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September

## 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 Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330.

**Field Trip Coordinator for September: Paul L. Noble (415) 948-3876.**

- Sept. 10 **Pescadero Marsh and surrounding areas.** Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet in the parking lot on the W side of Hwy 1, between the bridge and Pescadero Rd. (overlooks creek mouth). Bring water, lunch opt., full tank of fuel. Bring scopes. Easy walking of about 1 mile. Highlights: Fall migration peaking; shorebirds. Leaders: Betty Wyatt (408) 255-6091 and Audrey Stoye (408) 249-2108.
- Sept. 11 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Palo Alto Baylands. Sunday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at the "Duck Pond" parking area. Lunch optional. Bring field guides and binoculars. Learning shorebird identification basics. Leader: Rod Norden (408) 354-1545.
- Sept. 13 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. (408) 867-4748. Topic: Summer Bird Experiences.
- Sept. 14 **South County Field Trip.** Wednesday, 9 am. Jetty Rd. and Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing. For returning Elegant Terns and migrating shorebirds. Take US Hwy 1 S from Santa Cruz 20 miles. Turn right onto Jetty Rd., just N of the bridge over Elkhorn South. Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330.
- Sept. 17 **Jay-Proof Bird Feeder Workshop.** Saturday, 11 am to noon. Peninsula Conservation Center. See article inside.
- Sept. 18 **Monterey Hot Spots.** Sunday, 9 am. Meet at the SW corner of the Safeway parking lot in Carmel. Take Hwy 1 S to Carmel and turn left at Rio Rd. Bring lunch and clothing for a variety of weather. Possible vagrant landbirds and rare shorebirds, plus a wide variety of the regular migrants. Full day of birding expected. Please be **prompt at meeting spot**. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: David Suddjian (408) 479-9603.
- Sept. 21 **General Meeting.** Wednesday, 7:30 pm refreshments, 8 pm program. This month's program features Ted Chandik, Santa Clara Valley Audubon member and Naturalist for the City of Palo Alto. Read more about the September program inside the *Avocet*.
- Sept. 24 **Birdwalk for Beginners.** Arastradero Preserve, Palo Alto. Saturday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet in the parking lot at the preserve. Take Arastradero Road right off of Page Mill Road, about 1/2 mile past I-280. Proceed 1/2 mile to parking area on right. Bring water. Lunch opt. Moderate walking of 2-3 miles. Early wintering arrivals plus the regular residents. Learning the basics of birding in woodland habitat. Leaders: Jim and Sue Liskovec (415) 969-5542.
- Sept. 25 **Mountain View Forebay and Charleston Slough.** Sunday, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at the E end of San Antonio Road. 1-2 miles easy walking. Highlights: Shorebirds and waterfowl. Leader: Dick Stovel (415) 856-6105.
- Sept. 28 **Field Trip North.** Charleston Slough. Wednesday, 8:30 am. Meet at E end of San Antonio Road off Hwy 101. Leader: Rose Linn (408) 736-8207.

**Field Trip Coordinator for October: Grant Hoyt (415) 969-7892**

- Oct. 1 **Coyote Hills Regional Park.** Saturday, 8 am. Half day. Meet at the park entrance. Take 84 towards Fremont, to Thornton Ave. Exit. Go N on Paseo Padre to Commerce Dr. Turn left into the park. Easy walking of 2-3 miles. Possible entrance fee. Highlights: Fall migrants. HEAVY rain cancels. Leader: Grant Hoyt (415) 969-7892.
- Oct. 2 **Point Reyes.** Sunday, 9 am. Full day. Meet at the Drakes Beach parking lot. From Hwy 1 take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. W 14 miles to Drakes Beach turnoff. Go left about a mile to parking area. Car consolidation at Drakes Beach. Bring plenty of lunch, water and fuel. Highlights: Vagrant warblers and migrant shorebirds. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Peter LaTourrette (415) 961-2741.
- Oct. 10 **Bird Seed Order Deadline,** Monday. See article inside for details.
- Oct. 11 **Bird Discussion Group.** Tuesday, 9:30 am, at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. (408) 967-4748. Topic: Yellow Rumped Warblers.
- Oct. 25 **Bird Seed Pickup.** YSI Tuesday. See article inside for details.
- Oct. 28-29 **Bird Seed Pickup.** Palo Alto. See article inside for details.

## REVIEW OF "THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK" REVIEW

By Bill Bousman

The long-awaited handbook by Paul Ehrlich, David Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye has finally arrived. It is subtitled "A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds" and that is basically what it is. It is not an identification aid, but once you know your bird or have a question that goes beyond identification this is your guide to finding the answer. The format of the guide places two species accounts on the left hand page and an essay on the right hand page. The species accounts start with a line of pictures or symbols that represent the basic biology of the species. These include things like nest location and structure, clutch size, incubation and fledgling periods, foods used, and foraging behaviors. Following these pictographs there is an abbreviated text that expands on some of the information that has been symbolically presented and adds information on displays, conservation-related topics, and references to where additional information can be found (including the essays). It is not clear to me that the pictorial methods used save a great deal of space, but their usefulness in quickly communicating information alone makes them worthwhile. The essays on the facing page are sometimes directly related to the species being covered and sometimes not. They cover a smorgasbord of topics from what is a Blue List to nest parasitism by swallows. I thought them well-written with the proper balance drawn between scientific description and the environmentalist view. If we fail in our efforts to preserve habitats worldwide this book will be a guide to history with nothing natural left. The essays never let us travel too many pages without that reminder.

There are some features of this guide that I found truly striking. One is the use of references following a species account or an essay. These references are our entry to the vast ornithological literature. Anyone who has tried to track down basic information knows how time consuming this can be. I don't think anyone familiar with a particular species or research area will be surprised by the references included, but for a new species or new question, this is clearly the place to start. Another thing I liked very much was the use of question marks to indicate when data are absent or inconclusive. There is a great deal of life history information on local species that simply has never been obtained. Skimming through the book I noticed that there are neither incubation nor fledgling periods known for Common Poorwill, White-throated Swift, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Canyon and Rock Wrens, Western Bluebird, Black-throated Grey Warbler, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. There are still fundamental things to be learned and amateurs can make significant contributions here.

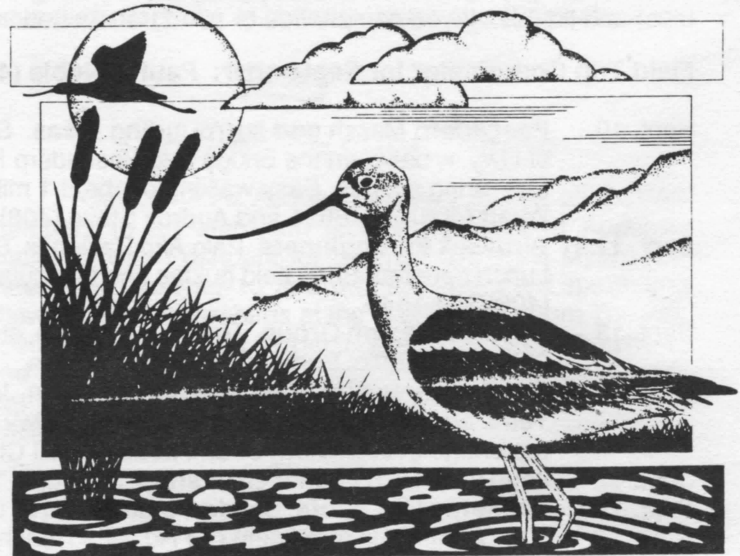
The book is a delight to pick up anywhere and start reading, but how good is it as a guide? I thought of five questions that had recently led me to look through my own rather incomplete library and I tried these questions on the new guide. The questions were: winter ranges of some of our summer resident species that are showing longterm population declines, information on the same decline that has occurred in the eastern United States, the building of dummy nests by wrens, the classification system for duckling size, and the duration of bill flanges on fledgling birds. For the last two problems I didn't have much luck with EDW (if I can call it that), nor did I get anywhere in my own library. I found useful information on the first three topics and I was especially interested in the eastern songbird decline, where I had yet to find anything in my own collection.

## ANNOUNCING SCVAS T-SHIRTS

Luis Tam has designed an elegant Avocet T-shirt for SCVAS. Also available on a sturdy canvas tote bag, and on notecards, they may be purchased from the office, or at general meetings. Shirts are sized small, medium, large and extra-large, and both shirts and tote bags cost \$10 including tax. If you would like one sent to you, please add \$1.25 postage, and send check to SCVAS office.

### AND OTHER SALES

Other new items for sale include The Birder's Handbook, by Ehrlich, Dobkin, Wheye, \$15 plus \$1.60 postage (see article), the Peterson Field Guide to Hawks, by Clark, Wheeler, \$13 plus \$.90 postage, and the new edition of Birds of Northern California - An Annotated Field List, by McCaskie, et al, \$6, plus \$.90 postage. We have lots of cassette tapes of Common Breeding Bird Songs of the SF Bay Area, Vol. 1, Sander, \$8 and of the beautiful Tracks in the Sky, Steinhart & Blake, \$32 inc. postage.



I have one major criticism of the guide and I am sure this will be repeated again and again by other reviewers. I want more information. I am happy (and admiring) that they have squeezed so much information into 785 pages. Now that they have done this I want more. There is clearly a thankless task with people around like me, but when they do put out a second edition, I would like it if they could use some representative linear measure such as wing chord, wing span, or cube root of weight and graphically show the range and the median for males and females separately. It would be a marvelous way of quickly seeing the size differences between sexes and to allow comparison between species. (Is the male Sharp-shinned Hawk smaller than a Northern Flicker? Are Lesser Yellowlegs smaller than dowitchers?)

Well, who is this book really for? If you regularly check museum collections for bird identification problems and are dissatisfied with Birding magazine's recent series on the Empidonax complex, then this book probably isn't for you. If you are one of those people who has an old Peterson guide that is way out of date, and still call House Finches, Linnets, but feed them just because you like them, then this book is definitely for you and is a better investment than the new National Geographic Society identification guide. If you have questions and are curious about birds then this is your book. The SCVAS Office has Handbooks for sale at \$15 inc. tax. (+ \$1.60 post.).

# ANNUAL FALL WILD BIRD SEED SALE WITH NEW PICKUP LOCATIONS

It's time for our fall bird seed sale. Once again, SCVAS is offering QUALITY SEED at a REASONABLE PRICE.

Due to the closure of the PCC, the **NEW PALO ALTO PICKUP LOCATION WILL BE IN THE UNDERGROUND GARAGE AT 379 LYTTON AVENUE AT THE CORNER OF LYTTON AND WAVERLEY. WE WILL AGAIN HAVE 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. Regretfully, we have had to pass along a small increase in the cost of 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 appeals to many species.

**STRIPED MEDIUM SUNFLOWER SEED**, a slightly less nutritive, but larger, seed. Also attracts many species, and is good for added variety.

**THISTLE SEED**, a small seed, rich in oil, that appeals to smaller birds.

**THIS IS A PRE-PAID SALE.** Your order, including a check payable to SCVAS, must be received by **MONDAY, OCTOBER 10**. All orders must be picked up from **EITHER the parking garage at 379 Lytton Avenue, on Friday, October 28** between 4 and 6 pm, or on **Saturday, October 29** between 11 am and 1 pm, **OR from Youth Science Institute, Vasona Park, Los Gatos, on Tuesday, October 25** between 4 and 6 pm.

**UNCLAIMED SEED MUST BE RESOLD SATURDAY AFTER 1 PM UNLESS ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN ADVANCE. BECAUSE THE PCC IS CLOSED, WE CAN NO LONGER HOLD SEED IF YOU FORGET TO PICK IT UP. NO EXCEPTIONS MADE!!!**

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, OCTOBER 10**. Please call the SCVAS Office at (415) 329-1811 if you have any questions.

## BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM Fall 1988

PLEASE CHOOSE AND MARK ONE LOCATION:

PICKUP LOCATIONS: \_\_\_ 379 LYTTON AVE., PALO ALTO, FRI. OCT 28 OR SAT. OCT. 29

OR \_\_\_ YSI, LOS GATOS, TUES. OCT. 25

		# Bags	Cost
Premium Seed	20 lb @ \$ 8/bag	_____	_____
Premium Seed	50 lb @ \$17/bag	_____	_____
Western Wild	20 lb @ \$ 7 /bag	_____	_____
Western Wild	50 lb @ \$15/bag	_____	_____
Black Oil Sun.	20 lb @ \$13/bag	_____	_____
Black Oil Sun.	50 lb @ \$30/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, OCT. 10  
SCVAS, 415 Cambridge, #21, Palo Alto, CA 94306

## VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED FOR BIRD SEED SALE

Volunteers are needed to help unload bird seed, and distribute it to buyers. **YOU MUST BE ABLE TO LIFT A 50-POUND BAG OF BIRD SEED.** All volunteers assisting for 2 hours will receive a 15% discount on seed ordered. Refreshments will be served, and it's a fun way to meet other members!

### Times needed:

- 1) 2 - 4 pm, Tuesday, October 25, YSI, Vasona Park, to unload delivered seed.
- 2) 4 - 6 pm, Tuesday, October 25, YSI, Vasona Park, to load seed into cars.
- 3) 11 am - 1 pm, Friday, October 28, Palo Alto, to unload delivered seed .
- 4) 4 - 6 pm, Friday, October 28, Palo Alto, to load seed into buyers' cars.
- 5) 11 am - 1 pm, Saturday, October 29, Palo Alto, to load seed into cars.

Please call Lynn at SCVAS office if you can assist, at (415) 329-1811.



## FIELD NOTES — Bill Bousman

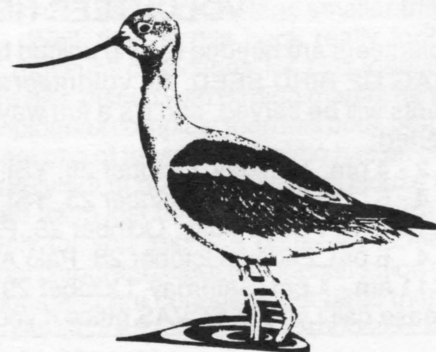
Probably the single, most important ornithological event of the year has been the start of the San Francisco Bay Project. With this project the Point Reyes Bird Observatory will try to determine the status of our shorebird populations within San Francisco Bay and along the coast. The first step was a census of these populations during the spring migration on April 16-18, 1988. During that weekend 183 observers censused the entire bay and estimated a total population of 838,000 shorebirds of 28 species. Seventy percent of these birds were south of the San Mateo Bridge while 27 percent were south of Dumbarton. These numbers represent a substantial proportion of the shorebirds that use Pacific Flyway and it is imperative that we quantify and monitor their use of our dwindling wetlands. A fall census will be held September 10 and 11. If you wish to help, contact PRBO.

Most unexpectedly, two **Horned Grebes** in alt. plumage were found on the Palo Alto Breeding Bird Count 4 Jun. One was on a salt pond at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge (Clark Blake - CB) and the second was at Charleston Slough (Grant & Karen Hoyt - G&KH, Ron Kistler). I have no previous records of this grebe overwintering. **Am. White Pelicans** were seen along the west side of the South Bay through late spring and early summer with flock sizes up to 75 birds (m. ob). The return of the winter flock was first noted on 16 Jul with the observation of 200-300 birds at the Mountain View Salt Pond No. 1 (Phyllis Bornwing - PMB). The first arrival of **Brown Pelicans** was of three at the Palo Alto FCB 3 Jul (PMB). This is the latest arrival date since 1982 and may be related to the extensive mortality reported from Monterey Bay last season (Amer. Birds 42:128). Five **Cattle Egrets** at the San Jose Airport 15 Jun (Clay Kempf - CKf *vide* David Suddjian - DLSu) represents one of our few recent records. **Green-backed Herons** have been found in slightly greater numbers this season with one at Searsville Lake 5 May (Hugh Possingham - HPo), three on Uvas Creek 12 May (DLSu), and one below Alum Rock Park 28 May (Alan Eisner - AME) being known or suspected breeders, while 1-3 birds seen along Adobe Creek and in the Mountain View Forebay 26 Jun - 19 Jul (PMB, Paul Noble - PLN) are typical post-breeding birds. Thirteen to fifteen **Wood Duck** along Uvas Creek 12 May including six young (DLSu) are typical for that location. An additional Wood Duck brood of five to seven young was seen along San Francisquito Creek 26 Jun (Betty Groce - BGr) which joins the dozen young noted earlier in the season

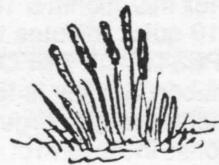


from this urban location. Sightings of **Blue-winged Teal** continued this spring and summer along Adobe Creek in the FCB with a pair noted through 2 Jul and an additional male in the FCB 2 Jul and a female at the Mountain View Forebay 10 Jul (all PMB). Phyllis Browning compared predator success in the Palo Alto FCB this summer. She noted two **Black-crowned Night Herons** taking six **Gadwall** ducklings in a half hour period with all attacks successful. Nearby, a **Western Gull** was unsuccessful in 17 attempts on another family of Gadwall ducklings. A pair of **Redhead** in Adobe Creek 12 Jun (PMB) were surprising as they had not been seen after mid-April in this actively birded area. **Lesser Scaup** were first recorded nesting in the outer Palo Alto FCB in 1981 and have returned there sporadically since then. Up

to seven birds have been seen this summer and on 3 Jul a female with a single duckling was observed (PMB). This is one of the few nest sites for this species west of the Sierra Nevada. Two **Surf Scoters** at Shoreline Lake 3 Jul (Mike Mammoser - MJM) were in an area where they have summered before. An adult **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was seen over upper Eastman Canyon in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains 25 Jun (DLSu). This may be our rarest breeding raptor in the local area. David Suddjian reports three pairs of nesting **Golden Eagles** from Santa Cruz County. Two pairs are on the border of Santa Clara County. Two adults with two imm. birds were seen at Loma Prieta 4 Jun and a pair with a begging imm. at Croy Ridge 25 Jun. During this same period we have records of an ad. at Russian Ridge OSP 12 May (CKf *vide* DLSu), an imm. at Monte Bello OSP 15 May (CKf, Bob Merrill - RMrr *vide* DLSu), an imm. over Stevens Creek CP 29 May (MJM) and an ad. at the Palo Alto FCB 30 May (PMB). This suggests that there are 1-2 more pairs north of his observations. An imm. **Peregrine Falcon** was well-seen near the Palo Alto dump 11 Jun (PMB, BGr). Summer records are very few for this species. A **Wild Turkey** was seen on Mines Rd. 10 May (WGB) where they are expected. A **Virginia Rail** at the Monte Bello OSP sag pond 4 Jun (CB, Jeanne & David Jones - J&DJ) was the only one reported this season. Single **Greater Yellowlegs** seen at Charleston Slough 4 Jun (G&KH) and the Palo Alto FCB 18 and 26 Jun (PMB) are of unclear status as the last of the spring merges with the first of the fall. Fourteen in the FCB 9 Jul (PMB) are clearly representative of the first strong fall movement. Two **Lesser Yellowlegs** in the Palo Alto FCB 17 Jul (PMB) were the first arrivals noted and had built to seven by 24 Jul (WGB). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was found along Uvas Creek near Hwy 152 21 Jul (DLSu). This is our third fall record and the earliest we have had. Just as with the record of one this spring, most of our sightings of this rare sandpiper are of birds along creeks. Two **Spotted Sandpipers** at Searsville Lake 5 May (HPo) and one at Stanford 4 Jun (BGr) must be spring migrants, but they have nested in Santa Cruz County. A second year **Thayer's Gull** along outer Charleston Slough 28 May (PMB) is most unusual. **Least Terns** arrived at Charleston Slough 16 Jul (PMB, AME) where they stage prior to moving south. On 24 Jul 5 ad. and 2 juv. were counted (WGB) which is disappointingly low. **Northern Pygmy-Owls** have been reported from three places this period: near Loma Prieta at 3000 feet 24 May (DLSu), at Henry Coe SP 29 May (Amy Lauterbach AL, James Yurchenco - JY) where there are few records, and Croy Ridge in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains 25 Jun (DLSu). **Burrowing Owls** have not done well in recent decades, so 23 reported from the San Jose Municipal Airport 15 Jun (DKf *vide* DLSu) is encouraging. What kind of pest control does the airport use for ground



squirrels? Their approach is critical for any population here. A **Lesser Nighthawk** over Summit Ridge on the Santa Clara - Santa Cruz county border 26 Apr (DLSu) is one of our few recent records. **Black Swifts** are a regular but rare migrant in the Santa Cruz Mountains in late May, so four over Loma Prieta 24 May (DLSu) are expected. The peak numbers of migrating **Vaux's Swifts** this spring was of 65+ over Vasona Res. May (DLSu). There are local nesters in the Los Gatos area and seen there regularly through the summer, but rarely reported. Two at the Paul Masson Winery 4 Jul (Peter LaTourrette) were at a typical location for this local population. A male **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen on 3 Jul in the e. San Jose Foothills (Marta Rauch, Mick Vargo). Most Rufous Hummingbirds migrate south in the Sierra Nevada and there are few summer records from the county. Visits to San Antonio Valley this spring and summer have reported 3 to 18 **Lewis' Woodpeckers** (Ron Thorn - RSTh, WGB). A juv. was observed 30 May (RSTh). The spring migration for empids was unusual in that observers found three species beyond the expected **Western Flycatcher**. Three **Willow Flycatchers** were found: an exceptionally early one at Stevens Creek CP 17 Apr (Jack Cole - JAC), another there on the typical date of 8 Jun (MJM), and another the same day at the Arastradero Preserve (GH). I mentioned Paul Noble's **Hammond's Flycatcher** in June's column, in addition David Suddjian found a **Gray Flycatcher** on the county line on Summit Ridge on 10 May. **Western Kingbird** is a rare migrant in the Santa Cruz Mountains so two records are of interest - one over Summit Ridge 26 Apr (DLSu) and a late migrant at the Duveneck Ranch 4 Jun (JAC). **Purple Martin** have been seen again this spring and summer in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains. On 10 May a pair was seen on Summit Ridge (DLSu) and then on 24 May two males and a female were seen in courtship flight near Loma Prieta (DLSu, Randy Morgan (RAM). A pair visited a nest hole on Croy Ridge on 25 Jun, but there was no other sign of breeding (DLSu). The **Red-breasted Nuthatch** has been considered a rare breeding species in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Atlas work has changed our perspective here. David Suddjian reports 16 new breeding sites of which seven are on the border or in Santa Clara County. Paul Noble has also heard one calling above Uvas Canyon. Breeding habitat for this montane nuthatch has been either in Douglas fir or knobcone pine. Interestingly, most were found in response to taped calls. Four **Hermit Thrush** were found in Mt. Madonna CP 2 Jun and were confirmed breeding (DLSu). This is the first confirmation of breeding of this species in the county in decades. A **Varied Thrush** found in Menlo Park 12 Jun held its left wing low as though injured (WGB). Although it was capable of flight it was probably overwintering because of injury. Male **Phainopepla** in San Antonio Valley 10 May and 30 Jun (WGB) are from an area where they are frequently found. Two pairs in Alum Rock Park 16 and 20 Jun (Dick Mewaldt - LMR) are suspected breeders and most unexpected - except that this species sporadically nests well outside of its historic range. Two male **Nashville Warblers** singing along Uvas Creek at Watsonville Rd. 12 May (DLSu) and another on Summit Rd. west of Uvas Canyon 14 May (PLN) round out a better than normal spring for this rare migrant. As in the case of the Red-breasted Nuthatch active birding in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains has increased our knowledge of breeding **Yellow-rumped Warblers** with nesting confirmed as far south as Croy Ridge at 1920 feet on 25 Jun (DLSu). A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** nest in Henry Coe SP 29 May (AL, JY) is from an area where we have



few records. Forty-three migrant **Townsend's Warblers** 10 May (DLSu) along Summit Ridge was a good concentration. Late migrants include a male south of Loma Prieta 24 May (DLSu), one at Stanford 26 May (HPo), and an exceptional three at Skylonda on 4 Jun (Gloria Heller - GH, Jennifer Green - JG). **Hermit Warblers** were recorded in migration from 3 to 24 May in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains (DLSu, JAC) including an exceptional 25 at the intersection of Summit and Croy Ridges on 3 May (DLSu). A single **MacGillivray's Warbler** was seen on Loma Prieta 21 May (JAC), two were on Jasper Ridge 1 Jun (HPo), and two were found along Langley Hill Rd. 4 Jun (MJM). Only the last are from a known breeding location. A male **Yellow-breasted Chat** (possibly two) was singing at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station 10-24 May and was captured and banded (Mike Rigney *vide* LRM). Two singing males were found along Uvas Creek 12 May (DLSu) near where they bred last season. A male in song flight along the Pajaro R. at Hwy 101 12 May (DLSu, Geri A. Brown - GAB) was in good breeding habitat. Two **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** along Old La Honda Rd. 4 Jun (MJM) were found in the same habitat as past years. Apparently 16 different **Black-chinned Sparrows** were found on the slopes of Loma Prieta from 21 May to 5 Jun (DLSu, Bruce LaBar, RAM, GAB, CKf, Brian Mori - BMMo, RMrr). A single bird was singing on Black Mountain 4 Jun (J&DJ). A singing **Sage Sparrow** on Loma Prieta 4 Jun (DLSu) was the only report from the Santa Cruz Mountains this season. **Grasshopper Sparrows** have been found from a new area along Mt. Madonna Rd. with 1-3 seen within the county border 2-24 Jun (DLSu, CKf, BMMo, RMrr) and more over the line in Santa Cruz County. Six were found on Russian Ridge OSP on 4 Jun (MJM) and three more were lower down near Coal Mine Ridge the same day (Allen Robinson). An adult **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was seen in Menlo Park 23 May - 8 Jun (BGr); again a wing injury appeared to be the reason for the unseasonal behavior. **Red Crossbills** have been confirmed nesting along the coast in Santa Cruz County. They are suspected of nesting in the mountains as well, but as yet there is no confirmation of breeding. This extraordinary and continuing incursion includes: 20 on Summit Ridge at Croy Ridge and 12 on Summit Ridge se. of Lands End 3 May (DLSu), 3 on Summit Ridge east of Lomita 10 May (DLSu), 8 over Los Altos 21 May (PLN), 2 at Skylonda 24 May (GH), and 10 there on 4 Jun (GH, JG). **Lawrence's Goldfinches** have been found in small numbers in the San Antonio Valley with a male there 10 May and two seen 26 May (WGB). If Red Crossbills are not enough for you, then our latest ever **Evening Grosbeak** seen 26-30 May in Los Gatos (Mike Feighner) will have to do.

Early arrivals: **Black-bellied Plover**, Charleston Slough 7 Jul (WGB); **Semipalmated Plover**, Palo Alto FCB 24 Jul (WGB); **Western Sandpiper**, Mountain View Forebay 9 Jul (PMB); **Least Sandpiper**, Charleston Slough 3 Jul (PMB); and **Short-billed Dowitcher**, Charleston Slough 9 Jul (PMB). Late departures: **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, Uvas Creek 12 May (DLSu).

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.

## 10 MINUTE ACTIVIST

The subject for this month's 10 minute Activist request (it'll only take 10 quick minutes to write a letter, and make an impact!) is PESTICIDE REFORM LEGISLATION.

National Audubon Society is focusing pressure on the House of Representatives, to urge better regulation of pesticides. Your response in the form of a letter will be helpful, and greatly appreciated. The following comes from Maureen Hinkle and Peter Weber of the NAS Washington DC Office:

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"Something needs to be done about the current state of federal pesticide regulation, and **Representative Kika de la Garza, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee**, is in a position to make that something happen. **A brief letter or phone call to his office today could mean that reforming pesticide legislation will be enacted this year.** For legislation to succeed, Chairman de la Garza must soon agree to support a core bill of reforms — and time is running out! Otherwise, we will have to wait for at least three years for Congress to take up this issue, delaying resolution of obvious problems until 1991.

### THE CORE PESTICIDE ISSUES

The current state of pesticide regulation is incredibly pathetic. In 1972, Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to test all of the pesticide active ingredients then on the market to ensure their safety. By 1978, however, EPA had fully tested only a few chemicals, and Congress dropped the original deadline rather than provide EPA with sufficient resources to speed up the testing.

Besides the 600 pesticide active ingredients which still today have not been fully tested for health and environmental hazards — yet are still on the market — the nation's pesticide law, the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), requires the taxpayer to pay the pesticide manufacturer if the pesticide is found to be dangerous to public health or the environment. If EPA determines that a pesticide currently on the market should be removed immediately, EPA must buy the company's remaining inventories and pay to store and dispose of it. These indemnity and storage and disposal costs totalled over \$400 million dollars for the three recently suspended pesticides 2,4,5-TP, EDB, and dinoseb. Not only is this an enormous cost to the taxpayer, but it has drained EPA's pesticide budget. Dangerous pesticides are left on the market because EPA cannot afford to pull them.

Although these are not the only problems with the regulation of pesticides today, these are the critical core issues which can be addressed this year. Other big issues, such as ground water contamination, are more controversial and have complicated the legislative process, making it easy for the pesticide companies to wield their power to stall and kill the FIFRA reauthorization process.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Chairman de la Garza is in a key position to break the ten year log jam by supporting a core bill and refusing any and all amendments. Write or call as soon as possible to ask him to support a core FIFRA bill which will:

1. Speed up the testing of the older pesticides to ensure their safety (called accelerated reregistration),
2. Provide EPA with sufficient funds to carry out accelerated reregistration,
3. Eliminate automatic buy-outs of suspended pesticides (called indemnities), and

## WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS 1988 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1988 Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists, publishers of WESTERN BIRDS, will be held on Thursday through Sunday, October 6-9, 1988 in Monterey. A BREEDING BIRD WORKSHOP will be held on Friday, October 7 and a PAPERS SESSION will be held on Saturday, October 8. Field trips will include Elkhorn Slough, Moon Glow Dairy and Salinas sewer ponds for shorebirds; Carmel River for vagrants; and several pelagic trips during the peak of the seabird migration! For information and registration forms, please write DEBRA LOVE SHEARWATER, P.O. BOX 1445, SOQUEL, CA, 95073. Telephone: (48) 688-1990.



### SEPTEMBER MEETING PROGRAM

Ted Chandik will highlight our September meeting with a marvelous program on the Natural History and Bird Life of Costa Rica. Ted, a Santa Clara Valley Audubon member and Naturalist for the City of Palo Alto, has led a number of trips to Costa Rica as well as to other areas of Central and South America. He is an accomplished naturalist, teacher and birder.

Meetings begin at 7:30 pm when refreshments are served; the program starts at 8 pm. Meetings are held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell Road at Embarcadero.



### CREATE YOUR OWN JAY-PROOF BIRD FEEDER

By popular demand, Betty Hone has agreed to repeat her jay-proof bird feeder workshop. On Saturday, September 17, from 11 am to noon, Betty will show you step-by-step how to make a jay-proof bird feeder, and you will go home with your own. This event will be held at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 2248 Watson Court, Palo Alto (behind Scott's Restaurant, near corner of Embarcadero and Frontage Roads). All members, of all ages, are welcome to attend. A 50 cent donation for supplies will be gratefully accepted, but is not required. All materials will be provided, on a first-come, first-serve basis, or you may bring your own: 3 lb. coffee can AND 2 PLASTIC LIDS, and pliers with curved tips. Electric can openers are also welcome! Please RSVP to the office if you know in advance that you will attend, otherwise, drop-ins are welcome. Call (415) 329-1811 for more info.

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#### 4. Transfer the storage and disposal responsibilities from EPA to the pesticide manufacturers.

Such a core bill will make significant improvements in current law and will position us to better focus on other pesticide problems, such as ground water contamination and food safety, in the near future.

Address: The Honorable Kika de la Garza  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-2531

For more information, please contact the SCVAS office at (415) 329-1811.



## SCVAS FIELD TRIP REPORT: YUBA PASS/SIERRA VALLEY JUNE 18-19, 1988

Birding in the Sierra Nevada in mid-June provides some of us 'flatland' birders an excellent opportunity to observe many of the montane avian species in full breeding plumage, song, and nesting activity. Nineteen SCVAS members took advantage of this two-day outing to enjoy the diverse habitat and challenging birding offered in the Yuba Pass region, located about 30 miles northwest of Lake Tahoe, and the adjacent Sierra Valley. We managed to identify 88 species, including many that occur here in the Bay Area as migrants or accidentals only, and several participants garnered more than a few 'lifers' for their lists.

The group spent the first day at the Yuba Pass summit (elev. 6701 ft.) and various spots down to 4200 ft. on the western slope. Several species familiar to Santa Clara Valley birders, such as Black-headed Grosbeak, Warbling and Solitary Vireos, Western Tanager, House Wren and Western Wood Pewee were quite conspicuous, vocally and visually. The handsome Cassin's Finch was thoroughly studied and compared to the more familiar Purple and House Finches, neither of which were present. Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, and the elusive Black-backed Woodpecker were all observed at nest holes; unfortunately, both Pileated Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker, known to breed in the region, escaped detection. Paul Noble's keen ears picked up the thin, hard-to-locate songs of the Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglet and Hermit Warbler as they flitted invisibly in the piney treetops. For those brave or crazy enough to want to study Empidonax flycatchers, Paul pointed out the subtle differences in plumage, song and behavior between Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers, while others practiced sorting out the multitude of mellifluous but confusing 'Robin-like' songs. After spending a good portion of the day straining and craning to identify some of the aforementioned species and other ephemeral songsters like McGillivray's and Nashville warblers, the group was treated to spectacular looks at the diminutive Calliope Hummingbird. Two separate American Dipper nests were located and studied at length: one under a bridge and the other behind a small waterfall.



Day Two was spent on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, and brought the expected specialties plus some surprises. The drier habitat, with its thinning pine woods and broad fields of sage, supports a whole different range of bird species, and we were able to start the day with Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Brewer's, Fox, Vesper, Lark, Chipping and Savannah Sparrows, Horned Lark, Gray Flycatcher, Sage Thrasher and Common Nighthawk. As we began to bake in the mid-morning heat, the open sage country suddenly gave way to green, grassy wetlands, and marsh-loving species were everywhere: strikingly handsome, ludicrous-sounding Yellow-headed Blackbirds, graceful Black Terns, Common Snipe performing their odd, high-flying winnowing displays, American Bittern skulking through the grass, Virginia Rail boldly defending its territory against a throng of 50 birders and one small cassette recorder, Marsh Wrens, Wilson's Phalarope and myriads of Cliff and Barn Swallows. Telescope views of nearby fields revealed 2 pair of Sandhill Cranes, recently confirmed as a breeder in the Sierra Valley, and the familiar Willet was seen in plumage and habitat unfamiliar to most of us. Scanning the surrounding grasslands we noticed some strange-looking heads barely

## NON-AUDUBON CLASSES AND EVENTS

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

LOTS of classes to choose from this fall.

- Maryann Danielson, through Sequoia Adult School, will be teaching "Following the Birds Through the Seasons" and "Bird Basics". There will be evening lectures and field trips. For more information, call (415) 369-6809.

- Palo Alto Adult Education sponsors Jim Rosso's classes in Beginning and Intermediate Birdwatching. Teaching through evening classes and field trips, Jim can be reached at (415) 968-7176.

- Alice Hoch teaches birding through Fremont Adult School. Here classes meet in the field on six Tuesday mornings. Get more information at (415) 791-5841.

- San Francisco Community College District will offer three courses in avian biology, identification of water and land birds. Call (415) 776-8247 for more information.

- DeAnza College offers "The Natural History of California Native Plants" during the Fall quarter. A Docent Training Class is offered which prepares participants to lead tours at the DeAnza Environmental Study area. SCVAS's Doug Cheeseman is the instructor and you can reach him at (408) 996-4657 or 4525 to learn more.

- Environmental Volunteers bring natural science education to elementary school children in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. You can become on through classes being held in Los Altos. For more information or to register for training, call (415) 424-8035.

- Shearwater Journeys offers pelagic natural history trips along the California coast. Many, many trips are scheduled during September and October out of Monterey Bay. Call Debra Shearwater at (408) 688-1990 to find out about the regular schedule and special events.

- Gail and Doug Cheeseman (Cheeseman's Eco Safaris) are sponsoring Australian Wildlife Tours in 1989, to be led by area naturalists. First dates are Oct. 15 - Nov. 5. The Cheesemans donate proceeds from their trips to SCVAS. Call them for more information at (408) 741-5330 or 867-1371.



## LIBRARY DONATIONS RECEIVED

Mark Hopkins, a past SCVAS Board Member and past President, has generously donated a broad collection of bird books to the SCVAS Library. The SCVAS Library is located in the new Peninsula Conservation Center, 2248 Watson Court, Palo Alto (behind Scott's Restaurant, near Frontage Road and Embarcadero). The library is maintained as a service to members - you are invited to stop by and use the wonderful assortment of field guides, site guides and informational texts! Open 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.



discernible through the shimmering heat waves; they turned out to be a small flock of the seldom-seen White-faced Ibis. Leaving the marshy part of the valley, we toured the eastern perimeter and found Swainson's Hawk and Black-billed Magpie. By 2 pm most of us were on the road back to the Bay Area after a most rewarding weekend of birding and sightseeing.

- Grant Hoyt

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			Cheeseman			

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

## THANKS TO SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

SCVAS' activities didn't stop over the summer, thanks to the assistance of many members. Special thanks go to: Tibby Simon and Rosa Stone for assisting in the office; Neal Margolis for help with tasks done on the computer; Elaine Piini-Wells and Nick Yatsko for their work representing SCVAS and organizing SAVE BOTH (Save Burrowing Owls and Their Habitat); Rose Green, Nick Yatsko, Gail Cheeseman, Janis Taylor, and Juliette Bryson for attending the SCVAS booths at De Anza Days Fair and the Shoreline Park Celebration; and to Betty Hone and Kay McCann for making order out of several hundred slides - a tremendous effort!!



## HR 4272, COMPLETE THE REFUGE LEGISLATION

Congressman Don Edwards has introduced legislation authorizing inclusion of more than 20,000 acres in the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Many more acres of wetlands could potentially be added to the Refuge, including seasonal wetlands that are currently seriously threatened by development. YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY NOW TO SUPPORT SUCH LEGISLATION. The bill would only allow purchase from willing sellers, and is supported by environmental groups around the Bay. If you agree that threatened seasonal wetlands need protection, please let Congressman Edwards know:

The Honorable Don Edwards  
House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515

**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 or subscribe to the *Audubon Activist*, 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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## SCVAS WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR!

Debby Johnston has agreed to join the SCVAS Board of Directors, filling a one year vacancy. Director of the Environmental Education Center of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Debby is in charge of environmental education programs at both the Alviso and Fremont sites.



## LECTURE ON SHOREBIRDS

Golden Gate Audubon Society invites all SCVAS members to an afternoon lecture by National Audubon Society's Vice-President for Science, Dr. Pete Myers. On Saturday, October 15 at 2 pm, Dr. Myers will speak and show slides on shorebirds at the Oakland Museum Theater, 1000 Oak St., Oakland, in a lecture entitled "Great Exertions and Immense Gluttony: Shorebirds Across the Americas". DON'T MISS THIS LECTURE; DR. MYERS IS A FASCINATING AND EXPERT LECTURER!!!



The Field Notes column provides the most recent information on the birds of Santa Clara County. If you find this interesting but would like to have access to more detailed information on local birds then you should be reading the *Riparian News*, which is the newsletter of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS), and the *Santa Clara County Breeding Bird Atlas Newsletter*. Both newsletters come out four times a year and may be obtained by joining either CCRS or the atlas. In addition to supporting the research programs of both organizations you will be tying into the most recent investigations into the status of our migrating and breeding bird populations. Membership in both organizations can be obtained by sending \$15 to Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

## CHECK CATEGORY

- Individual / \$30
- Family / \$38
- Senior Citizen / \$21
- Senior Citizen Family / \$23
- Student / \$18
- Avocet* only / \$6
- Audubon Activist* / \$9
- Introductory Membership / \$20