

**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

480J  
Mr & Mrs R Jay Andree  
12579 Radoyka Dr  
Saratoga, CA 95070

Volume 33, Number 9

November 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 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. 5 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands. Frank Balthis, Park Ranger at Ano Nuevo State Reserve, and a photographer, will speak. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- 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. 11 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Record Keeping Methods.
- 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.
- Nov. 16 **Alum Rock Park.** Sunday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at Youth Science Institute parking lot. Three miles moderate walking. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Dave Johnston (408)356-4945.
- Nov. 19 **General Meeting.** Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm. Palo Alto Cultural Center. Alan Baldrige from Hopkins Marine Station will present a program on the Marine Birds of Monterey Bay. Details of the program are inside.
- Nov. 19 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 9 am to noon. Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. Meet at the Main gate (not Whiskey Hill gate). From Hwy 280 go W on Sand Hill Rd about 2 miles to the gate on left. Gate will be unlocked from 8:45-9:10 am. There is a \$2 charge per person for these docent led tours. For information call Carol Zabel (415)948-5671.
- Nov. 23 **Santa Cruz Area.** Sunday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at N side of Neary's Lagoon. From Hwy 17 take Hwy 1 N to Laurel St. Left on Laurel, right on Blackburn St. Meet at end of Blackburn. Wood Duck and Black Scoter probable. Bring warm clothes and a scope if possible. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: David Suddjian (408)479-9603.
- Nov. 29 **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 I280 go W on Sandhill Rd. about 2 miles to gate on left. Gate will be unlocked from 8:15-8:40 am. Ring-Necked Duck, possible Wood Duck and Red-Shouldered Hawk. \$2 gate fee. Limited to 40 people. Rain or shine. Leaders: Jean and Bill Clark; Carol Zabel; Bill Kirscher. For reservations, call the Clarks (415)326-7565.

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

- Dec. 7 **Lake Merritt and Eastbay Shore.** Sunday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at Rotary Science Center, Oakland. Go N on Hwy 17 to Oak St., E on Oak. Oak becomes Lakeside, then Harrison. Right on Grand, right on Bellevue to meeting place. Parking fee. Possible Barrow's Goldeneyes and Hooded Mergansers. Leaders: Allen Royer (408)251-6133, Lynn Teneffoss (weekdays) (415)329-1811.
- Dec. 10 **South County Field Trip.** Campbell Percolation Ponds (Los Gatos Creek Co. Park). Wednesday, 9 am. Take 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.
- Dec. 14 **Woodbridge Rd. and Brannon Island.** Sunday, 8 am. Full day. Take I680 N to second Mission Blvd. turnoff. Meet in SE corner parking lot next to Shell Station. Carpool from there. Specialties: Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans, Geese, Hawks. RAIN CANCELS. Call a leader if coming. Leaders: Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091; Audrey Stoye (408)249-2108.

## LAST CALL FOR BIRD SEED

If you hurry, you can still order bird seed in our Fall sale. 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 p.m. or Saturday, November 22 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Please send your order, with your name, address and phone number, and a check to SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

### BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM FALL 1986

	# 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 (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN THIS ORDER TO THE SCVAS OFFICE BY  
 MONDAY, NOV. 3.

SCVAS, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306  
 (415)329-1811

## WELCOME TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Board of Directors has been joined by two new members:

MARTHA ESSERLIEU is an environmental scientist, has been a SCVAS member for three years, and is active in the Environmental Action Committee. She is President of COSA (Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado), and particularly interested in the protection of unique natural resources.

NEIL JACKSON is an active birder who joined SCVAS five years ago. He is a docent for Palo Alto Baylands and Foothill Park, member of and volunteer for San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, and volunteer at the SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

## MEASURE "A" NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

In November park advocates need to vote to extend the county's park charter fund which pays for Santa Clara County's 36,390 acre park system.

A yes vote is a vote to continue for two more years the method of park funding which voters supported in 1972 and 1978 by nearly 3:1 majority. Measure "A" does not impose a new tax; it does guarantee that a small part of existing taxes will be set aside for park purposes. In response to the county's revenue shortage, this measure reduces the present level of park funding by 40% and emphasizes park operations and maintenance.

The demands placed on our park system are overwhelming and continue to increase. Over 8 million people visited our county parks last year. Only by continuing the park fund can we assure that there will be sufficient funds to protect the citizens' investment in county parks.



## RADIO TAGGED AND FLIPPER TAGGED SEALS IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

This summer the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Point Reyes - Farallon Islands National Marine Sanctuary radio tagged and flipper tagged harbor seals in Drakes Bay, Marin Co. This study was designed to monitor the dispersal patterns of seals after the breeding season (March through June) and the daily activity patterns of seals that do not disperse from the breeding colony at Drakes Bay.

All seals are distinctly marked. A radio transmitter is glued to the back of the head and has a 12" flexible antenna. A neoprene (red) patch with an orange vinyl streamer is glued to the back between the shoulder blades. A 300 series number is marked on the neoprene patch and a number or symbol is marked on the orange streamer. Flipper tags are attached to each rear flipper between the second and third digits. Flipper tags are composed of a lime green cattle ear tag with a 300 series digit and an orange flexible vinyl tag with a one or two digit number. We would appreciate a report of any sighting.

Please note: 1) date, time, and location (landmark and county), 2) flipper tag numbers (either green or orange vinyl), 3) whether a radio transmitter is attached to the head, 4) shoulder patch number or symbol (if present), 5) observer's name, address, and phone number.

Please report sightings to: Sarah Allen, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Hwy, Stinson Beach, CA 94970, (415)868-1221.

- The Sanderling, October 1986  
 Monterey Audubon Society





## FIELD NOTES - by David Suddjian

Here are some statistics I've compiled by examining Santa Clara County's list of recorded bird species. 324 species have been recorded in the county as of Sept 1986. This is about 57% of the species recorded in all of California. Of these 324 species, 105 are considered regular year-round residents. 153 have been documented as breeding (not 160 as I reported in my previous column), and 7 of these are considered extirpated breeders in the county (Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Lesser Nighthawk, Bank Swallow, Bell's Vireo and Yellow-headed Blackbird). The county's list contains 6 introduced species, 65 species that have been recorded five times or less (34 of these have been recorded only once), 23 species that are considered Eastern U.S. species (9 of these are warblers), 13 species that are considered northern or montane species, 31 species that are normally pelagic or associated with the immediate seashore, 11 species that are considered primarily southern species, 4 species that are of Asian origin, and 133 species that are usually associated with water or wetlands. What conclusions can you draw from these numbers regarding the influences on the county's avifauna?

**Brown Pelicans** continued their best-ever showing in the county, with some of the higher counts being 100 at Charleston Slough on 27 Aug (Paul Noble-PN) and 130 in that area on 15 Sept (David Suddjian-DS). Most Sept sightings in previous years have been of fewer than 20 individuals. The highest **Am. White Pelican** count for the season so far was 360 at Charleston Slough on 15 Sept (DS), fewer than in previous years. A molting imm. **Little Blue Heron** was at the Palo Alto Baylands on 17 Sept (Ted Chandik), and at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (PA FCB) on 18 Sept (John Walton), and again on 23 Sept (DS). There are few Sept sightings of this species in the county. **Green-backed Herons** were well reported, with at least 5 individuals at various Bayside sites 22 Aug - 19 Sept (Al Eisner-AE, Peter LaTourette-PLT, Phyllis Browning-PB, Derek Currall, PN). Several sightings of **Blue-winged Teal** at Adobe Ck on 3 & 23 Sept and Mountain View Forebay (MV Forebay) on 7 Sept (DS) involved at least 5 different birds, perhaps all migrants. A male **Eurasian Wigeon** in the PA FCB on 23 Sept was early and probably passing through on his way further south (DS). One **American Wigeon** in the PA FCB on 27 Aug, and 3 there on 29 Aug may be early arrivals or over-summering birds (Mike Rodgers-MR). 30+ at Crittenden Marsh on 10 Sept were certainly returning individuals (DS, PB, Ed Laak, Betty Groce-BG). Shoreline Lake's lonely **Surf Scoter** was still present at least through 15 Sept (DS). Southbound **Osprey** were spied in the hills above Stanford on 23 Aug (Paul Goldstein, Dena Mossar) and over Palo Alto's Foothills Park on 22 Sept (Carl Beck). One **Golden Eagle** in Santa Clara 13 & 15 Sept, and singles over San Jose on 18 & 28 Sept were probably all returning migrants (Dave Douglas). Sightings of adult **Peregrine Falcons** at Crittenden Marsh on 31 Aug (fide MR), and at Charleston Slough on 1 & 5 Sept (MR, PN) may involve the same bird. An immature was near Alviso on 26 Sept (Kevin McCray). **Lesser Yellowlegs** were well reported 30 Aug to 23 Sept with peak numbers noted in the first half of Sept (DS, PN, PB, AE, MR). One **Whimbrel** was at Charleston Slough on 30 Aug and at the PA FCB on 14 Sept (PB). A late report of an adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at MV Forebay on 15 Aug (Jean-Marie Spoelman) is very interesting, as the vast majority of "fall" migrant Semipalmated Sandpipers in California are juveniles and most of the "fall" adults have been found in late July. This is the first adult reported in the county. A juvenile **Baird's Sandpiper** near the Palo

Alto Dump on 15 Sept is the latest ever reported in the county (DS). Few are seen after Aug. **Pectoral Sandpipers** had a poor showing, with 2 at MV Forebay on 3 Sept (DS), 1 there on 4 Sept (PN) and 1 in Charleston Slough on 14 Sept (Linda Kypta, m.ob.) being the only ones reported. One juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** at the Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds (SSP) on 30 Sept was a real rarity, the 4th for the county (PN). In recent years only a handful have been found each fall in all of No. California. The albino Dowitcher mystery was solved, as PLT reports hearing one give **Short-billed Dowitcher** call notes. This is as expected, as this species is far more prone to over-summer. One albino was still kicking about in the MV Forebay through 7 Sept (PB). A juvenile **Parasitic Jaeger** was attending a tern flock at the SSP on 9 Sept (PN). Jaegers are one of the most difficult groups to identify. Good discussions are in Stallcup's Pelagic Birds of Monterey Bay, Harrison's Seabirds, and Zimmer's Western Bird Watcher. One **Elegant Tern** was flying over Charleston Slough on 4 Sept for the 4th county record (PN). **Common Terns** were well reported with 3 at Crittenden Marsh 26 Aug and 1 remaining through 7 Sept (PN, DS), 1 at SSP 9 & 15 Sept (PN), 3 at Charleston Slough 14 Sept, 4 there 15 Sept, and 10 in that area on 23 Sept (DS). Along with those cited in the previous Field Notes, this indicates a conservative 19 individuals for the season (so far), of which 13 were adults. **Least Terns** made a brief and late appearance at Charleston Slough with 5 there on 3 Sept (DS). Meanwhile, 20 were still near Crittenden Marsh 3 Sept (PN) and 23 were there 7 Sept (DS). These are higher than normal counts for Sept. The season's 2nd **Black Tern** was at SSP on 15 Sept (PN), not bad considering most years this species goes unreported. A juvenile **Common Murre** was found starving at the mouth of Artesian Slough on 24 Aug (Kathy Hobson) for an unfortunate 3rd county record. While birding MV Forebay on 9 Sept I turned around to look for the Surf Scoter on Shoreline Lk and was amazed to find a juvenile **Cassin's Auklet** fishing along the lakeshore. A few quick phone calls brought other observers to enjoy this bird, which didn't even stay the whole day. Subsequent checks with various bird rehabilitation centers revealed no recent releases. This is the 1st county record for this normally pelagic species. Alcids breeding on the Farallon Islands reported abandoned their young to fend for themselves earlier than usual this season. This may be responsible for the unusual wanderings of the two juveniles cited above. Two **Roadrunners** were noted in Henry Coe SP on 15 Sept (Lisa Sinizer). One **Nor. Pygmy-Owl** was heard at Monte Bello OSP on 18 Sept (PN, Tom Olsen). The 1st **Lesser Nighthawk** identified in the county in many years was flying over Hwy 101 at Rengstorff in Mountain View on 15 Sept (DS). One southbound **Vaux's Swift** was seen at Matadero Ck Riparian on 12 Sept (PN). Two **Willow Flycatchers** were found along Coyote Ck on 13 Sept (PLT). This species has been captured regularly at the Wool Ranch banding transect and sometimes at Coyote Ck's banding station, but very few have been reported by observers working without mist nets. One migrant **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was in Los Altos on 24 Aug (Jim Liskovec). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** at Monte Bello OSP on 1 Sept was about 3 weeks early (PN). A female **Indigo Bunting** was at Matadero Ck Riparian for the 3rd county record (1st for fall) (PN). One fall-plumaged adult **Bobolink** at MV Forebay on 9 Sept (DS, PN) came with an apparent wave of Bobolinks, bringing at least 12 individuals to Central California between 5 & 9 Sept. This is another 3rd county record.



**Other first arrivals:** Green-winged Teal - Sept, Adobe Ck (DS); **Nor. Shoveler** - 10 Sept, Adobe Ck (DS); **Virginia Rail** - 4 Sept, MV Forebay (AE); **Glaucous-winged Gull** - 14 Sept, Adobe Ck (DS); **Cedar Waxwing** - 6 Sept, Los Altos (PN); **Yellow-rumped Warbler** - 23 Sept, MV Forebay (DS); **Fox Sparrow** - 25 Sept, Monte Bello OSP (PN); **Golden-crowned Sparrow** - 17 Sept, Menlo Park (BG); **White-crowned Sparrow** - 8 Sept (early), Palo Alto (DS); **Pine-Siskin** - 24 Sept, Los Altos (PN).

By the time you read this column Bill Bousman should be back from his sojourn to Paris. Beginning 1 November, please send sightings of "uncommon to rare" species to Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, (415)322-5282.



## NATIONAL AUDUBON APPEAL FOR MONO LAKE

In November or December all Audubon Society members will be sent a request for donations to support legal expenses related to Mono Lake lawsuits. National Audubon is currently responsible for carrying the major financial burden for several lawsuits tied to Mono Lake. The Mono Lake Committee does an excellent job using its funds primarily for educational and political purposes, but is only able to help fund a small portion of the legal expenses.

Our chapter strongly supports the legal efforts to save Mono Lake. Winning in the courts is the key to protecting the unusual resources of the Lake. Already the precedent setting nature of the legal battle has been seen - a favorable Bay water quality ruling in May was the direct result of Public Trust arguments upheld in the Mono Lake lawsuit. SCVAS has donated funds to NAS - Mono Lake Fund in the past, most recently with proceeds from the Spring bird seed sale, but EVERY MEMBER'S AID IS NEEDED. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to NAS when you receive their request in the mail. Have any questions about the effort to Save Mono Lake? Please call Lynn in the office (415)329-1811.

## ABA CONVENTION REPORT

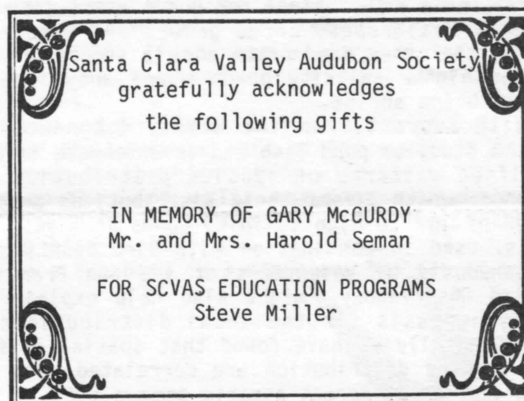
Once again the biannual ABA Convention has come and gone. In spite of unexpectedly hot weather in Tucson, the birding was excellent, with over 200 species seen by the group as a whole. Birding with the local experts, most people were able to see most of the lifers they'd hoped for -- Montezuma Quail, Five-striped Sparrow, Red-faced Warbler, etc. One man, from Newfoundland, racked up 69! The workshops on hummers, owls, sparrows, etc. were excellent as always, and the banquet speaker, Peter Dunne of Cape May Bird Observatory, was certainly the wittiest we've ever had. California was well represented, but mostly by Southern California. There were only two or three of us from SCVAS. I urge those who are truly interested in birding as a sport to consider going to the next convention, to be held in Duluth in June, 1988. It's a chance to rub elbows with the leaders in the field, such as Roger Tory Peterson, Arnold Small, Chan Robbins, Jim Tucker, and many, many others. It's also great to renew acquaintances and to compare notes with birders from other parts of the country. If you'd like more details, give me a call at (415)851-2623.

- Phil Hand

## ON SALE BY SCVAS

SCVAS offers the following books, tapes and other birding related items for sale this winter. All items may be purchased at General Meetings, or from the office. Please add \$.69 to each item you would like sent to you. Send all orders to the SCVAS office, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94306. All prices include tax. Make checks payable to SCVAS.

National Geographic Field Guide	\$13.00
Birding Northern California	10.00
Monterey Birds	16.00
S.F. Peninsula Birdwatching	6.55
Birds for Real	6.40
Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book	5.00
The Flying None	4.50
Flowers and Their Ancestors	6.50
Banquets for Birds	2.25
Our Hummingbirds	4.00
Birds of Sierra Coloring Book	5.00
Wren Cards	2.50
Patch	2.00
Pin	3.50 or 2/6
NAS 1987 Calendars - Wall and Engagement	7.50
Breeding Birds Tape	8.00
Nat'l Geographic Society Tape (2/set)	20.00
SCVAS Checklists	.50



## COYOTE HILLS FIELD TRIP

Eighteen people turned out on Sunday, Sept. 28, and enjoyed an excellent half-day of birding under gorgeous weather conditions. 72 total species were observed, including a number of returning fall migrants. A flock of Canada Geese flying low over the marsh contained a lone Snow Goose. Hoot Hollow yielded two Great Horned Owls, including one perched low in a hillside willow. White-crowned Sparrows were abundant, Golden-crowns relatively scarce. Several Fox Sparrows were seen, and a Lincoln's Sparrow on the previous day's scouting trip was noted. House Wren, Hermit Thrush, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Black-throated Grey Warbler were observed in or near the tall anise on the hillsides. Over 20 Common Flickers and Empidonax (most probably Western) flycatchers were seen throughout the park. Small numbers of ducks and shorebirds were present, and a Sora and Virginia Rail were quickly glimpsed, feeding within a few feet of one another. Four Caspian Terns, calling loudly, appeared to be "just passing through".

- Grant Hoyt

# SALT PONDS BY THE BAY

by David Lonzarich  
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory



Looking out on those shallow salt ponds spreading across the shores of south San Francisco Bay, a casual observer may see an almost endless stretch of harsh, inhospitable landscapes and wonder what wildlife value they could possibly have? It would be easy to think that only the hardiest of animals could use them. While this may be true most of the time, it may surprise you to discover that inhabiting some of these waters are rich and complex communities composed of various species of bay fish and invertebrates.

Those of you familiar with south bay birdlife probably already have some appreciation for the variety and number of birds that use salt ponds. Year after year the ponds provide refuge and food for thousands of phalaropes, grebes, waterfowl and other waterbirds. Such variety exists because the ponds are a myriad of habitats in spite of their similar appearance. Because of this they provide numerous niches for bay wildlife.

Typically, the bird species using any given pond are a reflection of the community of aquatic organisms that inhabit its waters. For example, pelicans, wading birds, cormorants, Western and Pied-Billed Grebes, which all share a common taste for fish, have a preference for ponds where fish are abundant. Phalaropes, Eared grebes and Bonaparte gulls on the other hand often show a strong preference for higher salinity ponds where they feed on abundant brine shrimp.

With support from the SCVAS, I conducted a longterm study of pond fish and invertebrate life. I identified patterns of species distribution and influences which affect these distributions through a range of low to high salinity ponds in Alviso. My results, used in combination with bird counts made simultaneously by volunteers of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, might also help explain the underlying basis for the local distributions of birds. Generally we have found that spatial differences in bird distribution are correlated with the composition of different aquatic communities.

## POND SELECTION

The first and second ponds I selected are ones most closely linked with the bay. Not only are they valuable habitat for many wading birds and waterfowl, they also support many species of fish including juvenile species of leopard sharks, topsmelt, shiner surfperch, northern anchovy, starry flounder, English sole, bat rays, bay pipefish and longjawed mudsuckers. The invertebrate fauna are also quite diverse and for me very fascinating. Various species of shellfish (shrimp, crabs, snails, mussel, and barnacles), sea anemones, and worms feed in the vegetated, mud and rocky habitats.

This variety of life, unlikely as it seems, is possible partly because there are a host of microhabitats for the aquatic species to use, but mostly it's because the salinities in these ponds rarely exceed ocean concentrations.

Salinity has little selective influence on these communities because the salt concentrations in the ponds are no different than what most of the organisms are used to. But this doesn't mean to suggest that the ponds are free of their share of stress. On the contrary, stresses on organisms seem common and probably explains the fact that these two ponds, although diverse, do not have any longterm stable community structure. It appears that the species in these two systems are quite susceptible

to periodic unpredictable changes in the environmental conditions (i.e. temperature, oxygen levels, pH, food). Translated, such variation leads to frequent overhauls in both the type of species and their abundance. Combine this effect of environmental variability with the apparent tendency for fish to become less tolerant to the range of such variation as they grow older (essentially they are like us in that they become more conservative with age) and what you have are fish that are fated to short lifespans in salt ponds.

Throw in frequently severe predation pressures by the pelicans, terns, gulls, wading birds, grebes, and cormorants that use these ponds and they're destined for even shorter lives. I have often seen Forster terns and Caspian terns fishing out many different fish species with great success. For these other birds it was not easy to determine the fishing effort but they presumably take some of the same fish as the terns.

Other abundant birds found in these ponds are migrating waterfowl. In fact these ponds provide one of the last remaining refuges in the south bay for wintering ducks.

## EVAPORATION RAISES SALINITY

After these two ponds, water flows into a series of ponds which form what might be considered the more "typical", or familiar salt pond habitat. In these ponds evaporation of water creates higher salinity environments which generally force such dramatic changes in these pond's aquatic communities that they become unique from all other environments in the bay. Salt intolerant aquatic plants are displaced by dense growths of salt tolerant planktonic algae which turn the waters green. Most of the fish and invertebrates from the two preceding ponds are also absent, as they too are unable to adapt to these high salinities. There has been strong selection against sharks, perch, bat rays and pipefish in favor of killifish, stickleback, longjawed mudsucker, juvenile topsmelt and staghorn sculpin.

Salinities in these ponds, which can reach two to three times sea water concentrations, have severely reduced community diversity. However, the biological productivity and community stability appear very high. Generally, the species that endure in such stressful environments become abundant and persistent in part because of reduced competition and predation by other species and an innate, physiological ability to cope with a wide range of environmental variability. The presence of brine shrimp and waterboatmen (an aquatic insect) are two important examples of this. Because of their year-round high densities they are the basis of very simple food chains, forming the major food link to the fish and birds which inhabit these ponds.

Collectively these and similar higher salinity ponds are prized habitats for a variety of the bay's migratory waterbirds. Thousands of eared grebes and phalaropes along with many other species of shorebirds and fish-eating birds use them extensively.

By replacing much of the marsh and bay habitat that once bordered the bay, salt ponds have probably altered the biology of the south bay for both better and worse. To appreciate their value, think about what bay wildlife might be like if salt ponds are ever replaced.



## COLOR-MARKED



## BROWN PELICANS

You are being asked to cooperate in studies of the California brown pelican by reporting your sightings of banded and tagged birds to UCD researchers. Brown pelicans have been leg-tagged to study their movements, migrations, and interactions with man. The tags vary from plain aluminum bands to plastic leg markers of various colors. Each configuration has a meaning, so a good, accurate description of what is seen yields the most information. If you see one or more of these birds, please report the following information: 1) the configuration (what is on what leg), 2) the color (and number if possible), 3) the date and location of sighting, 4) the situation, 5) any other comments you'd like to make that might be important (was the bird sick or injured, was it being a nuisance, etc.), 6) your name and address.

Please do not remove the tags or bands unless the bird is dead. If the bird is sick or injured and captured, notify the nearest DFG warden. If the bird is hooked, remove the hook and line carefully so as not to injure the bird or rip the skin or pouch. If the hook is imbedded in the skin, push the barb through the skin, cut it off, then back cut hook out. If the bird is dead, we'd appreciate the tags back so we can check them for wear and longevity. We will inform you of the bird's origins, age, etc., so send your sightings to: Pelican Research Project, Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, University of California, Davis, California 95616.

Your help will be much appreciated.

- The Sanderling, October 1986  
Monterey Audubon Society



## BOOKS FOR SALE

Two fancy books for sale which were bought for someone who had already purchased them elsewhere:

1. Hummingbirds of State of Espirito Santo (in English and Portuguese) by Augusto Ruschi. 1982, 263 pp., 11 x 14. 29 color plates of 44 species. \$110.00
2. Aves Do Brasil (in English and Portuguese). Vol. 1 1979, 335 pp., 11 x 14, 36 color plates, by E. Demonte. 85 drawings, complete list of species of birds of Brazil. \$125.00

Call Allen Royer, (408)251-6133, or SCVAS office.



## NOVEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHT

Alan Baldrige from Hopkins Marine Station has been studying the birds and mammals of Monterey Bay for close to 20 years and has observed the changes in sea bird populations as well as the presence of rare species. Alan is a frequent leader of boat trips for marine birds and marine mammals in Monterey Bay and elsewhere. He will bring a wealth of knowledge to inform us at the November 19th meeting, to be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center beginning at 7:30 p.m.

## REPORTING BEACHED SEABIRDS

There are many reasons seabirds end up immobilized on the beach. Starvation, oiled feathers, oil ingestion, and injury are a few. Any beached bird that lets a person pick it up is in need of care.

Native Animal Rescue treats hundreds of seabirds every year. Located at 2200 7th Avenue, Santa Cruz, in facilities donated by the animal shelter, Native Animal Rescue is open Monday through Saturday, 9:00 to 5:30. If you find a seabird that you think needs care call Native Animal Rescue at (408)462-0726. If you are willing to transport the bird to Native Animal Rescue, follow these guidelines.

1. Throw a towel or shirt over the bird.
2. Hold the neck or base of the skull in one hand and scoop up the bird's body with the other.
3. Keep the bird well away from your face. Most seabirds have long necks and sharp bills, and will try to bite or stab you.
4. Place the bird in a cardboard box for transport.



## FEEDING WINTER-HUNGRY HUMMERS

Do not take your hummingbird feeders down if you have hummers feeding. Unfortunately, a TV program on hummingbirds which aired during the summer advised mistakenly to take syrup feeders down by Labor Day so as to not keep hummers from migrating.

It is normal for many of the Anna's hummingbirds, the common species in our area, to stay here throughout the entire year. As the seasons advance there are progressively fewer plants in flower that can provide hummingbird sustenance. Hummingbirds that do stay and have access to a feeder can easily make it through the winter. Those birds with a strong migratory sense will leave, regardless of the presence of plants or feeders.

A properly maintained syrup feeder becomes even more important in the fall and winter. Feeders should be cleaned and filled with fresh syrup at least once a week.

Please tell others. Many have been confused.

- Louise Blakey

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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 direction.

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

## NON-AUDUBON TRIPS AND EVENTS

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

Cheeseman's EcoSafaris (Doug and Gail Cheeseman) have organized a special wildlife trip to Galapagos and in Peru to Paracas, Machu Picchu and the Manu, a vast, pristine area of tropical lowland forest and rivers in the Amazon Basin. The cost is \$1400 for the Ecuador/Galapagos part from July 28 to August 7 and \$1850 for the Peru part from August 7-22. Leaders are Dave Johnston, director of YSI and a member of our Board, and Paul Donahue, a neotropical naturalist with many years of experience.

The Cheesemans also have space on the following special trips: Kenya Safari, June 19-July 11, 1987; Brazil Natural History, June 26-July 25, 1987; Galapagos Island Photo Safari, June 21-July 4, 1987; Queensland, Australia and Papua, New Guinea, August 8-29, 1987. Call Gail and Doug for further details (408)867-1371.

The Natural History Museum of L.A. County is sponsoring a Mexico Monarch Butterfly Safari, January 24-28, 1987. You will travel to remote sites where virtually the entire population of monarchs from Eastern No. America congregate for the winter, an awe-inspiring visit. Safari fee is \$490 plus air fare. Contact Rebecca Chapman at the Natural History Museum of L.A. County, (213)744-3426.

Humphrey and Other Humpback Whales, a lecture-slide show by Debbie and Mark Ferrari, whale researchers and photographers, will be presented on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lucy Stern Community Theatre, Palo Alto. Donation is \$6 per person. The lecture is sponsored by the Environmental Volunteers. For more information and to order tickets, call 327-6017.

Debra Love Shearwater is the Director of Shearwater Journeys which offers excursions to the Monterey Bay, Monterey Seavalle, Storm-Petrel Study Tours and many others, all led by experienced guides.

During November they will journey to Cordell Bank & Beyond and the Monterey Seavalle. Excursions costs are \$45 and \$39. For more information on reservations or a copy of a descriptive brochure, write to Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 1445, Soquel, CA 95073.

Natural Excursions, sponsored by Point Reyes Bird Observatory, offers winter and spring excursions. Trips are Winter Birds of West Marin, Jan. 9-11; Palenque and the Yucatan Peninsula, Feb. 15-22; Palenque, Feb. 23-Mar 1; Yucatan, Laguna San Ignacio, Mar. 17-25 and Spring in Calif. Deserts, Mar. 29-Apr. 5. For registration and information call (415)868-1221.

View the inhabitants of the migratory visitors of Vasona Lake, Los Gatos Creek and the percolation ponds. David Johnston will lead the walk, giving special attention to the area's waterfowl. Bring binoculars or a spotting scope. Meet at 8:30 am on Friday, Nov. 7, at the Youth Science Institute in Vason Park. For more information, call 356-4945. The walk is sponsored by the Youth Science Institute and is open and free to all.

### 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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