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Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
San Jose, CA  
Permit No. 5869



March 1988

Volume 35, Number 3

## DAVID GAINES

1947 - 1988

I can think of few people in this world that are irreplaceable. David is one of them. For twelve years he has been Mono Lake's most eloquent and passionate champion, devoting his life to the lake and, at time, driving himself to exhaustion. There was always too much to do.

I am convinced that had David not decided to fight for Mono Lake, no one else would have. Who else was dedicated enough or young and foolish enough to believe that one could win against giant DWP? It was David, in his quiet way and by example, who then inspired quite a few thousand of us to believe as he did: that Mono Lake was worth saving, that it was not a hopeless fight and that *of course we could win*.

Monday, January 11, David and Don Oberlin, A Mono Lake Committee staff member, were killed in a head-on collision on Highway 395, north of Mammoth Lakes during a whiteout caused by blowing snow. Sally Gaines suffered a broken wrist and their daughter Verio, 5, was in serious condition for over a week. Their son Sage and the driver of the other car were not hurt. A Memorial Fund has been established. Sally has suggested that it be used to accomplish one of David's major goals - the continued existence of the Lee Vining Visitor Center. Donations in memory of David may be sent to the Mono Lake Committee or the Mono Lake Foundation (tax deductible). PO Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

Born in Los Angeles, David became acquainted with the eastern Sierra during family vacations. He attended UC Santa Cruz and UC Davis, where he received a master's degree in ecology. He was among the group of students who received an NSF grant in 1976 to study the Mono Lake ecosystem. I remember stopping in at their camp that summer. What enthusiasm! Bits and pieces of Mono Lake had been studied before, its geology and its limnology, but never the whole lake and all its creatures. What a marvelous idea, to gather a dozen students with many specialties, turn them loose on Mono Lake, and then put all their findings together.

Their work was a turning point in the lake's history. They provided solid evidence on the lake's importance to hundreds of thousands of birds - as a nesting site for gulls and plovers and as a critically important food source and resting site for migrating grebes and phalaropes. They also documented the elegantly simple ecosystem that supports these birds: mineral-rich water, bacteria, sunlight, algae, brine flies, and brine shrimp. Without David's passion and eloquence, this evidence might have stayed buried in a scientific report. Instead, appalled at the sure destruction of this living lake if the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power continued to divert its tributaries, dropping the lake a foot or two a year and increasing its salinity, David took it upon himself to do something. Soon joining him were Sally and a handful of friends. They publicized the lake's unique wonders and impending doom, they found allies, and organized the Mono Lake Committee. The Committee has led the fight to maintain the lake through legal, legislative, educational and political activities.

David is so closely identified with Mono Lake that you may not know he had other interests and talents. A few years ago he began making time for them, shifting Committee responsibilities to others in order to spend time with his growing family and on other projects long deferred. Such as ornithology - he had just finished a new and greatly expanded edition of his book Birds of Yosemite and the East Slope. Such as publishing; his Artemisia Press already has six titles on birds, local history and geology. Such as his mandolin.

David was a rare person, gentle and soft-spoken, but a bulldog on all matters concerning Mono Lake. A man with the courage to live his convictions. David, you were right all along. We are winning. A living, magnificent lake will be your eternal monument. And we are the richer for knowing you. Peace with Earth. - Genny Smith 1/29/88

NOTE: There will be a tribute to David Gaines at the Western Regional Audubon Conference at Asilomar, March 26-29. Please call SCVAS office for more details if you would like to attend.

# LAST CALL FOR BIRD SEED

If you hurry, you can still order bird seed in our Spring sale. This is a pre-paid sale. As you read last month, **THIS YEAR THERE 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.

**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.

## 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	_____	_____

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

# SCVAS BIRDATHON 1988

Mark your calendars for the 1988 SCVAS Birdathon fundraiser, **Sunday, April 24.** A birdathon is similar to a walk a thon or bike a thon, only instead of obtaining pledges of money for each mile you walk or bike, counters (birders) recruit sponsors who agree to pledge a specific amount for each bird species the counter identifies in one 24 hour period. This year's Birdathon is dedicated to the memory of David Gaines (see article). Half the funds raised in the Count will be offered to work towards protecting Mono Lake. This is the year to Save Mono Lake, and SCVAS wants to make a solid contribution to that effort. We'll direct the other half of pledges paid to local projects. That portion of funds raised by Birdathon counters will be matched by the Chapter, and offered to the S.F. Bay National Wildlife Refuge to print a TEACHER EDUCATION PACKET, construct a WATER CONTROL STRUCTURE, and build a BOARDWALK at the entrance to the Refuge. These are ambitious goals for the Chapter, and we hope you will throw your support into this effort, and help make it a success.

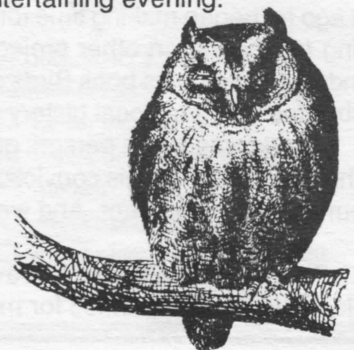
Choose your own route and gather your own sponsors, or pledge your support to one of SCVAS' teams of expert birders. A variety of prizes will be offered! April 24 will be a great day to be outside, birdwatching! More details and sponsor forms will be included in the April AVOCET. We hope to have a few celebrities joining us too, and look forward to **YOUR** support!

## MARCH PROGRAM

This will be a very fast paced, stimulating duo presentation by Bill Bousman and Paul Noble. Both Bill and Paul are tremendous contributors to SCVAS. Bill spends hours compiling all the field notes that people call in and Paul coordinates the whole field trip program. Both Bill and Paul are also involved in some very interesting studies of our local avian populations.

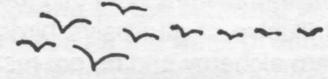
Bill will present the Santa Clara Co. Breeding Bird Atlas with the results of the past pilot year. Several SCVAS members are now helping him work on this very important census of our nesting species. He will describe what can be accomplished, the long term significance of this field work and how it can touch us.

Paul has just completed a study of the five owls of Montebello Open Space Preserve. The second half of tonight's program is all on owls, one of the most fascinating and mysterious of bird families. Join us for a wonderfully educational and entertaining evening.



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

Mar. 2 **Bay Area Bird Photographers.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm at the Baylands Interpretive Center Co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto

Mar. 5 **Fall River Mills.** Saturday, 7:30 am. Full day. Meet at the Sears 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 hours N of south bay. Suggest participants stay in Redding Fri. night - many hotel/motels available. Bring lunch for Saturday and something to carry water. Birding on the way back on Sunday. This is a new area of 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 for inland California Christmas Counts. Highlights may include: Both Eagle species, falcons, a good variety of waterfowl (including Hooded Mergansers and Tundra Swans), woodpeckers, Mnt. finches, Longspurs and Northern Shrike possible. Leaders: Bob Yutzky (916)2515 and Bill Von. Local contact Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091.



Mar. 8 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Barn Owls.

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.

Mar. 12 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Palo Alto Baylands. Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at the Duck Pond parking area. Take Embarcadero E off Hwy 101. Follow to Duck Pond. Rain cancels. Highlights: Basic identification skills including how to use a field guide. Leader: Rod Norden (408)370-7448.

Mar. 13 **Portola State Park.** Sunday, 8 am. Half day. Meet in the picnic area parking lot - the first lot on right up small rise before bridge. \$3 per vehicle entrance fee. Lunch optional. Heavy rain cancels. Highlight: search for elusive Pileated Woodpecker. Leader: Paul L. Noble (415)948-3876.

Mar. 16 **General Meeting.** Wednesday. Palo Alto Cultural Center, corner of Newell and Embarcadero. Refreshments at 7:30, program at 8 pm. See inside for details.

Mar. 19 **Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve.** Saturday, 9 am. Half day. Meet at the intersection of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy 35) and Page Mill Road. Informal carpooling from Page Mill x I-280 Park 'N Ride lot at 8:15 am. Moderate hiking of 2 miles. Rain cancels. Restrooms at Monte Bello OSP 1 mile down from Skyline. Highlights: Early warblers, wintering birds and hawks. Leader: Jim Liskovec (415)0969-5542.

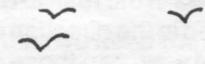
Mar. 20 **Alum Rock Park.** Sunday, 8 am. Half day. Meet at the YSI in the park. Take Alum Rock Ave. off Hwy I-680 or Hwy 101 E to park. Bring lunch. Waterproof footwear recommended. Anticipated species: Golden Eagle, Dipper, Rufous-crowned sparrow, woodpeckers. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Dave Johnson (408)356-4945.

Mar. 23 **Field Trip North.** Wednesday, 8:30 am. Foothill Park. Meet in the commuters parking lot at Page Mill and Arastradero Road just off of 280. Be prepared to share a \$2 per car entrance fee. Only a limited number of cars/people are allowed, so to be assured a spot, please call the leader, Alberta Jasberg (415)493-9546 or Dolores Norton (415)941-1666. Lunch optional.

Mar. 26 **Almaden Quicksilver County Park.** Saturday, 8 am. Half day. Meet at the Almaden/Camden Park 'N' Ride lot. Bring lunch. Moderate hiking of about 4 miles. Heavy rain cancels. Wear appropriate footwear if it has been raining. Anticipated species: Wild Turkey, early warblers, Golden Eagles, hawks. Trip limited to 25 people. BY RESERVATION ONLY. Leader: Tom Roach (408)268-6101.

Mar. 27 **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.** Sunday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet in the third parking lot near the restrooms. Take I-280 to Foothill Blvd. S. Right on Cristo Rey Drive. Proceed to the parking area. Rain cancels. Bring water, lunch optional. Highlights: Early spring arrivals and lingering wintering species plus bluebirds. Leaders: Audrey Stoye (408)249-2108 and Betty Wyatt (408)255-6091.

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



Apr. 2 **Coyote Lake County Park.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half to full day. Meet at the Denny's on Leavesley Rd. in Gilroy off Hwy 101. Bring lunch. Possible park entrance fee. Highlights: Early warblers, Poss. Common mergansers, Wild Turkey, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Magpies. Leader: Jean-Marie Spoelman (415)797-0265.

Apr. 9 **Coal Mine Ridge.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Take Hwy I-280 to Alpine, S about 3 miles to stop at Portola Rd. Continue on Alpine .9 miles to parking on right just before Willowbrook. Heavy rain cancels. Lunch optional. Bluebirds, vireos, warblers, views. Trip limited to 10 people. Call for reservations. Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623.

Apr. 12 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Short Eared Owls.

Apr. 13 **South County Field Trip.** Stevens Creek Park. Details next month.

# FIELD NOTES - Bill Bousman

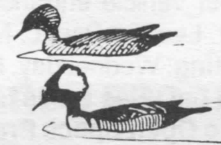
The medieval alchemists dreamed of turning base lead into gold. Today's birder has similar dreams; of turning the base immature Sora into the gold of a Yellow Rail - that most illusive of all illusive birds. If you thrive on tales of modern alchemy and do not mind a little irony as well, then listen to my tale. On the high tide of 17 Jan, following two nights of heavy rain, a small, bedraggled rail was found, more dead than alive, along the catwalk at the Palo Alto Baylands. Although I have not seen the written description, I am told that it was meticulous and clearly indicated a **Yellow Rail**, the first county record in 90 years! At some later point SFBBO volunteers came along on their rail census and found the same bird and collected it for rehabilitation along with an adult Sora that was also suffering from extreme hypothermia. They identified both birds as Sora, banded them, and took them home for some warmth and care. By the next day the grapevine was hot with the news of a Yellow Rail, but details were unclear whether the rail was still at the Baylands or whether someone had taken it home. That evening, Joe Morlan of the Northern California Rare Bird Alert, finally got in contact with Lou and Jean Young of SFFBO, whose two Soras had recovered their appetites and were busily eating mealworms. He convinced them of the need to re-examine the immature Sora and there they found true birder's gold - a healthy Yellow Rail! They released both rails at the Baylands the next day to the appreciative audience of 50 or so birders who then got their one short look of a Yellow Rail in flight.

What is the true status of the Yellow Rail in California? Grinnell and Miller considered it to be primarily a wintering species, with most of the records from the Bay Area over the period mid-October to late January. Three records from Santa Clara County are cited, but only one has an associated date - 14 Dec 1898. Interestingly, there are two nesting records from Mono County for the first half of this century. What is its status now? Is this a bird that is here every winter or just once every 90 years? Nobody really knows. It is such a secretive bird, and so easily confused with the multitude of immature Soras that abound here that it could easily be missed most winters. But for 90 years?

Lou and Jean Young are the only people I know who have held a Yellow Rail. Once he realized what it was Lou started to notice differences from the Sora. He commented, "Now, you won't believe me when I phone in a record to you." Is the Yellow Rail that similar to an immature Sora? Well, the 50 people who watched this one fly off will probably argue the point for the next 90 years. My opinion is that they are very similar, and that the diagnostic white patch in the wing is very easy to miss in the rush to get binoculars on a little rail that has just flushed in the direction opposite to where you are looking. Oh, by the way, can those of us who saw the bird fly off after release, can we count him on our life list? To answer that we must return to that other medieval conundrum - how many angels can fit on the head of a pin?



**Red-throated Loons** continue to use Shoreline Lake. Numbers there have varied from one to three through 29 Jan (Mike Rogers-MRo, Bill Bousman WGB). Additional birds have been found on Vasona Res. on 13 Jan (Ed Gustafson-EG) and at the old Palo Alto Yacht Harbor 18 Jan (WGB). This is the greatest concentration of loons that we have had since the storm-driven birds during the winter of 1983-84. Single male **Wood Ducks** were found at Vasona Res. 14-15 Jan (9EG) and along Redwood Slough in downtown Redwood City 17 Jan (Jobst Brandt). A male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Shoreline Lake 12 Dec (Hugh Possingham), but was not seen after that. This is the seventh record for the county. A flock of **Hooded Merganser**, ranging from four to eight birds was seen on the Campbell percolation ponds 11-15 Jan (Bob Merrill fide David Suddjian-DLSu). This very rare merganser is seldom found within the county. A flock of 21 **Common Mergansers** at Calero Res. 11 Jan (EG) continues this winter's list of south county reservoir sightings. An adult **Bald Eagle** was seen at Calaveras Res. 18 Jan (MRo) where they are known to winter. **Merlin** continue to be recorded in good numbers with one in Los Altos 2 Jan (Paul Noble-PLN), a bird at Skylonda 5 Jan that revisited on 12 Jan (Gloria Heller), and a bird seen in Arastradero OSP 14 Jan (Grant Hoyt-GH). One to two **Black Rail** were seen on the high tide at the Palo Alto Baylands on 17-18 Jan (Mike Mammoser-MM, WGB) as we have come to expect. The



**Sandhill Crane** found 20 Dec at Jasper Ridge Biological Reserve was still there through at least 3 Jan (Debbie Jamison, Dorothy Johnson). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at Vasona Res. 13 Jan (EG) for one of our few wintering records. **Whimbrel** are rare in the county outside of migration. Two in the Long-billed Curlew flock 18 Jan at the Palo Alto Baylands (WGB) are probably representative of our wintering population. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** responding to a tape at Arastradero OSP 24 Jan (Grant and Karen Hoyt) was from a new location in the foothills. A **Short-eared Owl** was seen on Hook's Isle on 17 Jan (Betty Groce-BGr, Phyllis Browning) and appeared to be suffering from the recent storms. The first **Allen's Hummingbird** of the season was one seen in Saratoga 25 Jan (PLN). This is earlier than most years by a week or two. The male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** that returned to a poplar tree in Palo Alto last November was briefly seen again 22 Jan (Alberta Jasberg-AL). An **American Dipper** seen in Alum Rock Park 12 Jan (EG) was in an area where they are normally seen each winter. A **Townsend's Solitaire** at Maymen's Flat just over the line in Santa Cruz County 21 Jan (DLSu) is of interest because of its rarity. The most recent county record is 1984. No wintering **Western Tanagers** were found on the CBC's, but two have been found this month. One was along San Francisquito Creek 5 Jan below El Camino (PLN) and the other was in the Stanford Cactus Garden on 12 Jan (GH). A pair of **Black-headed Grosbeaks** has been coming to a feeder in La Honda since early January (Claire Rittenhouse). The greater proportion of our winter grosbeak

# SPRING DESERT TRIP

Don Starks and Paul Noble are leading a four-day birding trip to the Joshua Tree National Monument - Salton Sea area. Dates will be Friday, April 22 through Monday, April 25. Don has led this trip in the past for SFBBO with great success and fun. His last spring trip resulted in such highlights as Brant, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Golden Plover, Gull-billed Tern, Yellow-footed Gull, and Macgillivray's Warbler. This list does not include all the usual species to be found in the varied habitats we will visit. Be prepared for heat, of course, but I might add that it snowed on our camp (Joshua Tree) the first night we were there last time. Accommodations are available near Joshua Tree and Salton Sea for those who prefer and a group camp is being reserved for those who like to sleep under the stars. If time permits, we may visit Morongo Valley and the Taft area. Why Taft? Leconte's Thrasher! Allow 10 hours Friday for the drive down and we'll start early Saturday on our birding adventure. \$30 a person and call Don at (408)371-9720 for further information.



records are for Rose-breasteds, curiously enough. The returning Black-headed should make their appearance in the beginning of April. An adult **Brewer's Sparrow** was caught and banded at the Coyote Creek Research Station 2 Dec (Dick Mewaldt-LRM) for our second county record. The first was of an immature last August. The RipariaNews contains a good picture of the adult bird. The wintering **Black-throated Sparrow** in south San Jose is still coming to the feeder there, at least through 27 Jan (Frank and Duane O'Sullivan, MM). Two **Sage Sparrows** seen along Loma Prieta Rd. 21 Jan (DLSu) are from one of the few spots in the Santa Cruz Mountains where this species is regularly found. A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was again found along the wastewater outfall at the Palo Alto Baylands during the high tides of 17-19 Jan (MM, EG, BGr, WGB). A **Swamp Sparrow** was seen in the same vicinity 18 Jan (GH, Dick Stovel) and may be the same bird found near here in November. A female **Harris' Sparrow** captured and banded in San Jose 5 Jan was recaptured 9 Jan (LRM). A single male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was in a flock of Brewer's Blackbirds at Milpitas High School 13 Jan (Larry Parmeter) for one of our few recent records. The irruptive **Red Crossbills** have been seen mostly in the Santa Cruz Mountains this winter, but this month we are starting to see some lowland reports with four over Mountain View 24 Jan (PLN) and 12 in Palo Alto 25-26 Jan (AJ). We should see more of this species and other mountain finches as the buds swell on the lowland trees in March.

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).

## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT NEEDS YOUR HELP

The following is the National Audubon Society Hotline Issue for the week of January 25, 1988. We will be offering selected Hotline Issues for your information, and hopefully to inspire you to WRITE YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES and tell them what you think. If you would like to receive all hotline alerts, call (202) 547-9017. The message changes weekly.

In early December, environmental groups launched a full scale effort to support the Endangered Species Act reauthorization without weakening amendments. We knew at least one amendment would be offered that would set a dangerous precedent for this premier wildlife law and unravel efforts to keep threatened and endangered sea turtles from going over the edge.

Soon, other Members of the House circulated their proposals and the list of bad amendments got longer and longer: an amendment to take the wolf off the endangered species list; an amendment to delist the leopard darter, a small fish found in Oklahoma; an amendment to delist the concho water snake in Texas; an amendment — well, you get the idea.

Those of you who have been calling the HOTLINE know that because of tremendous and heartening grassroots efforts, we prevailed on all fronts. Sensing defeat, some representatives never actually offered their bad ideas on the floor; the three weakening amendments that were brought to the floor all failed by significant margins, and the bill passed the House by a vote of 399 to 16.

While the story has a happy ending in the House, we have a long way to go in the Senate still. The bill in the Senate, S 675, is waiting for floor action. **You should write your two senators and ask that they cosponsor the bill. Also, write Senate Majority leader Robert Byrd and encourage him to bring the bill to the floor as soon as possible.** Byrd will be reluctant to put it on the Senate calendar because Senator Simpson of Wyoming has threatened to filibuster the bill. Simpson has concerns about how the Act affects certain predator issues, namely hunting grizzly bears and wolves.

It's important that we keep the pressure on the Senate to act on this bill. The fate of too many plants and animals depend upon a strong and well funded Endangered Species Act.

If you would like more information about this issue, the House vote or other issues, please call Connie Mahan at (202) 547-9009 or drop us a note at 801 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Suite 301, Washington, D.C. 20003. We'd love to hear from you.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Twenty-six people, including four beginners and a gentleman from Boston (he got a life bird), participated in our annual Foster City Field Trip on Jan. 24. The weather was glorious and all specialties, except the Peregrines, were cooperative. Central Lake proper yielded little; the Hooded Mergansers were in Marina Lagoon. Public access is at the intersection of Port Royal Ave. and Winchester; also at Virgo Lane off Beach Park Blvd. One pair of Barrow's Goldeneye was in the channel behind Central Lake; public access is off Edgewater Blvd. on Dorado to parking area at end of Andromeda and Hercules. We had a flock of Red Knots feeding near Shell Bar at low tide. By the way, the Foster City city council has reactivated plans to build a Marina in that area. If you can help fight it, please call Lynn at the office. My thanks to all who helped with spotting and identifying, especially Phyllis Browning and Frank Vanslager.



- Betty Groce

The San Joaquin Delta, with its vast network of sloughs, rivers and islands, plays a crucial role in maintaining the ecological vitality of our region's most important natural resource, the San Francisco Bay/Estuary. As Audubon members, most of us realize the need to protect and preserve the Delta by supporting efforts to prevent the siphoning off of its fresh water tributaries to southern water-guzzling interests. On January 23 our chapter made its annual birding trip to the Woodbridge Rd. area north of Stockton, and the 23 participants were rewarded not only with the sights and sounds of the area's winter bird life, but also the encouraging sight of full, healthy running rivers.

Birding in the Delta can involve considerable driving and searching for the particular grassy or flooded fields beings favored by various waterfowl species on a given day, but Woodbridge Rd. has been quite reliable for one of our most spectacular winter visitors, the Sandhill crane. We found a flock of about 2,000 within 1/4 mile of the road, and later a few smaller groups much closer for detailed scope observation. Throughout the mid-day period we had scattered groups flying around, filling the air with their haunting, unmistakable "call of the wild". We also enjoyed good looks at Tundra Swans, another area specialty, though the large (2,000 birds) flock had apparently broken up into small flocks in December. Small to medium-sized groups of ducks, geese, and shorebirds were found along Woodbridge and Staten Island Rds. Both areas are easily birdable and relatively safe for car caravan pull-outs; most of the traffic encountered consisted of other birding groups and the occasional puzzled local resident. An Ecological Preserve along Woodbridge provided a good lunch spot and observation point, but a hazy glare prevented adequate viewing of the Preserve's ponds. (A scouting trip a week earlier had yielded several species of ducks and shorebirds at this location, one of the few bright spots on a miserable, rainy, windy day.)



## A NEW OPEN SPACE DISTRICT FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY?

The Greenbelt Coalition is a group of organizations and individuals that advocate open space preservation in Santa Clara County. The Coalition favors formation of an open space district (OSD) as a key component of a county wide open space preservation program. **We believe that an OSD should have two primary functions: to preserve open space and to create a greenbelt to direct urban growth.**

**For an OSD to be effective in performing those functions, it should be an independent agency, be run by an independently elected board of governors, include all of Santa Clara County except that portion within the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and have a secure and adequate source of funding.**

Recent studies by both the County and San Jose support a similar OSD. The public also favors open space preservation through a new district or agency.

Members of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and San Jose City Council will meet as a Joint Implementation Committee in the near future concerning a proposed new open space district. Your support of the kind of district we want, expressed to these officials, is urgently needed. Their decisions regarding an OSD may affect open space preservation for years to come. **THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE AN IMPACT.**

Please write or call the officials listed below, and let them know how important an OSD is to you and why. Ask your friends and neighbors to write also.

**Mayor Tom McEnery, Councilmembers Judy Stable & Shirley Lewis, 801 North First St., San Jose, CA, 95110, (408) 277-4000**

**Supervisors Susanne Wilson and Dianne McKenna, 70 West Hedding St., San Jose, CA, 95110, (408) 299-2323**

The SCVAS office would like to hear from you if you are interested in helping support a new Open Space District. In particular, members living in South County, in the area proposed for the OSD, are encourage to participate. If you are interested, please call the SCVAS office, at (415) 329-1811.

Raptors were abundant through the day, and, naturally, immature Red-tails challenged our identifications skills repeatedly. The only unusual raptors were seen in the morning as the group stopped along Mtn. House, Kelso, and Bruns Rds. north of I-580 and south of Byron. We managed to find Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcon, and flocks of Lark Sparrows and Horned Larks in this open, rolling hill/grassland habitat. A total of 85 species (including scouting trip) were seen on this long (eight-hour, 250-mile) but very worthwhile outing.

- Grant Hoyt

## NON-AUDUBON TRIPS AND EVENTS

These are not sponsored by Audubon but are listed for your interest.

An Australian Wildlife Tour, Oct. 14-Nov. 5, 1988, conducted by the Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, will include exploration of the Cairns area, the Great Barrier Reef, the Atherton Tableland (prime Platypus habitat), Darwin and Kakadu National Park, the Victoria area including Little Desert N/P and Phillip Island, the Sydney area and the famous O'Reilly's Guest House in Lamington N.P. south of Brisbane. For more information, call Doug and Gail Cheeseman (408)741-5330.

Sponsored by the California Academy of Sciences, Evelyn Miller will teach a class in techniques and practice in photographing shore birds, marsh birds, coastal scenics and close-ups and wildflowers on March 18-20 at Pigeon Pt. Hostel, with a post-trip meeting on March 24. For more information call (408)624-6870.

On March 12, Evelyn Miller will teach a class on photographing spring flowers at the Photographic Center of the Monterey Peninsula. For more information, call (408)624-6870.

Mono Lake Committee Tours include Bhutan in October, 1988, and the Antarctica in Jan. 1989. For information about either of these fund-raising trips send a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to: "Antarctica" or "Bhutan", c/o M. Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708.

Youth Science Institute is sponsoring its Third Annual Wildlife Photography Contest. Both black/white and color prints of native California wildlife will be accepted until March 10. Two categories: junior, up to 18 years, adult, 19 and older. Entry fee is \$5.00. Prizes include boat excursions, summer backpacking trip and more. For information, call (408)258-4322.

The Institute also celebrates its 3rd Annual Wildlife Day at Alum Rock Park, San Jose, on March 27. The whole family can learn more about native wild animals with opportunities to meet live amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. There will be bird walks, slide and film shows, nature crafts and more. Wildlife Day co-sponsors are the Whale Center, SCVAS, Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society, Ano Nuevo Interpretive Assoc., Human Society Wildlife Program and the City of San Jose. For more information, call (408)258-4322.

Don Starks is teaching his "Introduction to Bay Area Gulls and their ID" again at SFBBO in March. There will be slide presentations and two field trips, cost \$30. So, if you hate gulls because you can't identify them, join Don and together you'll straighten out the mess. Call him at (408)371-9720 for more information.

Galapagos Islands & Ecuador, with optional extension to Peru. June 7-18; extension through June 25. Join members of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, led by Peggy Stern, on the air-conditioned Santa Cruz. Trip includes a tax deductible donation to the aquarium. Call Bob Nansen, Betchart Expeditions, (408)245-9517, for more information.

## WESTERN REGIONAL REPORT

**WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE.** It's time again to make plans to attend the 1988 western regional conference scheduled for the Asilomar Conference grounds **March 26-29**. This year's theme is "Defining the Common Ground; an exploration of issues and solutions for the coming decade." As always the conference will feature a broad array of workshops designed to offer something for the entire Asilomar audience.

We will be having workshops and presentations on Audubon's high priority action campaigns including old growth, wetlands, acid rain, the Platte River, and Alaska. There will also be numerous focused conservation workshops like the status of the national wildlife refuge system, western loon population trends, hardwood forest management, raptor migration, environmental protection strategies, marine mammals, the endangered wildlife of Hawaii, environmental aspects of U.S. foreign policy, and Mono Lake. Chapter-based workshops will include fundraising, chapter effectiveness training, computer applications, and education. For the first time we will also have workshops on nature photography and bird identification.

Volunteers for the National Audubon Society Gift Shop at Asilomar are needed. Registration will be waived for assistance. Please call SCVAS for more information on this and also for registration information - (415)329-1811.



## BAY-DELTA LECTURE SERIES

The San Francisco Estuary Project, Save San Francisco Bay Assn. and California Water Policy Group are sponsoring a lecture series on Bay-Delta issues. The lectures will take place in the James Moore Theatre at the Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street on Tuesday evenings in March. Speakers will give in-depth information on decline of natural resources, freshwater diversion, pollutants, waterway modification, land use and an historical look at the region. Speakers will include: legislators, environmentalists, scientists, business leaders and historians. The series format will offer two speakers per lecture, a short slide presentation and question-and-answer period.

For final information on speakers and time, please call the San Francisco Estuary Project at (415)464-7990 or Marcia Brockbank, SFEP Public Outreach Coordinator (415)464-7904.

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Rosso Unlimited goes to Joshua Tree Nat'l Monument, Salton Sea and Anza Borego St. Park for the 1988 California Desert Trip. Lots of birds, sights and good times for eight days at a cost of \$250/person for food, transportation and reservations. Call Jim Rosso at (415)968-7176 for more information.

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Donna Zetterquist		408/429-9716		Cheeseman	Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741

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.

## JOIN A SAN FRANCISCO BAY SHOREBIRD CENSUS 16-17 April 1988

On the third weekend in April, Point Reyes Bird Observatory will hold its first census of shorebirds using the Bay's tidal flats. This census is designed for volunteer participation: they can use experienced observers to conduct counts of specific sites and novices who can assist the counters. The census is timed to coincide with the peak of shorebird spring migration and should be a spectacular event. Contact coordinators Dave Shuford or Lynne Stenzel for more information: PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, 94970; (415)868-1221.

## NEW COLORATION SEEN IN CEDAR WAXWINGS

Since 1969 Cedar Waxwings, both adults and juveniles, have appeared in several states with orange, rather than yellow, tail tips. The color of the tail tips on the most intensely colored birds is approximately burnt-orange. Various shades between this color and the normal yellow have been observed.

Researchers at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Natural History are planning an investigation of the nature of the pigment. If you see such a bird, let them know. Please send the information to: Kenneth C. Parkes or D. Scott Wood, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.  
- from Sequoia Needles

### HENRY COE STATE PARK DATA NEEDED

A distributional checklist of the birds for Henry Coe State Park is being prepared. Anyone with observational or other data, both old or new, about the birds of the Park can be of help. Information about both common and rare birds is needed. Please contact:

James Yurchenko  
4102 Sutherland Drive  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

### YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG FOR CAMP!

In fact, taking a week or two away from home, in a beautiful outdoors setting, may be the best part of your summer! Brochures are now available from the SCVAS office, (415) 329-1811, for National Audubon Society's 1988-89 season at Audubon Ecology Camps and Workshops. Choose from sessions featuring field ecology, ornithology, introductory field ecology for educators, nature photography, or a wilderness research backpack program at camps in Maine, Connecticut, or Wyoming. In 1989, you may want to study winter ecology in Yellowstone or journey to Africa.

**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.

#### CHECK CATEGORY

- Individual / \$30
- Family / \$38
- Senior Citizen / \$21
- Senior Citizen Family / \$23
- Student / \$18
- Avocet* only / \$6
- Introductory Membership / \$20

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