



The Avocet

1137g

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

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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 March - Audrey Stoye (408)249-2108.

- Mar. 3 **Board of Directors Meeting.** Tuesday, 7:15 pm at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 2253 Park, Palo Alto. OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.
- Mar. 4 **Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands. Guest speaker, nature photographer, Betty Randall Potts. She will discuss bird photography techniques. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Mar. 7 **"State of the Bay" Conference.** Saturday, 9 am-5 pm at Golden Gate Univ. Auditorium in San Francisco. Admission \$25, discounts for students. To register (415)441-5970.
- 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, proceed past duck pond to end. Rain or shine. Leader: Dick Stovel. (415)856-6105.
- Mar. 10 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, (408)867-4748. Topic: Birds of India
- Mar. 11 **Stevens Creek Co. Park.** Wednesday, 8:30 am, half day. From I-280 exit onto Foothill and proceed S 2.1 miles to first park entrance. Meet at first parking lot (Chestnut Picnic area). Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647.
- 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. Highlights: Possible Dippers, Marbled Murrelets, deer, bobcats. Call leader in case of storm. Leaders: Lion Baumgartner and Dianne Westbourk (408)423-6381. Optional donation to center.
- Mar. 18 **General Meeting.** Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm. Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell at Embarcadero. Dr. Thelma Rowell, professor of Zoology at UC Berkeley presents a program on the monkeys of the Kakamega Rain Forest in Kenya. She is well known for her studies and a number of students have joined her and published their studies. (More about our speaker inside.)
- 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.
- Mar. 22 **Ches Bro/Uvas Reservoirs.** Sunday, 9 am, half day. Meet at Chesbro Res. at junction of Uvas Rd. & Old Oak Glen Rd. Take Almaden Expressway S to McKean Rd; left on McKean (which becomes Uvas Rd.) and S 1 1/2 mis. Leader: Emelie Curtis (408)779-2637.
- Mar. 25 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 8:30 am, half day. Hidden Villa. From I-80 take El Monte-Moody Road W past Foothill College about 1 1/2 mis. Watch for the sign on the left. We will park in the first parking lot. Lunch optional. Leader: Mary Hallesy (415)327-4822, or for information call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- Mar. 28 **Alviso Bird Walk.** Saturday, 8 am, half day. Limited to 25 people. Call leader for reservation and directions. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Grant Hoyt (415)969-7892.
- Mar. 29 **Coal Mine Ridge.** Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. Limited to 10 people. 4 mi. walk. Late winter & early summer visitants. Call leader for reservations and directions. RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.

Field Trip Coordinator for April: Mary Lou Burgin (408)253-7115.

- Apr. 4 **Coyote Lake County Park.** Saturday, 8:30 am, half day or longer if group desires. Take Hwy 101 S to Leavesley Rd. N of Gilroy. Exit E on Leavesley and meet at Denny's parking lot on left. Possible Park entrance fee. Highlights: Possible C. Mergansers, Early Warblers, Rufous-Crowned Sparrow & Wild Turkey. Leader: Jean-Marie Spoelman (415)797-0265.
- Apr. 8 **Field Trip South.** Wednesday, 8:30 am. Deer Hollow Farm. Exit off I-280 at Foothill Expy. Go one block S to Cristo Rey Drive and turn right. Go W on Cristo Rey almost one mile to Rancho San Antonio County Park sign. Go through gate to last parking lot. Leader: Frank Farran (408)252-3874.
- Apr. 11 **Pinnacles National Monument.** Saturday, 8:30 am, full day. Meet at Choame parking lot on E side of Monument. From San Jose take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 25; left on Hwy 25. Go approx. 40 mis S to Hwy 146; right on Hwy 146 to Monument. About 4 mis. easy walking. Entrance fee. Leader: Phyllis Swanson (408)274-2349.

FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

Good grief! Our winters aren't that cold, but I'm ready for spring. As I write these words I see pictures of a snow-blanketed East Coast, and as you read these words the first of the Orange-crowned Warblers will be back to the foothills and singing their buzzy song. We don't have a Walt Disney spring with the clouds opening up, bluebirds singing, and flowers in full bloom. Things are more subtle and I like it that way. The swallows will show up at the end of February or in early March. They march to a drum of temperature and insect hatches and have no idea of our Gregorian calendar and St. Jude's Day. By mid-month the first Warbling Vireos will be setting up their nesting territories. They will be on their second brood by the end of May when migrant vireos will still be passing through, on their way to northern climes. The natural world has a multitude of clocks, all keeping different time.

A good winter for **Common Loons** with one at Shoreline Lake irregularly since 16 Dec. He was seen there 4-12 Jan (James Yurchenco-JY, Amy Lauterbach-AL, Paul L. Noble-PLN, Mike Rogers-MR). Another was at Felt Lake 30 Dec (Al Eisner-AE). The **White Pelicans** usually move out at the turn of the year. Late birds include 50+ to the bayside of Crittenden Marsh 17 Jan (MR) and 4 at Crittenden 24 Jan (Bill Bousman-WGB). Two **Green-backed Herons** were found on Searsville Lake 30 Dec (Bill Kirsher-BK fide Clark Blake-CB). At least two **Blue-winged Teal** remain at the Palo Alto FCB into early January (Tom Olsen). The **Redhead** numbers usually peak in late December or early January; this year they dropped a bit sooner. By 10 Jan the FCB flock was down to five (JY, AL) and only one was found on 17 Jan (MR). Individuals in other locations have been one at Moffett Field 30 Dec (Ed Helley) and another on Bear Gulch Res. the same day (John Glover-JG, both fide CB). Some winter peak numbers of two of our uncommon ducks are 66 **Surf Scoters** at the Stevens Creek Mitigation Area 17 Jan (MR) and 30 **Common Goldeneye** at Shoreline Lake 14 Jan (PLN). The 1st-winter male and female **Barrow's Goldeneye** found last month were still at the Stevens Creek Mitigation Area 17 Jan (MR). This is the longest period that this species has remained in the county. **Hooded Mergansers** found in the hills include one at Skyline Ridge OSP (PLN) and two on Bear Gulch Res. (JG fide CB), both on 30 Dec. An **Osprey** was reported from the EEC in Alviso 25 Jan for one of our few winter records (Milton West). An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** was near Lawrence Expressway and Moffett Park 30 Jan (Lou Young). More west side **Golden Eagles** include one well-marked adult that was seen in bayside Palo Alto on 31 Dec and 1 Jan and then off Page Mill Rd on the other side of town on 8 Jan (Phyllis M. Browning). A bird was seen in Monte Bello OSP 18 Jan (Carl Beck-CBe). **Merlin** have been found in good numbers this winter. On 30 Dec one was found at Alta Mesa Cemetery (PLN), a second on Old La Honda Rd. (Henry Hayes, photo Peter La Tourrette), and a third at Embarcadero and 101 (Keith Hansen). A bird was banded at CCRS on 1 Jan (fide PLN) and on 4 Jan one was seen at Shoreline Lake (JY, AL). On 11 Jan one was on the Stanford Campus (CBe, Holly Wilkins). An immature was seen near CCRS on 18 Jan, but was not the banded bird (PLN) and on the same day two were seen in La Honda (CBe). **Black Rail** have continued to attract birders to the Palo Alto Baylands. Four were reported on 28 Jan (fide Betty Groce-BG) and two were at the same spot 29 Jan (BG, Ed Laak-EL, et al.). One of the latter birds used the cover of cars in the parking lot to avoid predation by a great egret, quick thinking, huh. Last month I promised owl totals from the Palo Alto CBC: 2+ **Common Barn-Owls**, 58 **Western Screech-Owls**, 44 **Great Horned Owls**, 7 **Northern**

Pygmy-Owls, 2 **Long-eared Owls**, 2 **Short-eared Owls**, and 30 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** - very impressive. I didn't get the totals on **Burrowing Owls**. Eight species in all! A smattering of **Orange-crowned Warbler** reports have continued. One that has been near CCRS since November was recaptured on 11 Jan (fide PLN) and a bird showed up in a Palo Alto backyard on 17 Jan (PMB). Another **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was found 30 Dec along Los Trancos Creek (AE). Three **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were at the Palo Alto Baylands 29 Jan - one at the parking lot corner (BG, EL) and two out by the sewage outfall (AE, WGB). Additional **White-throated Sparrow** are one from Los Altos 30 Dec (PLN) and another the same day on Coal Mine Ridge (Al Robinson fide CB). **Evening Grosbeaks** continue to be found in a number of spots. Some birds were still along San Francisco Creek near Stanford 1 Jan (PMB) where they had originally been found on 30 Dec. Another was seen at Mt. Madonna County Park on 1 Jan (David Suddjian). A pair was observed in Skylonda 11 Jan (Gloria Heller) and a flock of 14 were feeding on Chinese pistache berries in S. Los Altos 22 Jan (PLN). Paul has noted 15 different species feeding on this city-planted tree. If you regularly observe either native or exotic winter fruiting trees and the birds that feed on them, I would be interested in a summary of the species and numbers that use these trees for food.

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

BIRDS OF PREY STUDY

The Predatory Bird Research Group of the University of California, Santa Cruz, is conducting a study of nesting raptors this spring and summer. Breeding, wintering and migrating raptors are being studied through the hilly area of southern Alameda County including most of the area east of Mission Peak to Cedar Mountain Ridge, and those areas south of Route 84 to the county line. The group would appreciate being informed of new or historic nest sites in this area, as well as sightings of birds of prey. Please contact Joseph E. DiDonato at Sunol Regional Park, P.O. Box 82, Sunol, CA 94586 (415)862-2244, until August 1987.

MARCH MEETING SPEAKER

Featured at the General Meeting on March 18 will be Dr. Thelma Rowell from UC Berkeley, who has been living in the Kakamega forest in western Kenya for 17 years to study the behavior of three species of monkeys. Thelma's work deals mainly with the social organization of the blue monkeys and she and her students know all the members of two troops individually. At our meeting, she will discuss something of the history of the monkeys and, using slides, will go into detail about blue monkey society.

The northern part of the forest is located within the boundaries of a National Reserve and included in the area is a small elementary school, which will now have to move. Thelma hopes to teach these young Kenyans about their natural heritage right in their own local park.

Dr. Rowell's talk should be very special, in the true Jane Goodall vein.

Refreshments will be served at 7:30 and the talk will begin at 8 pm at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, located at the corner of Newell and Embarcadero.

ANNUAL SPRING WILD BIRD SEED SALE

It's time for our spring bird seed sale. Once again, SCVAS is offering 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.

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, APRIL 6. All orders must be picked up at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, on either Friday, May 1 between noon and 6 pm, or on Saturday, May 2 between 11 am and 1 pm. UNCLAIMED SEED WILL BE RESOLD SATURDAY AFTER 1 PM UNLESS AN EXCEPTION HAS BEEN MADE IN ADVANCE. WE CAN NO LONGER HOLD SEED IF YOU FORGET TO PICK IT UP.

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, 415 Cambridge Ave., Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306 NO LATER THAN MONDAY, APRIL 6.



OWLERS' REPORT

A total of 26 owls joined me for 3 owl prowls in January. On the 10th we heard a W. Screech owl, but it stopped calling as we moved closer. We did however have a Northern Saw-whet owl fly overhead, but were unable to spotlight it. Great Horned owls were heard calling. On the 17th we did better. The first owl we encountered was a Common Barn owl which gave us hissing and bill snapping and flew overhead in the spotlight. We chose a different route than on the 10th and were rewarded with several Western Screech owls calling, but again they would not show themselves. The Saw-whets however were in good voice and allowed us to see a couple in the spotlight flying overhead. A Great Horned owl on a utility line along Page Mill Rd. was an added bonus. The trip on the 24th was hampered by fog, drizzle and gusty winds. The only owl we encountered was a Saw-whet which gave us good views in the spotlight overhead.

In retrospect I think the owls are frightened by a group of people and therefore would not come in close and perch. Often when I census the area for owls the birds will come in quite close and perch nearby. But owling has a large factor of luck involved and just one visit is not enough to see all the species up there. For those who could not get space on this year's trips, I may repeat the series next January.

- Paul L. Noble

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 (____) _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS ORDER TO THE SCVAS OFFICE BY MONDAY, APRIL 6.

SCVAS, 415 Cambridge Ave., Suite 21
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(415)329-1811



NEW SCVAS OFFICE!

Our office has a new address - just two blocks away from the Peninsula Conservation Center. We are now located at 415 CAMBRIDGE AVE., SUITE 21, half a block east of El Camino. Office hours are usually from 9:30 am to noon, and 2-5:30 pm. Members are always welcome to visit, but because frequent meetings and errands entail closing the office unpredictably, it is a good idea to call before you come by. The phone number will be the same - (415)329-1811.

Hopefully this move will only be temporary - to give us more space while the Peninsula Conservation Center looks for a new location, when we will rejoin the group. Purchasing a building in the mid-Peninsula area is the PCC's top priority, although they have not abandoned the notion of renting. They are looking for a building with about 5,000 square feet of space, to accommodate all seven resident organizations and the store. If any SCVAS members can give, sell, or recommend a property for sale or lease in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Redwood City, or other nearby communities that may be appropriate as a future home for the PCC, please call PCC Director Jackie Brown at (415)328-5313.

