

**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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1137g  
Mr Alan M Eisner  
3538 Farm Hill Blvd #4  
Redwood City, CA 94061

Volume 33, Number 5

May 1986

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

**Field Trip Coordinator for May - Bill Clark (415)326-7565**

- May 2 **Bird Seed Sale Pickup.** Friday, Noon to 6 pm. Peninsula Conservation Center, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto. For pre-ordered seed buyers.
- May 3 **Bird Seed Sale Pickup.** Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm. See above.
- May 3 **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 I-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 7 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm, Baylands Interpretive Center. Program still undecided. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- May 10 **Mines Rd. and Del Puerto Canyon.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Full day. Take Livermore Ave. S from flagpole in center of Livermore 0.7 miles to Nob Hill Shopping Center on left. Meet in far end of lot facing Pacific Ave. and Civic Center. We must carpool from here because of limited pull-off space. Bring lunch, liquids, full tank of gas. No facilities en route. Specialties include: Lewis' Woodpecker, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Phainopepla, Canyon Wren. Leaders: Lynn Aldrich and Peter Gottschiling (415)325-9349.
- May 13 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Puffins.
- May 14 **South County Field Trip.** Wednesday, 8 am. Los Gatos Creek. Meet at the Los Gatos Library on Main St. Take Santa Cruz or University Ave. S. from Saratoga-Los Gatos Blvd. Go left on Main St. to library. Leader: Gary McCurdy (408)395-2763.
- May 17 **Montebello Open Space Preserve.** Saturday 8 am. Half day. Meet at the Preserve's parking lot on upper Page Mill Rd. Possible highlights include Grasshopper Sparrow, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Leader: David Suddjian (408)479-9603.
- May 20,21,22 **Coal Mine Ridge - Bonus Trip.** Tues, Wed or Thurs. 8:30 am. Small groups are best, so Phil Hand volunteered to repeat this popular trip. Take Hwy 280 to Alpine, S about 3.2 miles to stop sign at Portola Rd. Continue on Alpine 0.9 mile to parking on the right, just before Willowbrook. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.
- May 21 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero. Doug Cheeseman will present slides of his 1984 trip to the Galapagos. Rick Carver has also prepared a masterpiece slide show of his Galapagos trip last August, accompanied by music. The two shows will be both educational and aesthetic.
- May 24 **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.** Saturday 8:30 am. Half day. From I-280 take Foothill Expwy - Grant Rd. exit S. on Foothill Blvd. Turn right on Cristo Rey Drive. Go past Gates of Heaven Cemetery approximately 1.5 miles to third parking area. Meet near restrooms. Leader: Pete Latourrette (415)961-2741.
- May 28 **Montebello Open Space Preserve.** Wednesday 8:30 am. Half day. Informal carpooling from Park & Ride lot W 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 S side. Leader: Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Jun 11 **South County Field Trip.** 9 am. Neary Lagoon and Antonelli Pond, Santa Cruz. Meet in the parking lot beside the tennis courts at Neary Lagoon on California. Take Rt. 1 N from 17. Turn left on Bay St. and left on California and take the first right turn into the park. Leader: Irene Manici (408)476-8309.
- Jun 18 **Annual Dinner.** Wednesday, 6 pm. Los Altos. Details in June Newsletter.

## SAVING BAY WETLANDS

At the March meeting in Asilomar of all the western Audubon Chapters, one subject was chosen for top priority -- wetlands preservation. Whether we consider it a challenge or a privilege, our chapter is one with the highest number of acres of those precious lands at risk. In keeping with that goal, our Environmental Action Committee continues its efforts on behalf of the Citizens Committee to Complete the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Well over 1000 names have been obtained on petitions urging acquisition of these lands by the public. 800 of those were gathered during 5 days at a booth at the popular Sportsmen's Exposition at the San Mateo County Fairgrounds. Often the young hunters and fishermen lectured us about their observations of shocking declines in waterfowl and fisheries, and demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the role of the loss of wetlands in those declines. Their enthusiasm and support will be an asset to this campaign.

First goal for acquisition is Mayhew's Landing, an important seasonal wetland in Newark. It is adjacent to the Refuge, and its 125 acres provide critical feeding and nesting sites for dozens of species of birds and mammals. This beautiful piece of open space is in imminent danger of permanent loss.

If wetlands preservation is important to you, please join in. We need people who would like to help do any of the following: plan publicity for radio, newspapers, TV; educate political figures to wetland values; address envelopes or lick stamps; place a bumper strip on your car; carry around petitions (well, how about signing one at least?); help plan our next brochure; organize files; and search public records (for land owners, development plans, etc.).

All manner of persons for general support are welcome. Call Barbara Hamblton (Chair, SCVAS Environmental Action Committee) (408)446-3645, or Florence LaRiviere (415)493-5540.

## NON-AUDUBON CLASSES

Doug and Gail Cheeseman are offering 5 international wildlife tours for 1987. May 1-24, Kenya with naturalist Terry Stevenson; June 21-July 5, the Galapagos with photographer Rick Carver and resident guide; June 26-July 25, Brazil with leaders Paul Donahue, Chris Hrdina, and the Cheesemans; July 29-August 23, Galapagos and Peru with Dave Johnston and resident naturalist Barry Walker; and August 7-29, Queensland and New Guinea with the Cheesemans and local naturalists. Check with them for itineraries and costs at (408)741-5330.

Golden Trout Camp is a semi-primitive camp at 10,000 feet. Near Mt. Whitney, it can be reached by a 2.5 mile trail. There are dormitory tents. Meals provided. Daily hikes with naturalists are scheduled. Sponsored by 6 Southern California Audubon chapters, the cost is \$150/adult/week. Children are less. There are 3 weekly sessions. If interested, call or write Cindi McKernan, 40 Sherril Lane, Redlands, CA 92373 (714)793-7897.

## OWL PELLETS NEEDED

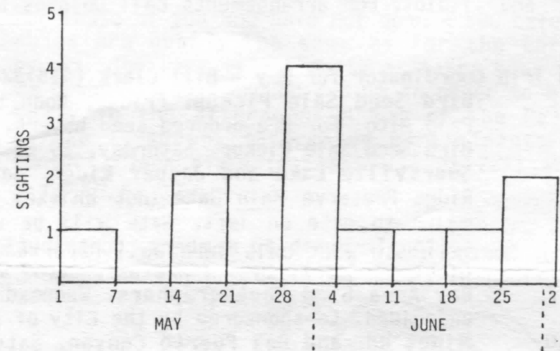
The Environmental Education Center in Alviso needs a constant supply of owl pellets for use with school children in the lab. The center teaches owl pellet dissection as part of the environmental curriculum.

Please call Karen or Fran at the Center, (408)262-5513

--Lee Lovelady

## FIELD NOTES - David Suddjian

When most of us think of spring vagrant "Eastern" passerines, places like Point Reyes and various desert oases with a history of vagrant sightings come to mind. However, the records show that vagrants can appear almost anywhere. At dawn most migrants simply land where they are. A migrant finding itself over the desert heads for the nearest oasis where it can rest and feed. Similarly, many individuals that find themselves over the ocean at dawn head for the nearest land. Thus, the birds are concentrated at such sites. Local birders should be aware that Santa Clara Co. has 12 reported spring sightings involving 7 species of vagrant "Eastern" migrants. The records are summarized in the graph below by assigning each to a 7 day period between 1 May and 2 July. In two cases individuals present for more than 7 days have been graphed for the entire period they were present. Most records are of individuals seen on only one day. A 9 April record of a Black and White Warbler was omitted as it does not fit the pattern of occurrence of "Eastern" vagrants. The species represented on the graph and the number of sightings of each are: Tennessee Warbler (2), Magnolia Warbler (1), Black and White Warbler (2), Ovenbird (1), Scarlet Tanager (1), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (2) and Indigo Bunting (2).



The graph shows that sightings of "Eastern" vagrants primarily occur from early May through late June, with the most from mid-May to early June. This matches the trend for the whole of California. In contrast, the bulk of "normal" migration of these species and other "Eastern" vagrants occurs in the East from mid-April through mid-May. The causes behind spring occurrences of "Eastern" species in the West have been little studied and remain unclear. In his *Rare Birds of the West Coast* Don Roberson cites two theories that attempt to explain the causes of spring misorientation. A number of species migrate north through the Eastern half of the country and then reorient north-westwards to reach breeding sites in Central and Western Canada (as is true for 5 of the 7 species dealt with here). According to one theory, a number of individuals turn north-west too early and wind up in California and other Western sites, far south of their goal. The other theory claims that many sightings of "Eastern" vagrants represent birds that are late in leaving their wintering grounds. When they do migrate north, the stars (thought to be the stimulus for migration in many species) have shifted to the west. Thus the birds reorient to the north-west too soon and end up someplace like California. This theory would explain the seasonally late occurrence of many vagrants.

Birders hoping to find such vagrants in Santa Clara Co. are advised to look everywhere, and track down all unfamiliar calls and songs. A number of sightings have occurred in the suburbs, so maybe your backyard is a good place to start. This is especially true if you live near a creek, oaks, or flowering exotic plants such as eucalyptus. Other

## FIELD NOTES

likely spots to search include riparian areas and forested ridge areas, both of which have proven popular stops for migrants.

A **Pelagic Cormorant** was found off Ravenswood Point on 23 Feb (Maryann Danielson-MD, Jean-Marie Spoelman-JMS). This species is very rare this far down the Bay. A pair of **Wood Ducks** returned to last year's nesting site on San Francisquito Ck. in Menlo Park on 6 Mar (Betty Groce-BG). This winter's only reported **White-winged Scoter** was present with 3 **Surf Scoters** on Mountain View's Shoreline Lake on 9 Mar (David Suddjian-DS). An **Osprey** with a broken wing was found in a San Jose backyard on 19 Mar. The bird was captured and taken for care to Wildlife Rescue. It's not known how the bird was injured or how it ended up in the backyard. Two **Red-shouldered Hawks** were reported from Los Altos on 11 Mar (Sister Helen Gilsdorf). The imm. **Rough-legged Hawk** first reported from Monte Bello OSP in January was still present on 9 Mar (Paul Noble-PN). This is the latest date for the species in Santa Clara Co. A **Merlin** was stirring up the sandpipers at Charleston Slough on 26 Feb (April Durran). A **Peregrine Falcon** was at Shoreline Lake on 14 Mar (PN). A **Spotted Sandpiper** wintering along Los Gatos Ck. was seen on 3 Mar and again on 16 Mar, and was noted to be molting into breeding plumage (Gary McCurdy-GMcC). The **Glaucous Gull** was last seen on 2 Mar at the Palo Alto FCB, representing one of our few March records (Phyllis Browning). **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were reported from two sites with one along Hick's Rd near Almaden Reservoir on 6 and 7 Feb (John Mariani-JM), and 1 at Monte Bello OSP on 2 Mar (PN). A belated report of a **Long-eared Owl** along Hick's Rd on 11 Jan is one of the few recent county records. A **Short-eared Owl** was present at Menlo Park's Bay Front Park on 21 Feb (MD, JMS). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were well reported with 2 along Hick's Rd on 7 Feb and one noted on 13 Feb (JM). One was also found at Monte Bello OSP on 27 Feb, where two were noted on 2 Mar, and one on 5 and 24 Mar (all PN). A **Common Poorwill** heard along Hick's Rd during unseasonably warm weather on 21, 26 and 27 Feb was probably a wintering individual (JM, Mike Danzenbaker). These records are among the few bits of evidence that suggest this species winters in the county. A male **Costa's Hummingbird** was reported visiting a feeder at a residence in the Santa Cruz Mountains between Bear Ck Rd and Skyline Blvd on 12-14 Mar (Louise Madrid). This is the second Santa Cruz County record of this species. The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the season was at a

feeder in San Jose on 25 Feb (JM). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** found in November at Jasper Ridge Preserve was still present on 26 Feb (Carol Zabel). The first **Western Flycatcher** of the season was noted in Palo Alto on 22 Mar, about two weeks earlier than most years (DS). Returning swallows were reported as follows: **Violet-green Swallows** in Mountain View on 8 Mar (DS), **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** in Los Gatos on 8 Mar (GMcC), **Cliff Swallows** in Los Altos Hills on 7 Mar (Bob Will), and **Barn Swallows** in Mountain View on 2 Mar (William G. Bousman-WGB). Ever notice how the swallows are reported to return to Capistrano about two weeks after they reach the Bay Area? One **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was in Mountain View on 24 Feb and another was in Los Altos on 6 Mar (both PN). Three early returning **House Wrens** were at Monte Bello OSP on 26 Mar, almost a month ahead of last year's arrival at this site (DS). A singing **Winter Wren** along Steven's Ck in Los Altos on 1 Mar was in an area where they've not been seen before (Jim and Sue Liskovec). An **American Dipper** was still present along Los Gatos Ck on 8 and 16 Mar (GMcC). They are not known to nest here. One was present on 17 Mar (Al Eisner) along Steven's Ck above the Eden Canyon Rd turnoff, where they have nested. The first **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** of the season was noted in Woodside on 20 Mar (Winke Lennihan fide PN). The first **Warbling Vireo** of the season was a very early individual at Monte Bello OSP on 9 Mar (PN). **Orange-crowned Warblers** returned on schedule to Monte Bello OSP on 27 Feb (PN). The first **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Monte Bello OSP on 26 Mar was early, while the first **Wilson's Warbler**, same date and site, was perhaps more typical (both DS). The **White-throated Sparrow** wintering near a Menlo Park feeder was still present as of 6 Mar (BG). The **Lapland Longspurs** found on the Palo Alto CBC last December have remained at Menlo Park's Bay Front Park with 6 on 22 Feb (MD, JMS), 6 on 9 Mar and 4 on 22 Mar (both DS). Most wintering longspurs leave for the north in late March, so it would be of interest if these birds are seen past 22 Mar. Another **Lapland Longspur** was found on 15 Mar at Redwood Shores, east of Belmont (WGB). The first **Hooded Oriole** of the season was one in Los Altos on 24 Mar (PN). The first **Northern Oriole** was reported from Menlo Park on 23 Mar (WGB). These are typical arrival dates for our two orioles.

If you see an "uncommon to rare" species please write or call: David Suddjian, 1136 Callas Lane, #1, Capitola, CA 95010 (408)479-9603.

## SKYLINE RIDGE FIELD TRIP

Fourteen eager birders joined in the field trip to Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve on the 22nd of March. Although the valley was fogged in, it was warm and bright on the ridge. We hiked a 3 mile loop trail and were afforded beautiful views of Orange-crowned and Townsend's Warblers and a male Allen's Hummingbird. Also of interest was a Yellow-rumped Warbler in full breeding plumage and in full song. All told a total of 40 species were seen or heard on a most delightful day.

--Paul Noble

## DONATIONS

Donations to the Chapter have been received from C. Lynn Kraus, Pat Daily, and Catherine J. Scoyen. Thank you!!!

## WATER SAFETY FORUM

The public is invited to a forum on drinking water safety on Saturday, May 10, from 9:15 am to 12:30, at the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium (the Old Board of Supervisors Chambers), in the county building, 70 West Hedding, San Jose. The Forum is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara.

Experts from water companies, local and state government and Citizens for a Better Environment will discuss issues of drinking water safety including: the present and future quality of surface and underground drinking water supplies in the San Jose area; how drinking water standards are set; and if treatment of the drinking water at the well heads is necessary. Admission is free. Parking is available in the parking lot on Hedding Street across the street from the county building. For further information, call Sara Malaun (408)252-4323.

Staff	Lynn Tennefoss (days)	415/329-1811	<b>DIRECTORS (1984-87)</b>						
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Barbara Hambelton	408/446-3645		Programs	Doug & Gail	Grants	Donna Zetterquist	408/429-9716		
Roy Lowe	408/251-2323			Cheeseman	Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741		

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

Avocet deadline is the first Monday of the month. Send contributions to the editor, Levona Sterngold, 720 M Blair Court, Sunnyvale 94087.

## PCCF AUCTION AND RAFFLE

Among raffle prizes at the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation's 5th annual auction and raffle are a vacation for two in Maui, dinner at Chez Panisse with an evening at Gramma's Bed and Breakfast, weekend getaways at cabins in wilderness areas, and many others.

Festivities begin at 7 pm, Thursday May 22. At 7:30 the auction will begin with items like a balloon flight, a wine-tasting (at the Page Mill Winery!), trips, weekends, and a hunt for the 'Wild Orchid Eaters' (California wild boar). There will be music, wine, lemonade, and popcorn. For more information, call Lucile Spurlock (415)328-5313.

## BYLAWS CHANGE

The Bylaws Committee has suggested a change to the SCVAS Bylaws. The problem: The number of Directors currently authorized in the Bylaws is 15 - 5 officers, 9 directors-at-large, and 1 immediate past president. However, there is no specific provision to fill the vacancy of an immediate past president should she/he be unable to serve.

The proposed solution: Allow the current president, with approval of the Board, to fill any vacancy of the immediate past president position.

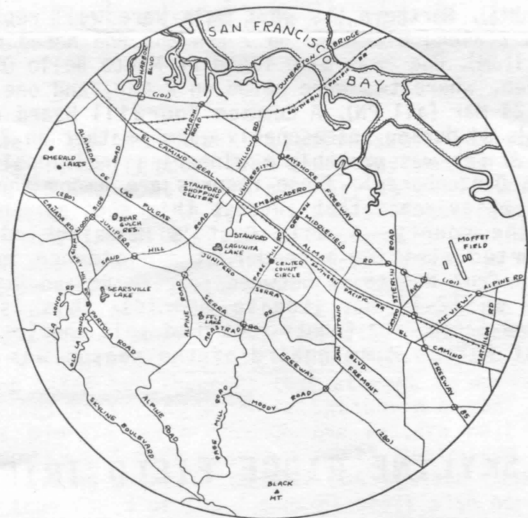
This is the way any other vacancy of officer or director is filled and thus is consistent with current practices.

Also, a name change will be considered: The Conservation Committee will be changed to the Environmental Action Committee.

Members will vote on these changes at the June general meeting.

## BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

Would you like a change of pace from those cold and rainy Christmas Bird Counts? Then join the sixth annual Palo Alto Breeding Bird Census on Saturday, June 7, 1986. All birders are invited to take part. For those of you who have not done a BBC before, the rules are nearly the same as for the Christmas counts. The pace is not quite as fast, however, and we generally quit around 2-3 pm in order to have the tally in the afternoon. A map of the Palo Alto circle is shown. Interested participants should contact Clark Blake (415/323-8111 ex. 2221 at work; 879-0007 at home).



## DONATIONS

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general, or gifts in honor or memory of relatives and friends. Such donations will be used as specified, or, if unspecified, will be used to support environmental education and projects. All gifts and donations are tax deductible.

## MEMBERSHIP

To join the Audubon Society send a check, payable to NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, to SCVAS office, 2253 Park Boulevard, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Membership includes AUDUBON magazine, the national publication, and the AVOCET. AVOCET subscriptions alone are \$6/year. It is published monthly except July and August. Send address changes to the office promptly.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECK CATEGORY

- Individual/\$30
- Family/\$38
- Senior Citizen/\$21
- Senior Citizen Family/\$23
- Student/\$18
- AVOCET only/\$6
- Introductory Membership/\$20