

The Avocet

Volume 32, Number 8

October 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.

- Oct. 2 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm. Baylands Interpretive Center. Sharon Chester, professional bird photographer whose picture of King Penguins is on the cover of the current *International Wildlife*, will show some slides and discuss getting one's work published. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Oct. 8 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Loons.
- Oct. 9 **Field Trip South.** Campbell Percolation Ponds (Los Gatos Creek Co. Park). Wednesday, 9 am. Winchester to Hacienda, right on Hacienda to Dell, left on Dell and right at park entrance. Meet in parking lot. Leader: Jo Pettit (408)266-5118.
- Oct. 12 **Marin Headlands, Rodeo Lagoon.** Saturday, 9 am. Meet at HQ parking lot, N side of Rodeo Lagoon. From Hwy 101 take Alexander Ave., Sausalito exit. Start downhill, swing left to tunnel entrance to Fort Cronkhite. Stay on this road. Take right turn across bridge between pond and lagoon. Park on left, opposite firehouse. Informal carpooling, commuter parking at 280 and Page Mill, 7:30 am. Vagrants and possible late hawks at Pt. Diablo. Bring lunch, liquids. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.
- Oct. 16 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero. Terry Stevenson will present a program on the Birds of Kenya. Terry's an E. African ornithologist who holds the Old World record of seeing 308 bird species in 24 hours. There will be slides.
- Oct. 19 **Birdwalk for Beginners,** Rancho San Antonio O.S.P., Saturday, 8 am, half day. Meet at last parking lot at end of Cristo Rey Drive. Take 280 to Foothill Expwy S to Cristo Rey Dr. Rain cancels. Leaders: Jim and Sue Liskovec (415)969-5542.
- Oct. 23 **Field Trip North.** Princeton Harbor. Wednesday, 9 am. Four miles N of Half Moon Bay, just off Rte. 1. Meet in parking lot near pier. For carpooling, meet at Park & Ride lot at Page Mill & 280 at 8:15 am. Lunch optional. Leader: Paul Noble (415)948-3876 or call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Oct. 27 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Palo Alto Baylands. Sunday, 9-noon. Meet at Lucy Evans Interpretive Center at the E end of Embarcadero Road. 1-2 miles easy walking to see resident and migratory waterfowl. Leader, rain or shine: Dick Stovel (415)856-6105.
- Nov. 3 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Ed Levin County Park. Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. Meet in schoolyard, 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 E. Possible Golden Eagles. Leader, rain or shine: Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-7124.

LOGGING ROADS IN NATIONAL FORESTS

Over years, the US Forest Service has built thousands of miles of new roads, many into undisturbed wild places, for the benefit of the logging industry. About half are paid for directly with your tax dollars.

Often in steep and fragile areas, they create erosion, pollute fishing streams, and destroy the forests which are the homes of deer, elk, bear, spotted owl, and other species. Roads disqualify otherwise eligible areas for future wilderness designation.

There is a growing outcry over the destruction caused by this kind of roadbuilding in public forests. Congress is investigating the fact that more and more federal timber sales return less money than they cost.

Conservationists went to Washington in June to put their case before Congress, asking to cut down the amount of forest roadbuilding, and for the Forest Service to pay more attention to wildlife and trails. The 1985 USFS budget shows that the agency plans to drastically increase roading and logging at the expense of other uses.

In July the House Appropriations Committee voted to delete nearly \$50,000,000 from the USFS's road building program, most of the amount allocated for road construction.

Now this budget item goes to the Senate. Write or phone Senators Cranston and/or Wilson at the US Senate, Washington D.C. 20510. (Capitol Switchboard, 202/224-3121.)

BIRDSEED SALE

If you hurry, you can still order birdseed in our October sale.

This is a prepaid sale. Your order, including a check payable to SCVAS, must be received by MONDAY, OCTOBER 7. All orders must be picked up from the SCVAS office in the Peninsula Conservation Center on either Friday, October 25, between noon and 6 pm, or Saturday, October 26, between 10 am and 2 pm.

Please send the order and your check to: SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 7.

	# BAGS	COST
Premium Seed	20 lb @ \$ 7/bag	
" "	50 lb @ \$15/bag	
Western Wild	20 lb @ \$ 6/bag	
" "	50 lb @ \$13/bag	
Black Oil Sun	20 lb @ \$12/bag	
" " "	50 lb @ \$26/bag	
Striped Sun	20 lb @ \$14/bag	
" "	50 lb @ \$32/bag	
Thistle	5 lb @ \$ 9/bag	
"	20 lb @ \$33/bag	
	Subtotal	_____
	Add 7% Tax	_____
	TOTAL	_____

DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR CHECK.

And remember, hummingbird expert Louise Blakey will be on hand Saturday, October 26, with a slide show, display and literature on how to attract hummingbirds with both plants and feeders.

SFBBO NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory needs some help for its fund-raising event Sunday, October 27.

Few people are aware of the existence of Kotani-En, one of the finest examples of Japanese building/landscaping in this area. Starting in 1918 a band of 11 Japanese craftsmen spent some 10 years handcrafting this magnificent estate off the Saratoga-Los Gatos Road.

As in any fund-raising effort, help is always needed for all sorts of jobs from shuttling people to acting as docent for the tour. If you choose to be a docent you'll undergo some training by the Kotani-En Foundation.

It should be a very pleasant way to spend part of a Sunday...visiting a lovely Japanese shrine and garden. And of course if you'd like to make a donation of money to SFBBO, you'll find those bird researchers to be with you 100%. After all...it is a fund-raiser! Remember the date: Sunday, October 27, from 9 am - 3 pm. For information, call SFBBO any weekday afternoon (408)946-6548.

-Dave Nauer

SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year the San Jose Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 15 - mark your calendars. In recent counts well over 100 people have participated. All levels of birding expertise are needed. Please join us that day. More information will be provided in the next Avocet. If you have any questions, please contact Sue and Jim Liskovec at (415)969-5542.

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

Once a year I like to explain what I do with the records people send or phone in. If you've heard this all before, skip down to this month's sightings. With phone calls, I write down all the information in a notebook I keep near the phone. Later I take this log and letters and postcards received, and enter the information into what I call the Combined List. This has pages for each species and I enter the date, number of birds seen, location, observer, and any interesting details. When the Avocet deadline nears I leaf through the Combined List in taxonomic order, writing down the most interesting for the Field Notes column. Four times a year I sit down with the Combined List and put together my quarterly report for American Birds. This report goes to the Regional Editor for the Mid Pacific Region who puts together his final report for publication. Not everything goes into the Field Notes, or to the Regional Editor - I must make a judgement of what is most significant. The amount of information has been increasing. The poor Regional Editors for American Birds have really become saturated and have instituted a new layer in the process called Sub-Regional Editors, who are assigned a small geographic area and are asked to summarize that area for the Regional Editors. I do that job for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. It may sound overly complicated, but the whole purpose is to better understand what is happening with bird populations. There is no doubt in my mind that we all learn a lot as these bits and pieces of data are put together. So I appreciate everything people send me. The careful observations of individuals are the basis for our continuing understanding of bird distribution.

Numbers of Brown Pelicans are higher than usual. Most years a flock of 10-20 birds is considered large for the south bay, but this year more have been seen with a high of 115 in the vicinity of Charleston Slough 27 Aug (David Suddjian-DS). The Little Blue Heron has been found in the vicinity of Charleston Slough and the Mountain View Foreay again this year. The first record was in the forebay on 28 Jul (Chris and Claire Wolfe) and it has been seen irregularly at least through 13 Aug (DS, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Ted Chandik, Linda Kypta all vide DS). This bird is rarely seen in the local area after August. A Green-backed Heron was seen in the Palo Alto FCB 11 Aug (Paul Noble-PN, DS). An over-summering American Wigeon continues to be seen in the FCB with one there 2 Aug (James Yurchenko-JY, Amy Lauterbach-AL). Two female Lesser Scaup were in the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor 10 Aug (DS, PN) and apparently overwintered there. The two summering Surf Scoters have remained on Shoreline Lake at least through 29 Jul (DS). A Peregrine Falcon has been seen in the south bay with records for 30 Jul and 27 Aug. It is not clear whether it is the same bird or not (DS). A trip to Henry Coe SP on 21 Jul led to a count of 31 Wild Turkeys (JY, AL). Lesser Yellowlegs have been seen pretty much continually since 14 Jul in the Mountain View Forebay and Charleston Slough (DS, Phyllis Browning-PB, PN, Al Eisner-AE, John Mariani-JM, JY, AL). Four were at the Moffett Field on 21 Aug. A Spotted Sandpiper was in the Mountain Forebay 21 Aug (JY, AL). Two Ruddy Turnstones were at Ravenswood Point 10 Aug (DS). The first Sanderling of the season was seen in Charleston Slough 9 Aug (DS). In recent years they have been regular in the winter in the slough. The extensive coverage of the Mountain View Forebay paid off when a juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper was found there 16 Aug (DS). This represents the third county record. By 18 Aug two were present and one or both were seen through 23 Aug (DS, JM, WGB). This species is probably present in suitab^u habitat every year or so, but its identification is difficult. Baird's

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

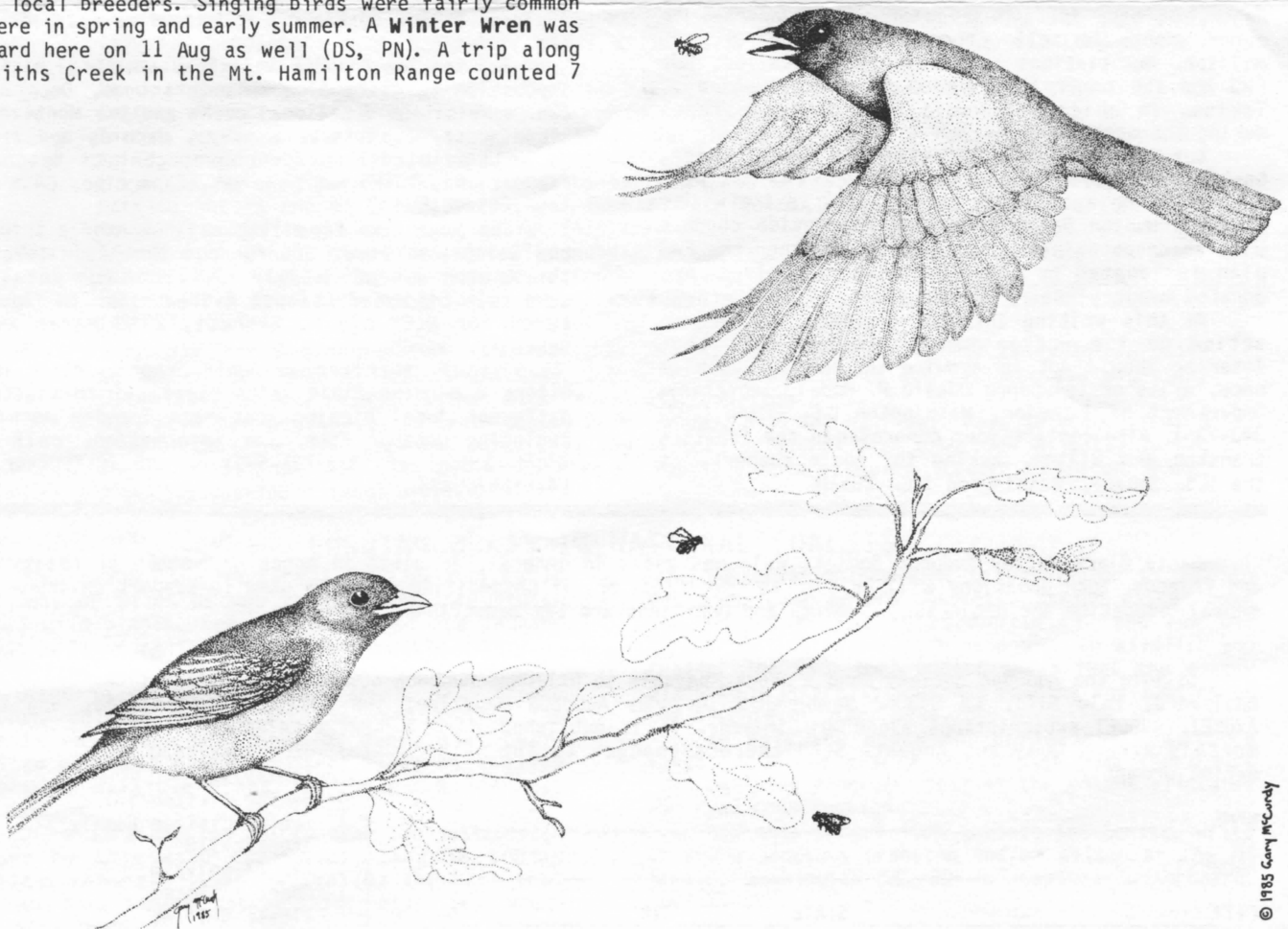
Sandpipers were also found in the forebay with two seen 15 Aug (PB) and recorded irregularly after that through 23 Aug (DS, AE, JM). The high was 3 on 21 Aug (DS). A single **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found here on 16 Aug (DS) and seen at least through 19 Aug (AE, JM). The Mountain View Forebay is clearly an unusual habitat to attract Lesser Yellowlegs, and Semipalmated, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpipers in such a short period of time, but it's clear that these species also used other habitats as they weren't always there. A **Common Tern** beyond Charleston Slough 29 Jul is the first county record in quite a few years (DS). They were seen more often as migrants in past years, but their present scarcity may be an artifact of the identification problem. **Least Terns** continue to use Charleston Slough for food and a secure resting spot. Birds have been seen 18 Jul through at least 23 Aug (JY, AL, DS, PN). A high count of 49 was made on 13 Aug and the adult:immature ratio in one flock that day was 11:13 which indicates a successful nesting season. These numbers are the best since 1981.

The status of our nocturnal species is poorly known. Two **Common Poorwill** at Monte Bello OSP on 10 Aug were in an area where they are rarely reported (PN, DS), but they may be regular here. A **Lewis' Woodpecker** in the Berryessa foothills from about 30 Jul to 2 Aug was probably from the Mt. Hamilton Range breeding population (Dave Nauer). One or more **Purple Martins** in San Jose on about 26 Jul were from an area where they haven't been reported before (Pamela Fridie). Early migrants? Hiking trips into the Mt. Hamilton Range find **Canyon Wrens** in appropriate habitat. Three were in Henry Coe SP 21 Jul and three more along Smiths Creek 25 Jul (JY, AL). Records of **House Wrens** in Monte Bello OSP and the vicinity from 23 Jul to 11 Aug (DS, PN) are probably of local breeders. Singing birds were fairly common there in spring and early summer. A **Winter Wren** was heard here on 11 Aug as well (DS, PN). A trip along Smiths Creek in the Mt. Hamilton Range counted 7

American Dippers on 25 Aug (JY, AL), fairly evenly spaced along 5 miles of creek, suggesting that they have formed winter territories. The last immature **Phainopepla** that fledged from a nest in the Almaden Valley was seen on 11 Aug (JM). An immature **Yellow-rumped Warbler** on 23 Jul and with a female on 26 Jul in Monte Bello OSP (DS) are undoubtedly from a local breeding population. A female **Hermit Warbler** there 11 Aug (DS, PN) is probably an early migrant.

Our summer of vagrants has continued. A **Northern Waterthrush** was found beneath the Searsville Lake dam on 29 Jul and again on 30 Jul (Bill and Jean Clark, Alec and Carol McClellan). This bird was well-seen and well-described, but the date doesn't fit the pattern of spring or fall vagrancy. So where did this bird come from? But this bird was topped by an immature **Summer Tanager** that appeared in Los Gatos eating bees on 24 Aug, and this was topped in turn by a full-plumaged male that was found on 27 Aug in the same tree (Gary McCurdy). Both birds were still present and eating bees on 29 Aug. The only previous county record I know of is of a dead bird of the eastern race *rubra* found in Palo Alto in the early 70's. The dates for these Summer Tanagers do not fit normal vagrancy dates either. Both adult and immature **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found in Monte Bello OSP into August (DS, PN). A high count of 4 adults and 7 immatures was made 26 Jul, and the last record was from 11 Aug. Early arrivals: **Eared Grebe**, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, 10 Aug (PN, DS); **Cedar Waxwing**, Palo Alto, 9 Aug (PN).

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



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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, 475 S 12th, San Jose, CA 95112.

CALIFORNIA CONDORS

After last year's disastrous winter, there are 7 California Condors living wild. There are 18 living in captivity.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposes to capture 4 of the remaining wild condors for the captive breeding program, leaving free the only remaining mated pair and one immature male. Soon they plan to release 3 of the captive-reared birds, immature females.

This program is acceptable to California Fish and Game, with several provisos. One is to identify and ameliorate causes of death in the wild population. (This winter two died of lead poisoning. Another was poisoned by a 'coyote-getter'. What happened to the rest is unknown.)

Another is that FWS must acquire the Hudson Ranch, primary feeding area for wild condors. The owner wishes to sell. Congress has appropriated \$9 million. Negotiations over price have stalled, but FWS and the owner have agreed to a Declaration of Taking, in which FWS would take over the ranch during the negotiations.

But Donald Hodel, Secretary of the Interior, has delayed approving the Declaration. FWS has been unable to release young condors back to the wild.

The Hudson Ranch is needed to provide condors with an uncontaminated food source, whether the FWS plan is adopted or not. (Still-born calves are donated by local dairy farms.)

At this writing Interior continues to take no action on the Hudson Ranch. If you feel that Interior should act to acquire the Hudson Ranch at once, write or telephone Donald P. Hodel, Secretary, Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240 (202) 343-7351. Also contact your congressman and Senators Cranston and Wilson, asking for their support, at the U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510.

WETLANDS ISSUE ON PALO ALTO BALLOT

Voters in Palo Alto will decide again on November 5th whether the rapidly silting inner harbor will be "maintained" for boating. In 1980 a similar measure was defeated, but here it is once more.

The only way to insure that dredged mud will never again be dumped on marshland is to defeat Measure C. A majority of the Palo Alto City Council, the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto have all signed the ballot arguments opposing this Measure.

We need campaign workers and money. Please write to Friends of the Baylands, 527 Rhodes Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94303, or telephone (415)493-5540.

NON-AUDUBON CLASSES AND TRIPS

The following are not sponsored by Audubon, but are listed for your information.

Ted and Zoe Chandik will lead a natural history expedition to Costa Rica this Christmas, Dec. 23 - Jan. 4, visiting 6 national parks and the Monteverde cloudforest, to observe monkeys, orchids and frogs as well as birds. For brochure, contact Betchart Expeditions, 10485 Phar Lap Dr., Cupertino, CA 95014 (408)245-9516.

The Mono Lake Committee will sponsor a trip to the Galapagos, Peru, Ecuador and the headwaters of the Amazon June 24 - July 10, 1986. For details, send self-addressed stamped 4x9 envelope to "Adventures for MLC" c/o M. Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, 94708.

Through the Fremont Adult School, Alice Hoch offers a Birding Field Trips class, which visits a different local birding spot each Tuesday morning, beginning October 29th. For information, call the Adult School at (415)791-5841 or the instructor at (415)657-0475.

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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