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The Avocet

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

2020

Volume 31, Number 3

March 1984

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On all field trips, CARPOOL and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, lunch (optional on half-day trips), and liquids. For carpooling arrangements call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666 or Manette Wittgenstein (408)354-9420.

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. 7 **Bay Area Bird Photo Club.** Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center, co-sponsored by Arts and Sciences Division, City of Palo Alto. Ian Tait will speak on bird photography using flash equipment, including electronic strobe.
- 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. 13 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Birds of East Africa.
- 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.
- Mar. 14 **Special Meeting.** Saratoga Library, 8 p.m., 13650 Fruitvale Ave. Skip Schwartz, resident biologist and manager of Audubon Canyon Ranch will present a program on the breeding biology of the Great Blue Heron and Great Egret colonies. Skip will also discuss the general history of Audubon Canyon Ranch.
- Mar. 18 **Livermore-Byron Hot Springs.** Sunday, 9 a.m. Take I-680 N to I-580. Take I-580 E 10-12 miles to First St/Hwy 84 exit. Make an immediate left into Mobil station. Trip will leave from here, perhaps in carpools. Excellent trip for raptors, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, possibly Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagles. Leader: Don Schmoldt (408)251-613.
- Mar. 21 **General Meeting.** Wednesday, refreshments at 7:30 p.m., program begins at 8. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell Road at Embarcadero. Magnus Elander will present a program on Northeast Greenland National Park, the world's largest. This area demands special adaptations of the 50 species of birds that must adapt to a very short breeding season. The park is also characterized by Muskox, Arctic Fox, Polar Wolf, Arctic Hare, Collared Lemming, Polar Bear, and a number of species of seals.
- Mar. 24 **Rancho San Antonio.** Half day, Saturday, 8 a.m. Meet at the last parking lot in the park. Take I-280 to Foothill Expressway; S. to Cristo Rey Dr. Resident birds and early migrants with emphasis on calls and songs. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Pete LaTourrette (415)961-2741.
- Mar. 28 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. Coal Mine Ridge. From I-280 go SW on Alpine Rd. in Portola Valley to the stop sign at Portola Rd. continue on Alpine .9 miles, parking in space along Alpine Rd. Early spring migrants and beautiful bay views. Moderate climbing. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2363.
- Mar. 31-
Apr. 1 **Sutter Buttes Natural History.** Saturday and Sunday, wildflowers, birds, geology with Walt Anderson on private lands. Cost \$28, send check (made out to Walt Anderson) to Gail Cheeseman, 20800 Kittridge Rd., Saratoga, CA 95070. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Colusa at Colusa Campground. Be prepared for hiking and bring lunch. For more details call Gail Cheeseman (408)867-1371. LIMITED TRIP.

Field Trip Coordinator for April - Bill Clark (415)326-7565

- Apr. 1 **Coyote River Park.** Half day, Sunday, 8 a.m. Meet in the parking lot. Take Hwy 101 S to Cochran Rd. in Morgan Hill. Continue E on Cochran to the parking lot. Woodland and chaparral species. Call in case of rain. Leader: Susie Formenti (408)779-8694.
- Apr. 7-8 **Pinnacles National Monument,** Saturday, 9 a.m. Optional 2nd day with camping at private campground before entrance to park (fee). Meet at Visitor Center on east side. Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 25; S on 25 approximately 40 miles to Hwy 146; S on 146 five miles to Monument. Entrance fee. Owling Sat. night, cave exploring Sunday, and lots of wildflowers. LIMITED TRIP. Leader: Phyllis Swanson (408)274-2349.
- Apr. 25 **Field Trip North.** San Francisco watershed. Weather permitting. Reservations will be needed. Details later. Call Kay McCann for more information (415)327-4138.

STRIP MINES IN CALIFORNIA?

Gasquet Mountain is located six miles northeast of Redwood National Park, near forks of the Smith River. Owner to mining claims there is California Nickel Corp. (wholly owned by NiCal, a Canadian firm), now planning to strip mine for cobalt, nickel and chromium.

The potential impact on air, water, land and wildlife in northern California and Oregon is severe. Seven tons of sulfur and nitrous oxides released per day into the atmosphere could create acid rain. Toxic heavy metals could contaminate groundwater and rivers. Landslides and erosion are likely. Nearby wilderness areas would get acid rain and fog, and access roads would scar the area. Three dams would be built on a tributary of the Smith River, the only undammed river system left in California.

Audubon, along with Cal Trout, CA Native Plant Society and fishermen, is fighting the strip mine because of the potential for damage to the land, water birds, plants and fish. More than 1,000 plants and 21 species of conifers, some rare, populate Gasquet. Smith River supports the migration of over 50,000 salmon and steelhead, and trout is a local industry. Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, elk and puma live there.

Because the mined metals are considered 'strategic', the strip mine would be eligible for a \$50 million subsidy yearly. A \$300-million power plant would cycle 525 million gallons of water per year, burn 300,000 tons of coal, 64,000 tons of fuel oil, and 8,500 tons of diesel and gasoline, in turn generating electricity for 77,000 homes and employing 540 persons over 18 years. Cal-Nickel would mine 5.2 million tons of soil on 2,300 acres.

A final message from Audubon Regional Rep. Dan Taylor is that stockpiles from South Africa and Malaysia could be purchased cheaper now. Also the Gasquet mining could take jobs away from those already created by the river itself.

What you can do: Write California Attorney General John Van de Kamp, 555 Capitol Mall, Suite 350, Sacramento 95814. Urge him to enforce laws dealing with the mining permits being sought. He's being pressured to cut red tape for the "good" of the economy and employment. He needs your letters. Then write your congresspersons in Washington about this assault on public lands and waters. More info is available from Smith River Alliance, P.O. Box 1334, Crescent City, 95531.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC OFFER

If you'd like to order the highly acclaimed NGS bird field guide, send Lynn a check for \$14.95 by the end of March. Checks should be payable to SCVAS. Guides should be in by the end of April and can be picked up at the office. This price includes shipping. You will be reimbursed if there is any further discount. These guides are not available in stores and are \$15.95 if ordered individually. Write Lynn at 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

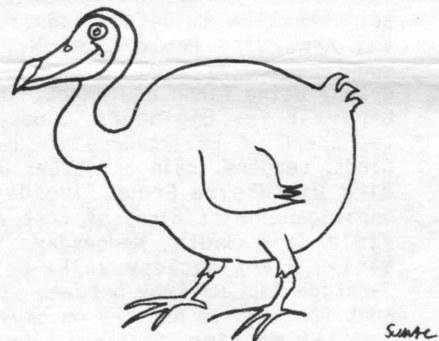
BROWN PELICAN SOARS

Not all environmental news is bad news. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that the eastern Brown Pelican has made such a hearty comeback that the agency is recommending removing the bucket-billed bird from the endangered species list in some states.

Pelican populations crashed 20 years ago mainly because of pesticides like DDT and endrin. The bird was listed as endangered throughout its range in 1970. Many birds were poisoned directly and all suffered reproductive problems due to heavy concentrations of pesticides. Since pesticide use has been controlled, several kinds of birds have rebounded.

The birds are still considered endangered in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, California, Mexico, and in Central and South America.

The Audubon Leader



DODO SIGHTED IN CALIFORNIA?

A Greater Dodo has been seen in Northern California, a first record for the state. It is in immature plumage, and has the ridiculous expression characteristic of a first-year bird. Not only is it a first record for California, but also for the Western Hemisphere. Some go so far as to predict that this will be the only sighting, or that it's not a sighting at all.

To reach the area where increasingly large numbers of birders claim to have seen the Dodo, take Hwy. 666 north to an unmarked dirt road. Go left 7/8 mile until you come to a gate on the right, marked PRIVATE DRIVE, NO TRESPASSING, and GO AWAY--THIS MEANS YOU! Park. Go ten yards to the left of the gate, where there is a gap in the fence. Crawl through the barbed wire, avoiding the straight wire with the porcelain insulators on it. Tiptoe down the road past the main house, through a large mud puddle, to a grove of cottonwoods. The Dodo has been seen in these trees, shedding an unearthly radiance, most often in the early morning or evening hours. Also look for Purple Finch, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Lewis's Woodpecker.

S. J. McCarthy

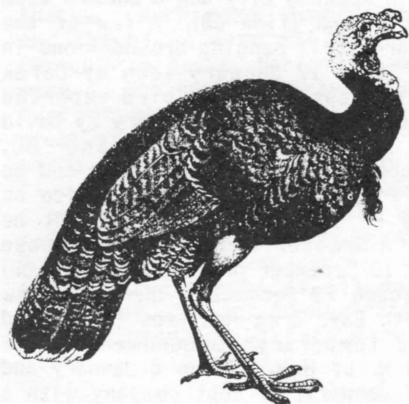
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TOTALS

Red-throated Loon,11; Loon, Species,1; Pied-billed Grebe,68; Horned Grebe,28;
 Eared Grebe,3756; Western Grebe,509; Western(Clark's)Grebe,1;
 American White Pelican,169; Double-crested Cormorant,299; American Bittern,23;
 Great Blue Heron,70; Great Egret,173; Snowy Egret,80; Cattle Egret,6;
 Green-backed Heron,7; Black-crowned Night Heron,44; Canada Goose,686;
 Green-winged Teal,76; Mallard,319; Northern Pintail,4140; Cinnamon Teal,37;
 Northern Shoveler,8645; Gadwall,2255; American Wigeon,5245; Canvasback,2660;
 Ring-necked Duck,167; Lesser Scaup,48; Scaup, Species,409; Common Goldeneye,8;
 Bufflehead,573; Hooded Merganser,8; Common Merganser,46;
 Red-breasted Merganser,171; Ruddy Duck,6236; Duck, Species,771;
 Turkey Vulture,45; Black-shouldered Kite,55; Bald Eagle(a),2;
 Northern Harrier,40; Sharp-shinned Hawk,7; Cooper's Hawk,10;
 Accipiter, Species,5; Red-shouldered Hawk,5; Red-tailed Hawk,203;
 Rough-legged Hawk,4; Buteo, Species,4; Golden Eagle(a),8; Golden Eagle(i),4;
 Golden Eagle(u),2; American Kestrel,166; Peregrine Falcon,1; Prairie Falcon,1;
 Ring-necked Pheasant,188; California Quail,435; Clapper Rail,3;
 Virginia Rail,9; Sora,8; Common Moorhen,30; American Coot,2654; Killdeer,420;
 Black-necked Stilt,1133; American Avocet,847; Greater Yellowlegs,28;
 Yellowlegs, Species,11; Willet,269; Spotted Sandpiper,2;
 Long-billed Curlew,250; Marbled Godwit,35; Sanderling,117;
 Western Sandpiper,2303; Least Sandpiper,156; Dunlin,1124;
 Short-billed Dowitcher,10; Long-billed Dowitcher,7; Dowitcher, Species,310;
 Common Snipe,28; Sandpiper, Species,335; Peep, Species,1550;
 Phalarope, Species,20; Bonaparte's Gull,1518; Mew Gull,148;
 Ring-billed Gull,1119; California Gull,909; Herring Gull,371;
 Western Gull,143; Glaucous-winged Gull,11; Gull, Species,8654;
 Forster's Tern,3; Rock Dove,2728; Band-tailed Pigeon,127; Mourning Dove,710;
 Greater Roadrunner,1; Common Barn Owl,5; Western Screech Owl,4;
 Great Horned Owl,20; Burrowing Owl,17; Short-eared Owl,2;
 White-throated Swift,118; Anna's Hummingbird,358; Belted Kingfisher,31;
 Acorn Woodpecker,38; Red-breasted Sapsucker,16; Nuttall's Woodpecker,69;
 Downy Woodpecker,21; Hairy Woodpecker,3; Northern Flicker,328;
 Woodpecker, Species,1; Black Phoebe,163; Say's Phoebe,41; Horned Lark,66;
 Tree Swallow,6; Violet-green Swallow,1; Steller's Jay,130; Scrub Jay,479;
 Yellow-billed Magpie,240; American Crow,110; Common Raven,1;
 Chestnut-backed Chickadee,394; Plain Titmouse,138; Bushtit,1068;
 Red-breasted Nuthatch,1; White-breasted Nuthatch,50; Brown Creeper,11;
 Rock Wren,5; Canyon Wren,1; Bewick's Wren,62; House Wren,2; Winter Wren,4;
 Marsh Wren,307; American Dipper,2; Golden-crowned Kinglet,10;
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet,466; Western Bluebird,179; Mountain Bluebird,1;
 Hermit Thrush,81; American Robin,2770; Varied Thrush,46; Wrenit,29;
 Northern Mockingbird,221; California Thrasher,11; Water Pipit,117;
 Cedar Waxwing,751; Loggerhead Shrike,110; European Starling,3421;
 Hutton's Vireo,6; Orange-crowned Warbler,1; Yellow-rumped Warbler,850;
 Yellow-rumped(Myrtle)Warbler,14; Yellow-rumped(Audubon's)Warbler,359;
 Townsend's Warbler,5; Common Yellowthroat,152; Western Tanager,1;
 Rufous-sided Towhee,82; Brown Towhee,483; Rufous-crowned Sparrow,10;
 Lark Sparrow,141; Savannah Sparrow,143; Fox Sparrow,38; Song Sparrow,783;
 Lincoln's Sparrow,14; Golden-crowned Sparrow,1123; White-crowned Sparrow,1552;
 Dark-eyed Junco,1193; Red-winged Blackbird,2210; Tricolored Blackbird,1;
 Western Meadowlark,729; Brewer's Blackbird,4925; Blackbird, Species,1738;
 Brown-headed Cowbird,1; Hooded Oriole,1; Purple Finch,12; House Finch,6045;
 Pine Siskin,5; Lesser Goldfinch,393; American Goldfinch,289;
 House Sparrow,488; Sparrow, Species,190;

THE GRAND TOTALS: 103534 BIRDS OF 159 SPECIES.

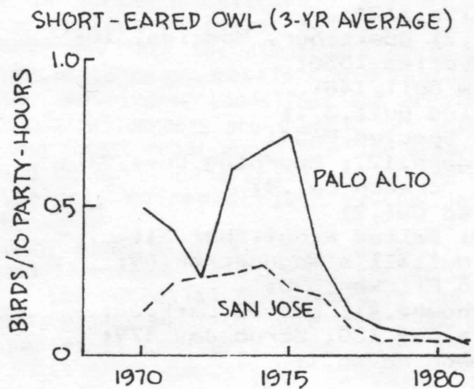
OTHER CBC TOTALS

Oakland	179
San Francisco	161
Sonoma	177
Santa Rosa	140
Marin	182
Point Reyes	191
Napa-Solano	139
Ohlone	167 (unofficial)
Crystal Springs	195
Ano Nuevo	184
Monterey Pelagic	30

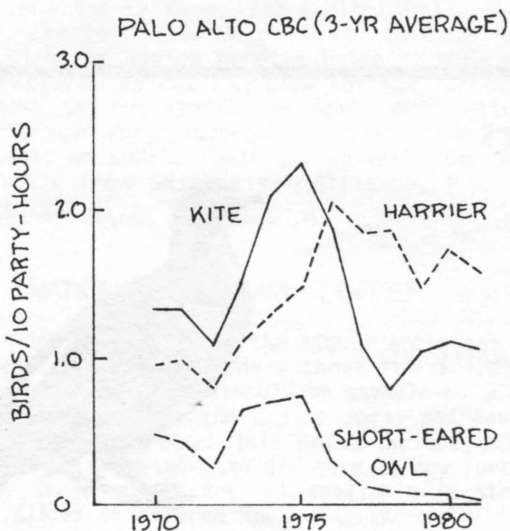


FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

A number of people have commented on the decline of **Short-eared Owls** in recent years. This owl is an uncommon to rare winter resident of the South Bay. Anyone who has watched 5-6 birds hunting in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin in years past and has seen none there recently might wonder what is the cause of this decline and whether it is a local phenomenon. Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data provide a source of information we can examine to try to answer these questions. I have looked at the last 14 years of CBC data to better understand the trends. To avoid short-term effects I have used 3-year running averages, and to allow for changes in observer effort I have normalized the number of birds seen by the number of party-hours. The first figure shows the number of Short-eared Owls seen per 10 party-hours for the Palo Alto and San Jose CBCs in the last decade.



Two trends are noticeable: there was a peak in numbers in 1973-76, and since then there has been a steady decline. Because raptors are on top of the food chain they're susceptible to many environmental factors. Abundance of prey species is often cyclic and predator numbers follow these cycles as well. Each predator requires a large hunting territory and so they're susceptible to habitat loss as well. We can gain some insight into these possibilities by looking at the abundance of two other raptors who use habitats similar to the Short-eared Owl's: the **Black-shouldered Kite** and the **Northern Harrier**. In the second figure I show the species abundance for all three raptors for the Palo Alto CBC.



These data are interesting in a number of respects. First, the Black-shouldered Kite also shows a peak in numbers for 1973-76. Is it possible that both species were responding to an increase in prey abundance? The Kite also shows a decline following the peak, but by 1979 the numbers start to recover. The Harrier, on the other hand, shows a more or less steady rise in numbers over this period. These data suggest that the Short-eared Owl may indeed be responding to cyclic prey abundance, but for other reasons that we do not understand it does not show the recovery evidenced by the Black-shouldered Kite. There does not appear to be an indication of habitat loss in these data. Is this decline a real one or might we expect some recovery in future years? How many years of data should we consider to be conclusive? In the table I compare the abundance of these three raptors a decade apart, including Hayward-Fremont CBC data.

BIRDS RECORDED PER 10 PARTY-HOURS (4-Year Average)

CBC	Short-eared Owl	Black-shouldered Kite	Northern Harrier
Palo Alto (1969-72)	.45	1.24	.87
Palo Alto (1979-82)	.08	1.03	1.55
San Jose (1969-72)	.20	2.45	.92
San Jose (1979-82)	.06	2.10	2.04
Hayward-Fremont (1969-72)	.61	1.90	1.89
Hayward-Fremont (1979-82)	.35	1.85	2.94

The drop in Short-eared Owl numbers does appear significant for Palo Alto and San Jose, but, interestingly enough, although Hayward-Fremont also shows a drop in numbers it is not clear that this drop is significant. This is particularly important as Hayward-Fremont appears to have more suitable habitat than the other two counts. The Black-shouldered Kite numbers do not change very much, but the Northern Harrier numbers have increased dramatically. There is no question that there is a real decline locally for the Short-eared Owl. That this decline is not shared by other marsh raptors is encouraging in that it suggests that our local habitats can support a good population of raptors. Will the decline continue? Will numbers recover in the East Bay? Is the increase in Northern Harrier related?

Data from the Palo Alto CBC, *fide* Clark Blake (CB) emphasize the influence of the 3 December storm on **Red-throated Loons**. A total of 39 were found on the count, an all time high, including 2 on Felt Lake. The other loons were apparently not affected with 2 **Arctic Loons** in Redwood City and a **Common Loon** still in Charleston Slough (*fide* CB). A few of the **Red-throated Loons** are still hanging around - one in the Flood Control Basin 12 January seen by Derek Curraill (DC), and perhaps the same bird reported from Charleston Slough on 19 and 22 January by David Suddjian (DS), Paul Noble (PN), and DC. **Cattle Egrets** may appear at any time of year and be gone the next day. Five on Taylor St. in Alviso on 28 January found by Ed Gustafson (EG) could not be found on the 30th. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** found in the FCB on 19 December on the CBC (*fide* CB) stayed at least through 29 December. There are few records for the South Bay. Greg Meszaros (GM) found a **Ross' Goose** in a temporary impoundment E. of Calabazas Creek and N. of Hwy. 237 on 2 January and it stayed through 7 January. It kept company with a

FIELD NOTES

large flock of American Coots. There is some confusion as to whether this is the first or second county record - heightened by a report of a "snow goose type" seen here on 26 December - so is this a 1983 or 1984 record? **Blue-winged Teal** reports continue this winter with sightings from Charleston Slough and the FCB up through 22 January (DC, PN, DS). The high count so far is 10 in Charleston Slough 29 December. Two **Eurasian Wigeon** were found on the Palo Alto CBC (fide CB), one of which has been seen by many observers in various spots in the FCB at least through 22 January (PN, DS, and Chris Benesh). **Redhead** continue to be seen there as well, mostly in the frontage road pond at least through 7 January (DC). A high count of 85 was obtained 29 December. A male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found N. of Moffett Field on the Palo Alto CBC (Ivan Barnes fide CB) -- they are rarely found this far down the bay. In the same vicinity were huge flocks of **Northern Shoveler** -- the CBC total of 86,000 is probably a North American high count. An adult **Bald Eagle** just E. of the county line at San Luis Reservoir 27 December (Louise Sousoures) is indicative of the good numbers found in the interior ranges this winter. **Ferruginous Hawks** continue to be seen. One was on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 December (fide Don Schmoltdt- DSc) and an adult was seen again at Moffett Field 19 January. The Palo Alto CBC had 3 **Golden Eagles** this year (fide CB) and an immature at Moffett Field 30 January (Paul Swan) was also unusual. This has been an excellent winter on the Palo Alto bayside with 2 or 3 different birds seen all through December (DS, CB, and Dick Stovel-DSt). An adult **Peregrine Falcon** was found at the Mtn. View Regional Shoreline 5 February (Susan McCarthy). Two **Prairie Falcons** on the Mt. Hamilton CBC (fide DSc) are typical of that interior location. A **Black Rail** was seen at the Palo Alto Baylands 18 January (Al Eisner) and 2 were there 19 January (CB). Records for **Glaucous Gull** usually come in in the first 2 weeks of January, and so they're missed on the CBCs. A first winter bird at the Palo Alto dump on 22 January (DS, PN) is the first report this winter. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** heard in Foothills Park 13 January (DS) is in a typical location. A

Northern Saw-whet Owl along upper Stevens Creek on the Palo Alto CBC (fide CB) is also a good location for this hard-to-find owl. A total of 85 **Lewis' Woodpeckers** were found on 22 December on the Mt. Hamilton CBC (fide DSc), a very healthy number. Our most likely winter swallows were both found on CBCs: **Tree Swallows** along Coyote Creek (Pete LaTourrette) and 10 **Violet-Green Swallows** on the Palo Alto count (fide CB). **Yellow-billed Magpies** rarely move up the W. side of the valley so 3 in Los Altos for the CBC were a pleasant surprise (fide CB) and one was also reported in Mtn. View 24 December (Beth and Cap Schramm). Six **Phainopeplas** on the Mt. Hamilton CBC is a new high (fide DSc). A few **Orange-crowned Warblers** are typical here in winter. One along Matadero Creek 10 December and another on Coyote Creek 18 December (DSt) are in typical habitat. The **Western Tanager** found in the Stanford Cactus Garden on the Palo Alto CBC was still there 26 December (DSt). A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was along San Francisquito Creek on 19 December for the Palo Alto CBC (Larry Newcomb fide CB) for a very unusual record. **Sage Sparrows** were plentiful on the Mt. Hamilton CBC with 25 found 22 December (fide DSc). A **Short-tailed Sparrow** was found at Baylands on the January high tides 16-18 January (fide RBA tape) along with 2 **Swamp Sparrows**. **White-throated Sparrows** have had a banner year with 4 on the Palo Alto CBC (fide CB). Individuals have been seen at Deer Hollow Farm 2 January (Tom Roach) and 7 January (Christine Wolfe), and remained at feeders (Betty Groce). Wintering **Hooded Orioles** continue to be reported with a female in Palo Alto on 25 December (PN) and a male in San Jose 5 January (Jerald DeVaughn). A **Red Crossbill** identified in flight by call note on Black Mtn. on the Palo Alto CBC on 19 December is the first county record since 1977 (fide CB). Another exceptional record from the Palo Alto CBC was a flock of 6 **Evening Grosbeaks** in Los Altos (fide CB). Since then one was seen in Palo Alto 1 January (Alberta Jaspers), and 3 in Los Altos on 29 January (Carol Zabel).

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



FIELD TRIP REPORT

There are four things that make for a good field trip - good weather, nice scenery, some exciting birds, and an enthusiastic group. On Saturday, Feb. 4, the annual trek to Panoche Valley was that and much more. Temperatures were in the 70's and the hills were all green. The Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, Harlan's Hawk, and Prairie Falcon were up and hunting early. Mountain Bluebirds were everywhere. Mountain Plovers were seen, but at a great distance. Chukars finally cooperated with two birds posing for everyone to see for the longest time. A real bonus was a Roadrunner trotting up a steep hillside. Thanks to the walkie talkies and CB radio of Linda Wills, Tom Rountree, Peg Woodin, and Ron Arps, the 11-car caravan was in radio contact and blitzed the birds all day long. 41 pairs of sharp eyes, instant communication capabilities, and a great group of birders made Panoche '84 a solid "10"!

Jim Liskovec

HAYWARD SHORELINE TRIP

SCVAS birders were led on a birdwalk to the Hayward Shoreline January 29th. The leader, Elsie Richey, reviewed the recent history of the area which led to creating the marsh.

The land (south of Hayward's Landing, on the bay shore) was purchased as mitigation for the new Dumbarton Bridge encroachment on the wetlands. The funds also provided for its development as a salt marsh shore area.

Eastbay Regional Parks and Hayward Area Shoreline Planning Agency worked in conjunction to provide wet areas and raised areas to attract as many birds as possible. Dr. Howard Cogswell, Hayward State University ornithologist, gave expert advice.

Today, a scant four years after the marsh was flooded, birds are using the area in considerable numbers. The field trip participants were "first viewers" of a Sora Rail in the newly-vegetated area. The bird flushed into the marsh and swam in plain view.

Later, a Eurasian Wigeon was spotted swimming in the Southeast Lagoon - probably the first time one was found there.

Fifty species were seen, from Eared Grebe to Horned Lark to Song Sparrow, by way of many duck and shorebird species.

Elsie Richey

WHO FOOTS THE BILL?

The following from the Dept. of Interior:

Who foots the bill for fish and wildlife besides anglers and hunters?

Do the 83 million Americans who watch birds, photograph wildlife, and travel to national wildlife refuges support the objects of their affection as sportsmen do? Will wildlife lovers become wildlife backers? The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is asking these questions as it investigates 18 potential sources of revenue that could be tapped to support State fish and wildlife programs.

The money would be used to support some of the nearly 3700 wild vertebrate species, most of which are "nongame" species not sought by sportsmen. These animals do not carry special distinctions or protections, such as endangered or threatened species or marine mammals, and are not classed as feral species that have returned to the wild from their domestic state. Nongame species range from chipmunks and porcupines, for example, to herons and songbirds.

The effort to identify an equitable and effective source of public funds to foster the State's conservation of fish and wildlife, especially those species not ordinarily hunted, fished or trapped, is required by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980. The results when presented to Congress, could lead to the enactment of funding for this program, perhaps as an excise tax similar to the "Pittman-Robertson" and "Dingell-Johnson" Federal aid programs. Under these programs, sportsmen have been financing conservation of game and many nongame species for nearly five decades.

Although Federal income taxes and certain State taxes help to support some fish and wildlife management programs, sportsmen have traditionally carried the bulk of this financial responsibility. State fish and game management is largely supported by the States' sale of fishing and hunting licenses, and supplemented by Federal excise taxes on fishing and

hunting gear. In 1983, for example, nearly \$140 million was returned to the 50 States and territories under Federal aid programs, bolstering \$484 million that fishermen and hunters paid for State licenses and permits during the preceding year.

There is a spin-off value for nongame species from the money that is spent for hunted species. Land acquired and developed with "Pittman-Robertson" funds provides habitat for shore birds and cranes in addition to waterfowl, for instance; in a similar way, "Dingell-Johnson" funds support habitat for turtles, crawfish and mollusks, as well as sport fish. Nongame species do lack a specific, comprehensive source of funds, however.

"It's time that Americans who do their hunting with binoculars be given an opportunity to shoulder part of the financial responsibility for conserving fish and wildlife," says G. Ray Arnett, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, in the news release reprinted above.

The Department release then goes on to propose special taxes on: wild bird seed, wild bird houses, wild bird feeders, wild bird waterers, birdbaths, heaters, wildlife books, travel trailers, campers, backpacking equipment, camping equipment, binoculars, monoculars, scopes, recreation diving equipment, photographic equipment, and motorhomes.

Also mentioned are a voluntary Federal income tax "check-off", user fees on Federal lands and waters, sale of "semi-postal" stamps whose cost would cover basic postage and a contribution to nongame programs, and annual appropriations from general U.S. Treasury funds.

Your Editor believes that the latter is the appropriate source, as the whole populace shares responsibility for the protection of the environment and the creatures that inhabit it with us. He also sees in this an attempt to get back at those damned environmentalists, eh, Mr. Arnett?

-The Gull

AT LEAST THREE LIFERS

The day dawned inauspiciously with a drizzle and a rather steep descent into the abandoned limestone quarry. However in less than two hours the zealous Dr. Zenone had shown every member of our group at least three members of the genus *Falco* which none of us had previously seen. Within newly-built and freshly painted cloistered chambers, we observed the *anatum* and *pealei* subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon, and in an outdoor weathering yard, Gyr Falcon x Peregrine and Gyr Falcon x Prairie Falcons preened in the pale sun. From behind one-way windows, the group also observed the neotropical Orange-breasted and Bat Falcons, as well as Harris' Hawks from the Southwestern United States. Santa Cruz is far north of their normal range. The topper for most of us was seeing several Aplomado Falcons (in California!) close enough to note their gray crowns, striking facial pattern, and barred tails. As we had waited in the parking area, an adult Golden Eagle had flown over at tree-top level, and we observed a pair of Barn Owls observing us from a hole in the rocky cliff over our heads. These are daily sightings at the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

After this falcon phantasmagoria, several of us went to Long's Marine Lab of UCSC which is open Tues-Sun, 1-4 pm, for a docent-led tour that included live marine specimens and a bleaching Blue whale skeleton.

This trip will be repeated, if possible, so that some of the fifty or so people on the waiting list may participate.

Allen Royer

CBC PARTICIPANTS

SCVAS wishes to thank the following for their help on the San Jose Christmas Bird Count (Section leaders in bold):

Lynne Aldrich, Barbara Allen, Jim Anderson, Pauli Baggs, Virginia Bennett, William Bousman, Don Brockhurst, Geri Brown, Peggy Brown, Phyllis Browning, Carole Burke, Sam Campbell, Jack Cole, Kathie & Mike Cooper, Don & Jill Crawford, Rigdon Currie, Courtenay Dawson-Roberts, Courtenay Dawson-Roberts, Jr., Jean BuBois, Dick Elliott, Jerry Estruth, Marc Fenner, Janet Fisher, Dennis Griffin, Jack & Betty Groce, Linda & Ron Hagelin, **Phil Hand**, Lynn Hassler, Michele Haverhill, Gloria Heller, Anne & Leonard Helton, Marge Herman, **Howard Honig**, Barbara & Bob Houghton, Grant Hoyt, Neil Jackson, Dorothy Johnson, Monica & **Dave Johnston**, Mike Johnston, Evelyn Kerk, Paul Kilkeny, William Kirsher, Craig & Kathie Kuziel, Leni Langone, **Pete La Tourette**, Ranada Laughlin, Jim Liskovec, Deborah Manley, Wendy Matsumoto, Kay & Ray McCann, Judy McEuen, Gregory Meszards, L. Richard Mewaldt, Mark Miller, Kevin Monahan, David Nauer, **Michael Newcomer**, Dolores Norton, Tom Olson, Carol & Matthew Palmer, **Richard Palmer**, Armin Ramel, Bob Ranoa, Ellen Ratner, Virginia Reynolds, Bob Roadcap, **Allen Royer**, David & Roberta Seals, Milton Seibert, Steve Shugars (co-compiler), **Vicki Silvas-Young**, Debbie Stamp, Don Starks (co-compiler), Diana Stillens, **Keppler Stone**, Richard Stovel, Audrey & Don Stoye, Lisa Swagerty, Lynn Tennefoss, Richard Tomasso, Sally Walters, Jim & Shelly Warner, Henry Weston, Pat Wheeler, Linda Wills, **Anne Wilson**, Betty Wyatt, Carol Zabel.

(Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, and friends)

NEW NATURE SOUNDS SOCIETY

The Nature Sounds Society will hold its first general meeting at San Francisco State University on March 17, at 2 p.m. in the Blakslee Room, 10th Floor, Thornton Hall. The meeting is hosted by the Avian Studies Group of the Biology Department; Dr. Robert I. Bowman will speak on "Evolution of Song in Darwin's Finches".

The Nature Sounds Society is sponsored by the Library of Natural Sounds of the Oakland Museum's Natural Sciences Department and is open to interested amateurs and professionals.

The Society will act as a focal point of contact and information. Areas of interest include educational use of sounds including bird identification, field recording of natural sounds, liaison of amateurs with researchers studying sounds in animals, and natural sounds and their application for music.

For further information call Oakland Museum Natural Sciences Department (415)273-3884.



PAMPAS GRASS MENACE

Pampas grass - those vigorous clumps with handsome plumes that kids like to wave - may eventually destroy much of the natural beauty of the Monterey Peninsula. In its native South America, pampas grass extends solidly for hundreds of square miles; its sawtoothed leaves can inflict deep cuts. Introduced into California for erosion control, it is so aggressive that it could some day replace most of the native plants along much of the coast and it could eventually fill in most of our open space.

Each plant produces millions of minute seeds, that can be blown many miles. Pampas grass establishes itself most easily in a cool, foggy climate, in wet, sandy soil, and in open or disturbed areas. However, it thrives in any soil, wet or dry, in full sun or dense shade. Once it is established, not even tree seedlings can compete with it.

There is nowhere along the coast where it is not a real threat. Young plants go unnoticed until they send up plumes. A few clumps sprout up here and there and cause no great concern - until close observation reveals dozens or even hundreds of seedlings in the vicinity. At Asilomar State Beach dozens of large clumps and literally thousands of seedlings have been removed, and each year more seedlings appear. Pampas grass has taken over almost entirely where the sand plants used to operate near Moss Beach.

What can be done? Cortaderia atacamensis should be declared a public nuisance, and every effort should be made to eradicate it while there is still a chance. Only the less aggressive species, C. selloana, should be permitted in any landscapes. All pampas grass should be destroyed in open-space lands, natural parks, and greenbelts. All who love the Monterey Peninsula are urged to do their part in spotting and removing young plants, especially in new territory. They look like extra vigorous grass plants with stiff, sawtoothed leaves all sprouting from a single crown and a strong vein running up the center of the leaf. In digging it is essential to remove all of the root crown and to leave no part of it lying on the ground. Seed plumes should be burned as soon as they appear. PLEASE HELP DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION - Condensed from An Open Letter Concerning Pampas Grass. California Native Plant Society, Monterey Bay Chapter. Bruce D. Cowan, President, and reprinted from the Sanderling.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BAAC MEETING

This year's Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) meeting was hosted by SCVAS at the Environmental Ed. Center in Alviso, January 7, and brought together several chapters to share news and conservation concerns.

Sue Liskovec, SCVAS President, chaired this event at a full house, consisting of officers and activists, regional and national Audubon staff, and anyone who wished to attend. Several fascinating presentations were given and topics discussed and debated. Following are highlights of this interesting meeting:

Some new information and successes were reported by **John Ogden** of the **Condor Research Office**. Because of a priority on photographic identification of the existing 18 condors and identifying feeding areas, researchers now know much more about the relationship between habitat and food, contradicting old assumptions. The area around Glenville, CA, is important as a wintering site for immature condors, and the Hudson Ranch in SW Kern County is crucial to the entire wild population. Congress has appropriated \$5 million to buy the ranch (now threatened by developers) to help preserve proven condor habitat. Ogden said good rapport between ranchers and researchers is a positive factor.

The theme for this year's **Western Regional Wildlife Conference**, April 14-17, at Asilomar, is "**Water and Wildlife**". Speakers include John Ogden, Russell Peterson, and wildlife refuge managers nationwide. Other topics are Mono Lake, sanctuaries, and predator/prey policy. Regional reps Glenn Olson and Dan Taylor spoke about Audubon camps, a Central Valley Wetlands study, the CA tax return check-off funding for endangered species, and working with Ducks Unlimited to acquire property for cranes. State issues include SB512-Hart, a wildlife bond issue supported by Audubon. National focus includes: S142, Tuolumne River; Santa Margarita River (HR1581); and Gasquet Strip Mining.

Chuck Houghten, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Refuge Planner, presented updates on **San Luis Island**, and talked in detail about the master plan process. Chuck urged chapter participation in the planning process. SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge is next for master planning.

Dave Henderson spoke on Richardson Bay Center and youth programs. **Project Egret** is a resource guide for chapter education. Volunteers are needed for the Western Regional Conference at Asilomar to staff the book store and lead field trips.

Chapter Reports came from Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin, Mt. Diablo, Napa-Solano, Ohlone, Santa Clara Valley, and Sequoia. They summarized Christmas Bird Count tallies and discussed such issues as: BCDC appointees; gill netting and the alarming increase of permits; proposed radio towers in the SF Bay; a population growth initiative in the Napa-Solano area; the garbage disposal issue; Ohlone's "adoption" of SF Bay Wildlife Refuge; South Bay Wetlands Coalition; Coyote Creek and Bryan Canyon; SCVAS's successful fund raiser Birding at the Bottom of the Bay; Status and Trends of CA Wetlands, available from Assemblyperson Byron Sher's office; Pescadero Marsh's future; and the state forestry department being stacked with governor's appointees.

Bruce Howard of NAS Board of Directors is Chair of **Chapter Relations Committee**, which is charged with improving communications between chapters. The Board is working towards a balanced budget, in lieu of current deficits. Discussion ensued on National's phone solicitation program and its controversial impact.

Special thanks to Sue Liskovec, Lynn Tennefoss, Courtenay Dawson, and Nancy Geenen for a well-planned meeting. Contact Lynn for further details.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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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.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Coyote Hills Regional Park will be celebrating National Wildlife Week on March 18, 24 and 25. This year's events will focus on WATER, and the living things that depend on it, and will feature birdwalks, hikes, van tours, slide shows, demonstrations, and a tasting session of shellfish produced in the bay. Activities will take place at both facilities on Sunday March 18 and Sunday March 25; all activities on Saturday March 24 will take place at the wildlife refuge.

All activities are free and most do not require reservations. Call (415)792-0222 for more information and directions.



SAN FRANCISCO BIRDING

For the first time, the Fremont Adult School is offering a one-day trip to birding spots in San Francisco, led by Alice Hoch. The class will observe birds in some of San Francisco's loveliest parks and top birding spots.

It will be held on Saturday, March 10th, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Students should bring lunch and beverage. Carpools can be arranged. Students must PRE-REGISTER at least five days before the class. Do so by mail or in person at the Fremont Adult School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont, CA 94538. The cost of the class is \$10.50.

For more information, call the Adult School at (415)791-5841 or Alice Hoch at (415)657-0475.

EASTERN SIERRA TOUR

Luis Baptista, ornithologist, Associate Curator of Birds and Mammals at the California Academy of Science and renowned bird communication specialist, will conduct a seminar/tour of the Eastern Sierra July 8-13, including the South Lake area, the Buttermilk area, the Owens Valley, the White Mountains (location of the Bristlecone Pines, the oldest living trees in the world), Mono Lake and Tioga Pass, the area in which Luis is presently doing research. Daily workshops will be supplemented with lectures and slides. You will be observing birds in their natural habitats, their ecology, and ways in which they communicate (using sounds, body language, etc.). Emphasis will be on birds but all vertebrate and botanical life of the area will be explored.

Accommodations will be at Parchers Resort, located at 9280' elevation on South Ford Road off Highway 168 west of Bishop, CA. The cost of the seminar/tour is \$530 and includes six nights lodging in clean, comfortable cabins and seventeen delicious meals in a delightful setting. Transportation to be arranged after signup. Openings are limited. Write or telephone before May 1 for reservations: Luis Baptista Seminar, c/o Parchers Resort, P.O. Box 204, Ross, CA 94957, (415)453-1521.

NATURE EXPLORATIONS

Nature Explorations-- Tuleyome will be offering programs on Migratory Birds (Elkhorn Slough), Owls (Point Reyes), the Desert (Death Valley), and Vernal Pools (Jepson Prairie) in March and April. These programs are described in their spring brochure. Call or write 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto 94306, (415)324-8737.

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 \$6/year. It is published monthly except July and August. Send address changes to the office promptly.

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