



The Avocet

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

- Feb. 1 **Bay Area Bird Photo Club meeting.** Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center, meeting co-sponsored by Arts and Sciences Division of the City of Palo Alto. Speakers: Ken Gardiner and Magnus Elander. Subject: Photographing Flying Birds.
- 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 OR THREATENING WEATHER CANCELS. 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.
- Feb. 14 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., at the home of Jean and Pat Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Avenue, Los Gatos. Topic: Cormorants.
- Feb. 15 **General Meeting.** Wednesday, refreshments and get acquainted at 7:30 p.m., program starts at 8 p.m., Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell (at Embarcadero - west of Bayshore). Ted Chandik and Pete LaTourrette will present a program on the birds and natural history of Trinidad and Tobago, with incredible close-up slides of honeycreepers, tanagers, hummingbirds, motmots and other birds at feeders. Ted and Zoe Chandik will discuss, through the use of slides, the natural history and plant ecology of these tropical islands.
- Feb. 22 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 9 a.m., Palo Alto Baylands. From 101 take Embarcadero east exit, following it to parking lot by the duck pond. Leader: Barbara Houghton (415)327-2186.
- Feb. 25 **Bird Banding Demonstration** at Coyote Creek, half-day, Saturday, 8 a.m. Meet at the entrance to S.F. Bay N.W.R. Take Hwy 237 to First St. Then right on Grand Ave. LIMITED TRIP. Call SFBBO for reservations (408)946-6548. Rubber boots recommended. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Mike Rigney.



Field Trip Coordinator for March - Pete LaTourrette (415)961-2741

- Mar. 3-4 **Honey Lake/Susanville weekend.** Saturday 9 a.m. at the Fleming Unit, Honey Lake Wildlife Refuge. Great Basin birding for Sage Grouse, Sage Thrasher, wintering sparrows, longspurs, waterfowl, Bald Eagles, other raptors. Bring lunch for 2 days; dress for cold weather; bring chains and be prepared for snow on the Sierra highways. Cancelled if I80 or 395 closed or large storm forecast. Mostly driving, easy walking. Camping possible at Fleming Unit. Motels (reservations advisable), restaurants in Susanville. LIMIT OF 30 PEOPLE. Please carpool. Driving time 6 hrs. on clear roads to Susanville. Call for reservations and last minute info. Leader: Bob Dyer (415)327-4787.
- Mar. 11 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Sunday 9 a.m. Half day, Palo Alto Baylands. Meet at Interpretive Ctr. at the E. end of Embarcadero Rd. 1-2 miles of easy walking to see the resident and wintering waterbirds. Leaders, rain or shine: Dick Stovel and Lisa Swagerty (415)856-6105.
- Mar. 14 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 9 a.m. Isenberg Ranch. Meet at Yerba Buena Nursery. Joint Audubon-Native Plant Society walk. Bring lunch. Located at 19500 Skyline Blvd., about 8 miles N. of Saratoga Gap. Halfway between Page Mill and La Honda junctions, and 2 miles down a good dirt road. Look for sign to nursery on Skyline. Leaders: Doug and Gail Cheeseman (408)867-1371.

COYOTE CREEK THREATENED BY WATER DISTRICT PROJECT

Ten miles of Coyote Creek, between Montague Expressway and the Bay, are unique. This is the last untouched climax riparian (streamside) corridor in the Bay Area, with 100 year old sycamores lining the banks next to box elders and lush stands of willow. In addition, several other habitat types occur in the transition from fresh to salt water. Next to the water, all signs of civilization are hidden; it is like being out in the country. Several canoe trips have been led down the creek in the last month, and birdlife is abundant. Around every bend is a Great Egret, a Kingfisher or a Black Phoebe. A Barn Owl flew out of a thicket right beside the boats, and Red-Shouldered & Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned and Short-eared Owls, Great Blue Heron, Yellow-rumped Warblers, woodpeckers, Dark-eyed Juncos, Hermit Thrushes and many other species are also seen. Tracks of raccoons and squirrels pattern the mud on the edge of the swiftly flowing stream. Through the midst of businesses and agricultural land, this is a quiet, accessible and calming haven.

However, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is proposing to significantly alter this habitat. The Water District Board of Directors is planning a Flood Control Project, that, at its worst, may rip out one side of the creek bank from top to bottom, and thus destroy the riparian character of the area.

SCVAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Dept. of Fish and Game, and the South Bay Wetlands Coalition are not opposed to flood control measures being taken along the Creek; we just want to implement the least destructive project possible. None of us want to see the residents of Alviso or similar communities or businesses subjected to the disasters they experienced in last winter's storms. But, THE MEASURES CURRENTLY PROPOSED ARE DRASTIC, UNNECESSARY AND AVOIDABLE. Ten years ago, the Water District planned to place setback levees on either

side of the Creek, 900 feet or more apart. In this scheme, Coyote Creek would be allowed to keep its trees and riparian characteristics intact; waters overflowing the banks in a flood would be contained in a wide channel, yet kept from expanding further or threatening adjacent property. This excellent proposal was changed for economic reasons. Because the agricultural land adjacent to the Creek is zoned for light industry, land owners command the highest price per acre in the Santa Clara Valley. The Water District contends that it simply cannot afford to buy all the land it needs to put their original plan into effect.

The environmental organizations and individuals who are concerned with this project are countering that this site is too valuable to be destroyed, and that there are other, less expensive and less damaging ways to provide flood protection. We are now meeting with the Water District, to try to change their current plans, but there is pressure to design and approve a project as soon as possible. Therefore, we need to show that a strong, concerned opposition to the destruction of Coyote Creek exists, and to aid the District by proposing a solution.

WE NEED YOUR RESPONSES

- o Join us on a canoe trip down the Creek - schedule of trips to be arranged.
- o Attend a strategy meeting.
- o Write to your local elected officials, and tell them that you want to preserve the Creek. Names and addresses are available from the office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL LYNN AT (415)329-1811 FROM 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Lynn Teneffoss

AIR BILL WOULD REQUIRE EPA ACTION

Billions of pounds of potentially cancer-causing chemicals are dumped into our air each year. One important study concludes that up to 18 percent of all lung cancers could be prevented by tighter control of air pollutants. In the 13 years since Congress passed the Clean Air Act, the EPA has regulated only four toxic air pollutants. For the past six years the agency has been studying 37 priority pollutants, 11 of which the National Toxicology Program has labeled as cancer-causing. Yet EPA has done nothing to regulate these pollutants.

Sens. Max Baucus (D-MT), Dave Durenberger (R-MN), and Gary Hart (D-CO) recently introduced a bill, S2159, that would break the bureaucratic logjam at EPA. S2159 would require EPA to make decisions on 40 potentially toxic pollutants within three years, would require that factories emitting cancer-causing pollutants apply for a permit to continue operation, and would require the installation of the best available control technology.

Audubon's clean air lobbyists urge members to write their senators immediately, urging them to co-sponsor this important legislation.

The Audubon Leader

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

Thanks to Bob Roadcap for donating the following books to the SCVAS Library Collection: North American Trees by Preston, A Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand by Falla, Sibson, Turbott, The Birds of Trinidad and Tobago by Herklots, and A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico by Edwards.

Remember, all donations to the library are tax-deductible, and are greatly appreciated.

AUDUBON CAMP, OF COURSE!

Looking for a summer vacation far away from the Olympic crowds? How about going to camp? Summer camp isn't just for kids, but for the 'kid' in all of us. Come spend an 'Evening at Camp' with Phyllis Swanson and Sue and Jim Liskovec, Wednesday, April 14th, 7:30 p.m., at the Saratoga Public Library at Fruitvale and Saratoga Avenues. They'll introduce you to two National Audubon Camps - Camp of the West in the Wind River Range of Wyoming, and Camp of Maine on beautiful, lobster-laden Muscongus Bay. After this show, you'll have answered your summer vacation question - Audubon Camp, of course!

TRAIL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

When the storms of winter have subsided our thoughts will turn to a walk through the woods on one of our recreational trails. Unfortunately cutbacks in county and state funds will be reflected in the condition of those trails unless we participate in their maintenance. The Trail Information and Volunteer Center, in conjunction with the Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Association, will be conducting a series of Trail Work Training Sessions, to train "Trail Bosses". One is needed for every 12 volunteers. Each session will be held in a different park or Open Space District area. The sessions began in January and will continue through April 14th. The sessions will culminate in the event known as Trail Days which has been conducted by the SCMTA for the last 16 years. This year's Trail Days will be April 28th and May 12th. Interested persons should contact Warren Olson at (408)286-4676 evenings or the Trail Information and Volunteer Center between 1 and 5 at (415)324-8482.

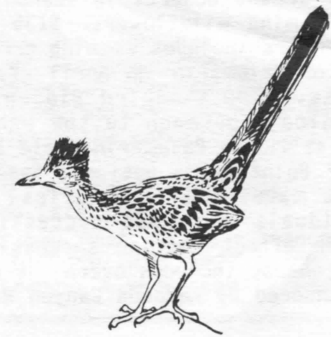
FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

I don't have all the Christmas Bird Count records in yet, but by all accounts both San Jose and Palo Alto did very well. A tentative 163 for San Jose is a second high species count, while Palo Alto's 174 is a new high by 12 species! Unless noted, San Jose CBC records that follow are fide Steve Shugars.



The loon story is of greatest interest in the South Bay following the storm of 3 December. An **Arctic Loon** at the Palo Alto Baylands 15 December (Ted Chandik- TC) was probably storm-driven, but a **Common Loon** at Charleston Slough 26 November (David Suddjian- DSu) and 4 December was apparently a normal vagrant. The major loon species affected by the storm were **Red-throated Loons**. There were numerous reports right up to Christmas Count day and initial reports from the counts include; 1 at Guadalupe Slough (Steve Shugars, Steve Haydock, et al), 1 at Los Esteros Slough (Rich and Chris Carlson), 1 at Mud Slough (Russ Fowler) all on 18 December, and 2 at Palo Alto Baylands (DSu) on 19 December. As 6 **Red-Throated Loons** were found in Charleston Slough immediately after the storm and only 1 remains, this suggests that more than 30 birds were blown in on the 3rd. A **Brandt's Cormorant** at Redwood City 14 December (Clark Blake- CB) was far down the Bay for this coastal species. A belated report of a **Least Bittern** in the vicinity of Charleston Slough on 27 September and 2 there on 28 September represent only the seventh county record of this rare and secretive species (Derek Currall- DC). **Blue-winged Teal** continued to be found in December with 9 in Charleston Slough 7 December. The **Hooded Mergansers** were up to 11 by 19 December, and a number were also found on the San Jose CBC. A count of 171 **Red-breasted Mergansers** in the Alviso Sector on 18 December is exceptional, as the 10-year mean is 12 birds/count. This is also probably related to the 3 December storm. One **Bald Eagle** was found in the Calaveras Sector 18 December, which is lower than usual, but a total of 5 birds on the Isabel Reservoir and in San Antonio Valley on 22 December is an all-time high for the Mt. Hamilton CBC (Don Schmolt- DSc). An immature **Ferruginous Hawk** found roosting on the transmission towers above the Stierlin Rd. Christmas Tree Farm in November stayed for the Palo Alto CBC on 19 December (Ivan Barnes et al). **Merlins** were well-reported for December, both along the bay and in the foothills. **Peregrine Falcons** have also been reported along the bay, with one on the ITT lands 26 November (Dick Stovel- DSt), in the Flood Control Basin on 4 December (DSt), and at Alviso 18 December

(Kathy Hobson et al). A **Prairie Falcon** was seen in the Calaveras area 8 December. A **Black Rail** was seen at the Palo Alto Baylands on 20 November (DSu). The lower tides this winter may give these birds some respite. A **Greater Roadrunner** in the foothills east of San Jose on 18 December was a good find for the San Jose CBC- the most recent record for the count is 1972. At least 2 **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were heard on the Palo Alto CBC (CB)- they're usually found here 2 years out of every 3. Two **Short-eared Owls** were found in Alviso 18 December. They have become more difficult to find in recent years. A **Pygmy Nuthatch** in Santa Clara 18 December was away from the coastal fir habitat it prefers (Rich Palmer et al). A male **Mountain Bluebird** was an exciting find for the San Jose CBC 18 December. It was just over the county line at Calaveras Dam (Dick Elliott, Sam Campbell). At least 2 **Phainopeplas** were found on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 December where they are regularly found in small numbers (DSc). A **Palm Warbler** was found in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin 4 December (DSt). They are seldom found in the South Bay. **Western Tanagers** were found again on the counts this year with a male along Guadalupe River on 18 December (Anne Wilson- AW) and the more typical immature or female at the Stanford Cactus Garden 19 December (DSt fide CB). A **Swamp Sparrow** at the Baylands 21 December (TC) was in a typical location for this rare and secretive sparrow. A **White-throated Sparrow** was found along Matadero Creek 14 December (DSu), and one continues to come to a feeder in Menlo Park, at least through 26 December. A male **Hooded Oriole** along Guadalupe River 18 December is very unusual (AW et al). This portion of the river across from the San Jose Municipal Airport is planted extensively with a red-flowering eucalyptus which is a good food resource, and is undoubtedly why the Western Tanager and Hooded Oriole have been found there this winter.



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

NEST RECORD PROGRAM

Betty Groce submitted 198 nest record cards for 1983. As Betty commented, "Whew, that's a lot of nests!" Here is her list of nests: 1 Gt. Horned Owl, 1 W. Bluebird, 1 R.W. Swallow, 1 Hooded Oriole, 2 Black Phoebes, 1 Bl.-headed Grosbeak, 1 R.-s. Towhee, 5 N. Orioles, 4 Br. Towhees, 1 Titmouse, 1 Ch.-backed Chickadee, 3 Bushtits, 2 Ca. Thrashers, 1 Nuttall's Woodpecker, 1 W.-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Acorn Woodpeckers, 107 Cliff Swallows, 20 Barn Swallows, 7 Robins, 6 Mockingbirds, 15 House Finches, 12 Brewer's Blackbirds, 4 Mourning Doves, 14 House Sparrows, 2 Scrub Jays, 23 Starlings, and 67 Rock Doves.

For more information about the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Nest Record Program, or for cards and instructions, call Gail Cheeseman at (408)867-1371.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Can you help us from "the grounds up"? We need someone to plug in the coffee pot at 7 p.m., before each General Meeting. Please call Lynn at (415)329-1811 if you are interested in helping.

MEMORIALS

We have received gifts from Mrs. M. H. Stuart in memory of Mr. Richard Holcombe, and from Henry V. Seward, in memory of his wife, Irene M. Seward.

Santa Clara 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.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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Lyman Fancher		408/942-1195	Programs	Doug & Gail Cheeseman	Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741

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.

CLASSES AND TRAVEL

SFBBO Birding Tours are designed with the adventurous and parsimonious in mind -- for the "certain segment of the birding population that wants to go on a professionally led birding tour and is also willing to camp out and provide their own transportation." Campgrounds are reserved in advance. Meals are not provided. Carpooling and organizing are taken care of at preliminary meetings. Each tour has a minimum of two guides so that every participant has a good chance at seeing all birds and the ratio between leader and participant is low. Upcoming are tours to the Salton Sea area, Death Valley, Kern River, Yosemite, Arizona, and a Condor trip. Call Don Starks (408)371-9720 for further information.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory offers two Natural Excursions in April. 'Spring in California Deserts' goes to Anza Borrego April 15-20 and the Mojave April 23-28. Instructors Jules Evens and Michael Ellis will follow the seasonal and ecological transition of the deserts in search of migrating birds and blooming wildflowers. \$135 PRBO members, \$145 non-members includes camping arrangements. 'Breeding Birds of Palomarin' on April 27-28, is led by Dave DeSante, PRBO Landbird Biologist. A fascinating ecological approach to the behavior of the land birds at PRBO's Palomarin Field Station at the south end of Point Reyes National Seashore. How do birds choose mates and territories? Which species and individuals are most successful and why? Does weather affect nesting success? \$25 members, \$30 non-members, includes overnight at Volunteer Canyon. Co-sponsored by Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Among pelagic trips planned by Shearwater Journeys are several to search for the Laysan Albatross Feb. 4, 11, and 26. Cost is \$28. A trip to the Monterey Seavalley Mar. 10 is \$27. Debra Love Shearwater, 362 Lee St., Santa Cruz, 95060 (408) 425-8111.

Susanne Luther Methvin's Bay Area Birdwatching School offers 'Owls and Coastal Birding: An experience in Sonoma Co.' on Mar. 24. Owlwing begins at 4:30 a.m. in an area where Barn, Pygmy, Screech, Saw-whet, Spotted, Great Horned and Long-eared Owls have been found. This trip will be preceded by an evening of slides and discussion Mar. 20. Cost: \$10/person. Call (415)376-6319 for information.

Ecology of Ecuador, Galapagos, Peru and Peruvian Amazon. April 17-May 13. Leaders: Doug and Gail Cheeseman, plus local experts. Cost: Land \$2585, Air \$1260. Please call (408)867-1371. Only six spaces left.

Field Trip to Klamath Basin, February 17-20. View hundreds of Bald Eagles leaving their roost to forage in the Tule Lake NWR. A slide lecture Feb. 7 will acquaint participants with the wildlife of the area. Fee: \$90, includes lodging. Sponsored by Sunbeam Ecology Explorations. For more information call Maryann Danielson (415) 342-6919.

The City of Palo Alto (Arts and Sciences Division) and Nature Expeditions...International are co-sponsoring a Baja California Gray Whale Watching Trip Feb. 25 to March 4. Leaders are Ted Chandik and Dave Johnston. Call Ted for more information at (415) 493-5330.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTION DUES INCREASE

The Board of Directors of National Audubon has adjusted the dues rate to maintain their value in constant dollars as dictated by inflation. As of January 1, 1984, a new dues schedule has been in effect. It has been two and a half years since the last increase.

This revenue is used to assist local chapters through dues sharing; and to finance the maintenance of sanctuaries, ornithological research, endangered species program, nature education centers and ecology camps, wildlife film lectures, regional offices, the Washington office, publications, and much more.

CATEGORY	OLD DUES	NEW DUES	CHAPTER SHARE
Individual	25.00	30.00	9.50
Family	32.00	38.00	12.00
Student	15.00	18.00	5.50
Sr. Citizen	17.00	21.00	6.50
Sr. Cit. Family	19.00	23.00	7.50

Our chapter's programs are supported by Chapter Shares. However, SCVAS will not receive this share for your first year, unless we send in the application. If you are applying for the first time, or if you are giving a membership as a gift, PLEASE send it through the SCVAS office. You will be helping our programs, which benefit you, and you will receive the AVOCET at a much earlier date than if you send your membership application to National Audubon. RENEWALS MAY BE SENT DIRECTLY TO: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 2667, Boulder, CO 80321.

... AND SCVAS DUES TO INCREASE ALSO

To keep up with accelerating costs, the dues for receiving the AVOCET will increase as of March 1, 1984 from \$5 to \$6/year.