

**SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Chapter C14 of the National Audubon Society  
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1137g  
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Redwood City, CA 94061

Volume 34, Number 2

February 1987

**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 Coordinators for February - Alan & Karen Thomas (408)265-9286**

- Feb. 4 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands Interpretive Center. Guest speaker is member Brigitte de Saint-Phalle who will speak on her participation in Cornell Lab Bird Photography Course. She will describe her work on George Lepp's Mono Lake project. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Feb. 7 **Montebello Open Space Preserve.** Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. Take Hwy 280 to Page Mill Rd. Go W on Page Mill for 7 or 8 mis. Parking lot is on left side of Page Mill Rd. Meet there. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Specialties: Townsend's Warblers, Varied Thrush. Leader: Paul Noble (415)948-3876.
- Feb. 8 **Livermore Hills - Altamont Pass.** Sunday, 8 am, full day. Take I-680 N to I-580 E. Go about 10 mis; take 1st Ave/Hwy 84 exit. Make immediate left into Mobil Station. CARPOOLING ESSENTIAL FROM HERE. Specialties: Bald & Golden Eagles, Merlin, Prairie Falcon. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Bring lunch, liquids, and full tank of gas. Leaders: Steve & Mark Miller (415)967-3429.
- Feb. 10 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Egrets
- Feb. 14 **Palo Alto Baylands Duck Pond.** Saturday, 8:30 am, half day. Meet at Duck Pond. From Hwy 101, take Embarcadero E exit to end; turn left and follow road until you see duck pond on left. Emphasis on gulls. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Don Starks (408)371-9720.
- Feb. 15 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Grant Ranch. Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. Meet at Visitors Center. Take Hwy 280 E; turn right on Alum Rock Ave., turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and follow to Park. Turn right into Park. So. County Birders take Capitol Expressway to Quimby Rd; turn right and follow to Mt. Hamilton Rd. junction. Turn right and go 1 mi to Park entrance. Park entrance fee: \$2 (not reimbursable from/by SCVAS). HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Specialties: Golden Eagle, Waterfowl. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.
- Feb. 18 **General Meeting.** Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero. Ted Chandik, member of SCVAS, presents a program on the Sea of Cortez. More on program inside.
- Feb. 21 **Birdwalk for Beginners, Coyote Hills Reg. Park.** Saturday, 9 am. Half day. Take Hwy 84 to Thornton Ave. exit, just E of the new Toll Plaza. Go N on Thornton (Paseo Padre on new maps) about 1 mi. to Commerce Dr. Turn left into Park and meet at the lot on right side near entrance. Possible entrance fee. Leader: Bill Kirsher (415)854-3936.
- Feb. 22 **San Antonio Valley Raptors.** Sunday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at San Antonio Junction. (Intersection of Mines Rd. and Mt. Hamilton-San Antonio Valley Rd.) Take I-580 E to Livermore and take Livermore Ave. S exit OR from I-680 take Mt. Hamilton Rd. (Hwy 130) E through Grant Park to Jct. Gas and facilities at S.A. Jct. only. If interested in Owling from Raney Park night before, call leader. Leader: Bill Bousman (415)322-5282.
- Feb. 25 **Coyote Hills Regional Park.** Wednesday, 8:30 am. Half day. From either direction on Rte. 84, take Thornton Ave. exit, just E of the new Toll Plaza. Go N on Thornton (Paseo Padre on new maps) about 1 mile to Commerce Drive, turn left into the park and meet at the lot near the entrance. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-1613.
- Feb. 28 **Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Full day. Meet at Jetty Rd. Take Rt. 17 to Santa Cruz; S on Hwy 1 to Moss Landing, right on Jetty rd. Park on right side before park entrance station. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Bruce Labar (408)476-7583.

## SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TOTALS

Pied-billed Grebe,118; Eared Grebe,4759; Western Grebe,207; Western(Clark's)Grebe,2;  
American White Pelican,700; Double-crested Cormorant,1359; American Bittern,6;  
Great Blue Heron,77; Great Egret,178; Snowy Egret,96; Cattle Egret,13; Green-backed Heron,8;  
Black-crowned Night Heron,433; Tundra Swan,9; Greater White-fronted Goose,4;  
Canada Goose,1433; Wood Duck,23; Green-winged Teal,132; Mallard,473; Northern Pintail,338;  
Cinnamon Teal,55; Northern Shoveler,2257; Gadwall,135; American Wigeon,2133; Canvasback,254;  
Redhead,7; Ring-necked Duck,45; Greater Scaup,7; Scaup, Species,22; Common Goldeneye,11;  
Bufflehead,165; Common Merganser,47; Red-breasted Merganser,92; Ruddy Duck,2610;  
Duck, Species,591; Turkey Vulture,174; Black-shouldered Kite,60; Bald Eagle(a),2;  
Bald Eagle(i),3; Northern Harrier,63; Sharp-shinned Hawk,17; Cooper's Hawk,20;  
Accipiter, Species,9; Red-shouldered Hawk,6; Red-tailed Hawk,292; Ferruginous Hawk,2;  
Buteo, Species,8; Golden Eagle(a),12; Golden Eagle(i),5; Golden Eagle(u),3;  
American Kestrel,146; Prairie Falcon,7; Falcon, Species,1; Ring-necked Pheasant,117;  
California Quail,406; Virginia Rail,17; Sora,8; Common Moorhen,25; American Coot,3886;  
Black-bellied Plover,3; Semipalmated Plover,3; Killdeer,296; Black-necked Stilt,430;  
American Avocet,545; Greater Yellowlegs,36; Yellowlegs, Species,4; Willet,77;  
Spotted Sandpiper,14; Whimbrel,1; Long-billed Curlew,179; Marbled Godwit,26; Sanderling,43;  
Western Sandpiper,503; Least Sandpiper,590; Dunlin,418; Short-billed Dowitcher,1;  
Long-billed Dowitcher,169; Dowitcher, Species,361; Common Snipe,31; Sandpiper, Species,279;  
Peep, Species,1147; Bonaparte's Gull,1087; Mew Gull,2149; Ring-billed Gull,1071;  
California Gull,857; Herring Gull,160; Thayer's Gull,26; Western Gull,161;  
Glaucous-winged Gull,5; Gull, Species,7624; Forster's Tern,29; Rock Dove,1586;  
Band-tailed Pigeon,2; Mourning Dove,1453; Western Screech Owl,5; Great Horned Owl,13;  
Northern Pygmy Owl,1; Burrowing Owl,20; Short-eared Owl,1; White-throated Swift,76;  
Anna's Hummingbird,566; Belted Kingfisher,56; Lewis' Woodpecker,1; Acorn Woodpecker,113;  
Red-breasted Sapsucker,31; Nuttall's Woodpecker,87; Downy Woodpecker,26; Hairy Woodpecker,2;  
Northern Flicker,408; Black Phoebe,199; Say's Phoebe,34; Horned Lark,186; Steller's Jay,161;  
Scrub Jay,539; Yellow-billed Magpie,345; American Crow,175; Common Raven,22;  
Chestnut-backed Chickadee,450; Plain Titmouse,174; Bushtit,860; Red-breasted Nuthatch,6;  
White-breasted Nuthatch,65; Brown Creeper,3; Rock Wren,14; Canyon Wren,2; Bewick's Wren,74;  
House Wren,1; Winter Wren,6; Marsh Wren,167; American Dipper,5; Golden-crowned Kinglet,5;  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet,338; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,1; Western Bluebird,96; Hermit Thrush,90;  
American Robin,1025; Varied Thrush,11; Wrentit,45; Northern Mockingbird,147;  
California Thrasher,4; Water Pipit,293; Cedar Waxwing,496; Loggerhead Shrike,100;  
European Starling,3615; Hutton's Vireo,25; Orange-crowned Warbler,1;  
Yellow-rumped Warbler,508; Yellow-rumped(Myrtle)Warbler,11;  
Yellow-rumped(Audubon's)Warbler,179; Townsend's Warbler,12; Common Yellowthroat,77;  
Rufous-sided Towhee,101; Brown Towhee,425; Rufous-crowned Sparrow,24; Lark Sparrow,68;  
Savannah Sparrow,345; Fox Sparrow,64; Song Sparrow,597; Lincoln's Sparrow,15;  
Golden-crowned Sparrow,1392; White-crowned Sparrow,1734; Dark-eyed Junco,929;  
Red-winged Blackbird,3725; Tricolored Blackbird,818; Western Meadowlark,1062;  
Brewer's Blackbird,2956; Blackbird, Species,2231; Brown-headed Cowbird,2; Purple Finch,100;  
House Finch,3763; Pine Siskin,75; Lesser Goldfinch,406; American Goldfinch,331;  
House Sparrow,200; Sparrow, Species,236;

THE GRAND TOTALS: 79026 BIRDS OF 158 SPECIES.

## 1986 SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WRAP UP

In contrast to the weather of the '85 CBC, this year's Christmas Bird Count was conducted under clear, sunny skies with temperatures in the 60's - IT DOES NOT ALWAYS RAIN ON OUR PARADE! A near record number of counters (154) tallied over 79,019 birds of 158 species. The species count was only one more than last year's, and short of our all time high of 168 set in 1982. The number of individuals was comparable to the 76,000 tallied in 1980, and below the 100,000 plus of the last few years.

Two very large flocks of white pelicans moving over sections A, B, C, and J made us look twice to determine the best estimate of the actual number. Nine tundra swans at Calaveras Reservoir were the first since 1982. Usually present in small numbers, hooded mergansers were absent for the first time since 1980.

Record high numbers of turkey vultures and red tailed hawks were tallied. This was similar to the 1984 count when clear sunny weather also prevailed. A record 46 accipiters were counted.

All these highly visible species, capable of covering great distances, seem to be counted in high numbers on clear days. However,

black-shouldered kites were down slightly from their recent high of 72 in '84, and perhaps even more surprising, golden eagles were less than half their '84 total.

The number of gulls was down from the 37,000 in 1985 to 7000 this year. Only 2 band-tailed pigeons were seen - down considerably from numbers in recent years. A first since 1981, a northern pygmy owl was observed at the San Jose Country Club.

Perhaps the best bird of the day was a Lewis' woodpecker, seen in Alum Rock. This was the species' first appearance in 13 years. The 87 Nuttall's woodpeckers was a record high. Except for the 118 golden-crowned kinglets seen in 1981, the 5 tallied this year are consistent with numbers counted in most years. For only the third time in the last 18 years, a blue-gray gnatcatcher was observed in Alum Rock Park.

The Christmas Count depends on people as well as birds. Section leaders work especially hard scouting their areas, recruiting counters, and handling paperwork. We appreciate their time and diligence. They have made our job as compilers a pleasure. In the following list of counters, their names are underlined.



Lynne Aldrich, Pauli Baggs, Ginny Becchine, Claudia Bonnet, Janice Boswell, William Bousman, Susie Brain, Peggy Brown, Phyllis Browning, Robert Buell, Richard Carlson, Bob Choate, Charles Cobb, Barbara Cox, Don & Jill Crawford, Derek Curral, Rigdon Currie, Maryann Danielson, Jim Danzenbaker, Mike Danzenbaker, Courtenay Dawson-Roberts, Penny Delevoryas, Joe DiDonato, Sandra & Steve Doran, Jean Dubois, Richard Elliott, Elizabeth & Jerry Estruth, Mike Feighner, Aaron Fink, Peter Folen, Susie Formenti, Marilyn & Russ Fowler, Erin Freed, Margaret Galvin, Cindy Goral, Dean & Diane Gordon, Pat & Phil Gordon, Shirley Gordon, Peter Gottschling, Kathy Graves, Darrel Gray, Betty Groce, Julie Hagelin, Barbara Hambleton, Phil Hand, Terry Hart, Michealle Havenhill, Rich Healy, Alice Hoch, Jim Holman, Julius & Ruth Honig, Grant Hoyt, June Hymas, Courtenay & Neil Jackson, Alberta Jasberg, David Jensen, Leroy Jensen, David Johnson, Dorothy Johnson, Jennie Johnson, Paula Johnson, Dave & Monica Johnson, William Kirsher, Kathy Kodis, Edwin Lack, Sheryl Lanier, Jonathan & Lenotte Lawton, Valerie Layne, Ralph Lee, Winkie Lennihan, Diane Lewis, Steve Lewis, Steven Liao, Clarice & Max Lincoln, Gerry Livingston, Linda Lloyd, Cindy Lockhart, David Lonzarich, Pete Lopitz, Leonora Main, Jeff Major, Armando Martinez, David McDonald, Richard Mewaldt, Mark Miller, Steve Miller, Kevin Monahan, Leslie Morrissey, Maria Mortkowitz, Lisa Negri-Bartels, Paul Noble, Phil Noble, Dolores Norton, Becky Ozoa, Larry Parmeter, Lucy Perrine, Peter Perrine, Gayle Petrick, Karen Powell, Don Price, Pamela Price, Gwyneth Ragosine, Annette Raible, Mary-Lyle Rempel, Elsie & Jerry Richey, Michael & Theresa Rigney, Bob Roadcap, Allen Royer, Rusty Ryan, Laura Scarborough, Ruth Scarborough, Kandice Scott, David & Roberta Seals, Milton Seibert, Carolyn Sherwood, Rob Shields, Steve Shugars, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Elizabeth & Norman Stabler, Keppler Stone, Dick Stovel, Lennie Stovel, Phyllis Swanson, Lynn Teneffoss, Barb Trask, Paul Travis, Ger Van Den Engh, Jerry Vitenson, Alan Walther, Henry Weston, Anne Wilson, Christine Wolfe, Clair Wolfe, Peg Woodin, Jean & Lou Young, Carol Zabel

Alan & Karen Thomas worked very hard pulling together the Calaveras section but were unable to participate in the count at the last minute. Kep Stone agreed to take over the Calaveras count-day leader responsibilities in a pinch.

Paul and Phil Noble put in an extra effort walking the 12 mile length of Coyote Creek from HWY 237 in Alviso all the way to Kelley Park in San Jose - no rarities this year but some great possibilities for future counts.

Bill Bousman headed the rare bird committee - bent on keeping everyone honest and our data impeccable. Judy McEuen did double duty as dinner coordinator and President. More than 80 hungry counters feasted on lasagna, salad, French bread, and dessert. Jim Howell of the San Jose Police Department, on hand to keep the rowdies in line, had a VERY quiet evening. Tired birders don't cause much trouble - even when there's a winetasting compliments of Montali Winery. And Lynn Teneffoss did everything!

Our leaders and counters all deserve a round of applause. Thank you everyone.

For 1987 it will be Sunday, December 20 for the next San Jose Christmas Bird Count. 'Til then, good birding and have a great year.

Sue and Jim Liskovec



## YOUTH SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Dear Fellow Audubon Members:

The SCVAS board and education committee would like to introduce the Youth Science Institute as a complementary organization to SCVAS. We feel that YSI provides many programs for youngsters and families interested in the natural sciences and the outside world that don't compete with Audubon activities, but rather augment them. If you are interested in taking part in more programs involving your children or your entire family, we invite and encourage you to use their programs.

Since its founding in 1953, the Institute's primary goal has been to educate the public about natural science and the environment through its many programs. YSI reaches thousands of children and families each year through its special programs, trips and events. After-school, weekend and summer programs are offered covering a variety of science-oriented topics. YSI leads trips throughout the year to diverse locales in California, from the Sierra to the desert, giving participants a close-up look at the splendor and wonders of our surroundings. YSI's special events include the annual Wildflower Show, Insect Fair and Wildlife Day. As a YSI member, you receive discounts on all activities; some programs are even offered free to members.

Other benefits of becoming a YSI member include early notification of programs, the YSI Quarterly newsletter and enrollment in the animal loan program at the Alum Rock Center. Membership begins at \$15 for individuals, \$25 for families, \$50 for supporting, and higher. Your membership donations are applied to YSI's general operating fund.

YSI operates four centers in Santa Clara County at these locations: Alum Rock Park in San Jose, Vasona Park in Los Gatos and Sanborn Park in Saratoga. YSI also operates a wildlife rehabilitation program in Morgan Hill, as well as at the main headquarters in Alum Rock Park. The Institute is planning to expand and build a living museum, similar to the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, along Coyote Creek in San Jose.

If you have any questions about YSI and how to become a member, please contact Executive Director David Johnston at (408)356-4945 or fill out the coupon below and mail it to YSI, 296 Garden Hill Drive, Los Gatos 95030.

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Yes, I would like more information about YSI.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$15/year  
Family \$25/year

Supporting \$50/year  
Patron \$100/year

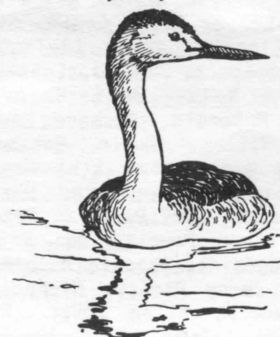
## FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

The Christmas Bird Counts come once a year and the three days' effort provides us with one of our best sources of information on the winter birds of Santa Clara County. This year's count dates were 21 Dec for San Jose, 22 Dec for Mount Hamilton, and 30 Dec for Palo Alto. As of this deadline not all of the records have proper ascriptions, and there may be some revisions in the species reports that follow. The San Jose count had good overall numbers, but no new species for the count. Mount Hamilton had good numbers as well and three new species for the count (great egret, cinnamon teal, and would you believe, rock dove). Palo Alto had a bang-up count for the second year in a row. They nearly tied last year's record 178 species and added seven new species to the count!

At this point the only information available from the Christmas Bird Counts is on rarities, but it is possible to ask some questions as to why some birds were seen and others weren't. The fall and early winter were dry and mild. The general belief is that the mild weather should allow a number of summer or migrant species to linger and here the story is mixed. None of the counts found lingering swallow, flycatchers other than our normal phoebes, tanagers, or orioles. Yet the San Jose count found a house wren and a blue-gray gnatcatcher and the Palo Alto count found an amazing seven species of warblers including: Nashville, black-throated gray, and Wilson's. In addition the common poorwill calling in Foothills Park on the Palo Alto count is unprecedented. Was the fall weather so mild that lingering birds weren't concentrated at flowering eucalyptus and other exotic plantings? Food crops seemed normal on the San Jose and Palo Alto counts, but the acorn and berry crop was nonexistent on the Mount Hamilton count and the number of Lewis' woodpeckers dropped from the nine-year average of 49 to only 7, and acorn woodpeckers from 134 to 43.

A **Red-throated Loon** was at Shoreline Lake from 29 Nov to 12 Dec (Paul Noble - PN, Bill Bousman - WGB), but left the lake only to return on count day, 30 Dec. A **Pacific Loon** was on Lexington Res. 24 Dec (David Suddjian - DS) and another bird was found off Redwood City on 30 Dec (Clark Blake - CB). A **Common Loon** showed up at Shoreline Lake 16 Dec (PN) and was there regularly through 29 Dec (James Yurchenco - JY, Amy Lauterbach - AL, Al Eisner, WGB, DS). However, on 30 Dec this same bird was found on Salt Pond #1 (DS). Another **Common Loon** was found on Lexington Res. 24 Dec (DS). **Brown Pelicans** stayed in the south bay in small numbers with the last noted 5 Dec (WGB) on Salt Pond #2 in Mountain View. **White Pelicans** stayed through the end of December to make both south bay counts. The highest count for the period was 430 on Charleston Slough 14 Dec (WGB). A **Pelagic Cormorant** NE of Bayfront Park in Menlo Park 30 Dec (DS) was a first for the Palo Alto CBC. A "calico" **Little Blue Heron** was found on the outer portion of Salt Pond #2 26 Nov and was seen at least through 3 Dec (Mark Moyer). It seems likely that this is the same bird seen earlier in the fall and may be a hybrid Snowy Egret X Little Blue Heron. A **Green-backed Heron** was found along Matadero Creek 30 Dec (DS): they are rare on the west side of the valley. Fifteen **Tundra Swan** were at the Palo Alto FCB 30 Nov (WGB) and left shortly after dawn. A flock of nine birds was found on Calaveras Res. 21 Dec (Kep Stone, Maryann Danielson - MD, Jean-Marie Spoelman - J-MS, many observers) for the San Jose count. Two adult birds remained on Pescadero Marsh through the period (Jobst Brandt, WGB). Four **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found at the south end of Calaveras Res.

21 Dec (MD, J-MS) and were a good find for the San Jose CBC. A **Snow Goose** was found at Dunes Beach, Halfmoon Bay 11 Dec (Phil Sherman) with a gull flock. **Canada Geese** are not found away from Crystal Springs and Calaveras reservoirs very often, so a flock of 130 birds over Palo Alto on count day was a stroke of good luck (fide CB). **Blue-winged Teal** have remained at the Palo Alto FCB with two males 6 Dec (Rich Jeffers - RJ), three birds on 26 Dec (WGB), and a pair seen on 30 Dec (DS). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was also found there on 30 Dec (DS). The **Redhead** flock in the FCB peaked on 20 Nov with 80 (PN) and decreased after that with 8 seen 6 Dec (RJ) and 4 on 30 Dec (DS). **White-winged Scoter** are usually rare at the south end of the bay; two found at the west end of the Dumbarton Bridge 30 Dec (DS) are about as far down as they normally come. An imm. male and female **Barrow's Goldeneye** were adjacent to Stevens Creek at Shoreline 30 Dec (PN) for our first record in about a year. **Hooded Merganser** numbers have been variable at the pond at Skylonda with individuals recorded 7, 28, and 30 Dec (WGB, Chris



Wolfe - CW). The pond water level is quite low and seems less suitable for them this winter. Another bird was found on the horseshoe pond on Skyline Ridge OSP 30 Dec (PN). **Common Mergansers** this month included four on Grant Lake 13 Dec (JY, AL) and three on Lexington Res. 24 Dec (DS). Five **Bald Eagles** were found on Calaveras Res. 21 Dec (MD, J-MS, Dick Elliott et al., Phil & Pat Gordon - P&PG), two were adults and the others were different age immatures. Two adults on Isabel Res. 22 Dec (Don Schmoltdt - DSc) gives us a good winter total. A total of six **Red-shouldered Hawks** on the San Jose count (fide Jim & Sue Liskovec - J&SL) is more than we have found in recent years (2.8 is 10-year average). **Ferruginous Hawks** have been well-represented this winter. An immature was at Jos. Grant CP 13 Dec (JY, AL), and another immature was at the San Jose airport from at least 14-21 Dec (Grant Hoyt, WGB). On 21 Dec another immature was found at Mission Peak Regional Park (Barbara Hambleton, Kevin Monahan). Three birds were found on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 Dec (CB, Elsie Richie fide DSc), and an immature was found in the Russian Ridge OSP 30 Dec (WGB, CW) for only the second Palo Alto count record. We are at the edge of this species winter range and they are reported every winter in small numbers. The **Rough-legged Hawk** is much rarer in the south bay even in irruptive winters. Only one has been reported this winter, a bird seen in the San Jose count circle on 20 Dec (fide J&SL). An adult was found in Halfmoon Bay 9 Dec (Roland Franz - RF) where they are more frequently found. **Golden Eagles** found on the west side include an adult at Stanford 23 Dec (Cynthia Dusel-Bacon) and another bird south of Bayfront Park 30 Dec (DS). A **Merlin** was found on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 22 Dec (O. Hughes - OH fide DSc) for the third year. **Peregrine Falcon** have been found regularly in December in the south bay; from descriptions it appears that at least three birds are involved (PN, Phyllis M. Browning - PMB, DS,



WGB). **Prairie Falcons** have also been well-reported with individuals at Jos. Grant CP 13 Dec (JY, AL), and along Zanker Road 19 Dec (WGB). Seven birds were found on the San Jose count 21 Dec (fide J&SL) which is an all time high. Eight of the last 10 years have had one or no birds seen and even allowing for some probable duplicate sightings the numbers are remarkable. A single bird at the Isabel Ranch 22 Dec (CB fide DSc) was at a typical locale. Two **Wild Turkey** in San Antonio Valley 22 Dec (OH fide DSc) are seldom found on the count although they are known residents. **Black Rail** were found on the December high tides of 30 and 31. At least five birds were present at the Palo Alto Baylands with some at the corner spot and others along the wastewater outfall. Extraordinary efforts to survey owls were made on 30 Dec and I hope to summarize these next month. For now it shall suffice to say that in the strigid-rich regions near Monte Bello OSP six species were found! This includes the first count record of **Long-eared Owl** with two found - one in Monte Bello (PN) and one in Los Trancos OSP (DS). Other owls found this month by mere mortals include a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** off Cloverdale Road along the coast 25 Nov (RF) and another pygmy-owl on the San Jose GC 21 Dec (Annette Raible fide J&SL). The **Common Poorwill** found calling on 30 Dec in upper Foothills Park (DS) was exceptional. The weather has been quite mild in the hills this fall and winter and it is possible that poorwills are more regular in winter than our records show. The failure of the acorn crop in the Mt. Hamilton Range may explain the single **Lewis' Woodpecker** at Alum Rock Park 21 Dec (Henry Weston fide J&SL). It is believed that the birds at Jasper Ridge Biological Reserve are from a more northerly population. They have been there regularly since October and four were found on count day, 30 Dec (fide CB). A male **Red-naped Sapsucker** returned to Jasper Ridge for the second winter and was also found on count day (fide CB). A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in Palo Alto 26 Nov (RF) was the only report until the Christmas counts. Then San Jose recorded six (10-year average is 1.1), suggesting that the fall flight has remained, but is highly dispersed. Three **Canyon Wren** were found in Henry Coe SP 28 Dec (JY, AL) in an area they have been found in regularly. A **House Wren** was found in Ed Levin CP 21 Dec (Peter Gottschling) for one of our few winter records. **Winter Wrens** are a rare, but regular wintering species along many of our creeksides and wet canyons. Individuals were found along San Francisquito Creek on 14 and 27 Dec (WGB) and the San Jose count found a total of six which is a little up from the 10-year average of 3.6. Four **Am. Dipper** were found in Alum Rock Park 21 Dec (Dorothy Johnson fide J&SL) where they often winter. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was found there the same day (Robert Shields) - it was probably the rarest of the San Jose count rarities having only been found twice before in 17 years. The mistletoe berry crop in the Mt. Hamilton Range was fine this winter. The resulting 26 **Phainopepla** seen 22 Dec (fide DSc) ties the previous record high set last



winter. **Orange-crowned Warblers** have been found in a number of spots this winter. Individuals have been seen along San Francisquito Creek 14 Dec (WGB) and 1 Jan (PN). Another was in Mitchell Park, Palo Alto 25 and 30 Dec (DS). One was in the Alviso area 21 Dec (Mike Rigney fide J&SL). Much less expected was an adult **Nashville Warbler** found along San Francisquito Creek above Middlefield 14 Dec (WGB), a probable second bird along the creek at Newell 30 Dec (DS), and another sighting above Middlefield 1 Jan (PN). There are few south bay winter records for this rare warbler. Wintering **Black-throated Gray Warblers** have also been found with a male in Mountain View on 29 and 30 Dec and a female in Menlo Park on 2 Jan (all DS). The last of our rare wintering warblers was a **Wilson's Warbler** found along Stevens Creek in Los Altos on 30 Dec (J&SL fide CB). Normal winter records of **Sage Sparrow** include at least 3 in the San Antonio Valley 22 Dec (WGB) and one in Henry Coe SP 25 Dec (JY, AL). These are both believed to be residential populations. **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** have had one of their best winters yet at the Palo Alto Baylands. Two were along the wastewater outfall 2 Dec (WGB), and 30 and 31 Dec (DS) and another at the parking lot corner 31 Dec (DS). Considering the available habitat for these birds and their secretive habits I wonder what the real total is. This species is still under review by the California Bird Records Committee; observers with detailed notes are encouraged to submit their descriptions for review. An adult **Swamp Sparrow** was found along Matadero Creek at the end of the Palo Alto maintenance yard 30 Dec (DS) for our first record in three winters. This is the first report from this location for this very rare wintering sparrow. Feeders productive in **White-throated Sparrows** in past winters failed us this winter, but one bird was seen in Palo Alto 24-30 Dec (DS). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** have been found in a few spots in the Mt. Hamilton Range this winter. A total of 12 were found in three spots on 22 Dec for the Mt. Hamilton CBC (fide DSc). A larger concentration than usual was a flock of 20-30 birds at Henry Coe SP 26 Dec (JY, AL). **Evening Grosbeaks** have staged their largest invasion in recent years, at least along the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Four were seen in Los Altos 2 Dec (Leonard Helton). On 7 Dec a flock of 20 was found in Mountain View (Galen Chaney, PN) and then on 11 Dec 30 were seen over Los Altos (PN). On 24 Dec three were seen over the Stanford Shopping Center, then on 30 Dec, count day, 12 were nearby along San Francisquito Creek, and five more in Menlo Park (all DS).

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

## SCVAS AS CO-SPONSOR OF STATE OF THE BAY CONFERENCE

SCVAS will be co-sponsor of the Oceanic Society's State of the Bay Conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 1987, at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Topics for panel discussions will include Water Quality, Water Quantity, Socio-Economic Impacts, Ecology and Water Politics and the Future. Speakers include Congressman George Miller and the following authors and reporters: Harold Gilliam, Tom Harris, Marc Reisner, Lee McEachern, Carol Benfell. For more information, please call the Oceanic Society at (415)441-5970 or the SCVAS office.

## NON-AUDUBON TRIPS AND EVENTS

These activities are not sponsored by Audubon but are listed for your information:

San Francisco Bay Chapter Oceanic Society "State of the Bay" Conference will be held on Saturday, March 7, at Golden Gate Univ, S.F. from 9 am to 5 pm. Congressman George Miller will be a featured speaker. Important updates on environmental issues will be presented.

Natural History of California Birds, an eight-week course sponsored by the Santa Clara Adult Education Program, will begin on Thursday, Jan 29. The course will be taught by Mike Rigney, co-founder of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, at the Santa Clara Adult Education Center at 1840 Benton Street. Field trips will include identification sessions and an introduction to bird banding. For more information call Mike at (408)263-1814.

The City of Palo Alto has opened a self-guided nature trail for visually handicapped and hearing impaired at the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center. The trail features a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk, braille number identity stations, narrative tapes and a free, new, illustrated trail booklet.



Whale watching boat trips are offered by Kurt Campbell, P.O. Box 268, Cotati 94928. Dates scheduled are March 2, 9, 16, 17, 24 and 30 as well as April dates. The trips are accompanied by experienced naturalists. For further information, including space availability, call (707)795-8492.

Photo Experience offers a photographic tour to Death Valley and Mono Lake from Feb. 28 - March 3. For more information on this and many other photography-oriented trips call (408)246-4943 or write to 663 So. Bernardo #132, Sunnyvale, CA.

A Wildlife Photo Contest is being sponsored by the Youth Science Institute. Contestants may submit up to eight entries, four each of black and white and color. Deadline for the contest is February 28; there are both Adult and Junior categories. Further information from JoAnne Souza, (408)356-4945.

Dave and Monica Johnston are leaders, along with local naturalists, of a Cheesemans' EcoSafaris trip to Galapagos, Machu Picchu, Paracas, and the Manu, a pristine area of the Amazon Basin where jaguars, macaws, and other rare species are undisturbed. Members may choose to do part or all of the trip. In the Galapagos a new 12-knot yacht will travel to 12 islands, including the western part of the archipelago where penguins, flightless cormorants, and whales feed in the cold upwellings of these deep waters. Call Dave & Monica Johnston at (408)867-7278 or Gail & Doug Cheeseman at (408)867-1371 in Saratoga. Dates are July 28-August 22.



## FEBRUARY MEETING PROGRAM

February's General Meeting on February 18 will feature Ted Chandik, a member of SCVAS and naturalist for Palo Alto Parks. Ted has led trips to many areas of the world and one of his favorites is the Sea of Cortez. He will share with us his incredible knowledge of natural history of this area. Through the use of slides, he will emphasize the beauty and adaptation of the special animals in the Sea of Cortez. The meeting will be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero; refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm.



## ALVISO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL CENTER

The refuge around the Environmental Education Center, Alviso, is open for birders and bird walks seven days a week during daylight hours. The gate is open from 8 am to 4:30 pm weekdays. If birders find the iron gate closed they can park on Grand or Spreckels and hike in. Birding is good along Grand, leading into the area of the Headquarters.

I maintain a bird checkoff chart and have a preliminary list of birds likely to be seen there. Anyone coming out during business hours could come into the building and ask for the list. If someone wants to have a scheduled trip there I probably could obtain a gate key and show up, or could lead a trip or help lead a trip, if desired.

- Lee Lovelady (408)262-5514  
H (408)723-4864



## WATCH FOR TAGGED BUTTERFLIES

Approximately 30,000 Monarch butterflies were banded along the California sea coast this winter. A small white paper tag was placed on the right forewing of each insect containing an individual number.

The 45 known wintering roosts are threatened by development, tourism and other activities. Seven sites were lost in the last two years.

Each banded butterfly recovered provides critical data which can help conserve the migratory phenomenon of the Monarch.

If you find a DEAD banded Monarch send the specimen and location found to: Chris Nagano, Entomology Section, Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Blvd., LA 90007. Send the information and location from the band of a LIVE Monarch. You will be notified the location and date of the banding.



## NEW LEGAL FUND TO PROTECT WETLANDS

With great pleasure we announce the creation of the South Bay Wetlands Legal Defense Fund. Its purpose is to provide initial funds to local groups to pursue legal action in order to protect wetlands. This fund has been created to free local activists initially to work with their attorney to put together a solid legal case, where their time will be best spent; their fundraising can come later when the legal case is underway.

This fund was created with the court-awarded attorney fees from last summer's lawsuit of Union City by the Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado (COSA). As is typical in these cases, the attorney's fees were paid by the developers rather than the city. Because so many contributions to the lawsuit were made by Boards and members of Bay Area conservation groups, such as the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, COSA's Executive Committee decided to establish this legal fund with the court's award. It functions within the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge.

Use of the funds must be approved by the Legal Fund's five-member Board, which is designed to act quickly. Cases will be reviewed by environmental attorneys to determine the merits of the lawsuit to estimate chances of success. When the fund is used, it must be viewed as a loan to assure its longevity.

Tax-deductible contributions to this fund are encouraged -- we anticipate that it will be a very effective tool in protecting our rapidly disappearing and valuable wetlands. Checks should be made out to the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation --Refuge/Legal Fund, and should be sent to the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, 453 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Please call Martha Esserlieu for more information about the South Bay Wetlands Legal Defense Fund at (415)487-1282.

- Martha K. Esserlieu



## VOLUNTEER NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CLIPPERS NEEDED

The SCVAS office is very interested in receiving any articles taken from local newspapers for our files on the following topics: Wetlands (local and nation), places to birdwatch, general information about birds, Christmas Bird Counts, SCVAS, National Audubon Society.

Black and white or color pictures of birds, with the name of the bird printed on the front or back, taken from magazines, are also greatly appreciated. These are made available to local teachers, and are very popular.

If you have the time to clip and send such pictures or articles, we would greatly appreciate your contribution. Extra copies of any articles are shared with the PCC and other conservation organizations. Please don't assume that we will see an article - they frequently slip by us. Have any questions? Please call Lynn in the office (415)329-1811.

## TRICOLORED BIRDS

Tricolored Blackbirds a rare and sensitive species? Nonsense, you say. You can see hundreds or even thousands of these birds if you know where to look. How can such an apparently abundant species be considered sensitive?

But Tricolored Blackbird populations have suffered at least a 50% decline over the last five decades and this downtrend is continuing. Loss of wetlands due to agriculture and urbanization, exposure to pesticides, herbicides and other toxic elements have contributed to reduced nesting habitat and reduced nesting success. This species is sensitive to aerial spraying and to disturbance while breeding: human entry into the colony can sometimes result in nest abandonment.

Ornithologists have reported spectacular numbers and densities of breeding Tricolored Blackbirds. In the 1930s one researcher estimated that a quarter of a million pairs of Tricolored Blackbirds were breeding in a 65-acre marsh! He reported that while standing amidst the colony he could touch as many as 26 nests without changing his position. This intense gregariousness carries over in to the non-breeding season and in fall and winter. Tricolored Blackbirds leave the immediate vicinity of their nesting colony and concentrate in huge roosts. Wintering Tricolored Blackbirds often associate with Red-winged Blackbirds and European Starlings.

This colonial species prefers to nest in freshwater marshes, building its open cup nests in cattails or tules. Tricolored Blackbirds will also nest in willows, blackberries, mustard, wild rose and saltcedar. A major factor in their selection of a nest colony is the availability of a nearby food supply. Breeding colonies are usually found within convenient flying distance of ricelands or pasture lands where they forage for invertebrates in flooded fields or margins of ponds.

Tricolored Blackbirds are largely a California species. Although a few breeding colonies have been reported in southern Oregon and nearby Carson City, Nevada, they are found chiefly in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. They are resident in California year around and are somewhat migratory within the Central Valley during fall and winter.

The USFWS has designated the Tricolored Blackbird a Candidate Category 2 species, which means that the available evidence on the species indicates it may warrant listing, but for which more information is needed before it can be listed as Threatened or Endangered. Ironically, another agency of the U.S. government, the Department of Agriculture, still lists the Tricolored Blackbird as an agricultural pest!

- Susan Sanders  
Burrowing Owl, Dec. 1986  
Davis Audubon Society



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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.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Field Trip Coordinator for March - Audrey Stoye (408)249-2108.

- Mar. 7 **Birdwalk for Beginners: Palo Alto Baylands.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at Interpretive Center. From Hwy 101 take Embarcadero E exit to end, turn left and go to end. Rain or shine. Leader: Dick Stovel. (415)856-6105.
- Mar. 9 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 8:30 am. Creek County Park. Leader: Frank Vanslager. (408)257-3647. Details next month.
- Mar. 14 **Waddell Creek.** Saturday, 9 am - 2 pm. Meet at Rancho Del Oso Nature Center. On Hwy 1, go 2 mis. S of Ano Nuevo; take 1st turn E after Waddell Creek Bridge and follow signs to 1st house. Specialties: Possible Dippers, Marbled Murrelets, Bobcats. Call leader if storming. Leaders: Lion Baumgartner and Dianne Westbourk (408)423-6381.
- Mar. 21,22 **Monterey Bay & Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Sanctuary** are the backdrop for this Bird Photography seminar by Kevin Monahan and SCVAS. Classroom and on-location sessions to develop personal bird photography techniques. Kevin (408)425-7841 or Lynn (415)329-1811.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is preparing a slate of Officers and Directors for 1987-88. We need you and your recommendations! If you would like to nominate yourself or another member for consideration please call Lynn at the office. This is a fun way to get to know about the Chapter and current issues. Call Lynn (415)329-1811 or Mark McEuen (408)251-3086.

## NEW IN LIBRARY

Bird Island in Antarctic Waters by David Parmelee  
Pigeons & Doves of the Works by Derek Goodwin  
 All SCVAS titles are available for members to check out of the library at the Peninsula Conservation Center.

## 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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