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TIME VALUE

Volume 28, No. 6

June 1981

A VINTAGE YEAR - Reflections on where we've been, by President Phyllis Swanson

A vintage wine doesn't happen every year. It takes a particular combination of just the right ingredients to produce a fine wine or a successful year for SCVAS. The secret for our outstanding successes this past year came from the careful blending of enthusiasm of our more than 3000 members with just the right amount of leadership from the officers, directors and chairpeople. That resulted in a vintage product that will be long remembered.

With grapes, soil preparation is the first step to insure a superior wine. Our 'soil preparation' started last June at the Chapter Workshop where we established a set of goals. These goals formed a supporting framework that gave us a way of focusing our energy for maximum production. By pouring our energies into such Audubon priorities as the Condor problem and Mono Lake, we reaped a significant harvest. Our highly successful Condor Conference was an informative presentation of the complex problems facing North America's largest bird. We made the Audubon "Leader" and a personal "thank you" from President Russ Peterson for our fundraising efforts for the Mono Lake legal battle.

Other fruits of our labors have included a very, very full field trip schedule and programs ranging from Yucatan and Hawaii to our own back yard, San Francisco Bay. We've learned how to improve our bird photography and we used some of those pictures as the basis of our educational slide show for elementary school children; we distributed \$4100 in grants. Each of these activities took time and energy of some very special people. Thanks to each and every one of you who helped make 80-81 a vintage year. It wasn't just a good year - it was a GREAT ONE!!!!

ALLEN, AL, COURTNEY,
CERRY, BOB,
DANE, BECCY,
DOUG, SUZIE,
JACKIE,
KRISTI,
LINDA,
MIC,
NOR,
POO,
SUZIE,
TERRY,
WAYNE,
WYATT,
ZETTERQUIST

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Field Notes: Bill Bousman (322-5282)

SEND ALL MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS AND
CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO:
Kristi Wiley, 1200 Woodland Ave.,
Menlo Park, CA 94025

And as the AVOCET
flies off on its
annual vacation,
the editor wishes
to say "thanks"
to all its loyal
(and on-time)
contributors. And
to all its readers,
HAVE A
GOOD SUMMER,
YOU-ALL.....



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



NOTE: The Avocet is not published in July or August, so save this issue if you are interested in the July or August trips. On all field trips, CARPOOL, share expenses, and get to know other birders. To arrange rides, call Dolores Norton (941-1666, Los Altos) or Manette Wittgenstein (354-9420, Saratoga).

- June 2---Board of Directors Meeting, Tues., 6:30. Call Phyllis Swanson (274-2349) for details.
- June 6---Owl Trip, Sat. Mt. Madonna County Park. We will call for Screech, Pygmy, and Great Horned Owls on this early morning trip. Call leader for reservations. Trip will be limited — call early. Leader: David Moore (293-7124).
- June 7---Field Trip, Sun., 8 AM, Saratoga Gap — Toll Road Trail. Meet at Saratoga Gap, the intersection of Hwy.9 and Skyline Blvd. (Hwy.35), where there is parking on the southeast corner. From Hwy. 280 in Cupertino, take Hwy.85 south to Hwy.9 in Saratoga, and on 9, 6.9 miles west to Saratoga Gap. Allow 1/2 hour from 280. We will hike down the Toll Road Trail and back up the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail, about 8 miles. We can set up a car shuttle at the bottom (about 4 miles hike) for those who would rather not go the entire distance. Bring lunch, liquid, and something to carry them in. Birds? You bet. Leader: Mike Newcomer (736-4176).
- June 7---DeAnza Day, DeAnza College, Cupertino. SCVAS Audubon display will be there.
- June 9---Bird Discussion Group, Tues., 9:30 AM. Meet at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, for field trip on Canyon Road and picnic.
- June 13---Boat Trip, Sat., 7:45 AM - 3 PM, Monterey Bay Pelagic Excursion. Price: \$21 per person. Trips leave from Sam's Fishing on Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey. June trips usually have good weather, lots of Black-footed Albatross, plus other birds in breeding plumage. Reserve with a check payable to Debi Millichap, 362 Lee St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for confirmation. For more information, call Debi (408-426-8111).
- June 14---Field Trip, Sun., 6:30 AM - noon, Montebello Ridge. From Hwy.280 in Cupertino, take the Foothill Blvd. exit. Take Foothill Blvd south about 1 1/2 miles. It becomes Stevens Canyon Rd. Meet in the small shopping center at the corner of McClellan and Stevens Canyon. Birders of all ages welcome. We will hike through a variety of habitats. Birds of particular interest: Rufous-crowned, Sage, Lark Sparrows, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Horned Lark. Bring water. Leader: Mike Rigney (867-7459).
- June 17---Annual Appreciation Potluck Dinner Party, Wed., 6:00 PM, 25600 Fernhill Dr., Los Altos Hills. Call Martha Hunton at 948-5157 for directions. All SCVAS members are cordially invited. Please bring food according to the first initial of your last name: A-H, dessert; I-N, salad; O-Z, main dish. Come early for birding and join in the fun. Bring swim suits and binoculars. There will be ping pong, horseshoes, swimming, owling, and an opportunity to meet members of the board, chairpeople, field trip leaders and all the people who have made this year so successful.
- June 19-21---Field Trip, Fri.-Sun., Robinson Flat, Sierra Nevada. We will be looking for such Sierran specialties as warblers, flycatchers, Mountain Quail, and White-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers in this quiet part of the mountains. To reach this area take I-80 through Sacramento to Auburn. From Auburn take Foresthill Rd. east about 20 mi. to the town of Foresthill. Robinson Flat Campground is 27 mi. NE of Foresthill via Mosquito Ridge Rd. (Co 15N34). On Friday, meet at the ranger station in Foresthill at 2 PM for a drive to the campground, where we will be the rest of the evening. Saturday meet at 6 AM in the campground, and again at 10 AM. Bring lunch for a hike. Saturday evening we will try our luck owling. Robinson Flat is a primitive campground. Motels in Auburn, possibly in Foresthill. Leaders: Ted Chandik (493-5330) and David Houle (856-1069).
- July 3-5---National Conference, Estes Park, CO. "Pressures on the Land" is the theme, from the Sagebrush Rebellion to the long term effects of land policies on soil, water and ecosystems. Governor Bruce Babbitt of Arizona will be keynote speaker. Information or application forms from National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3557, Boulder, CO 80307 (303) 499-0219.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



July 18--- Bay Area Audubon Council, Environmental Education Center, Alviso. Hosted by SCVAS, sessions begin at 9:30 AM. Join us and visitors from Marin, Napa/Solano, Golden Gate, Sequoia, Mt. Diablo and Ohlone chapters - for timely topics such as offshore drilling, energy, wildlife refuges.

July 25-26---Field Trip, Sat.-Sun. Mono Lake and Tioga Pass, Yosemite. You've given a lot to save Mono Lake, now come enjoy it. On Saturday David Gaines, "Mr. Mono Lake," will show us around the lake. We should see thousands of migrating phalaropes and grebes. Other Great Basin birds, such as Gray Flycatcher and Sage Grouse, are possible. On Sun. we will bird back along the Tioga Rd. looking for such Sierran birds as Black-backed, 3-toed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, and possibly Gray-crowned Rosy Finches. Those who would like may stay in Yosemite Sun. night to look for Great Gray Owl. We will base ourselves in the town of Lee Vining, just north of the intersection of Hwys. 120 and 395, east of Yosemite Park. Allow 7-8 hours driving time from San Jose. On Sat. meet at 6 AM at the turnoff to Aspen Campground on Hwy.120, about 4 miles west of 395, and 2 miles west of the ranger station. After breakfast meet again at 9 AM at the Mono Lake Information Center on the west side of 395 in Lee Vining, in the same block as Nicely's Restaurant. Campers try to stay at Aspen Campground. Motels in Lee Vining. Reservations are essential. Call leader for names and phone numbers. Leader: Clark Blake (948-6058). ~~(July 17-20)~~

Aug. 23---Field Trip, Sun., 8:30 AM, Ano Nuevo St. Reserve and San Mateo Coast. This is an ideal time of the year for migrating shorebirds. 20 species are likely at Ano Nuevo alone. Harlequin duck, Black Swift, and Bank Swallow are possibilities. We will meet at Gazos Creek Coastal Access parking area to reduce the entry fees. Take Hwy.84 to Hwy.1 from the peninsula. Go south on Hwy.1 about 12 miles. Parking is on the right, 2 miles south of Pigeon Pt. lighthouse. Expect 3-4 miles walking. After lunch we will move north to Pescadero Marsh and beyond. Please call trip leader in August. Carpooling desirable. Leader: Bill Bousman (322-5282).



BIRDATHON If you still have Birdathon checks, send them to Birdathon Headquarters, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. If you would like Mono Lake to receive a portion of this money, make sure you say you participated as a member of Santa Clara Valley Audubon. So many SCVAS members participated in the Birdathon in so many ways, in so many different areas that I do not know how much money was raised, but I'm sure it was substantial. Some highlights: Allen Royer and Don Schmoldt traveled from Inyo County to Morro Bay, identified 187 species, starting with a Blue Grosbeak and finishing with a Black Rail. The ten birders in the SCVAS group started at Stevens Creek Park, drove to the coast, then finished by driving up Mines Rd. and back over Mt. Hamilton. The reward was 155 species, capped by good looks at a Poor-will. Jayne Daly collected pledges totaling \$1.50 per bird for this trip. Many other birders participated through the Cheeseman's boat trip, and by birding on their own - thank you, one and all. If you missed the fun this year, don't miss it next.

David Houle



FIELD TRIP REPORTS On Wednesday, April 29, 20 Audubon members entered the San Francisco Watershed and drove down to Pilarcitos Lake where we parked our cars. Some stayed in the vicinity where there is a well developed picnic area and most chose to walk to Stone Dam 2 1/2 miles farther. It is a 5 mile round trip. I was able to ferry a few who could not walk the distance down to see the wildflowers near the Dam. There are always a profusion of wildflowers in bloom at this time of the year. The most unusual are Bleeding Hearts, Forget-me-nots and Romanzoffia which is only seen here by most participants. Others included two kinds of Paint Brush, Indian Warrior, 2 kinds of Nightshade, Huechera or Fringe Cups, lots of Columbine, Mission Bells, Donkey Ears, Hounds Tongue, Wall Flower, Zygadine and many others. This was an excellent year for blue Ceanothus. We also saw and heard 41 species of birds. The most exciting always is the Winter Wren singing everywhere in the woods, Pygmy Nuthatch and Golden Crowned Knight. On San Andreas Lake all saw a Common Loon. Kay McCann, leader.



Morro Bay 714-647-6440
Palmer 714-647-6467
Corte Madera 647-6543
Berkeley 647-6543
Midd



Don Roberson in his new book Rare Birds of the West Coast makes the point that when you look at a large enough geographical area the terms "accidental" or "casual" are no longer meaningful. What may appear locally to be an accidental occurrence may be part of a regular pattern. Fall vagrancy of eastern landbirds to the west coast is an example of this. Although less well understood there is also spring vagrancy of eastern landbirds, and it appears that these individuals fell into a regular pattern as well. In California these eastern vagrants show up in June and July long after our migration is complete. Are these vagrants located pretty much uniformly in California? This is an interesting question. Most of our records are either from the immediate coast or from desert oases, but this is due to two biological processes. First it appears that vagrants are concentrated by the need for cover and food. A night flying vagrant upon daybreak will look for a place to rest and if over inhospitable terrain (desert or ocean) will look for something better. The second concentrating process is that birders have learned about this behavior and hence they concentrate along the coast and in the oases too! What about Santa Clara County? Do we have 50 or a 100 vagrants annually, but they are so widely distributed that we rarely record one? Or do we have some concentrating factors locally?

Active searching for birds shows some quite remarkable results. Clark Blake (CB) and Dave Houle (DH) had a "Big Day" on 24 Apr. which was completely in Santa Clara Co. and came up with 41 species. On the 26th, Dave extended his range to the ocean and Livermore Valley for the Birdathon and he and his group counted 155 species. Both were excellent efforts. In what follows, observations for 24 and 26 Apr. are credited to the two surveys. 3 Redheads were still on Charleston Slough as of 22 Apr. and may summer here. A Golden Eagle was on the w. side of Mt. Hamilton on 1 May. A Saw-Whet Owl was heard in Hall's Valley on 26 Apr. Poorwills were heard in good numbers on the e. side of Mt. Hamilton on 24 Apr. A Vaux's Swift was over the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin 26 Apr., and 15 were at Stevens Creek Reservoir 5 May. A Rufous Hummingbird was at Alum Rock Park 24 Apr. 3 Lewis' Woodpeckers were still at the Los Trancos OSR 26 Apr. - perhaps they'll summer. Western Kingbirds were seen in large numbers in the San Antonio Valley 24 Apr., and appeared to be starting to nest near Smith's Creek on the w. side of Mt. Hamilton on 1 May. A Canyon Wren was singing in Alum Rock Park 17 Apr. A Mountain Bluebird was at the Los Trancos OSR 8 Apr. (DH). It is very unusual for wintering birds to reach the coastal mountains, perhaps this is the same bird seen in December. Golden-crowned Kinglets were found at Saratoga Gap on 24 Apr. Solitary Vireos were well reported this month with birds on both sides of Mt. Hamilton, at Smith's Creek, Stevens Creek CP and in Menlo Park. Nashville Warblers were reported from Alum Rock Park 17 Apr., Menlo Park on 19 Apr. and in the yellow pine belt just e. of Mt. Hamilton on 24 Apr. The latter location was excellent for warblers with Black-throated Gray, Hermit and Townsend's Warblers in good numbers on the 24th. By 1 May no Nashville or Black-throated Gray Warblers could be found, although Hermit and Townsend's remained plentiful. Hooded Orioles have returned with a male first found in Los Altos on 13 Apr. (CB), and a pair nesting in Mountain View (Cap & Beth Schremm). Lawrence's Goldfinches were in San Antonio Valley 24 Apr., and one was at Smith's Creek 1 May. Rufous-crowned Sparrows have been singing above the parking lot at Alum Rock Park during Apr. and May, and one was in Grant Park 1 May. Chipping Sparrows were singing on Mt. Hamilton on 24 Apr.

Next Field Notes comes at the end of summer, but if you find an "uncommon to rare" please drop me a line or call: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (322-5282)

An "uncommon" experience awaiting general meeting attendees in the fall will be SCVAS grantee Katherine Boxer reporting on her stay on the Island of Jersey, with Gerald Durrell's endangered animals.

IN MEMORIAM: Lloyd N. Case, Commodore, USN Retired: SCVAS president, director, field trip leader, education and conservation writer, able raconteur of birding treks. In his own words, "We found ourselves with a better understanding of our surroundings, a better sense of the meaning, the interdependence, and the unity of everything around us, and of the great importance of the saving of such areas for future generations."