

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

Volume 33. Number 8

October 1986

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Field Trip Coordinator for October: Richard Jeffers (415)325-9675.

- Oct. 1 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands Interpretive Center. Guest speaker, Jay Penniman, a biologist with Point Reyes Bird Observatory and a photographer. He will show slides of birds of Southeast Farallon Island. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Oct. 4 **Marin Headlands, Rodeo Lagoon.** Saturday, 8:30 am. All day. From Hwy 101 take Alexander Ave. - Sausalito exit. Start downhill, swing left to tunnel entrance to Fort Cronkhite. Stay on this road. Meet at parking lot on S side of the lagoon before right turn across bridge. Highlights: migrating raptors, possible vagrant landbirds. Leader: Clark Blake (415)879-0007.
- Oct. 8 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 9 am. Half day. Chesbro Reservoir, Morgan Hill. Take Almaden Expressway S from San Jose, left on McKean Road (which becomes Uvas Road), 11 miles S to junction of Uvas Road and Old Oak Glen Road. Lunch optional. Leader: Emily Curtis (408)779-2637.
- Oct. 12 **Pt. Reyes.** Sunday, 8:30 am. All day. Meet at the Drake's Beach parking lot. From Hwy 1 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. W. After 14 mi. turn left to Drake's Beach. Highlights: possible eastern warblers and migrant shorebirds. Leaders: Lynne Aldrich and Peter Gottschling (415)325-9349.
- Oct. 19 **Pescadero Marsh and Vicinity.** Sunday, 9 am. All day. Meet at the parking lot on the west side of the intersection of Hwy 1 and Pescadero Rd. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: David Suddjian (408)479-9603.
- Oct. 22 **North County Field Trip.** Wednesday, 9 am. Half day. Rancho San Antonio Park. From I-280 exit S on Foothill Blvd. Go right on Cristo Rey Drive past the cemetery to the park. Meet at 3rd parking area by restrooms. Rain cancels. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647.
- Oct. 25 **Charleston Slough and Mountain View Forebay.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. From Hwy 101 take San Antonio Rd. E to its end at Terminal Rd. Meet just inside the gate at N end of the Forebay. Rain cancels. Leader: Phyllis Browning (415)494-6360.

Field Trip Coordinator for November: Bill Clark (415)326-7565.

- Nov. 2 **Bird Walk for Beginners.** Ed Levin Park. Sunday 8:30 am. Half day. Meet in school yard, N side of Calaveras Rd. near the park. From Hwy 17 or I-680 take Calaveras Blvd. E to the park. Possible Golden Eagles. Leader, rain or shine: Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-7124.
- Nov. 3 **Bird Seed Sale Order Deadline.** Monday. Please see article inside. Seed pickup will be Nov. 21 and 22.
- Nov. 9 **Palo Alto Baylands.** Sunday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at the Baylands Athletic Center parking lot. From Hwy 101 take Embarcadero Rd. E. Turn left on Geng Rd. (2nd light) to the lot. Rain cancels. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647.
- Nov. 12 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 9 am. Sanborn Park. From Saratoga go W almost 2 1/2 miles on Big Basin Way to Saratoga Springs, left on Sanborn Rd. 1 mile, right into lower parking lot. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.

IN MEMORIUM

In memory of Gary McCurdy, donations to SCVAS have been received from: Beth Linder, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cooper, Robert and Nancy Whalen.

In memory of Harlow F. Scribner, a donation has been given by Mary Damon.

THANKS, VOLUNTEERS

Thanks go to Sue Liskovec for updating field trip records and to Tibby Simon for volunteering in the Office over the summer. If you would like to be an office volunteer, please call Lynn at (415)329-1811. Assistance is needed in cataloging the library collection, answering the phone, maintaining the mailing list, and helping with the bird seed sale.

FIELD NOTES - by David Suddjian

There's a new field guide that every birder should consider buying. It's called Shorebirds: An Identification Guide, by British authors Hayman, Marchant & Prater (published by Houghton Mifflin Co.) and it's by far the most comprehensive and authoritative guide to this diverse group yet available. Within its 412 pages are 88 excellent color plates by Hayman illustrating all of the world's shorebird species, from the strange Thick-knees and graceful Pratincoles to the familiar Western Sandpiper and the recently discovered Cox's Sandpiper. The plates are covered with paintings (40 different illustrations on the Phalarope plate alone) showing both sexes, and the various ages, plumages and postures. Birds shown in flight are numerous, and the close-ups of faces, bills, tails and even individual feathers are very useful. The text is quite thorough and easy to follow. For each species the scientific, "official" and alternate common names are listed, followed by an introduction to the species and details on its identification, voice, habits, movements, description, age/sex differences, races and measurements. The only drawback I've found so far stems from the abundance of illustrations. It can be confusing sifting through all of the paintings on each plate to find a certain one, but this problem should disappear with familiarity.

Even if you're not a shorebird enthusiast, and even if you don't care to tell the juvenile Australian Pratincole from the adult (look at the shape of the outer primaries, among other things) I'm sure you'll find this book to be a valuable addition to your birding library.

Eared Grebes nested again near Crittenden Marsh, with downy young and immatures found there in later Aug (Brad Lowman-BL fide Lynn Teneffoss-LT). At least 8 adults with 12 young were counted on 24 Aug (David Suddjian-DS). Does anyone have any other counts? **Brown Pelican** numbers declined from their mid-July record high to 151 in Charleston Slough on 25 July (DS) and 150 there on 1 Aug (Al Eisner-AE), still very good counts for the county. Their numbers dropped further to more normal levels through Aug. 239 **Am. White Pelicans** at Charleston Slough and adjacent Salt Pond 1 on 17 Aug was the highest reported count (Phyllis Browning-PB), well below high counts in previous years. One adult **Little Blue Heron** popped up out of the cattails in Mountain View Forebay (MV Forebay) on 3 Aug (PB). One imm. **Green-backed Heron** was in the MV Forebay 29 July - 2 Aug (AE, PB, James Yurchenco-JY, Amy Lauterbach-AL), with an adult there on 15 and 24 Aug (DS, Paul Noble-PN). Two male **Blue-winged Teal** remained in the MV Forebay through 25 Jul (DS). The status of this species in the late summer (particularly Sept) is unclear. Some numbers may migrate through the area undetected because they are in eclipse plumage. **American Wigeon** are rare in summer, so 2 in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (PA FCB) on 9 Aug are of interest (JY, AL). Shoreline Lk's summering **Surf Scoter** was still present on 24 Aug (DS). One adult **Golden Eagle** was over Black Mtn on 26 Jul (Peter LaTourrette-PLT), and an imm. was there on 17 Aug (JY, AL). A **Perigrine Falcon** was chasing shorebirds at Charleston Slough on 24 Jul (AE) for one of our few summer records. A flock of 32 **Wild Turkeys** in Henry Coe SP on 29 Jun consisted of 6 adults herding 26 young (JY, AL). Two imm. **Soras** in MV Forebay on 23 Aug (PB) may be early fall arrivals or they could have fledged here. No downy young have ever been reported from this site. A juvenile **Am. Black Oystercatcher** flying over the salt marsh near the PA FCB flood gate on 20 Aug was a strange sight indeed,

good for the 2nd county records (DS). **Lesser Yellow-legs** had a poor Jul showing, with only 1 reported from Charleston Slough on 25 Jul (DS). They continued to be found in generally low numbers, 1 - 24 Aug with most reports of singles and some of 2 birds (AE, DS, PB, PN). But JY and AL report "several" in the PA FCB on 9 Aug and 12 in the Charleston Slough area on 16 Aug. **Ruddy Turnstones** are pretty rare "fall" migrants in the county, though some birders may not report them as they are fairly common along the coast. This year 1 was at Charleston Slough on 8 Aug (Shawneen Finnegan-SF fide PN) and another was there on 16 Aug (JY, AL). Good coverage of Charleston Slough and MV Forebay again turned up **Semiplated Sandpipers**. One was in the slough on 8 - 10 Aug (SF fide PN, Joe Morlan-JM, m.ob.). Two were in the MV Forebay on 11 Aug (SF, Peter Metropolis-PM both fide PN) with 1 there through 17 Aug (Maryanne Danielson-MD, Phil Rostron fide JMK). These reports indicate that at least 2 and probably 3 birds were involved. All were juveniles as expected. Good discussions of this ID problem can be found in Shorebirds: An ID Guide, Roberson's Rare Birds Of The West Coast and Grant & Jonsson (1984). **Baird's Sandpipers** were found in the MV Forebay 14 - at least 24 Aug (PN, PB, MD) with a high count of 2 on 20 Aug (PN). All were juveniles as expected. One remaining albino **Dowitcher sp.** was last reported in Charleston Slough on 10 Aug (fide LT). The first **Common Snipe** of the season at MV Forebay on 17 Aug was early (PB). Three **Heermann's Gulls** were near the PA FCB flood gate on 20 Aug for the 3rd county record (DS). Two **Elegant Terns** were spotted flying over MV Forebay on 11 Aug, another 3rd county record (PN, SF fide PN). **Common Terns** were found for the 2nd year in a row with single adults at Charleston Slough and east of Crittenden Marsh on 24 Aug (DS). This species is probably a regular fall migrant in small numbers in the county, but identification can be difficult and many guides don't help much. For good discussions see Stallcup's Pelagic Birds of Monterey Bay, Harrison's Seabirds and Zimmer's Western Bird Watcher. The illustrations in the NGS Field Guide are good. **Least Terns** never showed up at Charleston Slough this year (for the first time in at least 6 years), but happily they were found in good numbers at the salt ponds east of Crittenden Marsh. 3 or 4 dozen" were there on 20 Aug (BL fide LT) and 48 tallied on 24 Aug included 20 immatures (DS). An immature **Black Tern** at these same ponds on 24 Aug was an exciting find (DS). This is the first county report since 1980 and only the 5th or 6th county record. A pair of **Nor. Pygmy-Owls** were still in residence in Monte Bello OSP on 19 Aug (PN). **Burrowing Owls** are infrequently reported by Santa Clara Co. birders. This troubled species is literally losing ground to development. Please help to clarify this species' status in the county and adjacent areas by sending all sightings to the address listed at the end of this column. Paul Noble called out 1 juvenile **Nor. Saw-whet Owl** at Monte Bello OSP on 19 Aug, providing the 1st confirmed breeding record for the county (160 species have now been confirmed as breeding in the county at least once). 6-10 **Vaux's Swifts** feeding over Black Mtn on 17 Aug were probably southbound migrants (JY, AL). **Canyon Wrens** were found in their usual haunts with 2 along Coyote Ck. in Henry Coe SP on 29 Jun and 3 along Smith's Ck. and Arroyo Hondo in Grant Ranch CP on 19 Jul (JY, AL). Three **American Dippers** were also present along Smith's Ck. and Arroyo Hondo on 19 Jul (JY, AL). One singing **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** was in evidence at Monte Bello OSP on 26 Jul (PLT).

Corrigendum: in the September Field Notes column the word "not" should be deleted from the comment following the 26 Apr Nighthawk Sp sighting. The Lesser Nighthawk occurs regularly in the Central Valley and has nested many years ago in the Gilroy area. The common Nighthawk has not yet been identified in Santa Clara Co.

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



SAVING THE WETLANDS

The Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, whose goal is to save the few remaining wetland sites in South San Francisco Bay by having them added to the National Refuge, has been very active this summer. Don Edwards, who sponsored the original legislation for the Refuge, has encouraged the Committee to develop local support for specific sites. Several "local" groups have been formed, including S.W.I.M. (Save Wetlands in Mayhews) and C.O.S.A. (Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado). A new local group concerned with wetlands in the Alviso area is now being formed. If you are interested in participating in this worthwhile environmental concern, please call Barbara Hamblton at (408)745-3645.

UNION CITY WETLANDS LAWSUIT SUCCESSFUL

A group of Union City residents has won a lawsuit against the City for violating State environmental laws. The group, Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado (COSA), was formed in July in response to the City's approval of two grading permits, signaling the beginning of development of the "511 Area." This area is 900+ (formerly 511) acres west of Union City Blvd. that contains extensive wetlands, including habitat of the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse. COSA's goal is to preserve the entire 511 Area for enhanced wetlands, open space, and recreation; we would like the 511 Area incorporated into a park, possibly the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge or into the East Bay Regional Park District.

COSA's victory is important because it demonstrates that a small group of local residents can win a lawsuit when a local government refuses to obey environmental laws. Acting in the public interest, we forced the developers (Ponderosa Industries and two individuals, Drs. Beretta and O'Connor) and the City to wait until a full environmental impact report is prepared, circulated, and approved. The Court's decision was swift and resoundingly in favor of COSA.

SCVAS has supported COSA's actions with a generous contribution, but the legal fees are high. Your \$10 or \$20 contribution will make you part of a new environmental activism that is setting precedents in the Bay Area and California. If you can contribute, please send your checks (tax-deductible) to the Peninsula Conservation Foundation -- Refuge, c/o COSA, 4626 Korbel Street, Union City, CA 94587. For more information about COSA or the lawsuit, call Martha Esserlieu at (415)487-1282.

- Martha K. Esserlieu

ANNUAL FALL WILD BIRD SEED SALE

It's time to restock your bird seed supply for fall and winter, and to support your chapter's activities at the same time. We are again offering a variety of QUALITY SEED at a REASONABLE PRICE.

The custom-blended PREMIUM MIX was formulated by the staff at Western Regional Audubon Society in Tiburon. This high protein mix contains red millet, white proso millet, and black oil sunflower seeds, with no inexpensive "fillers". Specially blended to attract songbirds, this seed is not available in supermarkets or feed stores - only through SCVAS.

The classic WESTERN WILD BIRD MIX, a blend of red millet, white proso millet, sudan grass screenings, and red milo is priced to compete with supermarket seed, but without waste "filler".

To mix with other seed, or offer alone:
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED, high in oil content and nutritive value, this seed appeals to many species.
STRIPED MEDIUM SUNFLOWER SEED, a slightly less nutritive, but larger, seed. Also attracts many species, and is good for added variety.
NIGER (THISTLE SEED), a small seed, rich in oil, that appeals to smaller birds.

THIS IS A PRE-PAID SALE. Your order, including a check payable to SCVAS, must be received by MONDAY, November 3. All orders must be picked up from the SCVAS office in the Peninsula Conservation Center on either Friday, November 21 between noon and 6 pm, or on Saturday, November 22 between 10 am and 2 pm. UNCLAIMED SEED WILL BE RESOLD SATURDAY AFTER 2 PM UNLESS AN EXCEPTION HAS BEEN MADE IN ADVANCE.

Tell your friends and neighbors about the sale. We will all benefit - you, the birds, and your Audubon chapter.

Please send the order form and your check to SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 NO LATER THAN MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3.

BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM

	# 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 @ \$27/bag		
Striped Sun. 20 lb @ \$15/bag		
" " 50 lb @ \$34/bag		
Thistle 5 lb @ \$10/bag		
" " 20 lb @ \$35/bag		
Subtotal		_____
Add 7% Tax		_____
Total		_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

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				Deborah Manley	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

DEVELOPER DEFIES ORDER

As many of you know, the Army Corps of Engineers issued a Cease and Desist order in October of 1985 on a project in Mountain View known as Shoreline II. This project has been closely monitored by Santa Clara Valley Audubon since that time. The developer has continued to build, at a slow rate, in direct violation of the order. After repeated complaints to the Corps by various environmental groups, including SCVAS, they decided to turn the matter over to the Attorney General for possible prosecution. This case is very important in that the message could be sent to all developers that disregarding the law will not be tolerated any longer. Please write to the Army Corps of Engineers, 221 Main Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, Attn: Lt. Col. Andrew Perkins, and encourage them to prosecute to the full extent of the law. For more information please call Barbara Hambelton (408)446-3645.

KTEH PLEDGE NIGHT

On August 20, fifteen members of the SCVAS answered phones for a KTEH, Channel 54, pledge night. It was great fun. We got publicity for the Audubon Society and were able to help a local public television station.

Thanks to volunteers Brad Lowman, Karen Todd, the Fisher family (Gene, Rita and Tim), Jack and Theresa Spindler, Noel Quinn, Deborah Manley, Barbara Hambelton, Kevin Monahan, Lynn Tennefoss, Don Price and Judy McEuen.

A special thank you to Deborah Manley who crafted one sign and arranged for another permanent sign to be painted with the Avocet logo. These signs were prominently displayed during the broadcast and increased the exposure for our chapter.

- Mark McEuen



AUDUBON ACTION GOES SUBSCRIPTION

"Audubon Action", National Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter of conservation and chapter news, has been replaced by the "Audubon Activist", and will now be available only on a subscription basis. \$6 will bring you a year's worth of the new newsletter, which will focus on providing up-to-date information on conservation issues and how to be most effectively involved. Subscriptions are available from: Audubon Activist, 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

This year the San Jose Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 21 - 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 (415)969-5542.



BAYDAY, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

The trip begins at Pier 39 in SF aboard the "Gold Rush". Bay experts and naturalists discuss aspects of the Bay from its history, geology and biology to its fish, mammals and birdlife. Issues such as fill, dredging, pollution and the Bay's connection to the Delta will be discussed. 9 am to 2 pm. Participants will cruise beneath the Golden Gate, San Rafael and Bay bridges, exploring the Bay to the north and south. A box lunch is included in the \$42 fee. Phone the Marin Conservation League (415)456-1912 for information.



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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CHECK CATEGORY

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