



The Avocet

MR ALAN M EISNER
3538 FARM HILL BLVD #4
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94061

2020

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January 1984

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.

Field trip coordinator for January - Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-7124.

- Jan. 4 **SCVAS Bird Photo group**, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Palo Alto Baylands (Lucy Evans Interpretive Center). Tom Rountree will give presentation on use of blinds and photo etiquette.
- Jan. 7 **Post C.B.C. Rarities Chase**. Half-day to full day, Saturday. We will be looking for any exotics turned up in the Bay area Christmas counts. Leader: Don Starks. Call Vicki Silvas-Young for reservations and information the week before the trip (408)293-7124.
- Jan. 8 **Canoe Trip on Coyote Creek**. Half-day, Sunday. Meet at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory at 10 a.m. We will be discussing a potentially devastating flood control project proposed for 10 miles of the creek, and examining the climax riparian habitat that the project will affect. Leader: Paul Kelley. LIMITED TRIP. Call Lynn for reservations, (415)329-1811.
- Jan. 10 **Bird Discussion Group**, Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Winter Sparrows.
- Jan. 11 **Field Trip South**, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., Grant Ranch. Meet in parking lot beside visitor center. Highway 101 to Tully Road exit to Quimby Road or 680 to Alum Rock Ave. exit to Mt. Hamilton Road. Entrance to Grant Ranch County Park is at the junction of Mt. Hamilton and Quimby Roads. Oak-woodland, grassland, and lake. Leader: Phyllis Swanson (408)274-2349.
- Jan. 14 **Bird Banding Demonstration at Coyote Creek**. Half-day, Saturday. Meet at the San Jose sewage treatment plant on Zanker Rd. at 8 a.m. LIMITED TRIP. Call SFBBO for reservations (408)946-6548. Rubber boots recommended. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Mike Rigney.
- Jan. 15 **U.C. Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Lab**. Half-day Sunday. Come join us for a guided tour of this facility and their work with a number of raptors (in particular Peregrines). Highlights may include close views of Peregrine, Bat, Orange-breasted, and Aplomado Falcons and Harris's Hawks. Meet at 11 a.m. at the Carriage House parking lot on U.C. Santa Cruz campus. Take Hwy 17 south to Hwy 1, north onto Mission St. Turn right at Bay, follow onto campus. Take first right - into parking lot in front of buildings. LIMITED TRIP. Call Richard Jeffers for reservations after Jan. 5 (415)325-9675. From 12/18 to 1/4/84 call Lynn Tennefoss at (415)329-1811. RAIN CANCELS. Leaders: Allen Royer, Lynn Tennefoss, and Sue Liskovec.
- Jan. 18 **General Meeting**, 7:30 p.m. Program begins at 8 p.m. Tom Rountree will switch with Ted Chandik and Peter LaTourette. Ted will be in New Zealand in January, so he and Peter will do the February meeting on Trinidad and Tobago. Tom will present his slide program on the birds of South San Francisco Bay and Bair Island. Even non-birders will be enthralled with this photographic work of art. Other Audubon chapters have given Tom Rountree a standing ovation for this program. You'll see waterbirds at dawn and dusk as few manage to see them.
- Jan. 21 **Foster City**, Half-day Saturday, 9 a.m. Take U.S. 101 north to the Hillsdale Blvd. east turnoff. Follow Hillsdale about one mile to Shell Blvd., turn right, and in half a block park in the gravel lot on the left, across from the Community Center. Highlights include Hooded Mergansers, possible Barrow's Goldeneye, and maybe the Smew. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leaders: Carol Zabel (415)948-5671 and Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Jan. 25 **Field Trip North**, Wednesday, 9 a.m. Foster City. Take U.S. 101 north to the Hillsdale Blvd. east turnoff. Follow Hillsdale about one mile to Shell Blvd., turn right, and in half a block park in the gravel lot on the left, across from the Community Center. Leaders: Betty Groce (415)326-5540 and Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Jan. 28 **Woodbridge Road and Brannon Island**, long day Saturday, 8 a.m. Take 680 north to second Mission Blvd. turnoff. Meet in SE corner parking lot next to the Shell station. Carpool from there. Join us for a trip to a new area. Highlights may include Sandhill Cranes, Whistling Swans, and wintering hawks, geese, and ducks. RAIN CANCELS. Leaders: Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091 and Audrey Stoye (408)249-2108.
- Jan. 29 **Hayward Shore**, Half-day Sunday, 9 a.m. Take Winton Ave. west off Hwy 17, continue on Winton Ave. until road bends and ends at parking lot. Highlights include wintering shorebirds, Red Knots, and possible Eurasian Wigeon. HEAVY TULE FOG OR RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Elsie Richey (415)357-2477.

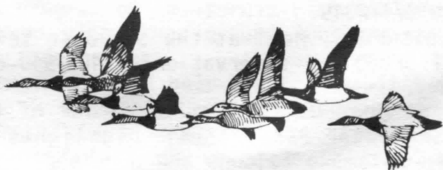
Field trip coordinator for February - Jim Liskovec (415)969-5542.

- Feb. 4 **Panoche Valley**, Saturday, 7:15 a.m. Meet at Chevron station on Dunne Ave., just west of Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill. Trip will leave from here in FULL cars. Highlights include wintering hawks, Mountain Plovers, Mountain Bluebirds, Lewis' Woodpeckers, and possibly Chukars. RAIN DATE - SUNDAY, FEB. 5. Leaders: Jim and Sue Liskovec (415)969-5542.
- Feb. 8 **Field Trip South**, Wednesday, 9 a.m. South Bay, Alviso. Meet at SFBBO. Take Route 237 to Gold and follow Gold to end. Left on Elizabeth to SFBBO. Walk will be in the refuge from Environmental Education Ctr. Leader: Mike Rigney (408)867-3791.
- Feb. 11 **Merced N.W.R. and Los Banos**, Saturday, 9 a.m. Meet at HQ parking lot of Los Banos W.M.A. Trip will leave from here in FULL cars. Take Hwy 101 south to Hwy 152, east to Los Banos. Turn left on Mercy Spring Rd. and go 3 miles to Henry Miller Ave. Turn right and go 1/4 mile to parking on left. Highlights include wintering hawks, geese, Whistling Swans, Sandhill Cranes, and White-faced Ibis. Leader: Ted Chandik (415)493-5330.

SCVAS OPPOSES ALVISO RADIO TOWERS

Yet another threat to the Bay's wetlands.... SCVAS has written to the Corps of Engineers opposing the proposed construction of four radio towers in New Chicago Marsh, in Alviso. SCVAS opposes projects that will destroy wetlands, and that are not water-dependent, and these towers are not. The proposed location of the towers is near the National Wildlife Refuge. We are concerned with the impact that the 172 foot towers and their guy wires will have on flying birds. Hundreds of birds currently use the Refuge for breeding and wintering grounds, and many pass through in migration. We strongly object to any unnecessary loss of wildlife that may occur. In addition, the four towers will be very visible from a major trail in the Refuge. Many members of the public, especially birdwatchers, use this trail, and the long-term visual impact of the towers and guy wires will be significant intrusions into the environment for these visitors. The site contains prime habitat for the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and the Clapper Rail - both endangered species. For the above reasons, SCVAS opposes the towers, and will be responding to the Environmental Impact Report by the 11th of January.

Lynn will be glad to provide any information on this topic, and members are encouraged to follow this issue, and to respond to the Corps.



A STATEMENT OF AUDUBON PHILOSOPHY

We believe in the wisdom of nature's design.

We know that soil, water, plants, and wild creatures depend upon each other and are vital to human life.

We recognize that each living thing links to many others in the chain of nature.

We believe that persistent research into the intricate patterns of outdoor life will help to assure wise use of Earth's abundance.

We condemn no wild creature and work to assure that no living species shall be lost.

We believe that every generation should be able to experience spiritual and physical refreshment in places where primitive nature is undisturbed.

So we will be vigilant to protect wilderness areas, refuges, and parks, and to encourage good use of nature's storehouse of resources.

We dedicate ourselves to the pleasant task of opening the eyes of young and old that all may come to enjoy the beauty of the outdoor world, and to share in conserving its wonders forever.

-Audubon, March 1954

SQUIRRELS REJOICE!

SCVAS still has some walnuts. Help us support Mono Lake and not our local squirrels - they've already had their fair share! Ten pounds of walnuts for \$7.50 is a bargain, especially when it's all tax deductible. Call Lynn at the office to squirrel away your own supply of walnuts for the winter.

CRUISING FOR MONO LAKE IN 1985

In the interest of fund-raising for covering costs to defend Mono Lake, the Mono Lake Committee wishes to sponsor one or more cruises in 1985.

We are just beginning to make plans and would appreciate hearing from any of you who are interested. Our choices will depend on you. We are considering: 1) a 14-day Alaska cruise that goes to Glacier Bay from S.F. and visits eight ports in Canada and Alaska, in June; 2) a 14-day transit of the Panama Canal from L.A. to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with six ports of call, in spring; and 3) a 10-day cruise out of L.A. to Mexico, with five ports of call, in late fall or early spring. The financial benefits of reserving cruise space through MLC are that there will be a substantial group discount from the standard fare (which is about \$3500 for the 14-day trips and \$2200 for 10 days), and that part of the fee paid will be a tax-deductible donation. Actual prices will depend on cabin size and location, number in cabin, discount, and so on. All arrangements are very nebulous at this time, but we will be making final plans in early 1984, so, if one of these trips is a dream you'd like to see come true in 1985, please let us know your thoughts soon. Write or call: Mono Lake Committee, c/o Mildred Bennett, 2719 Marin Avenue, Berkeley, 94708, (415) 526-1260.

SAVE THE SNAGS

Friends of Animals, Inc. lists 85 species of American birds that nest in cavities formed in dead and dying trees. When these trees are removed, natural systems are disturbed. Often, the more adaptable cavity-nesters such as Starlings and House Sparrows, move into man-made structures. But others, such as bluebirds and woodpeckers, will simply be driven away.

Traditional forest management removes old trees (foresters call them "snags") from woodlands. In cities, parks departments normally cut them down and haul them away. Suburbanites often consider them eyesores and quickly prune them away. In fact, there aren't many places in America where these decaying relics are tolerated. And that's one of the reasons why so many cavity-nesting birds have disappeared.

Mother Nature recommends that large, dead and dying trees should be left alone whenever possible. They are vital not only for birds, but also for other creatures which depend on them - from squirrels and raccoons, to the soil itself, which benefits as the tree gradually decomposes, the way Nature intended. So if you have one of these old-timers near your home, and it isn't threatening to fall and cause damage, let it be.

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

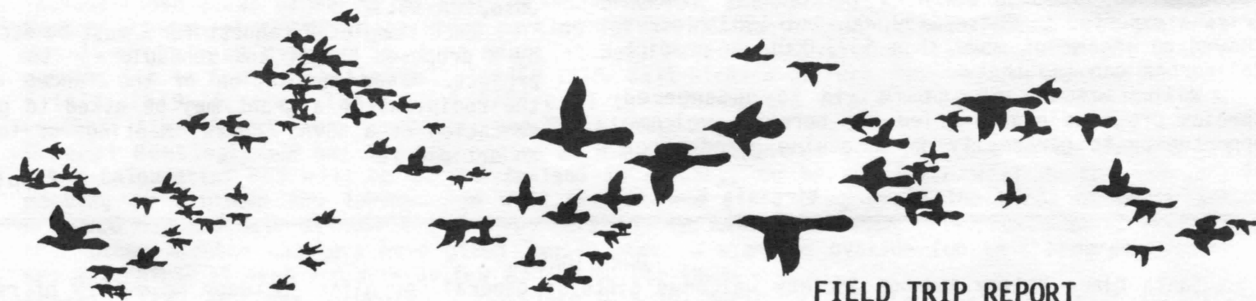
I have approximately 20 records of **Little Blue Heron** in my collection of sightings, some from American Birds and some from notes or phone calls. A record is a sighting of a single bird at a specific location for a length of time which could be a couple of months, or just a day. From these records it is possible to plot the frequency of sightings for one week intervals through the year. What we see is that the earliest reports of **Little Blue Heron** are in the last two weeks of April, there are good numbers of sightings in May, and then the birds seem to disappear in June. The birds appear again in July and August, especially in Charleston Slough, and there is at least one record in the third week of September. Outside of this period there is only a single record of an immature bird in December (Mike Rigney). This pattern is very interesting for a bird that we considered accidental ten years ago. It seems clear that the Little Blues do not winter in the South Bay. Most likely they migrate south into Mexico in a fashion similar to those on the East Coast. But why two peaks, why do they disappear in June? Here I will speculate that the summer reduction in sightings is related to their nesting efforts at the Alviso heronry or elsewhere. In this period perhaps they do not range as far afield and hit the spots that are regularly birded. The **Little Blue Heron** must still be considered a very rare to rare species.

What of more common species, do I have similar data that can be used to graph their occurrence? By and large, the answer is no. Take, for example, our three species of loons. In total I have only 11 records for these in the county (but then read below for this month's sightings). As winter visitors to the South Bay they are rare or uncommon, but each is surely more common than the Little Blue. But they go unreported for a number of reasons. Partly it is because they are a common wintering species along the ocean, partly because they cause some identification problems, and partly they just don't have the glamor of the **Little Blue Heron**. As strange as it may seem, we have the most information on our rarest species, the amount of data is proportional to the rarity. Call it the Little Blue Heron effect.

The SCVAS field trip to Charleston Slough 4 December followed our first major storm of the season by one day. The most noticeable effect was on loons: 6 **Red-throated Loons** in Charleston Slough and

another in Shoreline Lake, and a **Common Loon** in Charleston Slough as well. We have never recorded a loon in three years of censusing the slough -- it will be interesting to see whether the loons stay more than a day or two. Our rare winter ducks are starting to show up. **Blue-winged Teal** are being seen, with three males at the Palo Alto FCB 5 November (Dick Stovel - DS). A single **Eurasian Wigeon** was there as well 12 November along Matadero Slough (DS). The **Hooded Mergansers** have returned to the Skylonda Pond with two males and five females there 5 December (Betty Wyatt). **Ferruginous Hawks** have been seen at the edge of the Bay with an adult soaring over Moffett Field 21 November, and an immature roosting on the high voltage towers over the Stierlin Road christmas tree farm 25 November. Reports of west side **Golden Eagles** continue with one seen over the Stanford campus 4 and 8 November (DS) and one over the Geological Survey in Menlo Park 30 October (Clark Blake - CB). A **Merlin** at Searsville Lake 2 December (file Carol Zabel) was at a typical location, as was a **Peregrine** at the Palo Alto Baylands 22 November (Dolores Norton). A flock of 25 **Wild Turkey** were found near Burra Burra Peak in the Mustang Ranch addition to Henry Coe State Park 25 October (CB). **Red Phalarope** have been found in the South Bay with one at the Baylands 15 November and another at Charleston Slough 4 December, clearly a victim of the 3 December storm. **Western Kingbirds** are rarely found along the west side of the valley and seldom after October, so a well-studied bird in the Palo Alto FCB 12 November (DS) represents an unusual record. The white outer tail-feathers of the kingbird were well seen. The plumbeous race **Solitary Vireo** found in October was still along Coyote Creek on 26 November (Peter LaTourrette) although more of that habitat has been ripped out. The first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season was one that returned to Betty Groce's feeder 27 October and seen at least through 12 November. One showed up at Dick Stovel's feeder 5 November and two were there 12 November. One also has started to come to my feeder as of 20 November. A **Bobolink** reported on the RBA tape for the Palo Alto Baylands on 3 November is a late vagrant and only the second county record.

If you see an "uncommon to rare" please write or call: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415)322-5282.



CLASSES AND TRAVEL

Alice Hoch is teaching three courses through the Fremont Adult School. Birding Field Trips starts January 10. One-day workshops are Birds of the Delta on January 21, and Waterbirds on February 4. Call (415)791-5841 for information.

Doug Cheeseman is offering a short course on Marine Mammals and Birds of the California Coast through De Anza College, starting January 5. He'll also lead pelagic trips in Monterey Bay on January 14 and 21. Doug and Gail Cheeseman are leading a trip to Ecuador, the Galapagos, and Peru April 17-May 12. The Cheesemans can be reached at (408)867-1371.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

On the 30th of October, 21 birders of all levels, including many beginners, had a pleasant look at the winter avifauna of Alum Rock Park in east San Jose. Highlights of the trip were a pair of Dippers in the Mineral Springs area and an adult and an immature Golden Eagle soaring high over Penetencia Creek east of the Youth Science Institute. Several people continued into the afternoon and were rewarded upon the way up the Eagle Rock trail, but were rewarded by excellent looks at a flock of Lark Sparrows. 38 species were seen altogether. It was also interesting to see a hibernation aggregation of ladybird beetles along the creek.

Allen Royer

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	Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741
				408/867-1371			

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: Susan McCarthy, 475 So. 12th, San Jose, CA 95112.

CONSERVATION CHAIR SOUGHT

SCVAS is looking for a Chairperson to manage the activities of the Conservation Committee.

This group is key in focusing local Audubon efforts on issues of high priorities at local, state and national levels. As Chairperson, you would lead the organizing and planning of committee members involved in letter writing, the phone tree, attending meetings, contacting congresspersons, etc. Issues you'll be concerned with include those impacting the preservation and restoration of ecosystems supporting species of special concern, and control of toxic wastes and pollution.

Please contact Sue Liskovec at (415)329-1811 for more details about this challenging and all important post.

TAXES CAN GO TO ENDANGERED SPECIES

Imagine -- something to look forward to on your Californiastate income tax return. This year, you can elect to contribute to the Rare and Endangered Species program of California Fish and Game. Audubon has worked with other groups lobbying for this tax check-off deduction.

New funds will help preserve habitat sheltering a variety of native plant species, as well as wildlife. This fundraising via state tax agencies has resulted in large revenues in 20 other states. Arizona expected to raise \$100,000, but 1983 figures showed an income of more than \$323,000! We predict California can top that.

With federal and state aid to endangered species programs nearly dried up, here's a welcome opportunity to personally do something grand about it.

Virginia Bennett

BAYLANDS THEFT ALERT

Birds and ground squirrels aren't sharing their habitat just with birders, dog walkers, bicyclists and joggers at the Palo Alto Baylands. Thieves have discovered unattended cars a good spot to pick up valuables. Last month two SCVAS members returned to their car to find the wing window broken and a purse missing. Palo Alto police say there have been a number of problems in the frontage road area in particular.

SCVAS GRANTS

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society continues its program of providing grants to studies and projects that advance the knowledge, appreciation and protection of wildlife and its habitats. Proposals for grants will be accepted through January 31, 1984, for consideration in the 1983-84 funding cycle. Up to \$2,000 total will be awarded by April 15, 1984, to those proposals approved fully or partially by the SCVAS Grants Committee and Board of Directors.

Applications for grants must be submitted on a "Grant Request Form", which can be obtained by writing to: SCVAS Grants, c/o 2526 Amaryl Drive, San Jose, CA 95132.

Each completed request form must be accompanied by a proposed budget and schedule for the study or project. After completion of the funded activity, the recipient of a grant may be asked to give presentation at a SCVAS General Meeting, or to prepare an article for the Avocet.

Kepler Stone

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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