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MONO LAKE

SCVAS member. Special to Avocet

- Peter Steinhart
Contributing Editor, Audubon

Mono Lake is certifiably a spectacle. From Mono Pass on the eastern edge of Yosemite, you look down into a moonscape of yawning sage and ragged crater, and in the midst of it is a beckoning pool of pastel blue. It is benediction in an indifferent land, cool stillness in the heart of the desert. And looking down on it we are apt to recall Thoreau's idea that lakes are the most beautiful and expansive features of the landscape. They are, wrote Thoreau, "the earth's eye, looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature."

Since 1940, when the City of Los Angeles began diverting the streams that flow into Mono Lake, the lake has shriveled to half its original size. The struggle to save the lake from Los Angeles' thirst has gone on for more than a decade, protracted by studies and courtroom arguments and the vapors of press agency. It begins to seem like one of those medieval wars between Italian principalities, an event so prolonged that the drama of action has faded, and the authenticity of origins sometimes seems to drift beyond the reach of memory. We get appeals for money in the mail. We send our checks and wonder whether it's still worth carrying on the fight.

Even the Department of Water and Power has entered into discussions about the future of the lake. Ten years of effort have legitimized the place. Whereas few travellers stopped to look over the lake a decade ago, last year, the Forest Service reports, Mono Lake hosted 150,000 visitors. And ten years of legal efforts have affirmed the public trust doctrine, which if upheld in continuing suits, may protect not only Mono Lake, but a vast array of other places.

Places like Mono Lake are increasingly important. We are, geographically speaking, a large state. But we are at the same time the most urban state. We live our lives through automobile windshields and television screens and the winter



Carl Dennis Buell

Of course it's worth it. Glacial as the conflict has seemed, few environmental struggles have had so much gain for the effort. Were it not for the efforts thus far, the lake would by now have shrunken to nearly one third its 1958 size, and its biological life would be in great peril. Ten years of studies have shown the value of maintaining sufficient water in Mono Lake, not just to local wildlife, but to vast flocks of gull and phalarope that stop over on migration or come to breed there. A National Academy of Sciences study ordered by Congress and due this summer is expected to bolster these conclusions. And ten years of legal effort and negotiation have brought the Mayor of Los Angeles to agree that he wants to assure the lake a future.

ice of newspaper prose. We are badly in need of places; once in a while we have to get out and see something real and original. Places like Mono Lake become refuges of opportunity to confront our human nature directly, without the intervention of advertisers, highway engineers and broadcasters.

To continue the fight is to continue the struggle to wrestle with our own sharper impulses. Struggling to save Mono Lake is a way of setting limits on our ill-advised exploitation of water and air and genetic intelligence everywhere. **It's worth pursuing because it shows we care about what we are.**

WHERE WE STAND

Martha Davis, Executive Director
Mono Lake Committee

The March return of thousands of California Gulls to Mono Lake marks the beginning of spring in the Eastern Sierra. Brine shrimp eggs are hatching, refilling Mono's waters with life. As the days grow longer and warmer, thousands of landbirds and snowy plovers will soon join this annual celebration of rebirth.

But spring is not the only source of renewal in the Mono Basin. Thanks to the efforts of National Audubon Society, California Trout, and the Mono Lake Committee, dry cobbled washes have been transformed into productive, living streams. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is required by court orders to release water down Rush and Lee Vining creeks, Mono Lake's largest tributary streams. While these flows -- a little more than one-fourth of that needed to stabilize the lake -- only slow Mono's decline, the water has breathed new life into the Basin. Wild brown trout, bald eagles, osprey, dippers and kingfishers have returned to the once empty creek beds.

Restoration of the streams is the most recent of a long line of victories in our efforts to save Mono Lake. In 1983, the California Supreme Court upheld the public trust doctrine, clearing the way for a re-allocation and sharing of water between Mono Lake and Los Angeles. In 1984, we secured congressional protection for the lands surrounding Mono Lake through the creation of the 57,000 acre Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

Most important, public support for Mono Lake is growing by leaps and bounds, bringing critically needed if sometimes unexpected political support. Last year, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley pronounced Mono Lake an "environmental jewel", and declared that "Los Angeles was ready to do its part to protect Mono Lake." Statewide political leaders, including members of the Los Angeles City Council, called for a consensus solution to the dispute. Most recently, the United States Forest Service offered the agency's strong support and leadership for seeking a consensus solution.

Yet Mono Lake is not out of danger -- far from it. The lake level rose in recent years only because wet winters and heavy runoff provided more water than LADWP could physically divert. If this year's dry conditions continue, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power diverts all the water it can take legally from Mono's tributary streams, the lake could plummet two vertical feet by autumn. A second dry year could spell the loss, once again, of Negit Island and its recently returned gull colonies. A touch of drought, as MLC Chairman David Gaines says, is sobering.

The winter has left Mono Lake in a curious tension. The water level is still high (6380 feet), but the weather has turned exceedingly dry. Past legal victories spell hope for Mono Lake, yet our court cases are moving slowly. Political leaders have expressed support for finding a solution, but have yet to take decisive action. Will 1987 be the year in which we leverage DWP into meaningful negotiations?

It is too early to predict, but there are some intriguing signs. In July, the National Academy of Sciences' Mono Basin Ecosystem Study Committee will release its long awaited assessment of the ecological impacts of LADWP's water diversions on Mono Lake. The Forest Service will incorporate this information into its Scenic Area Management Plan, and will likely identify a water level for Mono Lake that will best meet the overall Scenic Area management objectives including protection of the lake's ecological and aesthetic values. In doing so, the Forest Service may play the crucial facilitating role, as it has in the past, in seeking a resolution of the Mono Lake controversy.

While we wait, you can help to keep things moving by taking a few minutes to write Governor George Deukmejian, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, and your State representatives on behalf of Mono Lake and its living inhabitants. Now more than ever, Mono needs our informed, passionate and insightful letters.

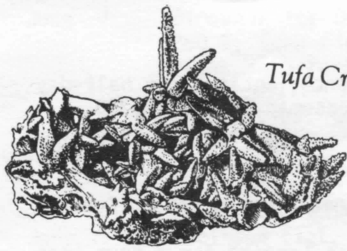
LEGAL ACTION ON FOUR FRONTS

Four different lawsuits challenge the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's diversions from Mono Lake's tributary streams.

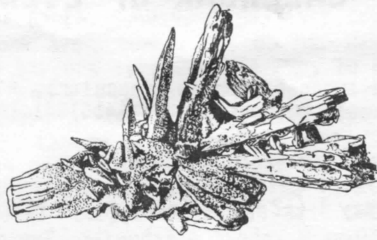
- Audubon's public trust suit is the cornerstone of legal efforts to save Mono Lake.
- An action challenging LADWP's Mono Basin water licenses questions the legality of LADWP's state-granted licenses to divert water from any of Mono Lake's tributary streams.
- The Rush Creek trial is based upon Department of Fish & Game codes for dam owners to release enough water to keep "in good condition" downstream fisheries. The public trust doctrine is also asserted.
- Identical to the Rush Creek case, the Lee Vining Creek case has been filed recently.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BENEFITS FROM MONO LAKE LAWSUIT Broad Applications of the Public Trust

The grebes, gulls and phalaropes of Mono Lake still cry to us for help. And now the clapper rails, salt marsh harvest mice and harbor seals of San Francisco Bay as well as all migratory birds using the Pacific Flyway also benefit from our support. San Francisco Bay is among the first to reap direct rewards from the Mono Lake lawsuit's affirmation of public trust values. Based on that lawsuit, a recent court order has forced the State Water Resources Board for the first time, beginning this July, to establish water quality, flow and salinity standards for San Francisco Bay and Delta. Fish and wildlife resources in the bay and delta must now be protected against any use or diversion of water from the delta or its tributaries that would have an adverse impact on wildlife. Perhaps such protections finally will provide the turnaround needed to halt yearly declines in numbers of waterfowl, striped bass, and other denizens of the Bay. This is only the first of many precedent setting results expected to spread from the Mono Lake lawsuits, and their establishment of solid legal doctrine with nationwide applicability.



Tufa Crystals



Dear SCVAS Member:

Mono Lake still needs our help. The officers and board members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society announce the opening of a new fundraising campaign targeted to contribute \$10,000 to continue the crucial legal defense of Mono Lake. Our target is to reach that goal before July 4th, and as seed money the 14 of us have personally pledged \$1,015.

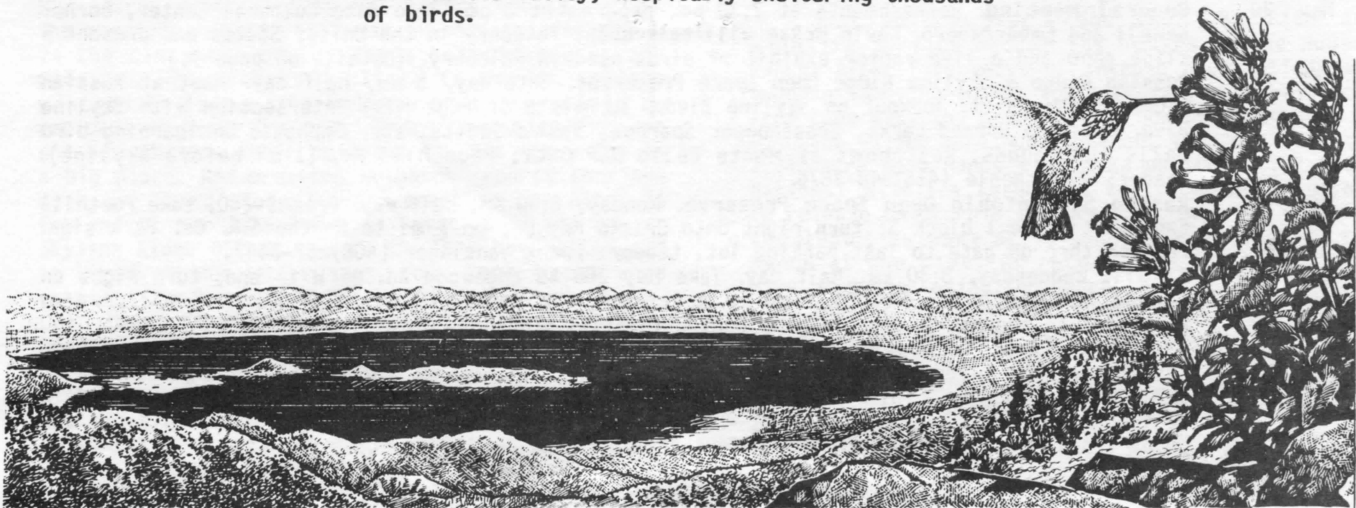
Many of you have helped Mono Lake before. In both 1980 and 1982 our chapter exceeded goals of donating \$10,000 towards saving the precious resource and environs of Mono Lake and confirming the public trust doctrine. As noted in the feature articles in this issue of the *Avocet*, through legal victories to date, Mono Lake now has a guaranteed minimum flow of slightly over 25% of the water necessary to stabilize the lake at an acceptable level. What has not been mentioned is that funding of Mono Lake legal expenses has come primarily from California Audubon chapters. The legal victories at Mono Lake are YOUR victories, and would never have happened without the support of you and other California Audubon members like yourself. The biggest legal fight is still to come; substantially more water is needed to protect the lake.

Please use the enclosed envelope or send your contributions directly to the SCVAS office. Checks should be made payable to the NAS-Mono Lake Legal Fund and are fully tax deductible. We urge you to make the most generous donation you can.

Judy McEuen
President

Trish Mulvey
Environmental Action Committee

YOU can be the reason the Lake will continue to lie cool in its valley, hospitably sheltering thousands of birds.



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 May: Betty Groce (415)326-5540.

- May 1-2 **Bird Seed Sale Pickup.** May 1 (12 noon-6 pm), May 2 (11 am-1 pm). Peninsula Conservation Center, 2253 Park Blvd., Palo Alto.
- May 2 **Elkhorn Slough Boat Trip.** Saturday, 9 am. Meet at Marine Lab in Moss Landing for 3-hour boat trip. Limited to 14 persons. Bring lunch. Cost: \$8. Call Gail Cheeseman for RESERVATIONS. (408)867-1371. Call Gail by 7 am if raining. Take Hwy 1 S to Moss Landing. Turn right on Potrero Rd; go past Marina over bridge to Lab. Leader: Bernadette Ramer.
- May 3 **Birdwalk for Beginners: Smith Creek Fire Station.** Sunday, 8:30 am, half day. Meet at Fire Station on Mt. Hamilton Rd. Take Mt. Hamilton Rd. to J. Grant Park. Proceed another 4.5 mis on Mt. Hamilton to the Fire Station. NO WATER, NO TOILETS. Facilities at Grant Park. Specialties: Lazuli Bunting, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak. Leader: Alan Thomas (408)265-9286.
- May 6 **Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands. Member, Mark Rauzon, formerly with US Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii will speak. He has just finished putting together a "coffee-table" bird book for which he wrote the text and supplied some photos. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- May 9 **Stevens Creek Park.** Saturday, 8:30 am, half day. Meet at 1st parking lot (Chestnut Picnic area). From I-280, go S on Foothill Blvd. (becomes Stevens Canyon Rd.) 2.1 mis to Park entrance on left. Pkg lot is down hill. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Flycatcher, vireos, warblers. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.
- May 10 **Carmel Valley/Chew's Ridge.** Sunday, 7:30 am, full day. Meet at intersection of Carmel Valley Rd. and Robinson Canyon Rd. Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 156 E to Hwy 1 S to Carmel Valley Rd. in Carmel. Turn left onto Carmel Valley Rd. and go 6.9 mis to meeting place. Have full tank of gas and BE PROMPT! Specialties: possible Mountain Quail, Dusky Flycatcher. Leader: David Suddjian (408)479-9603.
- May 12 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. (408)867-4748. Topic: Swans.
- May 13 **South County Wednesday Trip. Castle Rock State Park.** 8 am. Walk in redwood, chaparral, oak and madrone. From Saratoga take Big Basin Way up to Saratoga Gate at Skyline Blvd. Turn left to Castle Rock 3 mis down Skyline Blvd on the right. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330 or 867-1371.
- May 16 **Birdwalk for Beginners: Monte Bello Open Space Preserve.** Saturday, 6 am, full day. Meet at parking lot on left. From I-280 take Page Mill exit W for 7 mis. Bring lunch and liquids. Moderate walk of 6-7 mis. Walk begins at 6 SHARP. You snooze-you lose! Experienced birders welcome. Specialties: Golden Eagle, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Sage Sparrow. Leader: Bob Garcia (408)730-9931.



- May 17 **Mines Rd. and Del Puerto Canyon Rd.** Sunday, 8:30 am sharp! Full day. Meet at Nobhill Shopping Center in Livermore. Take So. Livermore Ave. S 0.7 mis from the flagpole in center of town to shopping center on left. Meet in far end of lot facing Pacific Ave. & Civic Center. MUST carpool from here due to limited pull offs along rte. Bring lunch, liquids, FULL TANK OF GAS. NO FACILITIES along rte. Specialties: Lewis' Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Canyon & Rock Wrens. Leaders: Lynne Aldrich & Peter Gottschling (415)325-9349 evenings.
- May 20 **General Meeting.** Refreshments at 7:30 pm, program at 8 pm. Palo Alto Cultural Center, corner Newell and Embarcadero. Kevin McRae will talk about falconry in the United States and present a slide show and a live raptor exhibit of birds used in falconry. (Details on page 7.)
- May 23 **Russian Ridge & Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserves.** Saturday, 8 am, half day. Meet at Russian Ridge OSP Vista Pt. lookout on Skyline Blvd., 1.1 mis N of Page Mill intersection with Skyline Blvd. Possible Horned Larks, Grasshopper Sparrow, Vaux's Swifts, etc. Emphasis on learning bird calls and sounds. Restrooms at Monte Bello OSP ONLY; Page Mill Rd. (1 mi before Skyline). Leader: Paul Noble (415)948-3876.
- May 25 **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.** Monday, 8:30 am, half day. From I-280, take Foothill Expy exit S. Go 1 block S; turn right onto Cristo Rey Dr; go 1 mi to Rancho S.A. Co. Park sign. Proceed through gate to last parking lot. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408)257-3647.
- May 27 **Filoli.** Wednesday, 8:30 am, half day. Take Hwy 280 to Edgewood Rd. Go W to end, turn right on Canada Rd. Watch for Filoli sign on a gate on the left in a mile or so. Fee: \$3/person. Reservations necessary. Call Martha Hunton (415)948-5157 or Dolores Norton (415)941-1666.
- May 30 **Alum Rock Park.** Saturday, 8 am, half day. Meet at parking lot in front of Youth Science Institute. From I-680 in San Jose take Alum Rock Ave. exit (1 mi N of 280/101/680 junction). Go E on Alum Rock Ave. into Park. Follow signs to YSI. Lunch in park. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Beginners welcome. Moderate walking - some hills - 4-5 mis. Wear boots or shoes suitable for muddy trails. Specialties: Dipper, Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Leader: Dave Johnston (408)867-7278.

Field Trip Coordinator for June: Paul Noble (415)948-3876.

- June 7 **Birdwalk for Beginners. Grant Ranch.** Sunday, 9 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 Expy 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. Specialties: Golden Eagle. Leader: Vicki Silvas-Young (408)293-7124.
- June 10 **South County Field Trip, Neary Lagoon and Antonelli Pond, Santa Cruz.** Wednesday, 9 am. Meet in parking lot beside the tennis courts at Neary Lagoon on California. Take Rt. 1 N from 17. Turn left on Bay St. and left on California and take the first right turn into the park. Leader: Barb Scharfenstein (408)438-3727. Carpooling: call Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.
- June 13-14 **Robinson Flat, Tahoe Nat'l Forest.** Saturday & Sunday 6 am. Camping or motels in Auburn. Details in June Avocet. Leader: Paul Noble (415)948-3876.



FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

The lingering **American White Pelican** flock was seen 7 Mar at Charleston Slough (Phyllis M. Browning-PMB) and numbered 7. **Brant** are coastal migrants in March and so 280 counted from Pigeon Point to Half Moon Bay on 21 Mar are typical (Roland Franz). Another lowland **Canada Goose** report is of 6 at the San Jose Water Pollution Control Plant on 15 Mar (Paul L. Noble-PLN). **Wood Ducks** have returned to where they have nested along San Francisquito Creek in the past two years (Betty Groce-BG). Three pairs were estimated on 2 Apr. Two male **Eurasian Wigeon** were found in Crittenden Marsh 22 Feb (fide Mike Rogers-MR) and one was found again on 26 Feb (MR). Another male was at the mouth of Belmont Slough on 10 Mar (Shawnee Finnegan-SF) and is probably the same bird seen there in early January. **Osprey** were seen at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park 10 Mar (John McKinney, photo) and the Menlo Park Bayfront Park 21 Mar (Ron Thorn). There are county records of Osprey for every month in the year except July; however, 25% of all records are for March during their migration. Our **Merlin** winter continues with one seen in Los Altos 8 Mar (PLN) and a female at Moffett Field 18 Mar (Bill Bousman-WGB). The latter bird appeared to be of the dark race **suckleyi**. A 1st winter **Glaucous Gull** at the Mountain View Forebay 11 Mar (SF) is the only report we have had this winter. The female **Long-eared Owl** was heard again at Monte Bello OSP 25 Mar (PLN, David Suddjian-DLSu). A male **Rufous Hummingbird** was in Los Altos 6 Feb (PLN). This is the earliest arrival for this species with the exception of a 15 Jan 82 record which may have been a wintering bird. We have been averaging 1-2 sight records in the county each spring for the last seven years. A **Pileated Woodpecker** at Henry Coe SP on 13 Mar (Barry Breckling) is the second county record. The previous record was 9 Mar 80 near Calaveras Res. Is the closeness of the dates coincidence or are Pileated Woodpeckers inclined to wander in late winter? It is hard to believe that they could be resident in Henry Coe considering how noisy they are and how obvious their drilling is, but Henry Coe is a big place. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports continue with one heard along Stevens Creek in Los Altos 14 Feb and 21 Mar (Jim & Sue Liskovec-J&SL) and one at Skyline Ridge OSP 26 Feb (PLN). They have attempted to breed at the latter spot. Four **Rock Wrens** were seen in the Permanente Quarry 26 Feb (Clark Blake-CB). There is no public access to this site. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Ed Levin CP 1 Mar (Grant Hoyt) was not singing and was probably a wintering bird. One singing in Los Altos 16 Mar (PLN) is thought to be the first migrant. A **Western Tanager** was calling along San Francisquito Creek 11 Mar (Peter J. Metropulos) and was our first winter

sighting since late November. Two **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** were found in Permanente Quarry 26 Feb (CB). It is interesting how two dry interior species have been attracted to this unique Santa Cruz Mountain habitat. A belated report is of a **White-throated Sparrow** on Los Gatos Creek below Vasona on 30 Jan (Chris Benesh fide DLSu). The last winter **Evening Grosbeak** report was of one in Los Altos 14 Feb (J&SL).

Early arrivals: Two **Allen's Hummingbirds** were nest building at Fremont Older OSP 24 Feb (Alan Walther); **Tree Swallow**, CCRS, 28 Feb (PLN); **Rough-winged Swallow**, along Stevens Creek in Los Altos 15 Mar (J&SL); **Cliff Swallow**, Moffett Field, 6 Mar (WGB); **Barn Swallow**, Redwood City, 15 Feb (SF); **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, 25 Mar (WGB); **Warbling Vireo**, Monte Bello OSP, 26 Mar (PLN); **Wilson's Warbler**, Monte Bello OSP, 26 Mar (PLN); **Hooded Oriole**, Los Altos, 24 Mar (PLN); and **Bullock's Oriole**, 21 Mar, Menlo Park (BG).

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



HUDSON RANCH ACQUIRED TO HELP CONDORS

Just before year's end the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service became the owners of the Hudson Ranch. After five years of intense negotiations and Audubon lobbying to get the necessary appropriations from Congress, the property has now been acquired.

The 11,360 acre Hudson Ranch, together with the 1,340 acre Hoag Ranch will make up the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge, a keystone in the effort to release California condors back into the wild. In the 1950's as many as 50 condors were seen on the ranch at one time. As recently as 1982, 14 birds have been seen using the ranch.

The Bitter Creek NWR will play a major role as foraging habitat for the condor in the wild when captive breeding produces birds for release in the wild. Please convey our appreciation and thanks to your chapter activists who worked hard in supporting this acquisition over the years.

- Audubon Leader, February 1987

GILL NETTING - SUPPORT LETTERS NEEDED

As of this writing, the first Senate Committee hearing for this bill has already been postponed due in part to concerns about a provision that allows limited funding for gear buy-out. It is critical that legislators hear from all of us who are concerned about protection of sea bird populations. The bill provides for a total closure to gill nets north of Pt. Reyes inside 40 fathoms south of Point Reyes, and 3 miles around the Farallon Islands. Provisions in the bill were worked out in five negotiating sessions involving the CA Dept. of Fish & Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries, CA Attorney General's Office, the Whale Center, Marin and Golden Gate Audubon Societies, CA Marine Mammal Center, Pacific Coast Fishermens Association, United Anglers, the Vietnamese Fishermen's Association and PRBO contributing biological data.

It is critical to the survival of the coastal common murre populations that this hard-won solution not be lost. All of the common murre colonies have suffered significant population declines. PLEASE WRITE in support of SB40 to: Senator Rbt. Presley, Chmn, Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife; and Assemblyman Jim Costa, Chmn. Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife with copies to Senator Milton Marks, author of the bill. Address for all: State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

The National Audubon Society 1986 Annual Report is available in the SCVAS office. It is an interesting and informative overview of National Audubon Society's actions and priorities.

GRANT FOR WETLANDS

The National Audubon Society will be receiving a grant from the Irvine Foundation for the purposes of acquiring additional Central Valley wetland areas. The gift of \$500,000 will be in the form of a challenge grant where the foundation will match dollar for dollar money raised independently by National Audubon for habitat acquisition in the area. Many thanks to the Irvine Foundation for this generous donation.

- The Gull, February 1987
Golden Gate Audubon Society



FLAGGED SHOREBIRDS

The Pan-American Shorebird Program, supported largely by World Wildlife Fund, has been marking shorebirds with colored leg flags in order to map their migration routes. If you happen to sight one of these flagged shorebirds, you should report the color of the flags and the location and date of the sighting to: Dr. J. P. Myers, Academy of Natural Sciences, Nineteenth and the Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

- Bay Area Bird Photographers Newsletter, March 1987

FIELD TRIP REPORT

MOSS LANDING (Jetty Road - Elkhorn Reserve)

Twenty-four birders enjoyed an excellent calm and sunny day of birding at one of the best locations in central California. The Moss Landing area throughout the years has turned up some of the greater varieties of species and rarities.

The highlight sightings include the following:

- Excellent view of **Clarks Grebes** as compared to Western.
- A winter plumaged **Red-necked Grebe** which is perhaps the hardest winter grebe to find.
- A first winter male **Black Scoter** which was compared to Surf and nearby White-winged Scoters.
- The wintering male **Harlequin Duck** was viewed by all.
- Two first winter male **Oldsquaws** were the highlight for many of us. One bird was advancing into the dark breeding plumage of the adult male while the other still had its basic winter plumage. By the way, are the males called Oldchiefs?
- Unfortunately we saw two **Common Murres** that were oiled and probably not able to survive.
- A **Peregrine Falcon** was viewed at a distance and may have had a jess attached to its talon.
- A **Merlin** cruised the slough area stirring up many shorebirds.

Many thanks to all for a wonderful trip.

- Bruce LaBar



THANKS FOR DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEER TIME

Many thanks go to Dr. Martin Sidor, Jim Stone, Pieter deVries and Steve Shugars for donations of office furniture for our new office. The only item we still need is a printer stand for the computer.

Thanks also go to many volunteers for their assistance over the past three months: Genny Smith, James S. McAllister, Eleanore Wilkins, Trish Muvey, Catherine Maxwell, Sue Liskovec and Alison Davis for a speedy job sending out a mailing for the Mono Lake Committee; Neal Jackson for helping move the office; Shawneen Finnegan and Allen Royer for helping with General Meeting refreshments; Helen Shamble for cataloging library books; and to Marion Lockwood, Louise deVries and especially Tibby Simon for help in the office. SCVAS has many opportunities to make use of YOUR assistance - with bird seed sales, booth attendance at special events, letter writing on conservation issues, and office work. Please call Lynn at (415)329-1811 if you have some time to help out.



BIRD SEED SALE PICKUP

If you have ordered bird seed from SCVAS REMEMBER TO PICK IT UP ON MAY 1 (from 12 to 6 pm) OR MAY 2 (between 11 am and 1 pm) AT THE PENINSULA CONSERVATION CENTER, 2253 PARK BLVD., PALO ALTO. The seed will not be kept for you unless prior arrangements are made.

WHERE TO RECYCLE

SCVAS now has a supply of "Santa Clara Recycles: A guide to household recycling in Santa Clara County" brochures in the office. If you would like to know the closest recycling center, and whether they take newspaper, glass, aluminum, tin, cardboard, motor oil, scrap metal or computer paper - and if they will pay you for those materials - just call or write the SCVAS office to be sent the information.



MAY PROGRAM SPEAKER

At the May 20 General Meeting Kevin McRae will talk about falconry as it is currently practiced in the United States. His presentation will include a narrated slide show, a question-answer segment and a live raptor exhibit of birds used in falconry. Kevin's talk will focus on the art and science of hunting with raptors, conservation of raptors and quarry and the legal status of the discipline.

Kevin, a member of SCVAS, has practiced falconry for over five years.

We would like to urge all those interested in raptor conservation to join The Peregrine Fund, 5666 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise, Idaho 83709. By the year 2000, as many as 100 species of raptors may be nearing extinction around the world, particularly in tropical regions. By applying the experience gained with the Peregrine, the Peregrine Fund can help to prevent the loss of other birds of prey. A new facility, the World Center for Birds of Prey's Tropical Raptor Building, will soon be completed. It will be the center of research for tropical raptors which are especially sensitive to environmental degradation resulting from human use of land and water. The Peregrine Fund accepts donations of any amount. Volunteers are needed each year also to assist with Peregrine release efforts. Each site is staffed by two people for a period of 8-10 weeks. Application blanks may be obtained from the Boise address, the Cornell Lab. of Ornithology, or from Brian Walton, Lower Quarry-UC, Santa Cruz, CA 95064.



NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

Our chapter still participates in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Nest Record Card Program. Betty Groce has recorded over 100 nests for the past five breeding seasons. If you have even one nest that you can watch and record, we would appreciate your filling out a card for the Nest Record Program. Call Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330 or 867-1371 for cards and instructions.

GARDENERS TAKE NOTE!

To appreciate the role our feathered friends have in controlling insect populations, one may simply pause and observe a nesting pair of birds, noting what the parent birds bring to their young.

While performing some tree-trimming work at a San Carlos garden last spring I found myself surrounded by a pair of scolding Bewick's Wrens, each bird with a beak-full of green caterpillars. Backing off a bit, the birds revealed the location of their nest. It was built in a small wooden bird house thoughtfully placed just outside the homeowner's kitchen window.

Throughout the course of the day these attentive wrens tirelessly delivered wriggling insects to their anxious young. Impressed by the quantity of caterpillars being consumed and curious as to exactly what beneficial impact this perky pair of songbirds had on the landscape, I pulled out my notebook and watch and initiated a bit of "backyard ornithology".

During a typical five-minute period of observation, the youngsters were fed four times, each time with one, and often two, caterpillars. Foraging activity did not appear to decrease throughout the day. With this data in mind, simple calculations show us the approximate rate at which the wrens eliminate their foliage-devouring insect prey. In one hour they take at least 48 insects. In one day they get 528.

The pair collectively snatches up 3696 per week and a mind-boggling total of 14,784 bugs in a single month.

Moral of the story: Put aside those insecticides, build a wrenhouse and let those fiesty little bug-snatchers do the work for you.

- Peter J. Metropulos



SAVE WATER

With Spring now with us, the gardeners among us should be thinking of ways to conserve water in our gardens. MMWD suggests a variety of approaches to reduce water use in the garden. Using a timer is an excellent way to manage water use more efficiently - whether it be a simple kitchen timer or a more sophisticated automatic sprinkler controller. Establish a regular watering schedule, and water during the early morning hours, before peak daytime use and high temperatures. Drip irrigation systems for lawns and plants are an excellent way to reduce outdoor water use because they water directly into the root zone. If you are considering installing an automatic irrigation system, consult your local nursery or irrigation expert before selecting a system. An efficient system means a significant reduction in maintenance and substantial water savings.

Also, don't overfertilize your lawn in spring. Much of the Spring growth tends to be top growth and produces shallow roots. Heavy fertilizing this time of year increases the need to water during the spring and summer. Mulching around plants and shrubs retains moisture, discourages weed growth and reduces water use. Soil should be well drained to achieve maximum water penetration with minimum water waste.

- Redwood Log, April 1987
Marin 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.

NON-AUDUBON TRIPS AND EVENTS

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

Save Wetlands Autoshades (for your car windshield) feature a beautiful design in color by Linda Patterson. They are being sold by the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge for \$5 plus \$1 postage and all profits go to saving wetlands. Checks to be made payable to Save Wetlands Autoshades at 1056 Forest Ave., PA 94301.

Doug and Gail Cheeseman have room for two on their Brazil trip, June 26-July 25, visiting nine national parks and biological reserves. There are two spaces on both Galapagos trips: the first is June 21-July 9 and the second is July 28-August 13. Call Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris at (408)741-5330.

"Up, Up and Away" is the theme of the first Wildlife Rescue Auction, to be held at June 27 at Mitchell Park Community Center, 3800 Middlefield Rd., PA. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be served; admission is \$15 per person. Wildlife Rescue, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose volunteers provide care to injured and orphaned native wildlife. For information and tickets, call Pat Carroll, (415)494-7926.

Andrew Hoyem, director of Arion Press, publisher of *Birds of the Pacific Slope*, about the work of painter-naturalist Andrew Jackson Grayson, will deliver a slide-illustrated lecture at 3 pm Sunday, May 3 in the James Moore Theater of the Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland. He will also describe the limited edition portfolio of Grayson's work and the process of fine printing. Grayson's paintings are on view April 25-June 4. More information from the museum.

An Auction Party, sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League Foundation, will be held on Wednesday, May 13, in the Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn, Sacramento, at 5:30 pm. Prizes include roundtrip tickets for two to Paris or Geneva, Grand Canyon rafting trip, ski vacations and much more. For tickets or more information, call (916)444-8726.

Fremont Adult School offers Tuesday and Wednesday morning Birding Field Trips Classes commencing April 28 and April 29, for six weeks. Each week a different birding spot will be visited. Alice Hoch will instruct the classes, limited to 15. For more information, (415)791-5841. Fee is \$40.50.

On May 16, the school offers an all-day birding trip to observe territorial, courtship and nesting activities of local birds, led by Alice Hoch. Students must preregister by May 12 by mail or in person at the school, 4700 Calaveras Rd., Fremont. More information, (415)791-5841. Fee is \$14.50.

Youth Science Inst. director David Johnston will lead a birdwalk at Vasona Lake and other areas on Friday, May 15, 8:30 am, starting from the YSI center at Vasona Center.

YSI hosts its 5th Annual Wildflower Show and Open House on Sunday, May 3, from 12-4:30 pm at the YSI Vasona Center in Los Gatos. The show will feature 200 species of wildflowers, native plant demonstration, dyeing with native plant materials, sale of posters and field guides and free samples of herbal teas and baked goods. More information, (408)356-4945.

Peninsula Conservation Center Library needs two volunteers 2 or 3 hours weekly to assign subject headings to newspaper and pamphlet material. This small environmental library, open to the public, is located at 2253 Park Blvd., PA, just off Calif. Ave.

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, 415 Cambridge Avenue, Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Membership includes AUDUBON magazine, the national publication, and the AVOCET. AVOCET subscriptions alone are \$6/year.

Make checks payable to SCVAS. They are published monthly except July and August. Send all address changes to the office promptly.

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