

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

1137g

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

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February 1986

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.

- Feb. 5 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm, Baylands Interpretive Center. Jack Wilburn will give a condensed version of a Fresnel flash seminar. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Feb. 8 **Livermore Hills-Altamont Pass.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Take I 680 N to I 580 E. Go about 10 miles to 1st St/Hwy 84 exit. Make immediate left into Mobil station. Trip will leave from here, perhaps in carpools. Wintering and resident birds of prey -- Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, possibly Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagle. RAIN CANCELS. Bring liquids and a full tank of gas (round trip about 180 mi.). Leaders: Steve and Mark Miller (415)967-3429.
- Feb. 11 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Fulmar.
- Feb. 12 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 8:30 am. Deer Hollow Farm. Exit off 280 at Foothill Expwy. Go one block S on Foothill to Cristo Rey Dr. and turn right. Go W on Cristo Rey almost 1 mile to Rancho San Antonio County Park sign. Go through gate to last parking lot. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- Feb. 15 **Panoche Valley.** Saturday, 7:15 am. Meet at Chevron station on Dunne Ave., just W of Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill. Trip will leave from here in FULL CARS ONLY. Highlights include wintering hawks, Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, Lewis' Woodpecker, and possibly Chukar. Rain or threatening weather cancels. Rain date Sunday, Feb. 16. Call leaders before 6:30 am to confirm if in doubt. Leaders: Jim and Sue Liskovec (415)969-5542.
- Feb. 19 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero. Don Schmoldt journeys from his home near the Sutter buttes to describe with slides the fascinating private world of the Buttes. Don will also be leading field trips to the Buttes -- see announcement in the January *Avocet*, or call Don at (916)458-4385. Trips are set for February 1, 15, and 22.
- Feb. 23 **A Trip for the Gullible.** Duck Pond and Charleston Slough. Sunday, 8 am, half day. Take Embarcadero exit E from Hwy 101 to end, turn left and follow road until you see duck pond on left. Emphasis on wintering gulls. Bring lunch, drinks, and water. Rain or shine. Leader: Don Starks (408)371-9720.
- Feb. 26 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 9 am to noon, Searsville Lake. Meet at the 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 8:45-9:10 am. Contribution of \$2 to the Preserve welcomed. Leaders: Carol Zabel (415)948-5671 and Lindy Gardiner.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is preparing a slate of Officers and Directors for 1986-87. We need you, and your recommendations! If you would like to nominate yourself, or another member for consideration, please call Lynn at the office. It is a fun way to get to know about the Chapter and current issues. (415)329-1811.

SCVAS PLANNING MEETING

The Annual SCVAS Planning Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 8, 1986, at the Environmental Education Center in Alviso. Important topics will be discussed - come and get involved with YOUR chapter. Put the date on your calendar and call the office for time and directions. (415)329-1811.

-Judy McEuen

PHOTO CONTEST

The Youth Science Institute is sponsoring a Wildlife Photo Exhibition/Contest open to all ages. The subjects are native wildlife -- from insects to large mammals. Black and white and color prints will be accepted. A maximum of four entries may be submitted. The prints must be mounted (8 x 10 to 16 x 20). The entry fee is \$3.50 per person. The deadline is Feb. 28.

Photos will be judged in two categories: junior (18 and younger) and adult (19 and older). Winning photos will be displayed. For more information call (408)258-4322.

NEW RARE BIRD ALERT

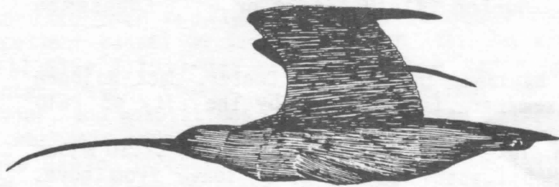
Morro Bay Audubon Society now sponsors a Rare Bird Alert for their area - (805)528-7182.

CITIZEN'S GUIDE

The Planning and Conservation League Foundation has a new publication designed to provide a clear and concise explanation of the key requirements of California's centerpiece environmental protection law. The new 16-page Citizen's Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) explains the law's most important provisions including requirements for preparing environmental impact reports and reducing environmental damage caused by projects.

The report was prepared by environmental attorneys who have substantial experience working with CEQA. The guide describes the process that public agencies must follow in reviewing projects, includes a glossary of terms, and provides a list of key court cases.

Copies of the Citizen's Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act are available from the PCL Foundation, 909 12th St., Suite 203, Sacramento, CA 95814 for \$2.00 per copy.



NEW FOR SALE

SCVAS now has for sale BRAND NEW cassettes of bird sounds, from the Laboratory of Ornithology, designed to accompany the National Geographic Society's field guide.

Cassettes - \$20 plus \$1 to send (2 cassettes, list of birds, carrying case).

Field Guide - \$13 plus 69 cents to send.

Birding at the Bottom of the Bay - \$6.55 plus \$1 to send.

Birds for Real - \$6.40 plus \$1 to send.

Sequoia Peninsula Birdwatching - \$9.50 plus \$1 to send.

Our Hummingbirds - \$4 plus \$1 to send.

Make checks out to SCVAS, and send to the office - 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306, or come into the office M-F, 9 am - 5 pm to purchase items there.

SCVAS GRANTS

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society continues its program of providing grants to studies and projects that advance the knowledge, appreciation and protection of wildlife and its habitats. Proposals for grants will be accepted through April 30 for consideration in the current funding cycle. Grants will be awarded on the second Friday in June to those proposals approved fully or partially by the SCVAS grants committee and board of directors.

Applications for grants must be submitted on a grants request form which can be obtained by writing to SCVAS Grants, c/o Donna Zetterquist, 55 Mountain Springs Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Each must be accompanied by a proposed budget and schedule for the study or project. After completion of the funded activity, the recipient may be asked to give a presentation at a SCVAS general meeting or to prepare an article for the Avocet.

-Donna Zetterquist
Chairman, Grants Committee

SAN JOSE CBC REPORT

Sunday, December 29th dawned with overcast and fog, then turned to a soaking rain by afternoon. Nonetheless, 138 undaunted counters took to the field for our annual bird census. By day's end they tallied 101,296 birds of 157 species. Although the number of birds compared well with the previous five-year average of 102,000, the species total was down from previous highs of 166-168.

Low numbers of some species - particularly land birds - were at least partly due to poor weather conditions on count day and a cold snap earlier in December. While we strive for data accuracy with every Christmas Bird Count, long term trends seem to be more meaningful. Deep swings in sightings can be caused by weather (either good or poor), and therefore may not reflect actual species numbers.

Such may be the case with Great Blue Herons this year. Sightings were down 50% from last year and down 30% from a six-year average of 53. Raptor numbers were also down significantly from previous highs. But perhaps this is more an indication of weather conditions rather than a severe decline in numbers. Gulls on the other hand soared to a 17-year high of 37,000!

As part of a nationwide study, counters were asked to sex American Kestrels. Despite rainy weather and poor lighting, nearly 60% of sighted birds were labeled male or female.

The rare bird committee had its hands full with a number of unusual sightings. A Caspian Tern in Alviso is a first for our CBC; other winter records are mostly coastal. A Long-eared Owl was heard in Alum Rock Park. Its ten-year absence from CBC records may reflect its reduced numbers in Northern California in recent years. A cemetery in Santa Clara produced both a Red-naped Sapsucker and a pure Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker.

Perhaps the most exciting bird of the day was a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Alviso. Sharp-tails breed in Siberia and are generally seen in this area as fall migrants headed for wintering grounds in the Southern Pacific. Its appearance this late in the year is most unusual. Photographs taken that day will hopefully provide final proof of the bird's identity.

The tern, owl and sandpiper were tentatively accepted by the rare bird committee, although additional supporting materials have been requested on each bird from the observers.

Special thanks to the dinner committee for a great lasagna feed served to more than 85 hungry counters. And thank you counters, party leaders, section leaders, and rare bird committee for a great 1985 Christmas Bird Count.

It's not too early to be thinking about the '86 count, so mark your calendar for Sunday, December 21. 'Til then, good birding and a bright, happy year to everyone.

Jim & Sue Liskovec

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DINNER

The 1985 CBC Dinner was a big success. 82 people enjoyed lasagna, salad, French bread, dessert, wine and hot cider. Credit for cooking and cleanup go to the following volunteers. Many, many thanks for their help and contributions.

Gail Cheeseman, Linda Hagelin, Barbara Hamblton, Phil Hand, Sue Liskovec, Deborah Manley, Mark and Judy McEuen, Nancy Norvell, Allen Royer, Pat Wheeler, Carol Zabel. Special thanks to Pat Wheeler for phoning cooks, Deborah Manley for extra help, and to Sue Liskovec and Mark and Judy McEuen for tireless, cheerful cooking and managing on the night of the dinner.

-Lynn Tennefoss

SAN JOSE CBC PARTICIPANTS

1985 San Jose Christmas Bird Count Participant List

Lynne Aldrich, Pauli Baggs, Marge Barnard, Ginny Becchine, Chris Benesh, Claudia Bonnet, William Bousman, Susie Brain, Phyllis Browning, Robert Buell, Sam Campbell, Chris Cassata, Jose Castillo, Derek Curral, Rigdon Currie, Maryann Danielson, Courtenay Dawson-Roberts, Jean Dubois, April Durran, Richard Elliott, Paula Fairchild, Marc Fenner, Aaron Fink, Peter Folen, Susie Formenti, Marilyn & Russel Fowler, Howard Friedman, Margaret Galvin, Ellen Gartside, Shirley Gehman, Bunny Gordon, Dean & Diane Gordon, Pat & Phil Gordon, Shirley Gordon, Peter Gottschling, Kathy Graves, Darrell Gray, Hazel Green, Betty Groce, Linda & Ron Hagelin, Barbara Hamblton, Phil Hand, Michealle Havenhill, Rich Healy, Jim Holman, Billy Howell, Grant Hoyt, Rick Hughes, Michael Hyde, Neil Jackson, Dorothy Johnson, David & Monica Johnston, Jim & Leona Jones, Sandy Kinchen, William Kirsher, Edwin Lack, Jonathan & Lenette Lawton, Valerie Layne, Jane Lee, Winkie Lennihen, Ellen Leonard, Jim & Sue Liakovec, Gerald & Gerry Livingaton, Linda Lloyd, Stephen Lloyd,

David Lonzarich, Dirk Maasen, Deborah Manley, Armando Martinez, Mari Matsueda, Gary McCurdy, Judy & Mark McEuen, John & Richard Mewaldt, Mark & Steve Miller, Minal Mistry, Michelle Morillo, Leslie Morrissey, Steve Muto, Dave Nauer, Paul Noble, Louise Nolette, Kathryn Parker, Larry Parmeter, Gayle Patrick, Vicki Pelton, Don Price, Pamela Price, Mary-Lyle Rempel, Jack & Virginia Reynolds, Elsie & Gerald Richey, Bob Roadcap, Allen Royer, Mark Sapsford, Kandice Scott, Milton Seibert, Carolyn Sherwood, Rob Shields, Steve Shugars, Vicki Silvas-Young, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Kepler Stone, Dick & Lennie Stovel, David Suddjian, Jean Swain, Phyllis Swanson, Alan & Karen Thomas, Barb Trask, Paul Travis, Ger Van Den Engh, Jerry Vitenson, Linda Wagner, Alan Walther, Jim & Shelly Warner, Leif Wennerberg, Henry Weston, Patricia Wheeler, Christine & Clair Wolfe, Marti Wolfe, Peg Woodin, Carol Zabel. (Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, & friends.)

Section leaders underlined.

SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Common Loon,1; Pied-billed Grebe,102; Horned Grebe,272; Eared Grebe,7993; Western Grebe,181; Western(Clark's)Grebe,2; American White Pelican,152; Double-crested Cormorant,420; American Bittern,23; Great Blue Heron,37; Great Egret,134; Snowy Egret,53; Green-backed Heron,3; Black-crowned Night Heron,175; Greater White-fronted Goose,13; Canada Goose,925; Wood Duck,12; Green-winged Teal,84; Mallard,589; Northern Pintail,354; Cinnamon Teal,78; Northern Shoveler,2252; Gadwall,194; American Wigeon,234; Canvasback,790; Redhead,35; Ring-necked Duck,119; Greater Scaup,34; Lesser Scaup,117; Scaup, Species,5; Surf Scoter,16; Common Goldeneye,75; Bufflehead,219; Hooded Merganser,5; Common Merganser,32; Red-breasted Merganser,43; Ruddy Duck,1742; Duck, Species,644; Turkey Vulture,41; Black-shouldered Kite,49; Bald Eagle(a),2; Northern Harrier,46; Sharp-shinned Hawk,6; Cooper's Hawk,7; Accipiter, Species,2; Red-shouldered Hawk,4; Red-tailed Hawk,170; Ferruginous Hawk,1; Buteo, Species,10; Golden Eagle(a),11; Golden Eagle(i),1; American Kestrel,132; Ring-necked Pheasant,149; California Quail,217; Clapper Rail,2; Virginia Rail,32; Sora,5; Common Moorhen,24; American Coot,2385; Black-bellied Plover,17; Snowy Plover,10; Killdeer,299; Black-necked Stilt,1230; American Avocet,1300; Greater Yellowlegs,22; Yellowlegs, Species,11; Willet,99; Spotted Sandpiper,6; Whimbrel,1; Long-billed Curlew,171; Marbled Godwit,134; Sanderling,31; Western Sandpiper,929; Least Sandpiper,997; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper,1; Dunlin,1277; Short-billed Dowitcher,3; Long-billed Dowitcher,193; Dowitcher, Species,348; Common Snipe,37; Sandpiper, Species,239; Peep, Species,181; Bonaparte's Gull,2922; Mew Gull,1592; Ring-billed Gull,1706; California Gull,4064; Herring Gull,3963; Thayer's Gull,8; Western Gull,1120; Glaucous-winged Gull,187; Gull, Species,22446; Caspian Tern,1; Forster's Tern,9; Rock Dove,2992; Band-tailed Pigeon,77; Mourning Dove,489; Common Barn Owl,1; Western Screech Owl,3; Great Horned Owl,5; Burrowing Owl,13; Long-eared Owl,1; Short-eared Owl,1; White-throated Swift,5; Anna's Hummingbird,198; Belted Kingfisher,20; Acorn Woodpecker,83; Red-naped Sapsucker,1; Red-breasted Sapsucker,10; Nuttall's Woodpecker,69; Downy Woodpecker,6; Hairy Woodpecker,4; Northern Flicker,144; Northern(Yellow-shafted)Flicker,1; Woodpecker, Species,3; Black Phoebe,127; Say's Phoebe,16; Steller's Jay,237; Scrub Jay,429; Yellow-billed Magpie,257; American Crow,113; Common Raven,1; Chestnut-backed Chickadee,219; Plain Titmouse,153; Bushtit,930; White-breasted Nuthatch,19; Brown Creeper,10; Rock Wren,5; Bewick's Wren,53; Winter Wren,4; Marsh Wren,107; American Dipper,3; Golden-crowned Kinglet,2; Ruby-crowned Kinglet,174; Western Bluebird,77; Hermit Thrush,52; American Robin,731; Varied Thrush,28; Wrentit,18; Northern Mockingbird,137; California Thrasher,3; Water Pipit,200; Cedar Waxwing,744; Loggerhead Shrike,86; European Starling,4194; Hutton's Vireo,6; Yellow-rumped Warbler,152; Yellow-rumped(Myrtle)Warbler,1; Yellow-rumped(Audubon's)Warbler,100; Townsend's Warbler,8; Common Yellowthroat,35; Rufous-sided Towhee,74; Brown Towhee,492; Rufous-crowned Sparrow,17; Lark Sparrow,79; Savannah Sparrow,166; Fox Sparrow,8; Song Sparrow,609; Lincoln's Sparrow,28; Golden-crowned Sparrow,1097; White-crowned Sparrow,2279; Dark-eyed Junco,811; Red-winged Blackbird,2729; Tricolored Blackbird,317; Western Meadowlark,980; Brewer's Blackbird,4559; Blackbird, Species,3316; Purple Finch,40; House Finch,2322; Pine Siskin,15; Lesser Goldfinch,328; American Goldfinch,72; House Sparrow,124; Sparrow, Species,268;

THE GRAND TOTALS: 101296 BIRDS OF 157 SPECIES.

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

Preliminary information is in from the Christmas Bird Counts. Palo Alto had 178 species, an astounding performance. Eight species were new to the count. To a significant degree this total was due to scouting and staking out birds. The San Jose count totals are not firm, but achieved about 162 species which is a good, though not record, performance. The Mt. Hamilton count numbers are tentative, but totals were down. Notable was the sighting of Halley's Comet at the countdown dinner held at Lick Observatory courtesy of the Bakers.

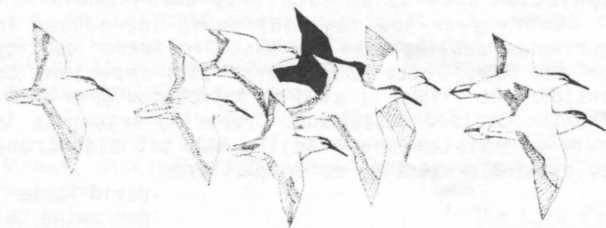
A **Common Loon** at Shoreline Lake was well seen on 7 Dec (Al Eisner-AE, James Yurchenko-JY, Amy Lauterbach-AL) and 8 Dec (Lynn Teneffoss-LT, Allen Royer-AR). Another was found on Calaveras Res. 29 Dec for the San Jose CBC (AR, Steve Shugars fide Jim & Sue Liskovec-J&SL). The **Red-necked Grebe** found at Shoreline Lake in November was seen there through 14 Dec (David Suddjian-DSu,AE,JY,AL). On 18 Dec a **Red-necked Grebe** was off Ravenswood Point (Ken Lajoie fide Clark Blake-CB) -- probably the same bird. Most **Brown Pelicans** leave the south bay before December, so four at Charleston Slough 8 Dec (LT,AR) and one at Shoreline Lake 18 Dec (DSu) are of interest. A **Green-backed Heron** in the Matadero riparian area continued to be seen with sightings on 11 and 18 Dec (DSu). Three were also found on the San Jose CBC including one in Alum Rock Park (Dave Johnston-DJ fide J&SL) and another along Guadalupe River at the San Jose airport (Grant Hoyt-GH et al. fide J&SL). **Greater White-fronted Geese** are extremely rare in the county so three at Calaveras Res. 29 Dec were a good find (Dick Elliott et al. fide J&SL). Seven **Blue-winged Teal** were found in the Palo Alto FCB 18 Dec where they've been since September (DSu). Three **Eurasian Wigeon** were in the vicinity of the Palo Alto FCB and Charleston Slough on 8 Dec for the SCVAS trip there (LT,AR). One was seen in Adobe Creek 15 Dec (DSu). On 18 Dec three were at the Sunnyvale sewage treatment area (Ed Helley-EH et al. fide CB) and two on Bear Gulch Res. (Arthur Bailey, Bill Kirsher fide CB). The **Redhead** flock in the Palo Alto FCB built to 150 birds by 2 Dec (Paul Noble-PN) -- the CBC total may be higher. They started wintering there in 1981. Good numbers were found on the San Jose CBC with 20 in Alviso (PN fide J&SL) and 15 on a small pond east of Guadalupe Creek and south of Hwy 237 (Ger Van den Engh). We rarely find **Barrow's Goldeneyes** wintering in the south bay so a total of seven found at the east end of Shoreline Park and the Sunnyvale sewage treatment area on 18 Dec was unusual (EH et al. fide CB). The **Hooded Mergansers** at the SkyLonda Pond numbered six on 15 Dec, and were also seen there on count day. Five were at Cherry Flat Res on 29 Dec (Dorothy Johnson fide J&SL). **Red-breasted Mergansers** were in good numbers in the salt ponds north of Alviso on 29 Dec with 43 reported (PN,DSu,David Lonzarich). Perhaps these ocean mergansers are attracted to the increased salinity of the salt ponds as opposed to the open waters of the south bay. An **Osprey** at the San Jose airport on 22 Dec (Dick Stovel-DSt et al.) was at an unusual location. They're very rare locally in December. Two adult **Bald Eagles** were found on Calaveras Res. on 29 Dec where they winter most years (Phil & Pat Gordon, Kep Stone, LT,AR). A **Ferruginous Hawk** was found at the San Jose airport 29 Dec (GH fide J&SL). Both adult and immature birds were found on the Isabel Res. on 2 Jan (Don Schmoltdt-DSc) and another adult in San Antonio Valley the same day (fide DSc). These are representative numbers for this rare wintering species. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was found along Russian Ridge on the Palo Alto CBC for one of the few recent records (WGB). It appears that this is an invasion year for this species, at least along the coast (CB). A **Merlin** was found in midtown Palo Alto on 31 Dec

(DSt). Another was found in San Antonio Valley on 2 Jan on the Mt. Hamilton CBC. At least one **Peregrine Falcon** has been found locally in December. On 8 Dec one was found near Charleston Slough (LT,AR). This bird or another was along Bayfront Park on 16 and 18 Dec (DSu). A number of **Prairie Falcon** reports rounded out this falcon winter. One was on the ITT lands on 30 Nov and probably the same bird was at the Palo Alto dump on 18 Dec (DSu). On the Mt. Hamilton CBC a pair was found on the Isabel Res. (DSc) and another in San Antonio Valley the same day. December high tides weren't very high, but at least two **Black Rails** were found at the Palo Alto Baylands 11 Dec (DSu,Betty Groce-BG fide DSu). Active night time censusing of rails with tapes on the Palo Alto CBC gives some perspective on the size of their winter populations (all DSu). Thirty-six **Clapper Rails** were counted from the Palo Alto Baylands south to the levee on the FCB. **Virginia Rails** were found along the bay and in hillside ponds with 5 in the slough by the Palo Alto airport levee, 4 in the Mountain View Forebay, 6 in Monte Bello OSP, and 2 in the pond at Skyline OSP. **Sora** included 4 along the airport levee, 3 in the Mountain View Forebay, 3 in the Palo Alto FCB, and one at Monte Bello OSP. Five **Snowy Plover** were found on Ravenswood Point north of the Dumbarton Bridge 18 Dec (DSu). At least 10 were found north of Alviso on 29 Dec (PN,DS fide J&SL). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was found in the Palo Alto FCB 14 Dec for one of our few winter records (JY,AL). **Whimbrel** are rare outside of their spring and fall passage so one at Charleston Slough 15 and 18 Dec is of interest (DSu) as is one along the airport levee at the Palo Alto Baylands 21 Dec (DSt). Of all the CBC sightings probably most astounding was a **Pectoral/Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** found in Alviso 29 Dec (PN et al.). Detailed photographs were obtained, but the identification is not yet certain (to be continued). A jaeger was found in Charleston Slough 9 Dec (Mary W. Smith) and was later identified as a **Parasitic Jaeger**. It stayed at least through 18 Dec to become a first record for the Palo Alto CBC (DSu). The few jaeger records we have are of fall migrants with the exception of birds that have apparently latched on to a gull flock and spent the winter. This winter's bird is fond of Forster's Terns, which appear to be in substantially higher numbers this year. The first-winter **Glaucous Gull** found in October continues to be seen with sightings on 15 and 18 Dec at Shoreline Park (DSu). David Suddjian is convinced that there are two birds present. **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were found on the Palo Alto CBC with one at Foothills Park and another on Langley Hill Road. At least two **Short-eared Owls** were found in the Palo Alto FCB on 18 Dec (Bob Roback-BR,Andy Kratter-AK,DSu) and on 27 Dec as well. Another was seen at Alviso on 29 Dec (DSu). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were also in good numbers on 18 Dec with one at Skyline OSP and two in Monte Bello OSP (DSu). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** is now considered a species separate from the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and two were found on CBCs this winter for first records. A male was found at Jasper Ridge on 18 Dec, undoubtedly the same bird found there in November (Carol Zabel, Phil Hand, Jean Shurtleff). Another male was found on the San Jose CBC in the Santa Clara Cemetery (Mark & Steve Miller et al.). There are fewer than ten records for this extremely rare winter visitor; the first from 1893. Winter swallow records are rare. Four **Violet-green Swallows** along Matadero riparian on 3 Dec and at the Palo Alto dump 18 Dec are the most likely swallow for this side of the bay (DSu). Extremely rare was the report of an immature **Barn Swallow** seen at SLAC on 27 Dec (Karen Krieger fide DSu). A **Winter Wren** at the Matadero riparian on 3 Dec may be the last of the fall migrants or a wintering bird (DSu). Three

FIELD NOTES

were found in Alum Rock Park on 29 Dec (DJ fide J&SL) and another at the end of Old Sweigert Road (J&SL) the same day. Most of the Winter Wrens found on the west side of the valley are thought to be resident birds, while the east side birds are clearly winter visitors. Three **American Dipper** were found at Alum Rock Park on 29 Dec (DJ fide J&SL). A few **Orange-crowned Warbler** reports are expected each winter. One found along San Francisquito Creek below Middlefield Road 3 Dec (DSu) was refound on 18 and 25 Dec. Another was in Monte Sereno on 10 Dec (PN), and yet another in the Matadero Creek riparian 18 Dec (DSu). **Palm Warblers** are found every other year or so - one was found below the Matadero Creek riparian on 11 Dec and again on count day (DSu). The area near the ITT lands and the Palo Alto FCB yield most of our records. A **Wilson's Warbler** found in Rancho San Antonio in oak woodland 18 Dec is one of our few winter records (Patrick Congdon). Reports of four to five wintering **Western Tanagers** have been received, almost all associated with flowering eucalyptus. A female was found along San Francisquito Creek at Sunset Gardens on 13 Dec and was refound on 15 and 18 Dec (DSu). A male was there on 14 Dec (Phyllis Browning-PB) and still had red on his head. Apparently the same male was refound on 3 Jan, but his head was now completely yellow. A second bird was found on the Palo Alto CBC in Los Altos (PB, BG, G. Ragsone fide CB). Others found included a female in Monte Sereno on 21 Dec and another in Los Altos 22 Dec (both PN). A **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** in Monte Bello OSP 18 Dec (Jeanne Jones fide CB) was from an area where they are occasionally found, but still unexpected. This is the third winter of below normal rainfall - does this cause an increase in dry county birds? Two wintering **Chipping Sparrows** were found on the Palo Alto Golf and Country Club 14 Dec. A single **Sage Sparrow** was found in chamise at the Foothills OSP on 18 Dec (Peter LaTourrette fide CB). They have nested here in the past. A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was along the airport levee at the Palo Alto Baylands on the 11 Dec high tide (BG, DSu). This species is still under review by the California Rare Bird Committee and a full description should be submitted for their examination. A **White-throated Sparrow** continued to be seen at a Menlo Park feeder and was counted on the Palo Alto CBC (BG). Another was seen on San Francisquito Creek below Middlefield on 25 Dec. Perhaps the biggest surprise on the Palo Alto CBC was the discovery of seven **Lapland Longspurs** at Menlo Park's Bayfront Park on 18 Dec (DSu). They were with a large flock of Horned Larks and feeding on graded land in a large open section of the park. This is the furthest south that they have been found in the bay. This might be the winter that they will first be found in the county. One or two **Hooded Orioles** are found each winter, but not often on the CBCs. The male seen along San Francisquito Creek (DSu) was a first for the Palo Alto count. Also new for the count was a **Northern Oriole** found along Stevens Creek in Mountain View, again near flowering eucalyptus (PN). A **Red Crossbill** was heard in Monte Bello OSP on 18 Dec (BR, AK).

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).

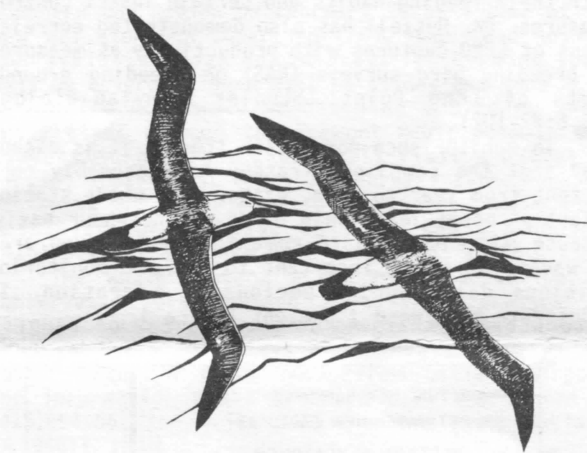


FIELD TRIP REPORT

On December 8, 25 birders saw over 50 species of winter water birds on a half day walk. We began a little after 9 o'clock on the inland side of the freshwater Forebay and saw Common Moorhen, Sora and a quick look at a Virginia Rail.

From the levee between Charleston Slough and the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, we saw three male Eurasian Wigeon and were able to compare them side by side with male American Widgeon. Overhead was a small dark falcon soaring and diving - consensus was Merlin. Then, a larger, but lighter falcon with a mask, brown streaked underparts, but with a lighter tail than back and wings - consensus was...Peregrine! We saw an excellent variety of ducks and shorebirds, as well as the following uncommon-to-rare birds - Common Loon and Common Goldeneye in the Sailing Lake, 4 Brown Pelican overhead, 2 Greater Yellowlegs in the Forebay, several Forster's Tern in the Slough, and a Common Raven soaring over the radio towers.

-Allen Royer
Lynn Tennefoss



HOW TO HELP MONO LAKE

The future of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic area is in your hands.

Early this year the Inyo National Forest will be soliciting public participation in the development of a comprehensive management plan for the 57,000 acre Scenic Area.

The plan will address issues such as roads, campgrounds, trails, interpretive facilities, hunting, grazing and off-the-road vehicle use. The challenge will be to provide for appropriate development and activities while preserving the natural and ecological integrity of the lands surrounding Mono Lake.

The first public meeting will be held in Lee Vining and will address historical recreational uses within the Scenic Area. If there is sufficient interest, future meetings will be convened in San Francisco, Sacramento and Los Angeles as well. It is essential that meetings to be held outside the Mono Basin to make sure that the Forest Service hears from as many people as possible who care about the Scenic Area.

Please contact: Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, P.O. Box 10, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

Please ask: 1) to be placed on their mailing list for announcements of all public meetings and workshop, 2) that a public meeting or workshop be held in your area.

This is your opportunity to play a part in the future of Mono Basin. Please write today.

-Mono Lake Committee

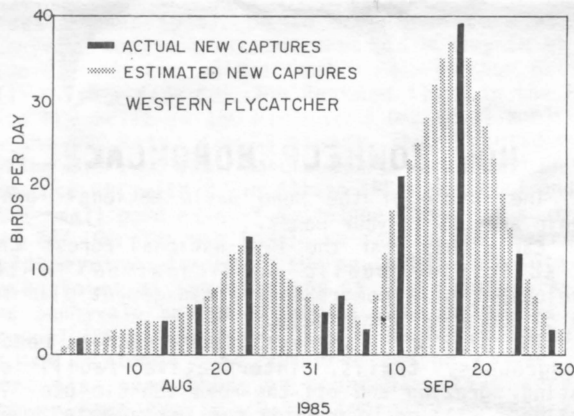
HOW MANY WESTERN FLYCATCHERS? AND WHY?

(The Coyote Creek Riparian Station is a project of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. To participate, call (408)946-6548.)

Can a long-term objective of Coyote Creek Riparian Station be to measure year-to-year variation in populations of broad-front migrant birds such as the Western Flycatcher? As SFBBO grows, the banding station will grow with it, so that the answer to the above question will be yes. Biomonitoring can be used to detect continental trends in bird populations. These trends, in turn, seem to be sensitive indicators of environmental change.

Changes in numbers of passage migrants, as detected at a bird observatory, can be indicators of widespread natural and man-induced environmental changes. For example, David Hussell at Long Point Bird Observatory in Ontario, pioneering in such studies, found striking correlations between numbers of certain species of wood warblers netted and banded in the fall at LPBO and widespread forest insect infestations further north. These warblers were, by species, variously affected in accordance with their feeding habits and certain insect control measures. Dr. Hussell has also demonstrated correlations of LPBO captures with productivity as measured in breeding bird surveys (NAS) on breeding grounds north of Long Point (Studies in Avian Biology No. 6:92-102).

To monitor such population trends, it is essential that the sampling strategy be reasonably consistent from year to year, either on a whole station effort -- or at least on a birds-per-net-hour basis. Because migrants tend to come through a given area in waves, it seems important to operate monitoring stations daily during periods of migration. To illustrate this need I present Figure 1.



In August and September of this year we operated CCRS mist nets on eleven days: 4, 14, 18, 24 August and 2, 4, 7, 11, 18, 25 and 29 September (Figure 1). We captured from 2 to 39 new Western Flycatchers on those 11 dates for a total of 116. Question: How many would we have captured if we had been operating daily? An interpolation estimate, as shown in Figure 1, suggests 681 Western Flycatchers. But how different would it have been had we captured only 15 on 18 September or, if we netted on 13 September and caught only 3? Or, if we had caught 57 on 13 September? Or, those 57 on 26 August? There seems to be no real substitute for operating daily during periods of migration.

Another point should be made here. The estimate of 681 Western Flycatchers in August and September 1985 is reasonable. The error of estimate, however, may be as much as plus or minus 250 (guess only); thus the total may have been 431 to even 931. Table 1 (data obtained from the North American Bird Bander) puts these capture numbers into perspective.

Table 1 .. Western Flycatchers banded in Western North America as tabulated by the Western Bird Banding Association in NABB.

Year	All Western North America	Highest Bander Total	Bander
1981	402	303	PRBO
1982	400	318	PRBO
1983	409	280	PRBO
1984	433	360	PRBO

It is clearly evident, that unless 1985 was an exceptional year, our Aug-Sept catch portends the importance of CCRS as a potential biomonitoring station. Even a conservative extension of only our Aug-Sept captures (e.g. 431) is nearly as great as the entire annual capture totals 1981 to 1984 for western North America including Canada and Mexico. The totals for Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) are for Palomarin (operating daily) and for the Farallons. These figures are, in fact, comparable to our captures of Western Flycatchers on the Wool Ranch (just 8. km ENE of CCRS) in the early 1970's. Operating daily from the last week of August and all of September in 1970 we captured 169; operating daily about half of August and all of September in 1971 we captured 408. In 1971 the western North American total was 748 of which the ABL of SJSU (Wool Ranch) contributed 456 (including spring captures) and PRBO 275 (231 at Palomarin and 44 on S.E. Farallon Island).

Yes, there is the opportunity for CCRS to serve in the future as a critical biomonitoring station for western North America. Working in concert, PRBO's Palomarin Station, PRBO's Farallon Island Station, and SFBBO's Coyote Creek Riparian Station could well form the nucleus of a major western North American biomonitoring effort.

-L. Richard Mewaldt,
in the SFBBO Newsletter

WATER QUALITY AND THE STRIPED BASS

The Striped Bass is a popular introduced game fish in California. Like Steelhead Trout and Salmon, it spends part of its life in the ocean and returns each year to the delta and rivers of the Sacramento Valley in order to breed. It's odd to think that we, as birdwatchers, should be concerned about a sport fish and an introduced one at that. However, the Striped Bass is seen by many biologists and conservationists as a good indicator of water quality needed for much of the wildlife connected with this broad habitat.

Every year, for over 35 years, the California Department of Fish and Game has conducted a survey of young Striped Bass in the San Joaquin Delta and the Sacramento River. This year's survey recorded the population at the lowest level ever measured, 30% below the worst previous reduction in 1977, a severe drought year. The Striped Bass population has been lower than predicted for a number of years and increasing levels of pollutants and water diversions are suspected reasons. This year's crash in population size is particularly worrisome.

Every year new legislation is introduced in Sacramento dealing with the issues of water quality for our bay, delta and rivers. It's important to consider the plight of even an introduced game fish, like the Striped Bass, when preparing arguments in favor of maintaining wildlife habitat and strong legislation projecting water quality.

-David Foote
Burrowing Owl

MOUNTAIN LIONS

A proposal has come before the California Fish and Game Commission to slaughter the entire Mountain Lion population in the North Kings River area of the Sierra National Forest.

Jack Parnell, Director of the Calif. Department of Fish and Game presented the proposal to the Commission that a "research study" be conducted on the effect of predation by the Mountain Lion on the North Kings River California Mule Deer herd.

The Mountain Lion population in the proposed study area is estimated to consist of 30 adults and 8-11 kittens. If the go-ahead is given, all of these animals, plus 50% of the animals in a surrounding buffer zone, plus any mountain lions that move in from adjacent lands to fill the vacant territories once held by the slaughtered Mountain Lions, over a 5-year period, will be killed.

Calif. Fish and Game representatives state that this research study is necessary to determine what impact the Mountain Lion has had on the steady decline of the deer population in that area.

Since this particular subspecies of the California Mule Deer is not endangered, threatened or a species of special concern and in fact is abundant in California, why does the Department consider the decline (over 30 years) of this particular population a situation serious enough to warrant the slaughter of such a large number of a previously threatened species? (There are hundreds of thousands of this particular species of deer in California. At present it is estimated that there are only 4,800 Mountain Lions in California).

If the Department of Fish and Game is seriously concerned about the decline of the population of deer in this area, why have they not halted annual hunting in the North Kings River area? In addition, why have they not halted the grazing of domestic cattle (which destroy young browse growth while trampling through the forest, and which compete with deer for a few types of vegetation) in this area?

Since Mountain Lions are solitary animals and are fiercely territorial, and Mountain Lions are present throughout the Sierras and other areas throughout the state, and since other locations such as Plumas County who report a growing population of Mountain Lions, do not report a decline in their deer populations, isn't it more likely that there are other factors such as human encroachment and resulting lack of "escape cover" from spreading development, logging, human poaching (a growing problem in the Bay Area), PG&E power projects, hunting and domestic animal grazing which are having an impact on the deer population in this area?

Although the Dept. of Fish and Game reports a dramatic increase in the population of Mountain Lions, isn't it more likely, as Dept. representatives report, that the techniques used to count the number of Mountain Lions in a given area have been dramatically improved over the past few years with the use of telemetry.

Senate Bill 76, which would have extended the moratorium on killing Mountain Lions, was vetoed by Gov. Deukmejian, and the Mountain Lion was reclassified as a large game animal Jan. 1. (It is possible that lions will once again be hunted for sport.) Two days later, the Commission will be reviewing this "research study" proposal.

Is the state moving too quickly to repeat the same mistakes that have caused this magnificent animal to become endangered or threatened in many states, including our own?

If you are concerned, please send your concerns to: California Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. They need to hear from you soon.

-The Kite Call

MONO LAKE WINE DRAWING

Two \$1000 fine wine cellars will be raffled off on March 21, 1986 to benefit Mono Lake. Only 500 tickets will be sold at \$50 per ticket - tax deductible towards saving Mono Lake.

Gerald Asher, distinguished Wine Editor of Gourmet Magazine, has selected a superb group of 1982 Grand Cru Bordeaux and Burgundies including a Magnum of Chateau Lafite Rothschild for The Mono Lake Committee. Herbert Cerwin, of Cerwin & Peck, San Francisco consultants, has donated some 1950 and 1960 rare and hard to find Cabernet Sauvignons from his private collection of early vintage California wines.

If you would like more information and tickets, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Grace de Laet, Board Member, The Mono Lake Committee, 37 Calhoun Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94133.

NON-AUDUBON EVENTS

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

Pete Allen will talk on Birding Spots of the Southern Bay Region on February 20 at 7 p.m. at the new REI store in Cupertino (2640 Homestead Road at Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road). Free. Ten birding spots will be covered. There will be slides and maps.

Alice Hoch will be teaching a Birding Field Trips class through the Fremont Adult School. Each Tuesday morning the class will visit a different birding spot. First class is February 25th. For both beginning and experienced birdwatchers. Car-pooling possible. For details, call the Adult School at (415)791-5841 or Alice Hoch at (415)657-0475.

The Whale Center, a non-profit education and conservation organization is offering cruises and flights to see the migration of the Gray Whales. Cruises leave Saturdays and Sundays from Pillar Point Harbor. Flights leave from Oakland airport. For information and a brochure call the center at (415)654-6621 or write 3929 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, CA 94611.

The Youth Science Institute is offering a trip to Death Valley and the Panamint Mtns. to study the native flora and fauna March 22-29. Cost is \$165-175. Tents, food and transportation will be provided. For ages 12-adult -- families welcome. For more information call (408)356-4945.

Mary-Lyle Rempel has spaces for 5 on a non-profit Galapagos cruise July 15-22. Cost \$740-855 (depending on number of passengers), including naturalist guide throughout, food, tips, Darwin Research Center fee, but not airfare (about \$1,000) or Baltra/Quito hotels. Full itinerary including Hood, Tower, climbing Alcedo Volcano to see nesting giant tortoises. Call (408)354-9973 evenings, or write to 17831 Skyline Blvd., Los Gatos 95030.

Second Annual River Running: "The Art & Politics" Conference presented by Friends of the River. It will be held on the Sacramento City College campus March 22-23 at 3835 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento, CA. Join us for this fun and educational forum on the art of river running and the politics of keeping the rivers we love flowing free. Features keynote speakers, workshops, equipment sales, swap and auction, videos, training sessions and much more! Call Ingrid or Laurie at F.O.R. for more information (916)442-3155.

A 7-day birding tour will go from Northern Virginia to Norfolk, Chincoteague/Assateague, Bombay Hook, Cape May, Maryland and return to Northern Virginia May 6 to 13. This is at the height of the Eastern spring warbler migration. Leader Erika Wilson. Further information available from Don Peterson, Cardinal Birding Tours, P.O. Box 7495, Alexandria, Virginia 22307. (703)360-4183.

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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.

OWL SEMINAR

Here's an opportunity to polish your skills, increase your knowledge, and raise money for an excellent cause! On Saturday, March 1st, Jon Winter will give a full-day seminar at the Marin Civic Center, Marin County, covering vocalizations, behavior, and adaptations of North American owls, with an emphasis on identification. He will also provide invaluable 'how-to' owling tips and techniques. There will be a question period, and useful discussions.

Jon is one of North America's premier experts on owls and is currently assembling materials and recordings for the upcoming "Owls of North America: a Field Guide to Songs and Calls," co-sponsored by the American Birding Association and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Jon is also the foremost expert on the Sierra's Great Gray Owls, having spent the last 6+ years studying them in the field.

This seminar is being presented by Pacific Adventures; all profits will go to American Birds magazine, National Audubon's journal of bird study. The program will be introduced by Kurt Campbell, regional editor of American Birds.

For information call (707)795-8492. To make reservations, send \$17.50 per person (payable to Pacific Adventures) with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Pacific Adventures, P.O. Box 268, Cotati, CA 94928.

AVOCET SUBSCRIBERS

If you subscribe separately to the Avocet (and therefore are not a SCVAS-affiliated NAS member), the expiration date of your subscription is shown on your mailing label. We will mail you a notice when your yearly fee is due, or you can save us the stamp, and mail it in ahead of time!

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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CONDORS -- WHERE TO WRITE

The National Audubon Society is protesting in the strongest terms possible the current Fish and Wildlife Service project to capture all the remaining California Condors and place them in captivity. NAS believes that if this is done, the future of the condor as an element of the natural landscape will in all likelihood disappear.

The FWS claims that sufficient condor habitat is available for future release, but NAS believes that with no condors in the wild, various cooperative agreements at the county level will unravel. The critically important Hudson Ranch will not be purchased, even though funds have been appropriated. There are no sites in federal ownership with the characteristics of a successful release site.

If you share these views, let government officials know. Write or call:

Eugene Hester, Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240, (202)343-4717.

William Horn, Asst. Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, (202)343-4416.

Please also send a copy of your letter(s) to Secretary of the Interior Donald P. Hodel, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

IN MEMORIAM

A donation has been received in memory of Edith Nordlund, from Sally, Craig and Courtney Nordlund.

SCVAS has also received a donation from the estate of Shelby Evans.