



Mr Alan M Eisner
3538 Farm Hill Blvd #4
Redwood City, CA 94061

Volume 32 Number 5

May 1985

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 May - Mary Lou Burgin (408)253-7115.

- May 1 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm, at the Baylands. Pete La Tourette will show slides from a birding trip to Costa Rica and will discuss the difficulties of bird photography in the tropics. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- May 4 **Searsville Lake and Jasper Ridge.** Saturday, 8:30 am, 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 am. 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 am, 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.
- May 12 **Smith's Creek Fire Station.** Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. From San Jose take Alum Rock Ave. E from Hwy 101 or I-680. From the junction of 101 and Alum Rock Ave., drive about 3 miles to Mt. Hamilton Road (Hwy 130). Turn right and go about 11 miles, or 3 miles past Grant Ranch. No bathroom facilities en route. Lunch optional. We'll study bird sounds of possible Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Costa's Hummingbird and warblers. Leader: Jean-Marie Spoelman (415)797-0265.
- May 14 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Godwits.
- May 15 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm Palo Alto Cultural Ctr., Newell Rd. at Embarcadero. Jim & Sue Liskovec will take you on safari to East Africa to explore the varied habitats of the National Parks in Tanzania and Kenya. They will share their view of the land, the wildlife and the people. Courtney Dawson-Roberts will give a short presentation at 7:50 pm on her work with swallows.
- May 18 **Birdathon.** Saturday, 12:01 am to 11:59 pm. See article inside. For more information, please call coordinator Paul Noble (415)948-3876.
- May 19 **Birding by Sound, Montebello Ridge.** Sunday, 8 am, full or half day. Meet at the commuter parking lot just W of Hwy 280 on the S side of Page Mill Rd. Take Page Mill Rd. exit off Hwy 280. From there we will carpool to the preserve parking lot. We hope to hear and see 3 kinds of vireos, 4 kinds of warblers, 5 kinds of flycatchers, plus such good birds as Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Swainson's Thrush. Bring lunch and water in a pack if you want to stay for the entire trip, but morning birders are welcome. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- May 22 **Field Trip North, Montebello.** Wednesday, 8:30 am, half day. Informal carpooling from Park & Ride lot west of 280 at Page Mill and Arastradero at 8 am. We will carpool 7 miles up Page Mill Rd. and meet at the main parking lot on the south side. Leader: Carol Zabel (415)948-5671.
- May 25 **Loma Prieta.** Saturday, 8:30 am, half day. From San Jose take Hwy 17 S to Summit Rd. Turn sharply right, cross over Hwy 17 and take Summit Rd. E. Summit becomes Highland in 3 miles. Continue for 2 miles to 3-way stop sign. Take left turn up mountain on Bache Rd. Continue about 5 miles to parking lot on S side of the peak. The last 2 miles are rough, but passable by most cars. No bathroom facilities en route. Bring lunch and water. Specialties include Black-chinned Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Sage Sparrows, other chaparral species. Leader: Don Starks (408)371-9720.



Field Trip Coordinator for June , Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-7124.

- June 9 **Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail.** Sunday, 8 am, full day. Meet at Saratoga Gap, parking lot on SE corner of intersection of Hwy 9 & Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35). From Hwy 280 in Cupertino take Hwy 85 S. In Saratoga turn right onto Congress Springs Rd (Hwy 9). We will hike part of the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail, about 8 miles. Bring lunch and liquids and wear walking shoes. Possible birds: Black-throated Gray Warbler, Solitary Vireo, Western Tanager. Leader: to be announced. Questions to field trip coordinator for June.
- June 12 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 8:30 am, half day. South end of Montebello Ridge. 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. We will carpool from here up Montebello Rd. and will go through a locked gate. Bring water and lunch since we will not return through the locked gate until 1:30 pm. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- June 12 **Annual Member Appreciation Dinner.** Wednesday, 6 pm Los Altos. Details in June Avocet. All members welcome and encouraged to attend.
- June 22-23 **Burney Falls Field Trip.** Saturday and Sunday morning. We'll start 9 am at Ranger Station in McArthur/Burney Falls State Park near Lassen National Park - about 325 miles from San Jose. Take Interstate Hwy 5 N as far as Redding, then Hwy 99 E (Alturas exit) through Burney to Hwy 44 N to the park. Overnight accommodations (camping & motel) will be given in next Avocet. Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Black Swifts, possible Pileated Woodpecker . . . lots of good birding. Please call if you plan to go. Leader: Dave Nauer (408)259-1283.

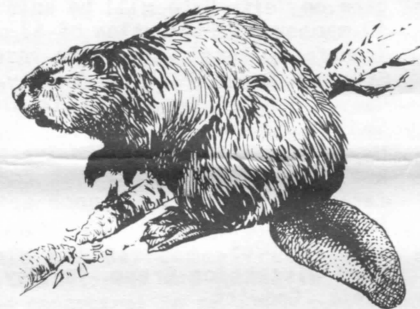
THE MOKELUMNE

East Bay Municipal Utility District plans to build one of the largest dams in California on the small but beautiful Mokelumne River, which flows through the Mother Lode Country near Jackson, east of Stockton. The Mokelumne is the last river that still flows beneath Highway 49 in the San Joaquin Valley; all others are now stilled in the foothills by giant reservoirs. Canoeing, fishing, picnicking, nature study, and gentle rafting are all possible on the Mokelumne, and are enjoyed by thousands each year from all around California.

East Bay MUD (EBMUD) wants to build this dam solely to make money by selling the power to PG&E. This is possible only because EBMUD can take advantage of a federal law subsidizing hydro projects of this kind. The law was intended to help small "mom and pop" power producers, not giant utilities like EBMUD, but they are making use of it anyway. Even with the federal subsidies, the project has a benefit cost ratio of only 1.1 to 1, a very shaky economic undertaking.

Fortunately, Assemblyman Burt Margolin (from North Hollywood) has introduced AB 1845 to prohibit the dam, by placing the Mokelumne in a new river recreation category. Bay Area Assemblymen Agnos, Bates, Sher and Isenberg have agreed to coauthor the bill. They deserve the thanks of their constituents. Please write your member of the Assembly today, and ask him or her to join these legislative leaders in coauthoring this important bill, so that the Mokelumne can continue to flow free.

-Gerald H. Meral, Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League



CONDOR PROGRAM UPDATE

We have just received some disappointing news from the Condor Research Center. Observations indicate that only 2 pairs of Condors are currently nesting. Although the data are still preliminary, it appears that three pairs active last year may have each lost a mate. Five pairs were breeding by this time last year.

If 3 birds were lost over the winter, then the mortality rate in the wild population is higher than previously anticipated. The wild population could be only a dozen or fewer birds.

All this information is of a preliminary nature. Better data and analysis should be available in the near future. You've heard the good news of the past 2 years as 16 eggs and fledglings have been successfully reared in captivity to establish a flock from which future releases would be made. Now, we have news of this setback.

The information is being evaluated by the National Audubon Society and Fish and Wildlife Service biologists to determine if changes in the program are needed. As soon as details are confirmed we will provide you with a more complete picture.

-Glenn Olson, Vice President

Western Region, National Audubon Society

DISCOUNT FOR NEW MEMBERS ONLY

Perhaps you have recently received an Earthstakes II application in the mail. This is a contest designed by National Audubon Society for prospective members. They may enter the contest by applying for membership at special low rates. Unfortunately the brochure does not clearly state that current members are ineligible for renewal at such low rates. Members who have renewed through Earthstakes will be requested to increase their subscription rate to equal the normal charge.

Despite the fact that new members generated by this appeal are sent the Avocet for a year, our chapter does not receive any part of the membership fee. However, if we sign up new members at the regular rate, we receive part to help with funding chapter activities, and the funds do help! We also receive part of the membership fee of every renewing member of our chapter.

You help SCVAS by renewing at regular rates, and by encouraging any potential member to also enroll through our office rather than to NAS. If you have any questions about the Earthstakes Contest, or membership procedure in general, please call Lynn at (415)329-1811.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SCVAS IN RESPONSE TO MARCH FIELD NOTES BY B. BOUSMAN

I take this opportunity to remind members that several of us in 1977 laid our knowledge, skills and money on the line in Federal Court to prevent the conversion of 90 acres of seasonal wetlands to "Shoreline Lake". This kind of habitat, so rare then and now, deserves to at least be remembered for the high tide resting space for Black-crowned Night Herons, nesting for Stilts and Avocets, to name a worthy few. For additional insult 110 acres of Charleston Slough, long subject to tidal action, were subsequently drowned to reserve water for the new "Shoreline Lake". It was a wonderful wading spot for shorebirds with islands of pickleweed for nesting and resting, even cord grass flourished on the Bayward side of the slough.

For those of us interested in preserving the diversity of habitat, though it may take trips to City Halls, Planning Commission meetings and yes, even to Federal Court in San Francisco we may not run out to "Shoreline Lake" for a new birding experience. Forgive us, especially me, if it is just too painful.

-Nancy A. Holmes

SCVAS BIRDATHON

In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of John James Audubon, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will take part in the 1985 National Audubon Society Birdathon. Funds raised in the Birdathon will be split evenly between SCVAS and National Audubon Society, for use in conservation, education and other priority activities.

Volunteers wishing to participate solicit sponsors who pledge a nickel, dime, dollar or more for each bird species the volunteer counter sees in a 24-hour period. This year, the BIRDATHON will be held on Saturday, May 18, from 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. For more information, to participate as either a sponsor or a counter, please contact Paul Noble, at (415)948-3876 or the office (415)329-1811.

APARTHEID AND AUDUBON

Golden Gate Audubon Society member Jeffery Black writes that he received the following from Les Line, editor of Audubon:

"You will be pleased to know that on Dec. 10, at a regular meeting of the Editorial Board, the subject of accepting advertising from the government of South Africa was brought up again. After considerable discussion, the Board adopted a motion stating that Audubon magazine would henceforth decline to accept advertisements from the government of South Africa because of its apartheid policy. A letter has gone to the South African government travel agency from Russ Peterson, National Audubon's President, advising them of this decision."

-The Gull, Golden Gate Audubon Society, March 1985

NEWS FROM SFBBO

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory writes that they're finally making progress in their effort to establish a Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS), with the donation of a 10 by 40 foot Scotsman Field Office. The CCRS is on City of San Jose property, adjacent to SJ/SC Water Pollution Control Plant storage and drying lagoons. The CCRS will be devoted to pure and management related wildlife research, and to preservation and enhancement of the Creek's riparian habitat. SFBBO has established an endowment fund for the station, and is hoping to get \$10,000, to pay, out of earnings only, electric and phone bills, insurance, and modest amounts for mist nets and the like.

SFBBO plans a number of studies this year that can use volunteer help. Volunteers and staff will be censusing and banding nesting birds on Bair Island, monitoring the new California Gull nesting colony in Alviso, studying avian botulism in Artesian Slough and Coyote Creek, doing population studies on the California Clapper Rail, Salt March Yellowthroat, and Forster's Tern, and banding birds year round along Coyote Creek to obtain baseline data. You can have a great time while helping SFBBO.

To make a donation, volunteer, or join SFBBO, write PO Box 247, Alviso, CA 95002.



FIELD NOTES--Bill Bousman

If May and its flowers and birdsong have you afield, marvelling at the energy of our resident species and tantalized by fleeting views of our rarer migrants, then I suspect you are hooked as a birder. The vagrants of fall and winter may be more exotic, but for me there is nothing like a morning in May.

Our wintering **White Pelicans** leave in December and early January. This year has been different. Four were in the Hellyer Park ponds in San Jose 26 Jan (Betty Wyatt-BW) and 140 were over the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin on 7 Mar. Two more in Charleston Slough that day had the nuptial horn on their upper bills. Five more were seen on Alviso Slough on 17 Mar (David Suddjian-DS). A **Eurasian Wigeon** was in the North Pond of the Palo Alto FCB 11 Mar (DS). One or more have been there all winter. **Barrow's Goldeneye** are seldom found in the county so a report of an immature male and a female at Coyote Reservoir 16 Mar (Paul Noble-PN,DS) is interesting. Five **Common Mergansers** were still there also. Fourteen **Red-breasted Merganser** along Alviso slough 17 Mar (DS) was a good concentration. We tend to see this species in the salt ponds more often than on the bay - is the salinity more to the liking of this salt



water merganser? An **Osprey** on Lexington Reservoir 9 Mar (Audrey Stoye et. al.) was probably a migrant, but one seen near the Metcalf Road ponds 23 Mar (BW) was probably one that wintered there. A **Merlin** in Menlo Park 17 Mar was a male of the **columbarius** subspecies, typical for our area. Two first winter **Glaucous Gulls** were seen at the Palo Alto dump 24 Feb (DS). The ploy used to gain entry was to take trash to the dump and pay the fee. Can we then say that these were trash birds? At least one **Short-eared Owl** remained in the Palo Alto FCB as of 7 Mar.



Two reports of **Rufous Hummingbird** were of a male at a feeder in Los Trancos Woods 2-6 Mar (Al Robinson fide Clark Blake-CB) and another male in NE San Jose (Kep Stone). We have been averaging 2-3 records a year locally for the past five years. A nearly-fledged **Allen's Hummingbird** brought to Wildlife Rescue 20 Mar suggests a first egg date as early as 11 Feb (Joyce Long). Local sightings were of one in Belmont 7 Feb and another in Palo Alto 18 Feb (both DS). A **Rock Wren** at Coyote Reservoir dam 16 Mar (DS) was in a typical location for this interior range specialty. West side **American Dippers** are always a surprise, so two on Stevens Creek above the Mt. Eden Road turnoff on 24 Mar are of considerable interest (Al Eisner-AE). One was seen at least through 29

Mar. They have nested there in past years. Two **Sage Sparrows** were well-described from the border of Hidden Villa and Rancho San Antonio on 17 Mar (James Yurchenko). They are very rare residents in the chamise on this side of the valley, but become more common to the south around Loma Prieta. **Lincoln's Sparrow** is considered uncommon in the county, but is found each winter in wet habitats. Because of its secretive nature it is often hard to find. David Suddjian has staked out wintering territories of Lincoln's Sparrows in Palo Alto and estimates a population of at least 55 birds. They are most common in riparian areas at the edge of the bay, but at least 5 were in Foothills Park. One **White-throated Sparrow** remains at a Menlo Park feeder through 27 Mar. **Red Crossbills** continue to be found



locally. Five in Monte Bello OSP on 19 Mar (Bill Howe fide Anne Wilson) were from a typical montane location. Nine in Palo Alto on 28 Mar (Courtney Dawson fide Lynn Tennefoss) were feeding on newly opening leaf and flower buds. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins also tend to move down onto the flats when leaf and flower buds open in March and early April. Three **Evening Grosbeaks** were seen in Los Altos on 25 Mar (PN).

Some early arrivals: **Western Flycatcher**, one in Portola Valley 15 Mar (Bob Wallace fide CB), which is very early, and another in Stevens Creek CP 24 Mar (AE); **Tree and Violet-green Swallows**, Moffett Field, 19 Mar; **Northern Rough-winged and Cliff Swallows**, Palo Alto?, 28 Feb (DS); **Barn Swallow**, Palo Alto?, 8 Mar (DS); **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, Rancho San Antonio OSP, 14 Mar (PN), very early, and another singing on Mt. Hamilton, 19 Mar (CB); **Warbling Vireo**, Los Trancos OSP, 23 Mar (DS) and Stevens Creek CP, 24 Mar (AE); 15+ **Orange-crowned Warblers** singing in Palo Alto Foothills Park 26 Feb (DS); **Wilson's Warbler** and **Black-headed Grosbeak**, Stevens Creek CP, 29 Mar; **Hooded Oriole**, San Jose, 26 Mar (Don Starks); and **Northern Oriole**, Menlo Park, 25 Mar.

I have completed a documented list of the breeding birds of Santa Clara County. An original is on file at the SCVAS office and SFBBO. Anyone who would like a copy should send a self-addressed envelope with 39 cents postage to me. If you see an "uncommon to rare" please drop me a note or phone: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415)322-5282).

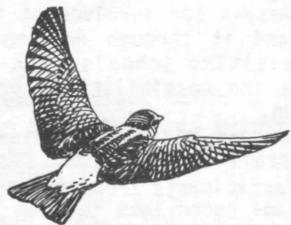
CONSERVATION CENTER VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers needed at Reception Desk at the Peninsula Conservation Center where the Audubon office is located. 2-4 hrs./wk. Excellent way to learn about local environmental events and outings and issues. 10% discount on Gift Store items. Contact: Mary Ann Kvenvolden, Volunteer Coordinator, (415)328-5313.

THE 1984 BIRD YEAR

For another year I have been able to share everybody's field observations and it is time to summarize what happened in 1984 in Santa Clara County. This is the fifth year since I took over the Field Notes column and each year I find it more interesting as additional data develop. The place to start is the 1975 checklist. It shows 89 species as "uncommon to rare" and of these I received reports of 73. But what of the others? With some effort we should be able to find any uncommon species if we search appropriate habitat at the right time of year. Examples are Brown Pelican, maybe Green-backed Heron, Townsend's Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow. The rare species will be harder to find, but with the number of observers out in the field reporting their sightings we should have at least a few records a year. Examples here are Eurasian Wigeon, Glaucous Gull, and Grasshopper Sparrow. Birds we don't see every year should probably be treated as "very rare", or "casual", or "accidental". Of the 16 missing species on the "uncommon to rare" list I am unaware of any county records for three: Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorant, and Black Turnstone. Three more have not been recorded in the last five years: Common Tern, Willow Flycatcher, and Bank Swallow. These should be considered casual or accidental species now. Of the other nine it is interesting to note the frequency of records. Four records in five years: Tundra Swan and Hermit Warbler. Three in five: Purple Martin. Two in five: Wild Turkey and Ruddy Turnstone. One in five: Lesser Golden-plover, Long-eared Owl, Calliope Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat. The turkey is resident and is obviously seen more often, but it is hard to get excited about introduced species. The others are obviously real rarities - something to set our caps for this season.

There are now 319 species for the county, 80 on the supplemental list of casual and accidental species. The two new additions since last year are Great-tailed Grackle and Ross' Goose. Three grackles were seen in flight on 4 May 83 over San Jose by Jack Cole. Jack had studied these birds in Arizona 10 days prior to the record, so was familiar with their distinctive call. The only addition from 1984 was the Ross' goose found north of Hwy 237 by Greg Meszaros on 4 Jan 84, which remained until 7 Jan. Of the other 78 species there were reports of 15. Three should now be considered rare species: Little Blue Heron, Ferruginous Hawk, and Least Tern. The little blue has been seen in 9 of the last 11 years with records normally from mid-April to mid-September.



The Ferruginous Hawk has been averaging about three records a year with records from late September to January. The Least Tern is also regular in recent years with records from mid-June to mid-September. Less common, with 4 records in the last 5 years: Sharp-tailed and Swamp Sparrows. Three records in five years: Palm Warbler and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Two in five: Black Swift, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and Townsend's Solitaire. Finally, birds seen only

once in five years or species that are second or third records. A Wandering Tattler at the Sunnyvale sewage treatment plant 4 May was only the third county record (April Durran). Two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at the Mountain View Forebay 6 Oct was a second county record (Phyllis Browning). A Stilt Sandpiper at Moffett Field 14 Apr was a second county record and only the second spring record for Northern California (WGB, Pat Page, Tom Rountree). A Costa's Hummingbird at Stevens Creek CP was the only record in the last five years (Phyllis Browning, Paul Noble). A Male Blackburnian Warbler was at Villa Montalvo in Saratoga 25 November for only the second county record and one of the latest fall records in Northern California (a good description by Rick Palmer). And a Vesper Sparrow at the Palo Alto Baylands 3 Feb was one of our few recent records (Jean Campbell).

For me it was a very nice year. No small part of the pleasure has been the improvement I have seen in the documentation of the very rare or accidental species. A good, sound, written description taken from field notes made before looking in field guides or references is absolutely essential. If you cannot describe a bird adequately without looking in a field guide then you probably didn't see it well enough to document the record.

-Bill Bousman

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

The SCVAS corner of the PCC library is getting fuller all the time. Recent additions include: THE BIRDWATCHER'S COMPANION: An Encyclopedic Handbook of North American Birds, by Christopher Leahy, Massachusetts Audubon Society; THE BIRDS OF ARIZONA, by Phillips, Marshall, Mouson, 1983. With color plates of field sketches by George Miksch Sutton and photos by Eliot Porter, (Donated by Allen Royer); Subscriptions to "American Birds", "Birding", "Bird Watcher's Digest"; and BIRDS OF MEXICO, by Blake.

WANTED-- BIRD SIGHTINGS

Blue, red, yellow, green, black, orange and silver bands have been placed on several Osprey from the Deschutes National Forest, Oregon, for long term studies. Both solid and bi-color bands are used. We are interested in as much detailed observation as you would care to offer. Please send sightings to: Osprey Study, Oregon Dept. Fish & Wildlife, Nongame Division, 61374 Parrell Rd., Bend, OR 97702.

The California Department of Fish and Game is gathering information on the Black Swift, the Bank Swallow and the Purple Martin in California to document distribution, abundance, habitat requirements, and reproductive success. In addition, we are especially interested in documenting threats to these species' habitats. Please send any reports of recent sightings (within the past decade) of breeding Black Swifts, Bank Swallows and Purple Martins to Ronald W. Schlorff, California Department of Fish and Game, Nongame Wildlife Program, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Please include your name, address, and phone number, along with the following: location of sightings (if possible, provide legal description of nest territory--township, range, section, 1/4 section--ideally, a copy of a topographic map should be included), date of observations, behavioral notes, and any other relevant information (e.g. evidence of competition with other species or destruction of nest sites). This information will assist state and federal agencies in developing habitat protection and species management plans for these bird species of special concern.

READER SURVEY RESULTS

We've received 43 surveys. This is between a one and two percent response. Two percent is an excellent response in a survey of any kind, and given that respondents had to pay their own postage, we think this is very good.

Most people are fairly happy with the Avocet, though we had some emphatic complaints! Most read features are field trips, field notes, local conservation news, and meeting announcements. Least read were non-Audubon trips, which were still read by 60%.

Local conservation news is more important to readers than national conservation news. Many say they get this elsewhere, as they do their National Audubon news.

Many respondents would like to see more birding site guides, field notes, local conservation news, and book reviews. There is interest in birding classifieds.

We got several suggestions on what to include (and we'll follow up on these), and a number of complaints about issues arriving late. We got a lot of praise for Bill Bousman's column, a number of requests for less humor, and a number of requests for more humor.

We made a rough estimate of the proportion of respondents who were mainly interested in birds, mainly interested in conservation, or interested in both. 60% were interested in both, and about 20% each in mainly one or the other.

These findings will be given to the board in more detail, and will be used in determining the future contents of the Avocet. (Late surveys are still welcome.) Thank you very much for responding to the survey (especially those of you who went to the trouble to photocopy your surveys). Each one has been read carefully and will be considered.

-The Editor



BIRDWATCHER'S DIGEST OFFER

Once again, Bird Watcher's Digest magazine is offering a special subscription rate to members of SCVAS. For \$11, you may receive 6 issues of Bird Watcher's Digest, a collection of entertaining and informative birding literature, and \$5 will go to SCVAS! \$20 will bring you 2 years, and \$30, three years. If you have not seen this publication, the SCVAS library collection contains back and recent issues. To subscribe, please send a check made out to SCVAS, to the office. We will forward your order.

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.

KILLER INSULATORS

In September 1984, we published an article warning against the use of red insulators on electric fences. Hummingbirds were and still are being killed by the hundreds by those insulators. Now, we have some addresses to which you can write to protest the manufacture of red insulators, and to urge those people who currently use them to paint them black. Write or call: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, Maryland, 20811 and/or Howard Langlie, President, and Albert Berg, Chairman, North Central Plastics, Ellendale, Minnesota 56026 (507) 684-3721.

BACK COPIES OF BIRDING SOUGHT

Are your bookcases getting too full? Would you like to donate some back issues of magazines to the SCVAS library, where they will be available to many people? We are looking for copies of BIRDING - Dec. of 1978 and '79 and from 1980 on, and any issues of AMERICAN BIRDS. If you have any copies to give, please drop them by the office, or bring them to a General Meeting.

-Lynn Tennefoss

PLANNING MEETING RESULTS

The March 16 planning meeting was very successful. We spent the day discussing areas we felt were important to focus on during the next year. We came up with four major categories.

- 1) Financial policies. Review the amount of money we have and what its best use is.
- 2) Conservation. Recommend ways the Chapter and members can become more active in conservation issues.
- 3) Membership. Assess the needs of members and make sure we are providing adequate membership services in order to keep our members interested. Stimulate greater membership involvement.
- 4) Education and publicity. Decide how to publicize Audubon so the public knows who we are and what to do. Assess our involvement in education and possibly expand it through Audubon Adventures and volunteers visiting schools with slide shows on birds. Pursue the possibility of producing a video for television.

Board members will be coordinating committees to further detail and carry out specific plans for each topic. Participants from the general membership are welcome and encouraged to join a committee now and help plan chapter activities for 1985-86. Please call Kevin Monahan (408)559-8713 or Lynn Tennefoss (415)329-1811 for meeting times.





FIELD TRIP REPORTS

This trip, led by Mark Miller, John Oram, and Allen Royer, was planned to see winter and resident birds of prey in the Livermore and Western San Joaquin Valleys. The group of 22 birders had many looks at mostly sub-adult Golden Eagles. Many Red-Tailed Hawks were seen including two which seemed to be mating in a tree at the end of Greenville Road. The pond here also had a large flock of Common Mergansers. At Frick Lake, we tried to separate the Thayer's Gulls from the numerous Calif. and Herring Gulls. We drove along many country roads which several weeks before had had Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks. Perhaps because of the moderate weather in late February, or just the late time of year, we had little success seeing these two raptors. We saw one Ferruginous Hawk briefly overhead at Greenville and Tesla, and better views of a Ferruginous Hawk with our only sighting of a Rough-Legged Hawk along Patterson Pass Road. We also watched a Cattle Egret along the Byron Highway. John Oram took us to a traditional Burrowing Owl site on Byron Hot Springs Road, where we had excellent views of the owls flying around a hillside pasture. We had brilliant looks at Mountain Bluebirds through Mark and Steve Miller's Celestron and Questar scopes - the latter with the brighter image of the two. This was a long trip of car caravanning down very pretty country roads. We saw fifty species and saw areas that local birders don't often visit. The trip would have been more productive in early February - perhaps the schedule will be adjusted next year. We had a day of beautiful weather and interesting birds in pleasant company.

-Allen Royer

31 enthusiastic birders set out on a gorgeous spring-like day at Montebello OSP on Saturday, February 23rd. Highlight of the trip, as advertised, was a flock of 10 Red Crossbills giving us fairly good views as they fed on fir cones. Other birds included Pygmy Nuthatch, Townsend's Warbler, Western Bluebird, Band-tailed Pigeon and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Total count was 39 species.

-Paul L. Noble

Gail Cheeseman's Grant Ranch trip February 13 was a resounding success for 15 birders. On a sunny morning we walked from park HQ to Halls Valley Lake and returned through the marsh. The lake is a fine place to see Common Mergansers, Canada Geese, and lots of ducks and grebes. We found six species of raptors, including a Golden Eagle. Other highlights were a Ring-necked Duck, Western Bluebirds, and a Red-breasted Sapsucker that lives at the parking lot. We flushed a Common Snipe in the marsh just north of the visitor center. We logged 53 species, not counting a Graylag Goose that thinks it is a Canada Goose. Park Ranger Sherrie Silveira reports that a wild Turkey flock sometimes comes down from the hills west of park headquarters in late afternoon.

-Lee Lovelady

AUDUBON FESTIVAL

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON: A TRIBUTE TO WILDLIFE

Mark your calendars for an exciting weekend May 18 and 19, to celebrate the bicentennial of John James Audubon's birth by attending the Richardson Bay Audubon Center's first festival.

SCHEDULE

Friday, May 17, 6-8 pm WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL \$3/person. Critically acclaimed wildlife films, winners of the University of Montana International Film Festival will be shown. Master-builders, the Platte-River of Life and Project Puffin will be shown.

Saturday, May 18, 10 am-4 pm AUDUBON FESTIVAL - JOHN JAMES AUDUBON: A TRIBUTE TO WILDLIFE \$1/person. Wildlife demonstrations, exhibits, walks, programs, John James Audubon's Birds of America exhibit. Lyford House open. Children's art contest winners. 2 pm Concert: Jay Leibovitz, Mountain Dulcimer.

6-8 pm WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL \$3/person. Spirits on the Wing, The Whales that Wouldn't Die and Last Stronghold of the Eagles will be shown.

Sunday, March 19, 9am-5 pm Center open to the public. 2 pm WINE TASTING \$25/person. Fund-raiser with Audubon Jazz Quintet at Lyford House. Preregistration necessary.

For more information, contact the Richardson Bay Audubon Center (415)388-2524.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS

The following people were a tremendous help in the office, baking cookies for General Meetings, and with the Bird Seed Sale. THANK YOU! Harry Beerbohm, Dave Burke, Jean Clark, Rose Green, Richard Jeffers, Marion Lockwood, Deborah Manley, Tibby Simon, Greg Meszaros, Jim and Sue Liskovec, and Hazel Tilden.

Please call Lynn (415)329-1811 if you are able to offer some time to SCVAS.

NON-AUDUBON CLASSES, TRIPS, AND EVENTS

- San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is offering free tours of Drawbridge, the South Bay's only ghost town, and various walks to see birds of prey, wildflowers, and various refuge areas. Slide shows and canoe tours are also offered (bring your own canoe). Call (415)792-0222 for information.

- Nature Sounds Society and the Oakland Museum Natural Sciences Dept. are sponsoring a presentation on "Sounds of the Bottlenose Dolphin" Saturday, May 11 at 2 pm at the Oakland Museum. For details call Paul Matzner at (415)273-3884.

- Sunbeam Ecology Explorations offers a birding trip to Colorado in June, led by Maryann Danielson. Cost is \$450 including models. Group limited to 8. The tour will look for White-tailed Ptarmigan, Rosy Finches, longspurs, and more. Call Maryann at (415) 342-6919.

- Fremont Adult School is giving a one day class on birding Stevens Creek Park Saturday, May 4th. The trip costs \$10.50, will be led by Alice Hoch, and goes from 9 am to 3 pm For more information, call the school at (415)791-5841 or Alice Hoch at (415)657-0475.

- Oakland's Whale Center is sponsoring cruises to the Farallon Islands, leaving from Sausalito many Sundays in June, through September. Children under 10 not permitted. Cost is \$42. Call the Whale Center at (415)654-6621.

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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.

SELENIUM AND HEAVY METALS IN BAY DUCKS

SCVAS members may have seen newspaper coverage of a recent report by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game personnel. In this study, 40 Bay ducks were collected in the winter of 1982 from areas near the Dumbarton Bridge, and their kidneys and livers were analyzed. "Alarming" levels of toxic selenium and high levels of cadmium were found in their tissues.

This is a very serious discovery. The liver and kidneys generally are quick to incorporate chemicals. Therefore, the study points to the toxic chemicals as being in the Bay, yet the source of these toxic materials and their concentration in the Bay has yet to be discovered. The full extent of selenium, cadmium and other toxic metal contaminants in Bay wildlife, plants, soil, and water needs to be assessed.

Finding the source of selenium will be a complex problem. It could be coming from lots of sources, each contributing a small amount, or from a few large producers. Possibilities include sewage treatment plants, refineries, inflow from the Delta, and/or a constant small amount always present in the ocean.

We don't yet know if or how the high levels of selenium in Bay duck tissues are affecting those birds. An 80-90% decline in the number of scoters counted in the South Bay over the last 4 years and a 50% drop in the numbers of scaup may be related to high levels of toxic materials in the Bay. Because of these unknowns, and because of the big problems at Kesterson, we need to try to find answers. Understanding this complex problem may help us safeguard the health of all components of our Bay's ecosystem.

We hope SCVAs members will join their Board of Directors in asking the Regional Water Quality Con-

trol Board (RWQCB) to immediately begin an extensive monitoring program. As the agency responsible for monitoring outfall into the Bay, it is appropriate for the RWQCB to implement a study of discharges, and background levels, and a sampling program. Frequent monitoring of all discharges is important. Authorities suggest that changing agricultural practices on farms in the Delta may be releasing greater amounts of selenium into the Bay than were found historically. And no one knows what the ocean's "normal" level of selenium is. Sampling of invertebrates, whose stationary nature makes them excellent indicators of the quality of the immediate area in which they are found, would be very helpful. The effects of dredging and dredge disposal also need to be examined, as this practice loosens sediments and may spread contamination.

Answers to these questions are of particular importance to the health of the South Bay, because, particularly in the summer, most of the freshwater inflow into the Bay comes from sewage outfall. Therefore, dilution of any toxics is slight, and the potency and concentration of toxic substances may be enhanced.

For more information, please call the SCVAS office (415)329-1811. The address of the RWQCB is: California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region, 1111 Jackson Street, Room 6040, Oakland, CA 94607. If you can send copies of your letter to any state Senator or Assemblyman, that will help.

-Lynn Tennefoss

DONATION

A donation in memory of Donna Palmer has been received from Neil V. Fissel.

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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