



## The Avocet

MR ALAN M EISNER  
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REDWOOD CITY, CA 94061

2020

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# SCVAS publishes area site guide

BIRDING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BAY, Santa Clara Valley Audubon's own site guide describing 38 areas in our County is now off the presses and available for sale at Audubon's office for \$6.50 (including tax) per copy.

Designed for the new birder and birders new to the area, it was written by 32 SCVAS members, each describing his or her favorite birding locale. The book was compiled and edited by Betty Wyatt and Audrey Stoye.

In addition to the detailed descriptions of Santa Clara County sites from Baylands to Mt. Madonna and Coe State Park, BABOB gives suggestions on a dozen nearby areas offering good birding and another dozen slightly farther afield in Northern California.

There is also a listing of 35 Northern California bird specialties with guide lines on where to find them locally.

The 100 page book contains nineteen original drawings also by SCVAS members: Terry Hart, Chris Andrews, Emelie Curtis, John Mariani, Kelly Kolbo, Linda Newberry and Anne Rosenthal. Detailed maps prepared by the individual author or Don Stoye give

guidance to the birding hot spots. Past President Phyllis Swanson contributed her talents as calligrapher. An updated check list of birds of the County compiled by Bill Bousman closes the book.

Authors contributing to the book include: Bruce Barrett, Bill Bousman, Ted Chandik, Gail Cheeseman, Jean & Bill Clark, Emelie Curtis, Courtney Dawson-Roberts, Jr., Mary Dewing, Frank Farran, Susie Formenti, Marilyn & Russ Fowler, Steve Getty, Ted Graf, Mary Hallesy, Phil Hand, Dave Johnston, Pete LaTourrette, Sue & Jim Liskovec, John Mariani, Kay McCann, Kevin Monahan, Rick Palmer, Jim Rosso, Allen Royer, Joan Ruddell, Don Schmoldt, Rae Schmuck, Curtis Schneider, Don Starks, Lee Sims, Phyllis Swanson, Audrey Stoye, and Carol Zabel.

Members buying copies direct from Audubon may take 50% of purchase price as a donation. Copies will also be available soon at The Nature Co. and other book stores in the area, but the donation will not apply to sales at these commercial outlets. Members desiring to order copies via mail should send checks for \$6.50 plus \$1.00 postage and handling to SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On all field trips, CARPOOL and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, lunch (optional on half-day trips), liquids. For carpooling arrangements call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666 or Manette Wittgenstein (408)354-9420. Unless specified, Informal Carpooling (IC), commuter parking at I-280 and Page Mill Road.

Field trip coordinator for September and October - Richard Jeffers (415)493-7531.

- Sept. 10 **Pescadero Marsh and Ano Nuevo**, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Meet in ocean-side parking lot at Pescadero Road and Hwy. 1. IC, 7:45 a.m. Afternoon meeting place at Ano Nuevo parking lot (entrance fee) at 1:00 p.m. Excellent time for shorebirds and pelagics. Leader: Ted Chandik (415)493-5330.
- Sept. 13 **Bird Discussion Group**, Tuesday. Meet at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga for carpooling for San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory in Alviso. Bring bag lunch.
- Sept. 13 **Board Meeting**, Tuesday, Cupertino Library, 10400 Torre Ave., 7:15 p.m. All members are welcome.
- Sept. 14 **Pelagic Trip (Shearwater Journeys)**, Wednesday, 7:45 a.m., Monterey Bay, Fisherman's Wharf, return 3:00 p.m. \$25 per person. Reserve with check payable to Debi Love Shearwater, P.O. Box 7440, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, (408)425-8111. Enclose self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation. Other trips on the following dates: Sept. 18, 24, Oct. 1, 8, 9 (\$32 for this trip - storm-petrel study tour), 15, 16 and 19.
- Sept. 14 **Field Trip South**, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., half day. Natural Bridges and Santa Cruz area. Meet at Natural Bridges parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Leader: Manette Wittgenstein/Linda Hagelin. Call Linda (408)867-3046.
- Sept. 17 **Point Reyes**, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Meet at Pt. Reyes Seashore HQ. Bring warm and waterproof clothing. IC; 7 a.m. Good time for migrants and eastern vagrants. Leader: Bob Dyer (415)327-4787
- Sept. 21 **General Meeting**, Wednesday, refreshments at 7:30 p.m., program at 8 p.m., Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell Road at Embarcadero. "Feather Lite" by professional photographer Brad Lowman. Slide presentation showing fascinating effects of light on birds. An Audubon bird photography group will be formed at this meeting. Please attend if interested in joining the photo group, or call Kevin Monahan at (408)559-8713, or Doug Cheeseman, (408)867-1371.

- Sept. 24 **Birdwalk for Beginners**, Ranch San Antonio O.S.P., half-day, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. Meet at last parking lot at end of Cristo Rey Dr. Take I-280 to Foothill Expressway; south to Cristo Rey Dr. Leaders: Sue and Jim Liskovec (415)969-5542.
- Sept. 28 **Field Trip North**, Wednesday, Long Ridge Open Space Preserve on Skyline Blvd. (Hwy 35). IC, 8:15 a.m. or meet at 9:00 a.m. at an unmarked parking lot on west side of Skyline Blvd. This lot is 4.5 miles south of the Alpine Rd. (Page Mill Rd.) intersection, OR 1.9 miles north of the Hwy. 9 intersection. About 2 miles of moderate walking. Leader: Carol Zabel (415)948-5671.
- Sept. 30 - **Western Field Ornithologists Convention**, Santa Cruz. Contact Debi Shearwater (408)425-8111 for details. Many field trips and lectures. Membership, \$14/year. Registration fee.
- Oct. 2 **Jetty Road and Moss Landing**, half-day, Saturday, 9 a.m. Meet at Jetty Rd. off Hwy. 1 north of Moss Landing. IC, 7:45 a.m. Looking for shorebirds, Elegant Terns. Leader: Don Starks (408)371-9720.
- Oct. 8 **Sunol Regional Park**, half-day, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Meet at Park HQ. North on I-680 to Calaveras Rd; south about 4 miles, left at sign to park. Entrance fee. IC, 8:15 a.m. Denny's at Hwy 237 and Hwy 17 in Milpitas. Migrants and residents. Rufous-crowned and Lark Sparrows. Maybe Phainopepla and Golden Eagle. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- Oct. 9 **Marin Headlands and Rodeo Lagoon**, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. Meet at HQ parking lot, north side of Rodeo Lagoon. From Hwy 101, take Alexander Ave., Sausalito exit. Start downhill, swing left to tunnel entrance to Ft. Cronkhite. Stay on this road. Take right turn across bridge between pond and Lagoon. Park on left, opposite firehouse. IC, 7:30 a.m. Possible vagrants, excellent for accipiters and hawks, possible Broadwinged. Rain cancels. Leader: Allen Royer (408)251-6133.
- Nov. 2 **Update on Management on the Peregrine Falcon in California**. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Saratoga Community Library. Brian Walton of the Peregrine Fund will speak and show slides on Peregrines as well as other research at the Raptor Center at U.C. Santa Cruz. The film "Peregrine" will be shown.

## THE TICO EXPERIENCE - PART I

By Lee Lovelady

We awoke in our San Jose hotel to the songs of Costa Rica's national bird, the Clay-colored Robin. Blue-and-white Swallows flitted around a light pole outside our window, and later we found the ubiquitous Rufous-collared Sparrow foraging in a school yard a block down the street.

We were 26 students and two professors of the Tropical Ecology class sponsored by San Jose State University. Our trip lasted 50 days (15 March to 3 May) for most of us, in this hot and humid Central American republic.

The friendly Costa Ricans are fond of using words with the diminutive ending "tico" and call themselves Ticos. They are fascinated by binoculars (almost unobtainable there).

After a downtown tour by our professor, a small group of bird enthusiasts visited an urban cemetery, where we found a Great-tailed Grackle, Groove-billed Ani, and Giant Cowbird almost within sight of each other.

In San Jose we saw our first Blue-Gray Tanagers and Tropical Kingbirds, both seen all over Costa Rica. At the beautiful campus of City University, we found a Palm Tanager, Broad-winged Hawk, colorful Squirrel Cuckoos, the beautiful Great Kiskadee, and a Boat-billed Flycatcher. A highlight of our stay in San Jose was a visit to the Ornithology class of Dr. F. Gary Stiles, famous authority on Costa Rican birds and prolific author.

Several nearby places yielded interesting birds. At Cartago, my first Red-billed Pigeon left its calling card on my new Pentax camera. Going on to Turrialba, we found numerous members of the parrot family, saltators, Black Vultures, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and an Orange-crowned Warbler (not on the Costa Rican list).

On a day trip to nearby Heredia, we birded along a paved road and were thrilled by a Blue-crowned Motmot (on the porch of an empty house), Inca Dove, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, and two new hummingbirds. We got a bit wet here, one of the few times we were bothered by rain.

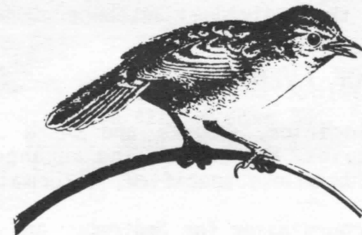
On a day trip to Poas Volcano, we tried to identify birds in the thick canopy along a nature trail. Two new hummingbirds, a Black-billed

Nightingale-Thrush, and a Sooty-capped Bush-Tanager. We actually saw a Slaty Flower-Piercer (a honey-creeper) feeding on the bases of flowers.

We missed some of the other good birding spots around San Jose, including the spa at Ojo Agua. Still, by the time we were ready to leave for Golfito, I had recorded 42 new life birds.

We would continue to use the little American-run hotel as headquarters and resting point throughout our stay in Costa Rica. Our two main problems here were the pickpockets in downtown areas and the taxi drivers that turn left and plunge through streams of pedestrians without yielding. But the food is good, and I had no problem with either food or drinking water in Costa Rica.

Next time I will tell you about our trip to Golfito and the Golden-hooded Tanager I found at a bus rest stop.



### EDITOR WANTED

Position opening this winter. Writing and pasteup skills and experience desirable. Present **Avocet** editor moving to Mt. Shasta area in the spring. Happy to work with new volunteer during transition period.

Job involves receiving copy from Audubon members, editing for clarity and brevity, and camera-ready pasteup, as well as arranging for typesetting and printing.

Rewards include job satisfaction, great feeling of accomplishment and lots of new friends.

For more information call Lynn at the chapter office, (415)329-1811, or Shirley Shepard, **Avocet** editor, (415)493-6209.

## FIELD NOTES - By Bill Bousman

In the May 1983 issue of *The Condor*, which is the Journal of the Cooper Ornithological Society, Roberson and Pitelha recount an interesting story of the only record of Willow Warbler in North America. The specimen was found dead in Alaska in 1952 and identified as an Arctic Warbler. In the late 1950's it was suspected that the bird was too gray for an Arctic Warbler and the specimen was forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution where it was identified as the first North American record of the Willow Warbler. Roberson re-examined the specimen in 1979 and identified it as a very gray Arctic Warbler, and his identification has been confirmed. If you have followed this story, the specimen's identification passed from the resident Arctic Warbler to the unrecorded Willow Warbler and back to the resident Arctic Warbler. The moral of this story is that without the specimen material available in the museums this resolution would never have occurred. Experiences such as this form the background of many professionals in ornithology and explains why they are unwilling to accept any truly unusual sighting unless it is supported by a specimen. Should this be the case for all sight records? Certainly sight records were not acceptable a generation ago. As an example, the first accepted record of a Little Blue Heron in Northern California is of an immature taken from Bodega Bay in 1964. There are many earlier sight records including one in Grinnell and Miller, 1944 "a bird in adult plumage watched by three observers on August 10, 1940, in Mountain View Marshes, Santa Clara County" (probably Charleston Slough then as now). But we are in a transition now. In certain cases photographic records or even sight records are acceptable. The difficulty that remains is that these records must be accessible to future students of bird distribution. The evidence must be provided to such standard repositories as the regional files of American Birds, the California Rare Bird Committee, or published in the literature. We need to develop good habits, and that means written descriptions. The descriptions have to show that the observer is aware of the significant identification problems. A claim for a Rufous Hummingbird in Santa Clara County in June will be rejected out of hand unless the observer demonstrates an intimate familiarity with the difficulties of separating Allen's and Rufous Hummingbirds. (These difficulties are not discussed in the standard field guides.) Rufous Hummingbirds do not occur on the coast after the spring migration. Always write detailed notes on anything truly rare. Get another competent observer to write their own notes. Obtain photographs - they are worth 10,000 words.

### WILDERNESS BILL

Senators Cranston and Wilson each have sponsored California Wilderness bills. Audubon supports the Cranston bill (S5), which would protect about 3.5 million acres as wilderness. In contrast, Wilson's bill protects only 1.2 million acres. Many areas worthy of wilderness status are omitted and open to development. Wilson's bill also includes "release language" that would prevent further consideration of California land for wilderness protection.

Please write to Senator Wilson to ask him to support S5 and to delete "release language" in any wilderness bill that comes out of the Senate. He also needs to hear from the business community that there is support for a strong California wilderness bill.

Senator Pete Wilson, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Jim Liskovec

The biggest summer surprise was found by Allen Royer and Lynn Tennefoss on 21 June when they found about ten **Eared Grebes** nesting in emergent vegetation in Crittenden Marsh (Crittenden Marsh is the public one third of a fresh water impoundment at Moffett Field. The fresh water is largely derived from cooling water used by NASA for their wind tunnels). On 24 June 11 nests were counted, but in subsequent weeks the numbers decreased from 11 to 5 to 1. However, a new center of nesting was discovered on the private side of the marsh on 15 July with 73 breeding adults and 28 nests with non-breeding adults. Unfortunately, by 26 July numbers were down to about 42 breeding adults. Predation by California Gulls is part of the problem. They make regular checks of the nesting colony and take eggs from any exposed nests. Prior to this year the nearest record of nesting Eared Grebes was in Los Banos. Perhaps because of last winter's rains Eared Grebes nested successfully in Pleasanton in a temporary holding pond (Art Edwards) for the first Bay Area record, and we now have the Moffett Field record which is certainly the first breeding record for the county. Early **Brown Pelicans** were 2 at Moffett Field on 2 June, and 6 were counted on the Palo Alto BBC on 4 June. A **Little Blue Heron** at Charleston Slough 18 July was at an expected location and time (Gloria Heller). Another new breeding record for the county also occurred at Moffett Field. A pair of **Green-winged Teal** were seen in pursuit flight on 3 June, and a female and 6 juveniles were found on 8 July. A male **Blue-winged Teal** was seen at Crittenden Marsh 25 June (Peter La Tourrette). Other ducks that were surprising for the summer were 20 **Lesser Scaup**, a **Surf Scoter**, 3 female **Bufflehead**, and a **Red-breasted Merganser** on the Palo Alto BBC, and another female **Bufflehead** at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin on 17 July (Vicki Silvas-Young). The first **Lesser Yellowlegs** of the season was at the Mountain View Forebay 5 July. We should see more here and in the Flood Control Basin through September. Breeding plumaged **Red-necked Phalarope** were late with 8 counted on the Palo Alto BBC. The Palo Alto BBC is helping us to learn more about some of our rarer passerines. Five **MacGillivray's Warblers** were found along Langley Hill Road for the third year and it is certain that they breed here. Also as in past years **Grasshopper** and **Sage Sparrows** were found on the count and represent breeding populations. Prior to the count Steve Shugars found a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** in his yard on the Mountain View-Sunnyvale border, one of the few records we have for this rare eastern vagrant.

If you see an "uncommon to rare" drop me a note or phone: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 322-5282.

### CLASSES AND TRAVEL

The chapter office (415/329-1811) has information on a variety of upcoming nature and wildlife classes and trips.

Some course offerings include Natural History of Australia, Galapagos, and East Africa taught by Doug Cheeseman as a De Anza College short course Sept. 20-Oct. 25; Intermediate Bird Identification taught by Don Starks at the Santa Clara Adult Education Center beginning in mid-September; and two courses to be taught by Alice Hoch through Fremont Adult School: Point Reyes - Migrants and Vagrants beginning on Sept. 24 and Birding Field Trips starting Sept. 13. Among travel opportunities is the Cheeseman's Natural History of the Galapagos and Peruvian Amazon, April 3-27, 1984.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Staff	Lynn Tennefoss (days) 415/329-1811	DIRECTORS (1982-85)		Publicity	Tom Dargan	408/249-9388
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Lyman Fancher	408/942-1195	Programs	Doug & Gail Cheeseman			

General membership meetings, held the third Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings, open to all members, are held at 7:15 p.m., the first Tuesday of each month. Call the office for directions.

AVOCET DEADLINE IS THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH. Send contributions to the editor.

**YOUR GIFT TO UNITED WAY COULD HELP SCVAS**

Perhaps you are already making a contribution to United Way with payroll deductions through your employer.

By designating Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society on the United Way Donor Option Plan, you can help your chapter promote environmental education workshops for teachers, place AUDUBON magazine in local public libraries, and provide scholarships to Audubon camp.

These are just a few of the programs we've supported in the past. Lately we've had to pull in our budgetary belt a little and cut back on these projects. But with your gift from United Way we can continue to provide quality environmental education programs such as these - for members and for the community.

Please remember to designate SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY when your United Way campaign begins this fall.

Sue Liskovec

**PCC SALE**

The Peninsula Conservation Store, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, will hold a sale September 19-30. Many items will be from 10 to 50 percent off and there will even be some freebies.

**GIFTS**

A generous gift has been received from the Whisman School Staff in memory of Mrs. Edna Farley. Gifts in memory of Lorraine Ireland have been received from Lawrence and Helen Kocher, David and Penelope Bowen, Wilbur and Coralie Fellows, and Donald H. Filippini.

**BOOK REVIEW**

The 8th edition of **Nature Guide** brings together stay-at-home naturalists and traveling nature buffs. The former answer requests for nature information by phone or letter and may take callers out for a short tour to see their birds, trees, and other wildlife.

Besides the long lists of guides and their specialties in 50 states and 12 Canadian provinces, knowledgeable, enthusiastic people will serve world-traveling nature lovers in 27 countries.

Next to the names of guides for each state and province, **Nature Guide** has listed a myriad of wildlife viewing spots - everything from nature trails to national parks.

**Nature Guide** describes its own first-of-its-kind international birding exchange with Yorkshire and has offered to act as a clearing house for others wishing to set up their own exchanges.

Another innovation in this edition is listing of hawkwatching sites throughout the country, and in Canada. These spots for viewing hawks and eagles on their migratory routes were previously thought to exist only on the Atlantic seaboard.

Maps, including one of Canada with 40 national wildlife areas, are included as are rare bird alerts, squibs, drawings, letters, poems and other information and suggestions.

**Nature Guide's** purse-size cover is built to take hard use.

Sponsor is Tahoma Audubon Society. Address: Nature Guide, 34915 4th Avenue So., Federal Way, Washington 98003. Send \$6 plus \$1.50 postage and handling for the book.

Allen Royer

**DONATIONS**

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general, or gifts in honor or memory of relatives and friends. Such donations will be used as specified, or, if unspecified, will be used to support environmental education and projects. All gifts and donations are tax deductible.

**MEMBERSHIP**

To join the Audubon Society send a check, payable to NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, to SCVAS office, 2253 Park Boulevard, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Membership includes AUDUBON magazine, the national publication, and THE AVOCET. AVOCET subscriptions alone are \$5/year. It is published monthly except July and August. Send address changes to the office promptly.

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