 43 bird nesting boxes, built from recycled lumber.

"It's difficult for animals and birds to make a living these days because there is so much encroachment, pollution and traffic," said Langebartel, 83, a retired U.S. Air Force command pilot. "They are just beautiful creatures."

Bonny Doon resident Bruce Barrett,

69, a wildlife photographer, was honored last year by the Santa Cruz City Council for his outreach efforts and enthusiasm for the sanctuary program, which is also under way at the DeLaveaga Golf Course.

Barrett is credited with jump-starting the sanctuary efforts at DeLaveaga by recruiting then 17-year-old Jonathan Ilse to build nesting boxes. Ilse, who was searching for an Eagle Scout project, corralled more than a dozen Boy Scouts to help him build 75 bird nesting boxes in his living room, using a model provided by Barrett. The boxes were finished in 10 days and have been installed at DeLaveaga.

"I wanted to do something that left a lasting impression," said Ilse, now a 19-year-old Cabrillo College student. "I was looking for something I could go to, and maybe someday bring my kids to."

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