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11879

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Volume 35, Number 2

February 1988

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On all field trips, CARPOOL and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids. If you can provide or need transportation, call Dolores Norton (415)941-1666 or Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.

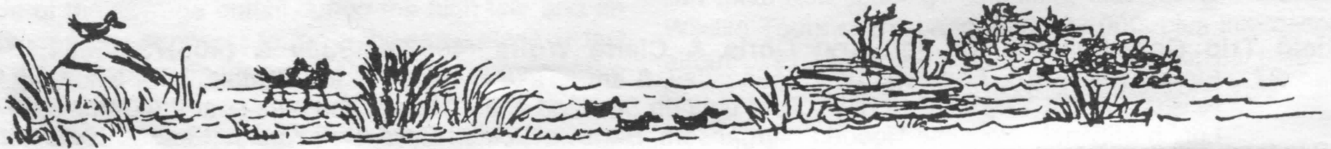
### Field Trip Coordinators for January: Chris & Claire Wolfe (408)245-9359 & (408)733-5654.

- Jan. 27 **Field Trip North, Foster City.** Wednesday, 9 am. Take Hwy 101 N to Hillsdale Blvd. E turnoff. Follow Hillsdale about 1 mi to Shell Blvd. Turn right on Shell, go about 1 block and park near the Community Center. Lunch optional. Possible Hooded Mergansers, Barrows Golden Eyes, Red Knots. Leader: Dolores Norton, (415) 941-1666.
- Jan. 30 **Los Baños/Merced NWR.** Saturday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at the junction of Rt. 59 and Sandy Mush Rd. Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 152 E. Go past Los Baños about 20 miles to Rt. 59. Proceed N to meeting place, a distance of 7 mis. Bring lunch and warm drink - fuel and food available in Los Baños. Trip goes rain or shine. Allow 2 1/2 hrs. from South Bay - longer if tule fog forecast. Probable species: Mt. Plover, Sandhill Cranes, geese, hawks, etc. Bring spotting scope and be prepared for cold and wet conditions. Leader: Ted Chandik (415)493-5330.
- Jan. 31 **Panoche Valley.** Sunday, 8:30 am. Full day. Meet at the rest stop on I-5, 18 mi. S of Hwy 152. See above directions. Bring lunch and warm drink. Carpooling strongly encouraged due to limited pull-off space. Trip goes rain or shine. Highlights: Mt. Plover, Mt. Bluebirds, hawks, etc. Leaders: Jim and Sue Liskovec (415)969-5542.

### Field Trip Coordinator for February: Paul L. Noble (415)948-3876.

- Feb. 3 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm, at the Baylands Interpretive Center. The program will be by members Doug Cheeseman and Luis Tam, featuring slides of the birds of Brazil, taken during their trip last summer. Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto.
- Feb. 6 **Monte Bello OSP.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet in the preserve parking area 7 mi. up Page Mill Rd. from I-280 -- or 1 mi. down from Skyline Blvd. Three miles of moderate hiking. Highlights: Techniques for birding for wintering passerines in a woodland habitat. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Paul L. Noble (415)948-3876.
- Feb. 7 **Trip for the Gullible. Palo Alto and Mt. View Bay Margins.** Sunday, 9 am. Half day. Meet at the Palo Alto Duck Pond. Take Embarcadero Rd. E off Hwy 101. Here's your chance to bone up on your gull identification. All aspects of gull ID will be addressed including ageing by plumage. beginners welcome - you have to learn your gulls sometime! Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Bill Bousman (415)322-5282.
- Feb. 9 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, (408)867-4748. Topic: Saw-Whet Owl.
- Feb. 10 **Field Trip South. Grant Ranch.** Wednesday, 9 am. Meet in parking lot near Visitor Center. Take Hwy 101 to Tully Rd. exit to Quimby Rd. or 680 to Alum Rock Ave. exit to Mt. Hamilton Rd. Entrance to park is at the junction of Mt. Hamilton and Quimby Roads. Oak-woodland, grassland and lake. Leaders: Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330 and Shirley Gordon (415)996-9863.
- Feb. 13 **Elkhorn Slough Boat Trip.** Saturday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just N of Moss Landing. Take Hwy 17 S to Santa Cruz, then 1 S to Jetty Rd. Trip limited to 14 participants BY RESERVATION ONLY. \$8.00 fee for use of Moss Landing Marine Lab boats. Bring lunch and warm clothing. Highlights: Elkhorn Slough is truly one of California's 'crown jewels'. A wide variety of wintering waterfowl and waders are present as well as raptors which wheel overhead searching for prey in the surrounding hills. For reservations and more info call Gail or Doug Cheeseman (408)741-5330. Leaders: Bernadette Ramer and Doug and Gail Cheeseman.

- Feb. 14 **Grant Ranch.** Sunday, 9 am. Half day. Meet near the visitor's center at Grant Ranch County Park. Take Hwy I-280/I-680 E; take the Alum Rock exit and go right on Alum Rock Ave. to Mt. Hamilton Rd. (Hwy 130). Continue on Mt. Hamilton Rd. to Park. Turn right into park. From south county take Capitol Expy to Quimby Rd.; turn right and follow to Mt. Hamilton Rd. Turn right and go 1 mi. to park entrance. \$2 park fee per vehicle. Informal carpooling at the park'n'ride at Lawrence Expy and Moorpark near I-280 in west San Jose at 8 am and at Eastridge near Tully/Quimby/Capitol in east San Jose at 8:30 am. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Bring lunch and liquids. Anticipated species: Golden Eagle and other raptors, ducks, woodpeckers and other wintering passerines. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.
- Feb. 17 **General Meeting.** Palo Alto Cultural Center, corner of Newell and Embarcadero. Refreshments at 7:30, program at 8 pm. Jim Wiltens will present a program on the use of native plants as potential food sources. Read more about the program inside.
- Feb. 20 **Moss Landing Area.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Full day. Meet at Jetty Rd. off Hwy 1 in Moss Landing. Bring lunch. Highlights: Shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. We will also visit the Elkhorn Slough Nature Center and the new Nature Conservancy areas. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Bruce LaBar (408)476-7583.
- Feb. 24 **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 mi. to Commerce Dr. Turn left into the park and meet at the lot near the entrance. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.
- Feb. 27 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Coyote Hills Regional 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 the park and meet in the lot on the right side near the entrance. Possible vehicle entrance fee. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. Leader: Bill Kirsher (415)854-3936.



**Field Trip Coordinator for March: Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091.**

- Mar. 5 **Fall River Mills.** Saturday, 7:30 am. Full day. meet at the Sear store in the Mnt. Shasta Shopping Mall in Redding. (At intersection of I-5 and Hwy 44 -- take the Hilltop exit N to mall.) Redding is approximately 6 hrs. N of south bay. Suggest participants stay in Redding Fri. night -- many hotel/motels available. Bring lunch for Saturday and something to carry water. This is a new area for SCVAS and has many of the same species that can be seen in the Honey Lake/Susanville area (with the exception of Sage Grouse). The Fall River Mills area has been consistently one of the high species totals Christmas Counts for inland California. Highlights may include: Both Eagle species, falcons, a good variety of waterfowl (including Hooded Mergansers and Tundra Swans), woodpeckers, sapsuckers, Mnt. finches, Longspurs and Northern Shrike possible. Leaders: Bob Yutzy (916)246-2515 and Bill Von. Local contact Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091.
- Mar. 9 **Field Trip South.** Coyote Creek Riparian Station. Wednesday, 9 am. To observe bird banding and the station. Meet in Alviso across from SFBBO at Harvey & Stanley Assoc, 906 Elizabeth ST. Limited to 10. Call Gail Cheeseman to reserve place, (408)741-5330. Leader: Dr. Dick Mewaldt who is in charge of the banding operation.

*GIFTS AND MEMORIALS*

*In memory of Mrs. Aglae Wall Lyman  
From Kenneth and Coline Cuthbertson*

*In memory of Edith Dudek Davidson  
From Nancy Segbarth, Shirley Leisses,  
Myrtle Carey, Edith Durfey*

*In memory of Robert S. Van Derveer  
From James H. and Margaret H. Stone and  
from Dwain and Elynor McCleary*

**FEBRUARY'S SPEAKER**

Jim Wiltens is a naturalist, botanist and outdoor enthusiast who has written a very successful book, Plants Your Mother Never Told You About. Jim has stalked edible plants throughout California, Canada and Hawaii. In addition to research in Marine Biology in looking for commercial uses for seaweed, Jim has also worked as an analytical chemist and writer. He is very involved in outdoor education and is the owner of Deer Crossing Wilderness Camp, a summer camp exclusively for teenagers. This will be a fascinating program and should broaden our background for future field trips.

# ANNUAL SPRING WILD BIRD SEED SALE WITH NEW SECOND PICKUP LOCATION

It's time for our spring bird seed sale. Once again, SCVAS is offering QUALITY SEED at a REASONABLE PRICE. **NEW THIS YEAR IS A SECOND PICKUP LOCATION, AT YOUTH SCIENCE INSTITUTE IN VASONA PARK, LOS GATOS.** YSI will receive a portion of the proceeds from all seed picked up at the YSI Center. We hope this will make it easier for South County residents to order seed.

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 supermarket 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 appeal 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, MARCH 14.** All orders must be picked up from **EITHER** the **Peninsula Conservation Center**, 2253 Park Blvd, Palo Alto, on either **Friday, April 8** between 3 and 6 pm, or on **Saturday, April 9** between 11 am and 1 pm, **OR** from **Youth Science Institute**, Vasona Park, Los Gatos, on **Tuesday, April 12** between 3 and 6 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, your Audubon chapter and now Youth Science Institute.

Please send the order form and check to SCVAS, 415 Cambridge Ave, Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306 **NO LATER THAN MONDAY, March 14.** SCVAS Office at (415) 329-1811 if you have any questions.



**One Good Thing about April 15th:  
LINE 45 on your State Tax Form.**

## BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM Spring 1988

### PICKUP LOCATIONS:

PCC, Palo Alto, Fri., Apr. 8 or Sat., Apr. 9  
Or YSI, Los Galos, Tues., Apr. 12

	# Bags	Cost
Premium Seed 20 lb @ \$ 7/bag	_____	_____
Premium Seed 50 lb @ \$15/bag	_____	_____
Western Wild 20 lb @ \$ 6 /bag	_____	_____
Western Wild 50 lb @ \$13/bag	_____	_____
Black Oil Sun. 20 lb @ \$12/bag	_____	_____
Black Oil Sun. 50 lb @ \$27/bag	_____	_____
Striped Sun. 20 lb @ \$15/bag	_____	_____
Striped Sun. 50 lb @ \$34/bag	_____	_____
Thistle 5 lb @ \$10/bag	_____	_____
Thistle 20 lb @ \$35/bag	_____	_____
	Subtotal	_____
	Add 7% Tax	_____
	Total	_____

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN THIS ORDER TO THE SCVAS  
OFFICE BY MONDAY, MARCH 14  
SCVAS, 415 Cambridge, #21, Palo Alto, CA 94306



### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is preparing a slate of Officers and Directors for 1988-89. We need you and your recommendations! Please consider nominating yourself or another member as an Officer, Director or Library, Membership and Hospitality Chairperson position. Please call Lynn at the office, (415) 329-1811 if you would like to know more about the responsibilities, time commitments and fun involved!! Terms of office begin June 1, 1988.

## SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 12/20/87

Red-throated Loon,1; Pacific Loon,1; Common Loon,2; Pied-billed Grebe,234;  
Horned Grebe,30; Eared Grebe,1443; Western Grebe,342; Western(Clark's)Grebe,4;  
American White Pelican,159; Brown Pelican,7; Double-crested Cormorant,541;  
American Bittern,7; Great Blue Heron,71; Great Egret,149; Snowy Egret,125;  
Green-backed Heron,3; Black-crowned Night Heron,497;  
Greater White-fronted Goose,2; Canada Goose,1156; Green-winged Teal,50;  
Mallard,427; Northern Pintail,77; Blue-winged Teal,1; Cinnamon Teal,33;  
Northern Shoveler,6768; Gadwall,357; American Wigeon,640; Canvasback,242;  
Redhead,14; Ring-necked Duck,18; Greater Scaup,34; Lesser Scaup,82;  
Scaup, Species,799; Surf Scoter,8; Common Goldeneye,37; Bufflehead,276;  
Common Merganser,106; Red-breasted Merganser,34; Ruddy Duck,2610;  
Duck, Species,724; Turkey Vulture,105; Black-shouldered Kite,43; Bald Eagle(a),2;  
Bald Eagle(1),2; Northern Harrier,58; Sharp-shinned Hawk,13; Cooper's Hawk,13;  
Accipiter, Species,6; Red-shouldered Hawk,10; Red-tailed Hawk,232;  
Ferruginous Hawk,3; Buteo, Species,13; Golden Eagle(a),15; Golden Eagle(1),1;  
Golden Eagle(u),1; American Kestrel,144; Merlin,3; Peregrine Falcon,1;  
Prairie Falcon,4; Falcon, Species,2; Ring-necked Pheasant,58; California Quail,401;  
Virginia Rail,13; Sora,10; Common Moorhen,36; American Coot,5485;  
Black-bellied Plover,6; Snowy Plover,7; Killdeer,875; Black-necked Stilt,743;  
American Avocet,2686; Greater Yellowlegs,81; Lesser Yellowlegs,2;  
Yellowlegs, Species,4; Willet,274; Spotted Sandpiper,9; Long-billed Curlew,205;  
Marbled Godwit,111; Sanderling,25; Western Sandpiper,1319; Least Sandpiper,644;  
Dunlin,826; Short-billed Dowitcher,35; Long-billed Dowitcher,21;  
Dowitcher, Species,922; Common Snipe,41; Peep, Species,1235; Phalarope, Species,3;  
Bonaparte's Gull,622; Mew Gull,1888; Ring-billed Gull,758; California Gull,3186;  
Herring Gull,1843; Thayer's Gull,7; Western Gull,198; Glaucous-winged Gull,53;  
Gull, Species,6595; Forster's Tern,68; Rock Dove,1145; Band-tailed Pigeon,200;  
Mourning Dove,939; Western Screech Owl,5; Great Horned Owl,12; Burrowing Owl,15;  
Short-eared Owl,3; White-throated Swift,347; Anna's Hummingbird,525;  
Belted Kingfisher,54; Acorn Woodpecker,100; Red-breasted Sapsucker,27;  
Nuttall's Woodpecker,94; Downy Woodpecker,26; Hairy Woodpecker,4;  
Northern Flicker,359; Woodpecker, Species,5; Black Phoebe,162; Say's Phoebe,25;  
Horned Lark,694; Swallow, Species,8; Steller's Jay,243; Scrub Jay,675;  
Yellow-billed Magpie,300; American Crow,132; Chestnut-backed Chickadee,334;  
Plain Titmouse,155; Bushtit,844; White-breasted Nuthatch,15; Brown Creeper,14;  
Rock Wren,14; Canyon Wren,1; Bewick's Wren,44; Winter Wren,2; Marsh Wren,69;  
American Dipper,1; Golden-crowned Kinglet,2; Ruby-crowned Kinglet,409;  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,1; Western Bluebird,108; Hermit Thrush,139;  
American Robin,1130; Varied Thrush,54; Wrenit,29; Northern Mockingbird,188;  
California Thrasher,3; Water Pipit,428; Cedar Waxwing,373; Loggerhead Shrike,108;  
European Starling,6098; Hutton's Vireo,22; Orange-crowned Warbler,6;  
Yellow Warbler,1; Yellow-rumped Warbler,824; Yellow-rumped(Myrtle)Warbler,16;  
Yellow-rumped(Audubon's)Warbler,233; Townsend's Warbler,20;  
Common Yellowthroat,65; Rufous-sided Towhee,56; Brown Towhee,387;  
Rufous-crowned Sparrow,21; Lark Sparrow,32; Savannah Sparrow,350; Fox Sparrow,22;  
Song Sparrow,638; Lincoln's Sparrow,27; Golden-crowned Sparrow,1746;  
White-crowned Sparrow,2146; Dark-eyed Junco,1083; Red-winged Blackbird,2654;  
Tricolored Blackbird,73; Western Meadowlark,1437; Brewer's Blackbird,5510;  
Blackbird, Species,16022; Brown-headed Cowbird,158; Oriole, Species,1;  
Purple Finch,82; House Finch,2775; Pine Siskin,93; Lesser Goldfinch,512;  
American Goldfinch,388; House Sparrow,354; Sparrow, Species,235;

THE GRAND TOTALS : 104728 BIRDS OF 164 SPECIES.

## SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 12/20/87

This year's bird count was exactly as we had expected - fantastic! When we left in mid-November for a long vacation, we turned the count over to the section leaders and Grant and Karen Hoyt. They all did a great job - just as we had anticipated, and the results speak for themselves. 153 counters tallied 105,000 birds of 164 species. The species count is our third highest.

The count had its share of "firsts", and a few species we don't see very often put in an appearance.

For the first time, our three regularly occurring loon species were recorded on the count. A male blue-winged teal was the first since 1979. A rather spotty performer, two greater white-fronted geese were seen in Calaveras section. Perhaps another first, all four falcons were observed this year. Despite high tides that day, no clapper ralls were seen; they have occurred in very small numbers on only half the

counts of recent years. Our highest number of white-throated swifts was recorded, including a flock of 300 (!) in Fremont Hills. For the second year in a row, a blue-gray gnatcatcher was observed in Alum Rock section. Could this possibly be the same bird?

An exciting first for the count, a male yellow warbler was seen and well described in Evergreen section. The species is rare in California in winter with the few records from the coast and the central valley. Over 21,000 blackbirds take the prize as the most numerous group. For only the third time on the San Jose CBC, an oriole - this one not identified to species - was reported from Agnew section.

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.

Louise Accurso, Jean Alexander, Steve Allison, Paul Baggs, George Bauer, Ginny Becchine, Christopher Bekins, Marlene Bekins, William Bousman, Penelope Bowen, Juliette Bryson, Carole Burke, Gall Campbell, Richard Carlson, Chris Cassatta, Galen Chaney, Morgan Childs, Nancy Childs, Mike Cooper, Don Crawford, Jill Crawford, Derek Currall, Rigdon Currie, Bill Deckman, Jan Deckman, Sandra Doran, Steve Doran, Jean Dubois, Sheldon Edelman, Dick Elliott, Laura Evins, Mike Feighner, Marc Fenner, Aaron Fink, Peter Folen, Susie Formenti, Marilyn Fowler, Russ Fowler, Margaret Galvin, Shirley Gordon, Constance Gottlund, Betty Groce, Phil Hand, Lloyd Hartshorn, Thomas Harvey, Rich Healy, Howard Higley, Kathy Hobson, Julius Honig, Ruth Honig, Grant Hoyt, Karen Hoyt, Lee Hung, June Hymas, Deborah Jamison, David Jensen, David Johnson, Dorothy Johnson, David Johnston, James Jones, Leona Jones, Dan Keller, Don Keller, William Kirsher, Deborah Kleffman, Allan Klonick, Sandy Klonick, Kathy Kodis, Toni Koenen, Ed Laak, Valerie Layne, Diane Lewis, Gerry Livingston, Linda Lloyd, David Lonzarich, Lisa Luke, Michael Mammoser, LeAnn McConnell, Dawna McLaughlin, John Mewaldt, Richard Mewaldt, Mark Miller, Steve Miller, Randy Morrison, Gerald Myers, Jr., VI Nisonger, Paul Noble, Phil Noble, Rod Norden, Debbie O'Sullivan, Duane O'Sullivan, Frank O'Sullivan, Peter Ostrenko, Rick Palmer, Kathy Parker, Larry Parmeter, Janet Pasternak, Gayle Petrick, Hugh Possingham, Don Price, Kirsten Price, Pamela Price, Michael Rigney, Theresa Rigney, Bob Roadcap, Michael Rothkopf, Allen Royer, Mary Rudokas, Deane Satow, Ellie Satow, Vivlan Schember, Kandice Scott, Patricia Selfridge, Carolyn Sherwood, Rob Shields, Leni Silberman, Jack Spinler, Theresa Spinler, Don Starks, Tom Stevenson, Wayne Stevenson, Keppler Stone, Susan Stout, Dick Stovel, Lennie Stovel, Lynn Tennefoss, Alan Thomas, Karen Thomas, George Tobin, Barb Trask, Paul Travis, Gene Troetschler, Ruth Troetschler, Jeff Tye, Robert Urry, Ger Van Den Engh, J. G. Van Stee, Sue Van Stee, Jerry Vitenson, Jack Wallace, Judy Wiley, Blair Wolf, Christine Wolfe, Clalce Wolfe, Peg Woodin, Debbie Wright, Jean Young, Lou Young, Carol Zabel, Jan Zubkoff.

Special thanks to the dinner committee headed by coordinator/president, Judy McEuen, for the delicious lasagne dinner served to more than 80 hungry counters. Thanks to all the counters, party leaders, section leaders. Bill Bousman and his rare bird committee members did their usual fine effort of handling all the reports. Especially this year, thanks to Grant and Karen Hoyt, Lynn Tennefoss, and Mark and Judy McEuen for looking after the pre-count business and helping with the post-count number crunching.

For the 1988 CBC, mark Sunday, December 18. Till then, good birding, and have a great year.

Jim and Sue Liskovec

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

SAVE APRIL 24, 1988 FOR SCVAS BIRDATHON. Watch for more information in the March *Avocet*.

## UNION CITY MARSHES AND OPEN SPACE THREATENED AGAIN

The tilting over the development of the 511 Area in Union City has escalated into a major battle. The City Council recently approved development on the 511 Area, an area of wetlands and substantial wildlife values. Immediately, COSA (Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado) gathered signatures to qualify a referendum. In spite of the referendum, the Council approved grading permits to begin development, so once again, COSA is having to sue to protect our unique open space.

The 511 Area Specific Plan calls for up to 1365 "upscale" houses on roughly 200 acres of the 900 acre site. These expensive houses are to be located adjacent to the sewage treatment plant and the recently closed Turk Island Landfill—wonderful location! The project will not pay its own way, nor does it meet the original goals that the Council set for it. To protect the special nature of the Union City marshlands, the Citizens for Open Space in Alvarado (COSA) have challenged the development by a referendum, with an election expected in early March.

While the petition signatures were being verified, the Council approved reissuing grading permits, the same ones overturned by our court action in August of 1986, signalling the beginning of development. These grading permits allow 440,000 cubic yards of fill on 90 acres — 30,000 double gondola truckloads, with all the associated dust, noise, and air pollution. In spite of our protests about citizen rights and environmental law, the vote was 3 to 1 to approve. So, once again, COSA has to sue the City over these grading permits for violating the State elections code on referendums and environmental laws. We are outraged by the Council's arrogance and are determined to save the 511 area.

COSA is once again in need of contributions for the litigation. COSA needs to raise \$15,000 to cover the costs of this citizen lawsuit; our attorney is again Roy Gorman of Gorman and Waltner in Oakland. If you care about protecting a vast and beautiful open space for wildlife, and believe in citizens' fighting for good government, then please send money to help. We need your tax-deductible donations quickly. Checks may be made to "PCCF-Refuge (COSA)" and sent to COSA, 4626 Korbelt Street, Union City, CA 94587. The feet of many salt marsh harvest mice will dance with joy, and your friends in Union City will praise your names.

If you have any questions, or would like to help use, please call Martha Esserlieu at (487)1282. Thank you.

- Martha Esserlieu

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## WANTED - LIBRARY ASSISTANCE

SCVAS has just received a large donation of books. We need help in cataloging the books so that they may be entered into our collection. Assistance is also needed to enter our entire collection into the computer. Please contact the SCVAS office if you can volunteer two hours a week or more, (415) 329-1811.

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## FIELD NOTES -- Bill Bousman

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season always brings out an incredible amount of information on our wintering birds and I am hard pressed to make a great deal of sense of it in this column. If I have not credited the correct people with a CBC sighting then I will apologize ahead of time for what follows. When I started participating on CBCs the most important thing was the discovering of a new bird for the count or at least a species no one else found. Now, with all these years of data, I become more excited by the fluctuating numbers of those birds whose range boundaries include our counts or those species undergoing expansions or declines. In another decade I will probably become most excited if it doesn't rain on any of the count days (as it almost managed to do this year). But let's give the birders who found new species their due. Here's to Bill and Jean Clark and Ed Fryer for the Sandhill Crane at Jasper Ridge and LeAnn McConnell and Sandy Doran for the Yellow Warbler in the Evergreen sector of the San Jose count.

It has been a loon winter for sure. Both the San Jose and Palo Alto CBCs found a full complement. Shoreline Lake has had a number of **Red-throated Loons** since 30 Nov when a single bird was found (Derek Currall - DCu). Numbers have ranged as high as four through 31 Dec (Alan M. Eisner - AME, Mike Rogers - MRo, Rich Jeffers - RJ, Hugh Possingham, Andy Kratter - AK, Bob Roback - BRo, and Bill Bousman - WGB). Additional birds found locally include one on Calaveras Res. 20 Dec (Allen Royer - AR and Lynn Tennefoss - LyT) and one at the San Francisquito Creek delta 21 Dec (Mike Mammoser - MM). **Pacific Loons** have also been found in unusual numbers with one on the Coleman Rd. ponds 3 Dec (John Mariani - JMa), two on Vasona Res. 19 Dec (Jean DuBois - JDuB), and one on Lake Cunningham for the San Jose CBC 20 Dec (A&S Klonick). A **Common Loon** was at Shoreline Lake from 5 to 18 Dec (RJ, AME, WGB, DCu). An additional bird was on Calaveras Res. 20 Dec (AR, LyT) and another was found the same day on the salt ponds north of the Sunnyvale dump (DCu, Eugene and Ruth Troetschler). Less expected was one on Searsville Lake on 21 Dec (Robert R. Buell, W. Lennihan, L&E Rush). **Brown Pelicans** lingered in the south bay to make both CBCs. Seven were found in the Alviso area on 20 Dec and a total of 15 were found from Moffett Field to Redwood City on 21 Dec. Puzzling have been one or more birds inland. One was seen on the Coleman Rd. ponds 3 Dec (JMa) and another bird (possibly the same?) was seen at Vasona Res. 18-24 Dec (JDuB). Fairly substantial numbers of **Am. White Pelicans** remain in the south bay as indicated by an estimated 159 on the San Jose CBC 20 Dec (fide Jim & Sue Liskovec - J&SL) and nine the next day near Charleston Slough (AK, BRo). **American Bittern** were down in the Alviso area with seven found 20 Dec (fide J&SL). Only one was found on the Palo Alto CBC 21 Dec (Ed Helley), one of the lowest numbers on record. The possible hybrid **Little Blue Heron X Snowy Egret** reported last month was found regularly in Charleston Slough through 21 Dec (AK, BRo, WGB). The only **Cattle Egret** record of the season was of two off Alpine Rd. in Portola Valley on 21 Dec (Allen Robinson - ARo). This species has not been recorded

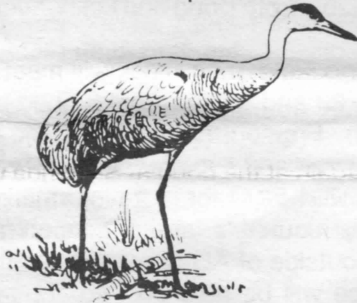


in Santa Clara County for the last two years. Three **Green-backed Heron** were found on the San Jose CBC (fide J&SL), but none were found the next day in the Palo Alto circle. Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found in the large flock of Canada Geese at the south end of Calaveras Res. 20 Dec (Alan & Karen Thomas - A&KT, WGB). This flock often has other geese species mixed in, but is out of range of everyone but the Questar birders (and the CBC crew once a year). A female **Wood Duck** was at the Palo Alto Duck Pond 5 Dec which is an unexpected location for a wild bird (MM). A male **Blue-winged Teal** on the San Jose CBC 20 Dec was unexpected (Barbara Trask). A pair in the Palo Alto FCB 21 Dec (Ted Chandik - TAC, MM) was in a typical location, while three miles in the old Menlo Park sewage ponds the same day was an area where they are seldom reported (Peter Metropulos - PJM, Dan Keller - DK). At least one of the imm. male **Eurasian Wigeon** found earlier in the fall has stayed in the outer Adobe Creek with a sighting 10 Dec (WGB) and 21 Dec (AK, BRo). A second male was found 21 Dec on the southern side of Ravenswood Point (Ken Lajoie - KL). **Redhead** were found on both of our south bay CBCs with 14 near Alviso 20 Dec (fide J&SL) and 17 in various parts of the Palo Alto circle 21 Dec. **White-winged Scoter** have been found sporadically at Shoreline Lake with one there 12 Dec (RJ), three on 21 Dec (AK, BRo), and one on 31 Dec (WGB). **Hooded Mergansers** have been wintering again at the pond at Skylonda with four there 21 Dec (Gloria Heller - GHe, Jennifer Green - JGr) and a male still there after ice formed 1 Jan. Less expected were a single on Felt Lake 21 Dec (AME, Dave Rich - DRi) and seven at Searsville Lake (fide Bill Clark). Good numbers of **Common Mergansers** were found on the San Jose CBC 20 Dec with 106 (fide J&SL). Six birds on Bear Gulch Res. in Woodside 21 Dec were from the spot they are usually found for the Palo Alto count (Art Bailey). **Bald Eagle** were found at their normal wintering locations with five on Calaveras Res. 20 Dec (A&KT, AR, LyT, WGB) and two on the Isabel Ranch 23 Dec (Don Schmoltd - DSc). Our CBC data clearly document a significant range or population expansion of **Red-shouldered Hawks**. Ten on the San Jose count and 20 on Palo Alto support a trend noted less than a decade ago.



Typical numbers of the mid-1970s were 1 to 5 birds. The reason, however, is unclear. Is this hawk responding in some way to increasing urbanization? We are at the edge of the normal wintering range of the **Ferruginous Hawk**. This winter had more than the usual number of records with three on the San Jose CBC 20 Dec including an adult (Grant & Karen Hoyt, Mark & Steve Miller, Chris Wolfe, and Lee Hung), one on Russian Ridge OSP for the second year (WGB, Larry

Parmeter - LP), and three more on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 23 Dec (DSc, LP, WGB, George Bauer - GB). It has also been an exceptional winter for **Merlin** with 14 birds in the county area where I normally get reports of three to four. A male was in San Jose 5 Dec (Marjorie & Alan Neal) and a second bird was over the Matadero riparian the same day (RJ). A bird was seen at Shoreline Lake 17 Dec (DCu). Three were found on the San Jose count 20 Dec (Dave Lonzarich - DL, Robert Shields, Mike Feighner). A bird found in Los Altos 20 Dec (Carol Zabel - CZ, *fide* Mary Rozenberg) was found again the next day along with a second adult (Mary & Don Rozenberg). Two males were found fighting in the San Antonio Valley 23 Dec (WGB, LP, GB). Lastly, a bird was seen over Bayfront Park in Menlo Park 26 Dec (Mike Rothkopf). **Peregrine Falcons** have been found in pretty much typical numbers along the bay. One was at Crittenden Marsh 29 Nov (Jim Corliss). An adult bird was found in Alviso 20 Dec (Debbie O'Sullivan, Rigdon Currie, DL, Laura Evins). A single bird was at the Palo Alto Baylands 21 Dec (TAC) and another one was seen at Shoreline Park the same day (AK, BRo). A bird was seen over the Palo Alto FCB 24 Dec (David Houle) as well. **Black Rail** have been found at the Palo Alto Baylands on 5, 18, and 21 Dec (MM, Arianna Rosenbluth). On 13 Dec one was caught and eaten by a Great Egret. One of the big surprises of the count period was a **Sandhill Crane** that has



settle in at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve and was observed 21 Dec (Bill & Jean Clark, Ed Fryer). This is only the third San Mateo County record. A Sandhill Crane was also found on the Hayward-Fremont CBC (*fide* Phil Gordon). Seven **Snowy Plover** were found near Alviso 20 Dec (Tom Harvey *et. al.*). A few are found along the salt pond dikes most winters. Good numbers of **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found this winter: single birds were found in two places near Alviso 20 Dec (Russ & Marilyn Fowler, Richard Carlson); two were south of Ravenswood Point 21 Dec (KL); another near Bayfront Park the same day (PJM, DK); but the biggest surprise was of 20 north of the PG&E substation on 21 Dec, an unusual concentration (Grant Hoyt - GH, LyT). Three **Ruddy Turnstones** on the San Francisquito Creek delta 21 Dec (MM) are from one of the few places that they are regularly found. A **Red Phalarope** was found at Shoreline Lake on 6 Dec following one of our early December wind storms (AME). These birds are sometimes blown inland by winter storms and have been known to stay for weeks if they have a good food supply. However, this bird could not be found the next day. The Palo Alto count's catch of owls was down from last year's national record. A single **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was found at Monte Bello OSP 21 Dec (Paul Noble - PLN). Another bird was seen below Mt. Hamilton on the CBC there 23 Dec (Jack Cole *fide* DSc). Three **Short-eared Owls** found in the Alviso area 20 Dec are fairly typical

numbers (*fide* J&SL). Six birds found on the Palo Alto count 21 Dec are back up towards previous levels and this may reflect the good nesting success in the Suisun Marshes this year. Eight **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were found 21 Dec in their breeding metropolis in Monte Bello OSP (PLN). A male **Red-naped Sapsucker** has returned to the same location in Jasper Ridge B.P. for the third winter and was recorded on 21 Dec (Jane Becker-Haven, Chip Haven). A **Tree Swallow** over the Palo Alto FCB 5 Dec is one of our occasional winter records (RJ). More surprising was one found 21 Dec near Hamm's Gulch above Portola Valley (ARo). No lowland **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found on the counts. Three in Wunderlich Park 21 Dec (GHe, JGr) appear to be part of the resident Santa Cruz Mountain population. A single **Canyon Wren** in Arroyo Hondo 20 Dec was the only bird found on the San Jose count (Kep Stone). **Winter Wrens** winter in our lowlands and two were found on 20 Dec on the San Jose count (*fide* J&SL) and a single bird in the vicinity of Charleston Slough the next day (AK, BRo). A bird found in Monte Bello OSP 21 Dec (Peter LaTourrette - PLAT) was from the resident population. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was found at Alum Rock Park 20 Dec (Dave Johnston, Howard Higley). One was found here last winter as well. Wintering **Orange-crowned Warblers** are usually found in good numbers on the San Jose CBC and the six this year are typical. This is not normally the case on the Palo Alto count for reasons that are not obvious. The one along Stevens Creek 21 Dec (PLN) was the only one found. A male **Yellow Warbler** was found off Flindt Ave. in the Evergreen sector of the San Jose count 20 Dec (LeAnn McConnell, Sandy Doran) for one of our few winter records. A female or immature **Black-and-White Warbler** was found in Palo Alto 17 Dec suffering from exposure. A few hours in the warmth of the Junior Museum perked it up and it was released. It was last seen feeding there in the afternoon (TAC). There are few local records for this eastern warbler - the most recent was an autumn bird in 1983. Rounding out our rare warblers was a male **Wilson's Warbler** found 21 Dec along Corte Madera Creek in Jasper Ridge B.R. (CZ, Louise Fletcher). A **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** was found on Black Mountain 20 Dec (Briana Lindh - BLi), but was missed on count day. This is one of the three sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains where this interior range bird has been found in recent years. Four **Chipping Sparrows** were found at the Palo Alto Hills GC 21 Dec (AME, DRi). Our winter records for this sparrow all seem to be concentrated at the edge of the foothills. It appears that the bird of the winter is an out-of-range **Black-throated Sparrow** in



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suburban San Jose north of Tulare Hill (Frank & Duane O'Sullivan). This bird appeared at their feeder in the first week of December and has returned regularly through at least 3 Jan. It is the fourth county record and one of the few winter records for Northern California. The Palo Alto CBC picked up some of our truly rare wintering sparrows in the baylands 21 Dec. A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found on the n.e. side of the sewage outfall during the high tide and an adult **Swamp Sparrow** was found in the same place as last year in the Matadero riparian adjacent to the corner of the Palo Alto maintenance yard (both MM). It seems to be a better than average winter for **White-throated Sparrows**. Feeder birds have shown up in Portola Valley, 20 Nov-5 Dec (Phil Hand); Palo Alto, 20 Dec-2 Jan (Phyllis Browning); and Los Gatos, 23-24 Dec (JDUB). Another bird was found on 21 Dec on Old Page Mill Rd (Ralph Hunter). The signs for an irruptive **Red Crossbill** winter seem clear; it should be at least as good as the winter of 1984-85. Thirty-five were at Monte Bello OSP 12 Dec (PLN) and 14 counted 21 Dec (BLi). The same day flocks totaling 35 were at Skyline Ridge OSP (PLaT) and 93 along Russian Ridge (WGB, LP). A single flock of 15 **Evening Grosbeaks** was found in Los Altos 21 Dec (PLN) which follows our normal pattern for this irruptive finch which is usually attracted to urban fruit trees in the winter.

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

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- Tuesday Birding Field Trips Class will meet at 9:30 am beginning on Feb. 23 and ending April 5. Led by Alice Hoch and sponsored by Fremont Adult School, the class is designed for both beginner and experienced bird-watchers. Call the school at (415)791-5841 for more information.

- Celebrating our country's largest concentration of wintering bald eagles outside of Alaska, the Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference will be held on Feb. 12-14. The conference, sponsored by Klamath Basin Audubon Society, will be held at the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls. Contact person is Charlotte Opp, (503)882-8488.



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