

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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The Avocet

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

2020

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On all field trips, CARPOOL and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, lunch (optional on half-days) and liquids. For carpooling arrangements call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666 or Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.

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

- Apr 3 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at the Baylands. A presentation by Kodak on multi-projector slide shows. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Apr 6 **Stevens Creek Park.** Saturday, 8:30 a.m., half day. Take Stevens Creek Blvd W to Foothill Blvd., left on Foothill about 1 1/2 miles. Turn left and go down into parking lot below the dam. Highlight - ~~birding~~ by sound! Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- Apr 9 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Curlews.
- Apr 10 **Field Trip South.** Montalvo Arboretum. Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., W off Saratoga-Los Gatos Rd. at sign about 1/2 mile S of Saratoga or 4 miles N of Los Gatos. Meet in parking lot No. 1 at base of hill as you come into the park. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- Apr 13 **Coyote River Park.** Saturday, 8 a.m., half day. Take Hwy 101 S to Cochran Rd. in Morgan Hill. Continue E on Cochran to parking lot. Woodland and chaparral species. Call in case of rain. Leader: Emelie Curtis (408)779-2637.
- Apr 17 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments at 7:30 p.m., program at 8 p.m. Palo Alto Cultural Ctr., Newell Rd. at Embarcadero. Sea Birds of Monterey Bay. Jo Guerrero, Mike Newcomer and Jim Anderson have been researching the distribution and abundance patterns of seabirds and marine mammals in Monterey Bay in an attempt to assess the effect of El Nino. They will compare their results with those of Donald Crull, another Moss Landing graduate student who looked at distribution and abundance patterns before and during El Nino.
- Apr 20 **Monterey Bay Aquarium Bus Trip.** Saturday, 8:30 a.m. Join us on a bus trip to the fantastic Monterey Bay Aquarium. This is a joint trip with Sequoia Audubon. There will be bus pickups at Hwy 92/Ralston, and Valley Fair Park-and-Rides. We will arrive for a docent-led tour of the aquarium, then have time off for lunch and to explore more of the aquarium on our own, or nearby Cannery Row. Bus pickups begin 8:30 a.m., last dropoff will be 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$18/adult, \$15 senior and students, and \$12 children. Maximum 45 people. For information and reservations, please call Lynn at (415)329-1811 or Donna at (415)593-7368.
- Apr 21 **Mines Rd. and Del Puerto Canyon.** Sunday, 8:30 a.m., full day. Take I-680 N to I-580 E to Livermore Ave. S on Livermore Ave. thru town. 2 miles from the flagpole in the center of Livermore, Livermore Rd. becomes Tesla Rd. In another 1/2 mile, Tesla intersects Mines Rd. Meet here. Carpooling required from here because of very limited pull-off space. Bring lunch, liquids and a full tank of gas. Limited bathroom facilities en route. We'll look for Lewis' Woodpecker, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Phainopepla, Canyon Wren, and Golden Eagle. Leaders: Lynne Aldrich and Peter Gottschling (415)325-9349.
- Apr 24 **Field Trip North.** San Francisco Watershed. Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Take 280 N to Millbrae Ave. exit. Follow the frontage road 2 blocks and turn left under the freeway to the dead end. We will go left through a gate to parking for car pooling to Pilarcitos Lake. There are nice flowers and birds and a hike to Stone Dam for those who wish. Bring lunch and plenty of gas if you intend to drive. Plan to stay 'til three since we must all enter and leave together. Our permit limits us, so reservations are a must. An ALTERNATE TRIP will be planned if necessary. Call Kay McCann (415)327-4138 or Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Apr 27 **Pinnacles National Monument.** Saturday, 6:30 a.m., full day. Meet at Bank of the West at Campbell and Union in Campbell. Carpool and convoy 2 hours to Monument. Entrance fee. Raptors and spring passerines. No food available. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Kevin Monahan (408)559-8713.

Field Trip Coordinator for May - Mary Lou Burgin (408)253-7115.

- May 4 **Searsville Lake and Jasper Ridge.** Saturday, 8:30 a.m., half day. 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. Please be prompt. Lunch optional. Limit 40 members. Contribution of \$2/person to the Preserve welcomed. Leaders: Jean and Bill Clark, Lynn Tennefoss, Carol Zabel. For reservations call Carol (415)948-5671.
- May 8 **Stevens Creek Park.** Wednesday, 9 a.m. half day. Meet in pkg. lot by reservoir on Stevens Creek Canyon Road up from Foothill Blvd. in Cupertino. For details, call Gail Cheeseman (408)867-1371.

CHAPTER ELECTIONS MAY 15

SCVAS members present at the May 15 General Meeting will vote on officers for 1985-86. Following are capsule profiles provided by the nominees.

PRESIDENT - Kevin H. C. Monahan: SCVAS President 1984-85, First Vice-President 1983-84, Director 1982-83. Long time birder, with professional training in archaeology and electrical engineering. Employed by Lockheed Missiles and Space Company.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT - Judy McEuen: SCVAS First Vice President 1984-85, Field Trip leader and active on the Grants Committee in 1982-84. Bird watcher and world traveler, has offered natural history programs to children and community groups. Works as a dental hygienist.

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT - Dave Johnston: SCVAS Director 1982-85. Director of Youth Science Institute. Leads birdwatching trips to Baja, and locally.

TREASURER - Dave Nauer: SCVAS Treasurer, 1985 and 1982-83; Editor 1972-78, 1981-82; Corresponding Secretary 1980-82; Director 1974-77, 1980-81. Interests include lots of birdwatching, backpacking, and camping. Currently teaches science to junior high and high school classes.

RECORDING SECRETARY - Courtenay Dawson-Roberts, Jr: Corr. Sec. 1984-85, Director 1981-84. Interested in birds since she was ten years old. Environmental educator and conservation activist. Works at the Nature Company.

DIRECTORS FOR THREE YEARS (1985-88)

Phil LaRiviere - SCVAS Director 1984-85. Major interest is conservation issues. Has represented SCVAS for over 10 years, working on preserving Charleston Slough as a tidal marsh.

Karen Ingels - Works with teachers and students from throughout the Bay Area at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center. Involved in environmental education for years at Redwood National Park, with the Nature Conservancy and with U.S. Fish & Wildlife.

Donald Price - Interested in hiking, swimming and nature observation. Involved with a group that is reforesting a section of Stanford's Arboretum. Works at the Controller's Office, Stanford University.

Any member present at the meeting may place names in nomination providing the written consent of the candidate has been obtained.

REMINDER

Please send in your reader survey from last month's *Avocet*. We really want your opinions. Only a few have come in so far.

NEW THREAT TO SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN

San Bruno Mountain is still threatened by developers. Vistacion Associates, owners of the mountain, are seeking permission to grade the south side of the Mountain up to the 500 foot level, to prevent landslides on proposed new housing projects.

The land to be cut up is habitat for two species of endangered butterflies, and one species of endangered plant - and it is an area the same developer agreed to protect in 1982, in the compromise that allowed any development at all to occur at the base of the mountain.

The grading on the mountain will be visible for miles. Two 200 foot long retaining walls are planned, plus a series of 30 feet by 10 feet benches. Conservationists argue the grading project is unnecessary. The Committee to Save San Bruno Mtn. points out that the same number of housing units can be accommodated if the buildings are clustered away from the slide area. However, the developers are refusing to modify their master plan.

The developers are now trying to change the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which required the developer to dedicate the top of San Bruno to conservation and to the County Parks Department. Agreement must be reached with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dept. of Fish and Game, County Board of Supervisors, and the cities surrounding San Bruno Mtn.

The County has already agreed to change the HCP. If the San Bruno HCP is changed, a precedent will be set that could undermine the Endangered Species Act for the rest of the country. Developers given permission to destroy the habitat of an endangered species in exchange for creating an "enhanced habitat" elsewhere, would now be free to destroy the native habitat, and not be required to create a new habitat if the new plant and animal community interfered with his development project.

For more information on what you can do to help save the mountain from development, call Quenby Smith (from the Committee to Save San Bruno Mountain) at (415)467-5098, or Bay Area Mountain Watch at (415)467-2145. These groups are organizing speakers for City Council meetings, and planning demonstrations.

-Greenbelt Action

BOOKS FOR SALE

SCVAS now has a supply of the National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America (\$12.95 + .63 if you want it sent), *Birding at the Bottom of the Bay* (\$6.50 + \$1 to send), and *S.F. Peninsula Birdwatching*, from Sequoia Audubon (\$8.95 + \$1 to send), as well as SCVAS Patches (\$2.00 + SASE). Send orders to SCVAS Office, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

RIP-RAP THREATENS SACRAMENTO RIVER

The Army Corps of Engineers has a plan to rip-rap every outside bend on 72 miles of the Sacramento River. It's time to take out your stationery and warm up your writing hand. Letters to your national and state representatives are needed now.

The State Reclamation Board, which administers the Red Bluff to Chico Landing Bank Protection Project of the Corps, has put out a wholly inadequate environmental impact report draft. This statement was no more than a rewording of previous documents produced by the Corps. It contains no recent research on impacts of rip-rapping on riparian wildlife or fish species except salmon. All in all, the DEIR is totally unacceptable to conservationists and is an insult to the people of California. In addition, a second project, the Sacramento River Bank Project, Butte Basin Reach, will contribute to the rip-rapping. Only 1.2% of the riparian habitat originally found along the Sacramento River remains. This project will affect nearly all of it.

We need to let our representatives know that we must have acceptable, adequate DEIR's on these projects. Let them know that we have grave doubts about the economics, the environmental impacts, and the effectiveness of channelizing the Sac River. If we do not let our voices be heard on this issue, if we sit by and do nothing, the Corps will be doing something, and we won't like the results. If the Sacramento River is to remain a vital force in the natural scheme of things, we as conservationists must see to it. For more information, please contact David Bobb, President, Sac River Preservation Trust, 3200 Trexel, #113, Sacramento, 95833, (916)929-0948.

Please write: Assemblymen Byron Sher, Ernest Konnyu, John Vasconcellos, Dominic Cortes or Alister McAlister, Senator Alfred Alquist or Don McCorquodale. Address for all is State Capital, Sacramento, 95814.

-from a story in *Burrowing Owl*

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

I've nearly completed a list of birds that have bred in Santa Clara County. Using the Breeding Bird Atlas standards, 153 species are confirmed to breed or to have bred within the county as of 1984. Five others are probable breeders: Double-crested Cormorant, Western Screech-Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Wrentit. It is clear that the Western Screech-Owl and the Wrentit are regular breeders and we just lack acceptable documentation. Six species are possible breeders: American Bittern, Cattle Egret, Common Raven, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Phainopepla, and American Goldfinch. Again, it's certain that Phainopepla and American Goldfinch have bred in the county, but the evidence is lacking. Of these species, seven appear to have been extirpated from the county: Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Lesser Nighthawk, Bank Swallow, Bell's Vireo, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. The reasons for this are very interesting and I will speculate on them for some of these species. The Peregrine Falcon has suffered population reductions in general and probably has been more sensitive to man's depredations than the Prairie Falcon, because its breeding sites are generally nearer water and population centers. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Bell's Vireo are victims of the destruction of riparian habitat and perhaps the Willow Flycatcher (last breeding record Jun 62) has gone too. The Lesser Nighthawk nested in the valley stream beds and these have been channelized and improved out of existence.

The last summary of county breeding birds was done by Sibley in 1952. Since then 13 species have become confirmed breeders and this is certainly a positive note. These include: Eared Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Wild Turkey, California Gull, Western Gull, Forster's Tern, Purple Martin, Winter Wren, and Hermit Thrush. Most of these are species that breed near or on the bay. Why have they flourished in the last three decades? The bay structure or substrate hasn't changed that much in thirty or even fifty years. I believe that one factor is the long recovery period that was required by the herons and ducks following their annihilation by the plume hunters and market gunners of the last century. A second factor, I believe, is that once they did start to recover they were aided by the developing conservation ethic. Finally, we bought land for them in the south Bay (the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge) and hired people to take care of them. I think this may be a major factor in the continuing health of these species. So, everyone should take a bow.

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen in the outer Palo Alto FCB on a SCVAS trip 3 Feb. He appears to have been in this area for the last two winters. A **White-winged Scoter** was still at Shoreline Lake the same day. With the lake re-opened to sailors the diving ducks have mostly left the lake. The merganser pond at Skylonda has been drained, but a male **Hooded Merganser** was found on a pond at the Sharon Heights golf course 17 Feb (Clark Blake-CB). Two



adult **Bald Eagles** were seen at Calaveras Reservoir 8 Feb (David Suddjian-DS). A **Golden Eagle** over midtown Palo Alto on 20 Feb (Dick Stovel) continues the pattern of west side sightings of the last year. Two **Merlin** were seen together in Cornelius Bol Park in Palo Alto 4 Feb (DS). At least one **Peregrine Falcon** has remained at the Palo Alto Baylands with sightings on 1 Feb (DS) and 5 Feb. A first winter

Glaucous Gull was with the afternoon flock at the Mountain View Forebay on 14 Feb. At least one bird has been seen in each of the last five winters in the south bay. A **Long-eared Owl** was found roosting in the last trees towards the bay along Matadero Creek 9 Feb (Bob Romack fide CB). This is the first county record since 1981. One **Short-eared Owl** was still at Moffett Field as of 8 Feb. A female **Allen's Hummingbird** arrived at Sunol on 5 Feb (Milton Seibert) and had completed a nest by 12 Feb. No male has been seen. A **White-throated Sparrow** continues to visit Betty Groce's feeder in Menlo Park at least through 13 Feb. Another has been at my feeder through 25 Feb. A male **Hooded Oriole** at a hummingbird feeder in Los Altos 9 Feb (Paul Noble) was undoubtedly a wintering bird. Migrants are usually first reported at the end of March. Barry Breckling writes from Henry Coe SP that **Red Crossbills** are still resident there and 20-30 birds have been seen on trips. An injured bird was found in Santa Clara the week of 17 Feb and is now under repair (Joan Priest). Five **Evening Grosbeaks** were in a Sunnyvale yard 22 Feb (Diana Rice). It has been an excellent winter for the montane finches this year.

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

LEAD PIGEON POINT TOURS

Here is your chance to be a modern day lighthouse keeper! Lead Sunday tours through the second tallest lighthouse on the west coast and enjoy the panoramic view of the San Mateo Coast. Only 3 classes are needed for the lighthouse tour guide position. Training begins April 20th. Space is limited. To receive an application: Call (415) 879-0454 or 879-0595 or write to: Ano Nuevo Interpretive Association, New Year's Creek Road, Pescadero, CA 94060. Applicants may also apply for roving naturalist positions.

WETLANDS

According to a recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report, the annual loss of wetlands in the U.S. is more than 450,000 acres. In the last 20 years there was a net loss of 9 million acres, about twice the size of New Jersey.

SCVAS DISPLAY AT THE PALO ALTO DUCK POND

SCVAS Bulletin Board at the Palo Alto Duck Pond has been renovated! Many thanks to Kevin Monahan for his burrowing owl and egret photos, chapter volunteers who clipped and labeled pictures, Lynn Tennefoss who delivered same, Duane Hallesy for his muscle and cleaning power, and Andrea Hendrick and Edith Greene for their artistic talents and advice. This display has been set up with one side to appeal to younger readers, and the other with information about our chapter, publications and field trips. The bright sun fades everything fast, so always needed are pictures and prints of local natural history. Questions, suggestions are welcome. Call Mary E. Hallesy (415)327-4822.

WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL

The California premier of the International Wildlife Film Festival, featuring award-winning films of 1985, will be held Saturday, April 20, at the New Varsity Theater in Palo Alto.

Winners from the 1985 Festival, chosen just two weeks prior, will be shown from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the New Varsity Theater. A tax deductible donation of \$5, \$2.50 for children under 12, will benefit the Peninsula Conservation Center. For more information or advance ticket sales, call Deborah Jamison, (415) 328-5313.

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General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call the office for times and directions.

Avocet deadline is the first Monday of the month. Send contributions to the editor, Susan McCarthy, at 475 S. 12th, San Jose, CA 95112.

NON-AUDUBON CLASSES, TRIPS, AND EVENTS

- Ted Chandik will co-lead a boat trip in the Sea of Cortez from April 27-May 5. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto and Nature Expeditions Int'l, the trip will visit at least 5 islands in the gulf, looking for breeding colonies of boobies, frigate-birds, gulls and terns. Also expect to see Finback Whales, fish-eating bats and more. The trip starts in San Diego and ends in La Paz and costs \$1490 plus airfare. Call toll-free (800)634-0634.

- Don Starks, SFBBO tour director and birding whiz, will teach a class for the beginner birder and others who just want to sharpen their birding skills. The class will consist of six two-hour lectures (once a week) and four half-day field trips to local areas. Lecture will consist mostly of bird slides with comments by Don. Class will begin on Wednesday, May 8 at SFBBO. Call Don at (408)371-9720.

- Fremont Adult School is offering a six-week class, 'Birding Field Trips', meeting Tuesday mornings from 9:30-12:30, starting April 23rd, and taught by Alice Hoch. Also offered is a birding trip to Mines Road in Livermore April 13th, a good area for Phainopepla, Turkey, Lewis' Woodpecker and much more. Cost is \$10.50. For more information call the School at (415)791-5841 or Alice at (415)657-0475.

- Shearwater Journeys has a full schedule of boat trips out of Monterey Bay to watch birds and marine mammals. These trips are always fun and have encountered such rarities as the Laysan Albatross, Blue Whales, and a newborn Gray Whale. Call or write Debra Love Shearwater, PO Box 7440, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 (408)688-1990.

- Introduction to Birdwatching will be taught through Palo Alto Adult Education Monday nights 7:30-9:30 in room 202 at Palo Alto High School. This class will start April 22, will meet ten Monday evenings, and have three field trips. It introduces the beginner to the birds of the Bay Area with

lectures accompanied by slides. The cost is \$29. Information can be obtained through Palo Alto Adult Ed. Office at (415)855-8195.

- Youth Science Institute's Third Annual Wildflower Show will be held at Vasona Park, noon to 4:30, Sunday, April 21.

- There will be a slide show, Across the Pioneer Corridor, Thursday, April 11, 8 p.m. Syntex Auditorium, benefit for Committee for Green Foothills, featuring a new guidebook by Ellie Huggins and John Olmsted: Adventures On and Off Interstate 80. Wine and Cheese Booksigning at the PCC, Friday, April 12, 4-7 p.m. Free. Books featured will include Adventures On and Off Interstate 80, Passing Farms by Stegner and Jacobson, South Bay Trails by Rusmore and Spangle, and others.

- Cheeseman's Ecology Safaris has spaces on the following trips: AUSTRALIA, June 8-29, \$3800 including air from S.F.; KENYA, June 15-July 9, \$2600 plus air; PERU, July 17-August 6, \$2300 plus air; GALAPAGOS, August 4-13, \$1050 plus air. Call or write Doug & Gail Cheeseman, 20800 Kittredge Rd., Saratoga, CA 95070, (408)867-1371 or 741-5330.

- For 21 days, British ornithologist Barry Walker, author of the forthcoming book Birds of Machu Picchu National Park, will lead a group of 14 through birding areas in a variety of habitats ranging from coastal desert to Amazon rainforest. Highlights will be a leisurely 9-day trek through the four ecological zones of the Park. Porters carry gear, set up camps and cook for us. Mist nets will be employed to capture birds for closer observation and photography. Also included are visits to Paracas, the Ballestas Islands, the Nazca lines, the Explorer's Inn on the Tambopata Wildlife Reserve and rafting on the Urubamba. July 10-30, 1985. Land cost \$1950. Information from: Peruvian Adventures, 444 Redlands Ave., Claremont, CA 91711, (714)626-2905

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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