

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter C14 of the National Audubon Society
2253 Park Boulevard, Palo Alto, CA 94306
Telephone: (415) 329-1811

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 696
Los Altos, CA



The Avocet

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

2020

Volume 31, Number 9

November 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.

- Nov. 4 **Birdwalk for Beginners. Ed Levin County Park.** Half day, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. Meet in schoolyard on N side of Calaveras Rd. near the park. From Hwy 17 take Calaveras Blvd. E through Milpitas to the park, or from Hwy 680 take Calaveras Blvd. east. Possible Golden Eagles. Leader, rain or shine: Vicki Silvas-Young (408/293-7124).
- Nov. 7 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Palo Alto Baylands Center. Gary Zahm will speak. He is refuge manager for San Luis, Merced, and Kesterson Nat'l Wildlife Refuges, and a noted wildlife photographer. Non-members are welcome.
- Nov. 10 **Searsville Lake and Jasper Ridge.** Half day, Saturday, 8:30 a.m. Meet at Stanford Univ. Jasper Ridge Preserve Main Gate (not Whiskey Hill gate). From Hwy 280 go W on Sand Hill Rd. about 2 miles to gate on left. Gate will be unlocked from 8:15 to 8:40 a.m. Ring-necked Ducks, possible Wood Ducks and Red-shouldered Hawk. Suggested contribution of \$2 to the Preserve. Limit 40 people. Lunch optional. Leaders, rain or shine: Jean and Bill Clark, Carol Zabel, Bill Kirsher. For reservations call the Clarks (415/326 7565).
- Nov. 13 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Our guest speaker will be Joan Priest, director of the Wildlife Department of the Santa Clara Humane Society.
- Nov. 14 **Field Trip South. Campbell Percolation Ponds.** 9 a.m. Call Jo Pettit (408)266-5118.
- Nov. 14 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments 7:30 p.m., meeting starts 8 p.m. George Lepp, noted wildlife photographer, whose credits include the cover of *Natural History*, will present a stunning slide lecture on the natural history of the Monarch Butterfly in its wintering ground on mountain slopes west of Mexico City. George explored and photographed the area for several years with a noted lepidopterist, keeping the exact location a secret to protect the millions of butterflies wintering there. His insights and observations about the Monarch Butterflies should be as intriguing as his photographs are breathtaking.
- Nov. 18 **U.S. Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Lab.** Half day, Sunday, 10 a.m. Guided tour of this facility and its work with raptors may include close views of Peregrine, Bat, Orange-breasted, and Aplomado Falcons, Harris's Hawks and Elf Owl. Meet at the Carriage House parking lot on U.S. Santa Cruz campus. Hwy 17 S to Hwy 1, N onto Mission Street. Right at Bay, follow onto campus. Take first right into parking lot in front of buildings. Limited to 10 persons. Rain cancels. Call Carol Zabel for reservations at (415)948-5671.
- Nov. 25 **Pescadero Marsh.** Sunday, 9 a.m. Meet in oceanside parking lot at Pescadero Road and Hwy 1. Take Hwy 84 through San Gregorio to Hwy 1, then about 5 miles. Informal car pooling at 7:45 at Hwy 280 and Page Mill Road. Leaders: Mike Newcomer (408)286-2346, James Anderson (408)272-1159, and Colleen Pelles..
- Nov. 28 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 9 a.m. Palo Alto Baylands. From 101 take Embarcadero E exit, following it to the parking lot by the duck pond. Leaders: Paul Noble (415)948-3876 and Barbara Houghton (415)327-2186.

JON DUNN AND THE NGS GUIDE

We are pleased to have Jon Dunn, the co-chief consultant for the National Geographic Field Guide, present this two day, slide illustrated seminar to review the field guide from cover to cover. Jon will compare species, provide additional details on field marks, correct errors, and answer plenty of questions. The NGS field guide is now widely regarded as the best and most accurate of the North American guides available today. Join us for this unique opportunity to spend two days with Jon Dunn, and to

annotate and update your NGS field guide.

The seminar is Nov. 3 and 4, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Stanley Intermediate School, Lafayette, CA. Limited to 200, reservations required. Fee, \$15 per person. Bring sack lunch.

For reservations, mail your check, with name, address, phone, and a self-addressed envelope to the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

-Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Twenty-five enthusiastic birders showed up for the Charleston Slough field trip led by Rose Lind and Dolores Norton on 26 Sept. Mild weather and an abundance of spotting scopes helped us see approximately 40 species. The more notable included Pectoral Sandpiper, Sora, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, and hundreds of White Pelicans congregated not far to the east of us.

-Lee Lovelady

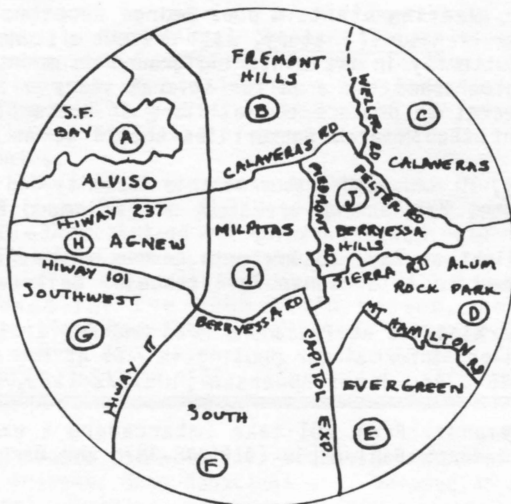
SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS COUNT DEC. 16

SCVAS is again sponsoring the San Jose Christmas Bird Count (CBC) to be held on Sunday, December 16. If you are new to Christmas Counts or are a new birder, please don't let that stop you. We need people of all abilities. Save December 16 for an exciting day of birding followed by a tasty dinner. For more information call co-compilers Sue and Jim Liskovec (415)969-5542.

SECTION LEADER NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS 1984 SAN JOSE CBC

| | |
|------------------|--|
| A(Alviso) | Jean Dubois (408)395-4264 |
| B(Fremont Hills) | Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-71244 |
| | Mike Newcomer (408)736-4176 |
| C(Calaveras) | Kep Stone (408)251-2186 |
| D(Alum Rock) | Dave Johnston (408)867-7278 |
| E(Evergreen) | Audrey & Don Stoye (408)249-2108 |
| F(South) | Sue & Jim Liskovec* (415)969-5542 |
| G(Southwest) | Anne Wilson (415)941-0966 |
| | Rick Palmer (408)243-0582 |
| H(Agnew) | Dick Stovel & Lisa Swagerty (415)856-6105 |
| I(Milpitas) | Terri Hart (408)946-6353(days) |
| J(Berryessa) | Betty Groce (415)326-5540 |

*Section leader(s) not identified at press time.
Please call co-compilers for information.



CBC DINNER NEEDS A POLICEMAN

After the count, SCVAS traditionally holds a dinner, where birders can eat, relax and hear the preliminary results of the count. This year, we will be using the Leninger Center, in San Jose. Center policy requires us to have a City of San Jose official reserve uniformed police officer on duty while we are using the Center. We are looking for anyone who is or knows of an officer willing to donate this service. His/her assistance will be greatly appreciated! Please call the office (415)329-1811 if you can help.

WE'VE JOINED PCL

SCVAS has recently joined with other Bay Area Audubon Chapters as organizational members in the Planning and Conservation League (PCL). The PCL is a membership organization devoted to the passage of sound environmental and planning legislation in California, and based in Sacramento. Membership includes a subscription to California Today, an excellent bimonthly newsletter which is indispensable for keeping abreast of current environmental legislation. For more information on their activities, or to obtain a membership application (yearly, \$25, student/senior, \$10), please contact PCL, 1228 N. Street #33, Sacramento, CA 95814.



ATTRACTING REALLY EXOTIC BIRDS

New in our library is Attracting Exotic Birds to Your Back Yard, by Jack Clouseau. It offers many unusual tips for the bird lover who wants to do more than put out a hummingbird feeder and some sunflower seeds. "Anyone can attract House Sparrows, squirrels, and yellowjackets," write Clouseau, "but wouldn't you rather attract unusual, rare species like the Greater Flamingo or the Red-crowned Ant-tanager?" Clouseau's own yard has brackish stagnant ponds full of the algae that Flamingos feed on and the high mounded ant nests that contain the favored food of the Ant-tanager.

Most interesting to local birders, perhaps, is Clouseau's advice on attracting California Condors. "To me it's incredible that there are people who live here in California, who call themselves birders, who've never seen our state's most famous bird. Well, of course not - they don't try! Do you expect a Condor to come to a lump of suet and a chickadee feeder? What I do, I put out deer and ground squirrel carcasses - a Condor's natural food resource!" Sounds tempting to any birdwatcher who's ever watched a bluebird house go untenanted year after year - you have nothing to lose but your neighbors.

©1984 by S. J. McCarthy

S. J. McCarthy

BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA -- PALM SPRINGS TRAMWAY

Frank Farran, a long-time active chapter member and trip leader has extensive experience birding in Southern California as well as in the Bay Area. He has prepared a guide to some of his favorite areas in Southern California for the AVOCET to be used as space is available.

PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY is west of State 111 just north of Palm Springs. At one time the tram didn't run on Wednesday or in September. This may still be true. Their phone is 714/325-1391.

Before it was built in the 1960s, many conservation groups opposed construction of this tram as it places a rather ugly manmade structure in a beautiful wild mountain canyon and at the same time provides too easy access to one of the last of Southern California's primitive high mountain areas. However, now it has been built, it's foolish for nature lovers not to use it.

The tram provides an incredible experience in nature watching. An 18-minute ride on the tram is biologically equivalent to a 2,000 mile journey from Sonora, Mexico to Northern Alberta. In the palms and chaparral at the base of the tram (2,600 ft.) are Hooded Orioles, Sage Sparrows and House Finches. In the Sugar and Jeffrey Pines and White Firs at the top of the tram (8,500 ft.) are Nutcrackers, Solitaires and Cassin's Finches. The temperature difference is 18 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit if both places are in the sun. It will be more during the day if there are clouds over the mountain.

The view of the valley from the tram is spectacular, but I prefer the view from the end of the tram car facing the mountain. The San Jacinto escarpment is one of the most abrupt on the continent and this fractured, diked and fault sheared wall of granitic rock is a most interesting sight. The view directly down on the thin little stream, its falls and tangled growth of alders and wild grape vines, is most enchanting. The best birds I have seen from the tram are White Throated Swifts, but there are eagles in the area. The smaller of the plants growing like huge candles out of the cracks in the rock are Yucca whipplei. The larger "candles" are the rather rare Nolina.

There is a restaurant in the chalet at the top of the tramway. If you eat on the outside deck, you may have to share it with a Clark's Nutcracker.

In March or April I enjoy hiking a short way north from the ranger station on the crusted spring snow along the banks of a little snow-bridged creek. It seems more a world out of wintertime New England than Southern California, but the numerous little groups of Pygmy Nuthatches and the Jeffrey Pines tell me it is not New England.

Later in the season I follow the same course, but go as far as Round Valley or Tamarack Valley. One year I found a family of Goshawks less than a mile north of the ranger station. The dumb birds didn't know they weren't supposed to nest south of the Sierras.

In early summer the Hermit Thrushes can be heard singing in the Lodgepole Pines just south of Round Valley. Round Valley itself is a meadow and naturally has many nesting robins. Such high mountain birds as Nutcrackers and Williamson's Sapsuckers are found in the area. From Round Valley on up one encounters Limber Pines among the Lodgepole Pines.

In August, if there are summer thunderstorms, the little streams get a second lease on life and there is a good crop of late wildflowers. Along these streams and in other wet and verdant places one often finds House Wrens and MacGillivray's Warblers on their migration south.

With all its charms, there are several precautions to keep in mind about Mt. San Jacinto and the tram. The elevation is such that people with a heart problem should forego the experience.

In winter, temperatures may be low. Any time of the year the weather can change without warning. Winter storms are the same as in the Sierras. There was 15 ft. of snow on the level at Round Valley in 1969. Summer thunderstorms on the old mountain can only be described as violent. Plan and dress accordingly.

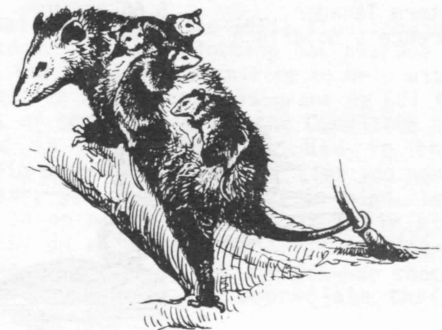
Don't fail to get a map and wilderness permit at the ranger station just west of the Mountain Tram Station. A good rule when hiking in any high mountain area is always to carry a warm lightweight jacket, rain protection and matches. If you are lost, or in event of an accident such as a broken ankle, these items could save your life on a cold or stormy night.

PALM SPRINGS INDIAN CANYONS: From the north, drive through Palm Springs on the main street (State 111). On the south side of the town bear to the right onto Indian Avenue and proceed to the toll house for the Indian Canyons. There are four Indian Canyons: Andreas, Murry, West Fork and Palm Canyon in that order going south from the toll house. Andreas and Murry Canyons are my favorites. Palm Canyon is beautiful, but rather heavily used. All the canyons are home to the native California Fan Palm which is found from Chino Canyon (where the tramway is) on south at oases into Baja California. It is the only palm native to Western United States. These canyons have remained the same since I first saw them at the age of four.

-Frank Farran

THANK YOU, SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEERS

Thanks are extended to General Meeting cookie bakers Celeste Kirsher, Barbara Anderson, and Genevieve Gullahorn. Office volunteers include Marion Lockwood, Tibby Simon, Harry Beerbohm and Mercedes Williams. They have maintained the membership list, created a file of photos and drawings, organized back issues of AUDUBON, and offered various welcome assistance in the office. Members who have become active in SCVAS conservation efforts include Martha Esserlieu, Trish Mulvey, Sherry Kritzer, and Sue Pike. Wetlands preservation, the Greenbelt Congress, and several other conservation efforts are benefiting from their involvement. THANK YOU! If you would like to volunteer for SCVAS, please call Lynn at the office, (415)329-1811.



FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

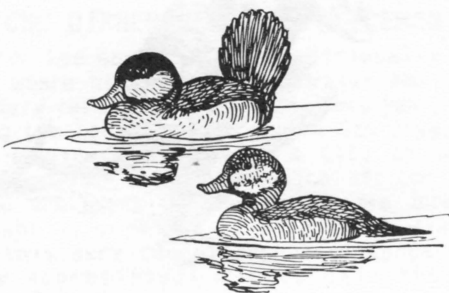
The Palo Alto Breeding Bird Census is four years old now and there's sufficient data to allow some interesting observations. Clark Blake has been running the count and tabulating the data for the last three years. The same count circle is used as for the Christmas Bird Count.

One interesting thing about the breeding bird count is that the excitement is not in the vagrants, but in the birds that are actually nesting here. A Black-bellied Plover is just summering here, ho-hum, but singing Black-chinned Sparrows are fantastic. What are the most common species? In order of abundance the top ten are:

| SPECIES | 4-YR AVERAGE | BIRDS PARTY-HOUR |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Cliff Swallow | 1,483 | 11.2 |
| Western Gull | 865 | 6.9 |
| Chestnut-backed Chickadee | 577 | 4.3 |
| Bushtit | 568 | 4.3 |
| Barn Swallow | 558 | 4.2 |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 546 | 4.1 |
| House Finch | 480 | 3.6 |
| Forster's Tern | 479 | 3.6 |
| Mourning Dove | 430 | 3.2 |
| Scrub Jay | 402 | 3.0 |

The quantitative basis of the Breeding Bird Count allows us to compare distributions with local and regional checklists and answer the questions: are there species that are clearly more common or less common than the checklists would suggest? I'll take a stab at this and for this purpose I will modify the definitions used for common, fairly common, etc. found in Birds of the Yosemite Sierra by Gaines. Because his definitions and the checklist definitions apply to birds found in suitable habitat I must adjust the definition for the Breeding Bird Count data which cover a range of habitats. I will do this crudely by assuming half the party-hours were in forest and half in baylands habitats. The numbers that follow are the birds per 100 party-hours as tabulated in the count: the Gaines definitions have been adjusted by half. The modified Gaines abundances then are: common - greater than 50 birds per 100 party-hours; fairly common - 25 to 50; uncommon - 5 to 25; and rare - 0.5 to 5. I compare these numbers with the Santa Clara County Checklist and Birds of Northern California by McCaskie, et. al. Birds that seem to me to be more common than expected are:

| SPECIES | BIRDS/100 | | SANTA | | N.CAL |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------|-------|------|-------|
| | PARTY-HRS | GAINES | CLARA | | |
| Gadwall | 275 | C | FC | R | |
| Ruddy Duck | 105 | C | FC | R | |
| California Gull | 60.9 | C | U/R | U/FC | |
| Western Gull | 694 | C | U/R | - | |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | 44.0 | FC | U/R | - | |
| Hutton's Vireo | 50.0 | C | FC | U/FC | |
| Solitary Vireo | 9.62 | U | U/R | R | |
| Warbling Vireo | 135 | C | FC | C | |
| Western Tanager | 5.66 | U | U/R | VR | |
| Lawrence's Goldfinch | 8.49 | U | U/R | - | |



The Gadwall is considered rare in Northern California although locally common. Clearly the South Bay is one of the locally common areas as the Gadwall is one of our most common breeding ducks. The Ruddy Duck is also common in summer and often breeds. California Gulls are now, of course, breeding locally and this is certainly a new factor. Although the checklist considers the Western Gull to be purely coastal in the summer we have a large summering population here. (This isn't properly reflected on our own checklist.) Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is considered a fairly common breeder in the inner coast ranges, but it is interesting to see such a healthy population on the east slopes of the coast range. We should probably consider it fairly common on both sides of the valley. Our resident vireos are all more common than expected. Hutton's Vireo is considered only fairly common on the checklists, but here just makes the cutoff on common - perhaps no surprise, unless you wonder why you can never find one when you want to show it to a visitor. Solitary Vireos are considered rare in Northern California, but their primary breeding habitat is the inner edge of the coastal forest which goes right through the count circle. Warbling Vireo is clearly one of our more common insectivorous forest species which makes the fairly common designation on the Santa Clara checklist seem low. Western Tanager is considered a common breeding species of the coast range north of Sonoma County, but very rare to the south. Our small breeding population rates an uncommon or perhaps even rare. Lastly, the vagabond Lawrence's Goldfinch has been found in three of the four years of the count - it is not expected in the coast range. Breeding is hard to prove, but it appears that it should be considered uncommon to rare on this side of the valley.

Some species appear to be in smaller number than expected, but this judgement is complicated by the question of habitat. If the number of species per party-hour seems low, perhaps it's just because there is little suitable habitat. Despite this problem, there are some numbers that stand out to me:

| SPECIES | BIRDS/100 PARTY-HRS | SANTA | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | GAINES | CLARA | N.CAL |
| Nuttall's Woodpecker | 20.0 | U | FC | C |
| Downy Woodpecker | 12.8 | U | FC | C |
| Hairy Woodpecker | 6.79 | U | FC | C |
| Northern Flicker | 16.8 | U | C | C |
| Horned Lark | 3.02 | R | FC | C |
| N. Rough-winged Swallow | 4.34 | R | FC | C |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | 9.62 | U | FC | C |
| Savannah Sparrow | 21.5 | U | C | C |
| American Goldfinch | 3.01 | R | FC | C |

Our local woodpecker species are wide ranging and found in many habitats. Why four of them are uncommon where the checklists suggest they should be more common is a puzzle. Horned Larks are fairly common to common residents of grasslands, but not coastal range grasslands (rare in San Mateo Co. and uncommon in Marin). Are they more common in the Mt. Hamilton Range? What is it that make the Northern Rough-winged Swallow rare in the count circle? Is there a specific lack of nesting habitat? Brown-headed Cowbirds are common most years in my urban area. Do they find more host nests in urban areas as opposed to forests and chaparral? Are they just less common than indicated? Savannah Sparrows breed along the edge of the bay, and their status may reflect scarcity of habitat. To me the biggest surprise is the American Goldfinch. I always think of it as common, until I look at these results and realize that I rarely see it in the summer. But why rare on the eastern edge of the coast range?

FIELD NOTES -cont.

There have been a number of late summer reports of **Green-backed Herons** on the west side of the valley. One was flying over Sunnyvale 11 Aug (David Suddjian-DS) and on 26 Aug an adult and immature were seen at Searsville Lake (Carol Zabel) and an immature in the Mountain View Forebay inlet channel (Phyllis Browning-PB). An **Osprey** seen flying over downtown Palo Alto was probably an early migrant (Ron Thorn). Unusual concentrations of **Black-shouldered Kites** include a roost of 8 in central Palo Alto through 4 Sept (Rosalie Lefkowitz) and 30 in flight over S. Palo Alto 21 Sept (Bob Sleeper fide DS). **Golden Eagle** sightings in urban areas on the west side of the valley continue with one over Stanford 4 Sept (DS), one over Page Mill and El Camino in Palo Alto 6 Sept (Clark Blake) and one at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park 23 Sept. A **Peregrine Falcon** at Charleston Slough on 6 and 23 Sept (Al Eisner-AE) is probably an early winter arrival. Good numbers of **Lesser Yellowlegs** were reported from 1 to 24 Sept from Charleston Slough and the Mountain View Forebay with 6-7 on 7 Sept the highest number (Chris Benesh-CBe), AE, DS). Less expected was one along a creek in S. Palo Alto (DS). Good numbers of **Pectoral Sandpipers** have also been found with 2 at Charleston Slough 1 Sept (PB, CBe),



1 at the Sunnyvale sewage treatment ponds 11 Sept (April Durran), 1 at the Forebay 23 Sept (AE), and 2 at Charleston Slough the next day (DS). A report of a **Short-eared Owl** in Rancho San Antonio OSP 3 Sept (James Yurchenko-JY), Amy Lauterbah-AL) is of a bird out of habitat and season. Size comparison with a nearby Mourning Dove and the description appear to eliminate Burrowing Owl or juvenile Great-horned Owl; the record remains unexplainable. A seldom explored area of the county is the edge of Grant Park adjacent to Arroyo Hondo. A hike down to the creek on 22 Jul yielded 10-15 **Canyon Wrens** along the canyon bottom and about 8 **Am. Dippers** (JY, AL). In combination with a belated report of a Dipper fledgling above Almaden Reservoir 5 May (John Mariani(JM)) this suggests that this species is a rare but regular breeder in permanent streams in the county. **Phainopepla** were seen near Calero Res. in south San Jose 23 and 27 Aug (JM). Are we seeing more Mt. Hamilton Range species on the west side of the valley after our dry spring, or are we just looking harder? Some early returns: **Townsend's Warbler**, 23 Sept, Menlo Park; **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, 23 Sept, Los Altos (PN); **White-crowned Sparrow** 22 Sept, Palo Alto (DS).

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

GOODBYE ANN JILG, WELCOME MYRA HODGSON

Our librarian of two years, Ann Jilg, has recently moved to Los Angeles, as her husband re-located in a job change. SCVAS greatly appreciates all of Ann's cheerful help during her stint as the Library Chairperson. She has helped the library grow, and has steered the collection's acquisition policy towards the accumulation of practical field identification and site guides. She leaves us with an excellent, expanded collection. Thank you and good luck.

Myra Hodgson will be stepping into the Library Chairperson's position. Myra is a manager of technical communications at ASK Computer Systems in Los Altos. She has a Masters of Library Science from San Jose State, and has been a Palo Alto resident for 12 years. Welcome Myra - we are looking forward to working with you.

**SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF INCOME, EXPENDITURES & INVESTMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1984**

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| INVESTMENTS at cost on June 1, 1983 | \$136,693 |
| INCOME | |
| Nat'l Audubon Soc dues | \$23,423 |
| Investment income | 10,868 |
| AVOCET subscriptions | 493 |
| Gifts/memorials | 698 |
| Christmas Bird Count | 257 |
| Misc. | 641 |
| | \$36,380 |
| Book sales & other, net | 6,587 |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$42,967 |
| EXPENDITURES | |
| Administrative | 13,399 |
| AVOCET | 11,375 |
| Conservation & field trips | 874 |
| Education | 1,615 |
| Entertainment/social | 544 |
| Grants | 3,340 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | \$31,147 |
| EXCESS OF INCOME | 11,820 |
| BEQUEST - Shelby Levin Evans | 84,742 |
| INVESTMENTS at cost on May 31, 1984 | \$233,255 |

REI SUPPORTS MONO LAKE

Recreational Equipment, Inc (REI) a nationwide retailer of outdoor gear and clothing has awarded a \$1,500 grant to the Mono Lake Committee to help with its work to preserve Mono Lake. This grant by REI is the most recent of several made to the Committee by the co-op and is designated for use in the Committee's media program. So the next time you need some outdoor gear, you might keep REI in mind. You need not be a co-op member to shop at their big store in Berkeley or to order from their catalog--but you miss the dividends if you are not--so check REI out and let them know you appreciate their environmental grants when you do.

-IG (Sanderling)

THE TICO EXPERIENCE -- PART V

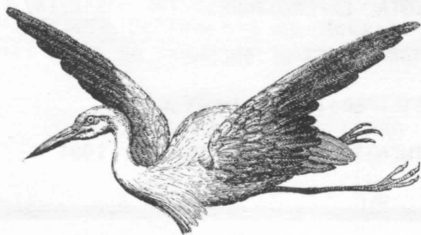
After a birthday party and a pizza dinner in San Jose, our Tropical Ecology class from San Jose State University took the long ride on the "jungle train" to Limon. At Limon, a farmer with a cattle truck hauled us 30 miles to our destination, a beautiful A-frame house overlooking the brackish lagoon. We took turns pumping water for showers, and there was no electricity, but we had a gas stove and room to sleep indoors.

From the veranda next morning I showed our bird leader a Common Tody-Flycatcher in exchange for a Sungrebe swimming by and watched several Northern Jacanas and Purple Gallinules. A rowboat ride at dawn the next day revealed a Least Bittern like the one we saw at Palo Alto Baylands. We still preferred cold breakfasts to get out early for birding.

Near the Estrella River, we saw 2000 Turkey Vultures migrating northward, and several waves of Eastern Kingbirds flew over the fields. As at other parks, we did not actually penetrate the jungle, but found that roads provide the best visibility for seeing wildlife. We spotted 11 sloths on the Limon Road, three in one tree. And in the last outpost of civilization, we bought a coke so cold it was half frozen.

Some exciting birds were the Montezuma Oropendulas, Band-backed Wren, two new warblers, Long-tailed Tyrant, White-lined Tanager, and Black-cowled Oriole. The Slaty Spinetail forced us to pull out well worn field guides, which suffered sadly from the dampness and handling. A Gray Hawk added zest to our day, and on the shores of the lagoon, a Collared Plover conveniently stood next to a Semipalmated Plover for easy comparison, like a page from a field guide. A Snowy Cotinga flashed by. Our Muscovy Duck (our only duck of the trip) seemed wary enough to be called a wild bird.

We hiked out early to take a bus to Limon and the ferry for Tortuguero. The ride on the ferry barge up the Tortuguero Canal was certainly the most beautiful tour we took. On this all-day ride in the bows of the crowded craft I saw my first Anhinga, sunning its wings, and found more herons and egrets than I have ever found in a single day. Ringed Kingfishers kept just ahead of us along the banks, and a Gull-billed Tern sat on a log.



We felt as if we were on the African Queen when we stuck on a mud bar and several young men piled overboard to look for the channels and try to free our bottom. At dusk a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron topped off our day, and some Howler Monkeys were skylighted in the tall trees.

As we jumped off the ferry onto the bank at Tortuguero, one of our students who had fallen overboard became an instant celebrity in this gossipy little community. The owner of the cabins where we were to stay led us through her bar, then out to tiny cubicles with sway-backed cots. Here we would rest before visiting Tortuguero National Park of which more in my next column.

Lee Lovelady

FEDERAL DUCK STAMPS 50 YEARS OLD

On March 16, 1934, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, initiating one of the most successful conservation programs ever devised. The Act required every hunter 16 years or older to purchase a "Duck Stamp" and the proceeds were to be used to buy and lease waterfowl habitat. Duck Stamp designs depict waterfowl in their natural surroundings, and have been chosen in a contest by a panel of leading artists and waterfowl experts since 1949. Until that year, a leading artist was commissioned by the Federal Government. Through the years, prints of winning Duck Stamp designs and the Duck Stamp themselves have increased in value and become collector's items.

Duck Stamps were the inspiration of political cartoonist and conservationist, Jay N. "Ding" Darling. Darling, alarmed over the destruction of prime waterfowl habitat in his native state of Iowa, devised the Stamp as a way to preserve wetlands essential to the survival of our nation's waterfowl. Millions of acres of prime habitat had been drained during the decades prior to 1934, and crucial staging and migration rest areas along midAmerica, bottomland swamps of southern river systems and Gulf Coast marshes that provided wintering habitat were vanishing. Huge flocks of waterfowl were steadily dwindling and were further reduced by indiscriminate market hunting. Even nature joined in the attack with a drought of historic proportions.

During the early years, the major focus of habitat acquisition was protection of important breeding areas in the prime waterfowl territory of the upper Mid-west. Vast tracts of wetlands were added to the National Wildlife Refuge System during the late 1930's and early 1940's. In those days wetlands could be purchased for as little as \$1 in some areas, and the cost of a Duck Stamp was \$1.

Today the goal is to preserve key breeding and wintering habitats in each of the four major north-south waterfowl migratory flyways, particularly those threatened by development, and to save habitats needed by species whose numbers are low or declining. The cost of an acre of wetland may now be as much as \$1,000, therefore, recent acquisitions tend to be smaller than in the past. As the value and scarcity of wetlands have steadily increased, so have Duck Stamp sales and cost. The current cost of \$7.50 was established in 1979.

The 90 million Duck Stamps that have been sold during the program's 50 years have enabled the purchase of 3.5 million acres of wetlands. Many of the 400 National Wildlife Refuges scattered throughout the U.S. have been paid for entirely or in part by Duck Stamp receipts. These lands not only benefit waterfowl but many other wildlife species including shorebirds and upland species plus the fact that one-third of our endangered and threatened species and many marine and shellfish species rely on these wetlands for food, shelter and spawning.

Unfortunately, America's wetlands continue to disappear. Under on-going pressures from development, an estimated half million acres of wetlands are drained and filled annually. Help from hunters and non-hunters alike is needed in this on-going effort to save wetland habitat. Purchase of a Duck Stamp is a small investment that pays large dividends - helping to ensure that our wildlife have a future, and that future generations can continue to enjoy our wildlife. Duck Stamps can be purchased for \$7.50 at most Post Offices.

Help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Federal Duck Stamp, the only program whose funds go entirely to the protection of critical habitat, by purchasing a Duck Stamp! Framed with the certificate they make a fantastic gift.

-Redwood Log

AUDUBON BACK ISSUES -- FREE!

SCVAS has many issues of AUDUBON available to teachers, or anyone who can use them for educational purposes. AND, if you have AUDUBONS to give away, just contact the office and we will be glad to receive them. (Recycle your old issues for a good cause!) Call Lynn at (415)329-1811.

GIVE OUR BIRDING SITE GUIDE

Don't leave home without it! Birding at the Bottom of the Bay is a treasury of the hottest birding areas in our locale. This 100-page guide includes descriptions, directions, target birds, habitats, drawings, and miscellaneous comments for each area, all written by local birding experts. It's a popular gift for family, friends, and yourself, and makes it easy to get to know our region and its birds.

(Profits from sales contribute to SCVAS grants and educational programs, including scholarships, wildlife rescue, animal welfare, and environmental enrichment groups.) To order, use coupon with Point Reyes poster offer.

POINT REYES POSTER OFFER

The Point Reyes Bird Observatory has just issued a new 2x3' poster - WATER BIRDS OF POINT REYES & THE FARALLONES ISLANDS. It features drawings and descriptions of birds, a color photo of two puffins, and a color map of the area covered. PRBO is offering it to SCVAS members at a reduced price of \$9 each (regular price is \$10.55), plus postage of \$2 per order. (If you buy two posters, the cost would be \$18 plus \$2.) In addition, they will donate \$1 from each poster sold through SCVAS back to this chapter. We have several for sale or viewing at the office, and they will be available at General Meetings. To order, please send a check for \$9/poster plus \$2 for postage to SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 _____ posters (\$9 + \$2 postage) _____
 _____ Birding at the Bottom of the Bay (\$6.50 + \$1 postage) _____
 _____ SCVAS patches (\$2 + SASE) _____
 _____ Field Guide for the Birds of North America (\$12.95 + \$.63 postage) _____
 _____ Mass. Audubon Society Bird Identification Calendar for 1985 (\$8.50 + \$.63 postage) _____
 TOTAL _____

SEED SALE -- LAST CHANCE

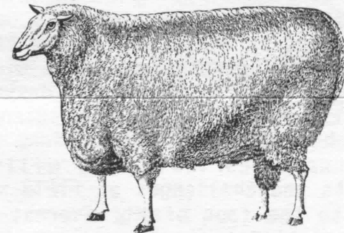
BIRD SEED SALE -- PRE-ORDER ONLY BEFORE NOV. 8 -- PICKUP NOV. 17

This is your chance to order seed for the birds of your yard, and to help SCVAS's Audubon Adventure Clubs for schoolchildren, as well as other SCVAS educational projects. The seed must be picked up at the PCC Saturday, Nov. 17, between 10 and 3. See last month's AVOCET for more details.

PREMIUM MIX - Red millet, white proso millet, sudan grass screenings, black oil sunflower seeds. High protein, special blend.
 WESTERN WILD BIRD MIX - Red millet, white proso millet, sudan grass screenings, red milo.

| | | | |
|-------|-------------|---------------------|-------|
| _____ | PREMIUM MIX | 20 lb. @ \$ 7 ea | _____ |
| _____ | PREMIUM MIX | 50 lb. @ \$15 ea | _____ |
| _____ | WESTERN MIX | 20 lb. @ \$ 6 ea | _____ |
| _____ | WESTERN MIX | 50 lb. @ \$12.50 ea | _____ |
| | SUBTOTAL | | _____ |
| | 6.5% Tax | | _____ |
| | TOTAL | | _____ |

Please send your order with your NAME, ADDRESS, ZIP, PHONE to SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 by NOVEMBER 8.



SHEEP THREATEN MONO LAKE TUFAS

Sheep, grazing illegally on lands exposed by the receding lake, are damaging Mono Lake's tufa formations and impacting shoreline vegetation.

In September 1983 the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve cited one of California's largest wool growers for allowing 1,600 sheep to graze on state park property on Mono's southeast shore. Sheep were trampling delicate tufa formations and wreaking havoc on spring-fed marsh and meadow habitats.

Sheep are legally grazed all around Mono Lake, but only above the 1940 shoreline. Both the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve have barred grazing on the relicited lands exposed by Mono's decline. But wool growers have persisted in allowing their flocks to trespass into these sensitive areas.

Grazing could devastate Mono's shoreline habitats. As early as 1882, Israel Russell observed that "owing to overstocking . . . natural pastures are now nearly ruined." A 1981 Council on Environmental Quality publication called grazing "the most potent desertification force, in terms of acreage affected, within the United States." We commend BLM and State Parks for adopting and enforcing a no-grazing policy.

The wool growers, however, are attempting to change this policy and open Mono's shores to grazing. The Mono County prosecutor has yet to press charges on last summer's trespass.

-The Mono Lake Newsletter

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Staff | Lynn Tennefoss (days) | 415/329-1811 | DIRECTORS | Richard Jeffers | (days) 415/329-1811 | Publicity | | |
| President | Kevin Monahan | 408/559-8713 | Barbara Hamblton | 408/446-3645 | Barbara Hamblton | Library | Myra Hodgson | 415/326-3641 |
| 1st Vice Pres | Judy McEuen | 408/251-3086 | Roy Lowe | 408/251-2323 | Roy Lowe | Field Trips | Richard Jeffers | 415/325-9675 |
| 2nd Vice Pres | Diana Stillens | 408/972-2777 | DIRECTORS (1984-87) | Deborah Manley | 408/749-8126 | Membership | Dolores Norton | 415/941-1666 |
| Treasurer | Bob Houghton | 415/327-2186 | Deborah Manley | 408/749-8126 | Mark McEuen | Education | Linda Hagelin | 408/867-3046 |
| Rec. Sec'y | Courtenay Dawson-Roberts | 415/325-4654 | Greg Meszaros | 408/985-7157 | Greg Meszaros | Hospitality | Elaine Gould | 408/448-0622 |
| Past President | Sue Liskovec | 415/969-5542 | CHAIRPERSONS | Editor | Susan McCarthy | Conservation | | |
| DIRECTORS (1982-85) | | | Assistant Editor | Virginia Bennett | 408/293-7498 | Christmas | | |
| Betty Groce | | 415/326-5540 | Programs | Doug & Gail | 408/973-2699 | Bird Count | | |
| Dave Johnston | | 408/258-4322 | | Cheeseman | 408/867-1371 | Grants | Kep Stone | 408/251-2186 |
| Phil La Riviere | | 415/493-5540 | | | | 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, TRAVEL AND EVENTS

- Judith Wagner will be co-leading a "Mexico: Mangroves to Monarchs" trip for Betchart Expeditions Feb 1-12, 1985. The trip will spend a week in the Yucatan Peninsula and then go to Mexico City and the mountains to the west, as the first North American group to visit the wintering sites of the eastern Monarch Butterfly. Migrant warblers, frigatebirds, spoonbills, flamingos, and more. Call Betchart Expeditions at (408)245-9517 for more information.

- Whether an armchair archaeologist, an avid scuba diver, or simply curious about the world "out there", you can share in the excitement of scientific discovery as a member of a UC Berkeley research expedition this winter.

The mountains of Nepal, the plains of Patagonia and the pristine wilderness of Costa Rica's Guanacaste Province are just a few of the destinations to choose from. You don't have to be a scientist.

As a member of a UREP expedition, your well-developed sense of curiosity and willingness to share the costs and challenges of field work become the passport to the foot of Mt. Everest to explore changes in traditional Sherpa village life. Or to the unspoiled Guanacaste Province to assist in the development of a wilderness preserve. Or to the frontiers of Argentina in search of the mysterious viscachas, rabbit-size mammals that build complex colonies.

The choice is yours. And the contribution you make (from \$500 to \$1500) to join a UREP expedition is tax-deductible, and covers research expenses as well as food and accommodations.

For a free catalog describing all expeditions planned for the 1985 field season, contact: University Research Expeditions Program (UREP), University of California, Desk K2, Berkeley, CA 94720, or call (415)642-6586.

- Doug and Gail Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris is offering 3 exciting trips in summer 1985, one to Australia and New Guinea (July 21-August 24), one to Kenya (June 15-July 8) and one to Peru (July 17-Aug 6). Contact the Cheesemans for extensive itineraries and other information at (408)867-1371.



- If you're in a rut, a trip to view the amazing terrain of Baja California may be just what you need. An 11-day Field Studies in Natural History visit to Baja California January 6-16, 1985, offers you a first-hand look at giant cardon cactus, whale mothers and babies, wintering birds, and other natural life. We'll visit Scammon's Lagoon, the Gulf Coast, the Catavina desert, and the San Javier Mission. For further information contact Field Studies in Natural History, San Jose State University, Office of Continuing Education, One Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95192-0135 or phone (408)277-3736.

- Yosemite Institute is offering 2 Coastal Studies programs, one November 25-30 and one January 6-11. This is an Elderhostel program for those 60 and over. It will be held at their Marin Headlands campus. Each day participants will study facets of coastal geology, ecology, botany, zoology and history. A bus trip will allow participants to view birds and marine mammals in their natural habitat. 2-4 miles walking daily. Slide lectures in the evening. Cost \$170 for class, meals and lodging, \$90 for class and lunch. Call Steve Cochrane at (415)332-5771 or write Yosemite Institute, Golden Gate Nat'l Recreation Area, Sausalito, CA 94965.

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.

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CHECK CATEGORY
 Individual/\$30
 Family/\$38
 Senior Citizen/\$21
 Senior Citizen Family/\$23
 Student/\$18
 AVOCET only/\$6
 Check Enclosed
 Please Bill Me