



The Avocet

March 1989

Volume 36, Number 3

SCVAS WETLANDS DEFENSE FUND NEEDS YOU! SUPPORT THE 1989 BIRDATHON.

Planning is progressing for the April 1989 SCVAS Birdathon. Ten teams of birders have already pledged their participation in support of this major chapter fundraiser - but we want you to join in too! In a birdathon, counters (birders) recruit sponsors who agree to pledge a specific amount for each bird species the counter identifies in a 24 hour period - this year, over the weekend of April 29-30. Funds will go towards the **National Audubon Society Mono Lake Legal Fund**, ongoing SCVAS educational projects, and to a very special new **SCVAS Wetlands Defense Fund**.

Why a Wetlands Defense Fund?

We expect our environment to be protected to the fullest extent of the law. But when the welfare of valuable wild places is compromised or neglected, the environmental community must work within the legal system, to close the gap between neglect and environmental protection.

To span this chasm to effective legal action, SCVAS's board of directors is proposing creation of a legal defense fund. Through this fund, we will finally be able to confront, head-on, the kind of critical legal cases that previously were lost for lack of knowledge or capability. When needed, money from the fund will be used to retain experts; be they biologists, hydrologists, geologists, economists, or lawyers, their knowledge and credibility become our bridge to the successful conclusion of legal actions we face. The legal defense fund will help us chart a course of environmental protection into the future.

This effort only begins with the board of directors—its successful conclusion lies with you, the members of SCVAS. Remember that through your voice the needs of the environment are heard, that through your actions and donations, its needs are realized. To this goal of environmental action, the board of directors has proposed to dedicate a significant portion of the 1989 Birdathon pledges to be the financial foundation of the new legal defense fund. You can participate in this

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important effort as a donor and/or as a birder. Money is the foundation of any legal fund. Without adequate capital, expert witnesses and lawyers cannot be retained—and we return to our original problem that we, as grassroots activists and citizens, cannot adequately shoulder this responsibility. So, your donations to a Birdathon team are enthusiastically welcomed. And secondly, join us on the weekend of April 29 and 30, not only to count species, but to look at your favorite wild places and imagine their many possible futures—protected, a habitat for the many species you know and cherish, or ignored, a site for progress poorly planned.

For more information on how you can create your own birdathon team, or join an already existing team, please call the SCVAS office at (415) 329-1811. A pledge form for donors will appear in the April Avocet.

Dedicated volunteers who can help ensure the establishment, growth and effective use of the fund are needed. If volunteerism and its rewards are for you, join in our effort to make the Legal Defense Fund a success and environmental protection in the future a possibility. For more information on the SCVAS Environmental Action Committee, call Kevin and Barbara Monahan at (408) 425-7841.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION NOTES

•The Oceanic Society sponsors a **State of the Bay Conference, "A Vision for the Future"**, on Saturday, April 29, 9 am- 5 pm, at the Holiday Inn Hotel, San Francisco. SCVAS is a co-sponsor. Call (415) 441-5970 for registration information.

• A Public Input Meeting will be held on interim and long term land uses for proposed **Guadalupe Gardens** (under approach for San Jose Airport), Mon., March 6 at 5:30 pm, 333 W. Santa Clara St., San Jose. SCVAS and SAVE BOTH hope to include habitat for Burrowing Owls within the site- please call SCVAS if you would like to get involved! (415) 329-1811.

HELP THEM SURVIVE, USE LINE 45 AT TAX TIME!

FIELD NOTES by BILL BOUSMAN

LOONS TO DUCKS

Our unusual loon winter has continued with sightings in numerous locations in late Dec. and early Jan. Single **Red-throated Loons** were found 29 Dec (DLSu) at the pond at the Santa Clara Valley Water District, on the east pond of the Los Alamitos Groundwater Recharge Facility North, and Guadalupe Reservoir. Birds at Shoreline Lake declined from five on 6 Jan to two on 11 Jan to one on 14 Jan (all MRO). None were noted after that date (MRO, PLN). A single **Pacific Loon** was found at Shoreline on 6 Jan (MRO) and 14 Jan (AME), but not after. Finally, **Common Loons** have been found at Calero Res. with three 7 Jan (AME) and a single on 12 Jan (DLSu), but none at Shoreline Lake. I don't know what caused so many loons to come to the lakes and ponds on the west side of the valley this winter, but the extensive observations at Shoreline Lake this winter do give us some insight on why we rarely see loons after late December locally. The large concentration at Shoreline, as many as 19 birds of three species in late December, was matched by large numbers of **Double-crested Cormorants** as well; 106 on 17 Dec. But their numbers rapidly declined in early January and by 15 Jan only two were seen on the lake (PLN). It seems clear that these fish-eating birds, both the loons and the cormorants were responding to an abundant food resource at Shoreline in December, but by mid-January had fished the place out of prey species of an appropriate size. Those diving ducks that feed on mollusks and crustaceans did not show the same response; numbers of scaup and scoters have grown throughout January (523 Greater Scaup and 137 Surf Scoters on 31 Jan - PLN), although the **Common Goldeneye** has declined. **American Bittern** have remained scarce in the local area with single birds in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 28 Dec (G&KHt) and 14 Jan (MRO, AME). An adult **Ross' Goose** at Calero Res. 12 Jan

(DLSu) is only our second county record. **Eurasian Wigeon** have been found away from the heavily-birded bayside with a male at Almaden Lake 29 Dec, two males at Lexington Res. 6 Jan, and a single at Guadalupe Res. 12 Jan (all DLSu). A single bird was found at a more typical spot - the Mtn. View Forebay 6 Jan (MRO). A male **Redhead** at Shoreline Lake 6 Jan (MRO) was the only report for the month. A male and female **Barrow's Goldeneye** continue to be found irregularly at Shoreline Lake with the former found 6 and 11 Jan (MRO) and the female on 15 Jan (PLN).

MERGANSERS TO FALCONS

Good coverage of the Groundwater Recharge Facilities (GRFs) has found unusual numbers of **Hooded Merganser** this winter. A male was at the Los Alamitos GRF South 2 Dec (Marion Farber) and again on 29 Dec (DLSu). A pair were at the Los Capitancillos GRF East the same day, four were found on the GRF at Budd Road and San Tomas 4 Jan and a female was at the Page GRF 9 Jan (all GRF). There are numerous winters with no Hooded Mergansers recorded in the county. **Common Mergansers** have been found in typical numbers from many of the south county reservoirs this month with birds seen on Calero, Lexington, Guadalupe, Almaden, and Uvas reservoirs from 2 to 22 Jan (DLSu, AME). An **Osprey** at the Metcalf Rd. fish ponds 29 Jan (FOS) is undoubtedly taking advantage of the fish that are stocked there. **Rough-legged Hawks** have been found in the county with an adult near Coyote Creek Park 2 Jan (DLSu), an imm. near Calero Res. 12 Jan (DLSu), and a bird at Montebello OSP 22 Jan (PLN). The total of five birds this winter is the highest since I have kept the county records. **Merlin** have also been widespread with reports of a female *suckleyi* (the dark race) pursuing a **White-throated Swift** at Almaden Expressway and Winfield on 29 Dec (DLSu), a male at Ranch Lake County Park 2 Jan (MJM), a female at Coyote Res. the

same day (DLSu, GAB), and another bird at Lexington Res. 6 Jan (DLSu). **Peregrine Falcon** have been found at I-280 and Alpine Rd, 14 Jan (PLT) and Moffett Field 18 Jan working over **Tricolored Blackbirds** (MRO).

SHOREBIRDS TO GROSBEAK

Lesser Yellowlegs are a rare wintering bird in the south bay - reports of two birds at the Sunnysvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) 16 Jan (PJM), one in Alviso the same day (DS, PW), and one below the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) on 28 Jan (GHt) are all of interest. The first **Glaucous Gull** of the season was at the North Pond of the Palo Alto FCB 22 Dec (MRO). A first winter bird was found at the Sunnysvale WPCP 16 Jan (PJM), and additional bird was found there 19 Jan (MJM). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** near the bridge at Anderson Dam 30 Dec (EC) is from an area of few reports. Our Breeding Bird Atlas, however, is starting to show that they are a very widespread owl despite their rarity. The only **Short-eared Owl** report since the Christmas counts is of a single bird at the Palo Alto FCB 28 Dec (G&KHt). The first **Allen's Hummingbird** noted locally was a male in Atherton 17 Jan (PJM), a San Mateo arrival record by two days. Six **Violet-green Swallows** over Lexington Res. 6 Jan are our only winter record this year. a male **Phainopepla** at the Arastradero Preserve 7 Jan (G&KHt) is one of our few Santa Cruz Mountain records. This species, however, can be nomadic at times. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was found at the Palo Alto sewage facility 11 Dec and 16 Jan (PJM). A male **Black-headed Grosbeak** at a feeder in Atherton 27 Dec (PJM) is a rare find.

Contributors: Geri Brown, Emelie Curtis, Al Eisner, Marion Farber, Grant & Karen Hoyt, Peter LaTourrette, Mike Mammoser, Peter Metropoulos, Paul Noble, Frank O'Sullivan, Mike Rogers, Don Starks, David Suddjian, Peg Woodin.

•Bill Bousman (415) 322-5282.

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.

MARCH

Mar 1 Bay Area Bird Photographers, WEDNESDAY, 7:30 pm. at the Baylands Nature Center. Dick Kuenne, who traveled solo to Kenya to photograph wildlife, will show his work.

Mar 4 Princeton/Half Moon Bay. SATURDAY, 9 am. Meet at Harbormaster's office near boat launch in Princeton. Take Hwy 92 W. to coast. N to Princeton. Full Day. Bring lunch and drinks. Major storm cancels—call leader 7-7:30 am. on trip date to confirm if in doubt. Highlights: Possible Rock sandpiper, other wintering waterbirds. Leader: Rod Norden (408) 255-3033.

Mar 5 Calero County Pk. SUNDAY, 9 am. Half day. Meet at the parking area 1/2 mile S. of Bailey Rd. on McKean Rd.. Take Hwy 101 S. from San Jose to Bernal Rd. exit. Get on Monterey Rd. S. to Bailey. W. on Bailey 2 miles to McKean. Moderate hiking for 5 miles. Rain cancels. Leader: Paul L. Noble (415) 948-3876.

Mar 8 South County Field Trip, Sanborn Park. WEDNESDAY, 9 am. Half day. From Saratoga go W on Big Basin Way to Saratoga Springs; left on Sanborn Rd one mile, right into parking lot. Leaders: Harriet Gerson (408) 252-6244, Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330.

Mar 11 Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough. SATURDAY, 8 am. Full Day: Meet at Jetty Rd. just off Hwy 1 in Moss Landing. Bring lunch. Waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors. Heavy

rain cancels. Leader: Bruce LaBar (408) 476-7583.

Mar 12 Golden Gate Park. SUNDAY, 8:30 am. Half day. Meet at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park. Bring lunch. Trip will explore Chain of Lakes in Golden Gate Park, Cliff House and Lake Merced. Rain cancels. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0483.

Mar 12 Birdwalk for Beginners at Charleston Slough. SUNDAY, 9 am. Half day. Meet at end of San Antonio Rd. in Mountain View, east off Hwy 101. Trip stresses basics of birding: what field guide is best, binocular use, field techniques for birding. Easy walking for 2 miles. Leader: Lynn Tennefoss (415) 329-1811.

Mar 14 Bird Discussion Group. TUESDAY, 9:30 am. at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga (408) 867-4748. Topic: Blue Heron.

Mar 15 General Meeting WEDNESDAY, 7:30 pm refreshments, 7:45 bird id workshop on Ring-billed and Mew Gulls by Don Starks, 8 pm program. Palo Alto Cultural Center, corner Embarcadero and Newell Rds. Paul Matzner, curator of the California Library of Natural Sounds presents "Techniques of Nature Sound Recording - Its Pleasures and Advantages for Birders".

Mar 18 Hayward/San Leandro Regional Shoreline. SATURDAY, 8:30 am. Half to full day. Meet at Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center (4901 Breakwater Ave.) Take Hwy 92 E over San Mateo Br, exit at Clawiter Rd. - Eden Landing Rd. exit. Go left over freeway. Follow jog, another left, to Breakwater Ave. Continue W to Center. Bring lunch. Scopes helpful. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Elsie Richey (415) 357-2477.

Mar 19 Panoche Valley. SUNDAY, 8 am. Full day. Meet at Paicines General Store. Take Hwy 101 S to Hwy 25 in Gilroy. E on 25 thru Hollister to Paicines, about 20 miles. Carpooling probable from here as little turnoff space on trip. Limited services past Paicines. Bring lunch, full tank of gas. Highlights: raptors, roadrunner, vesper sparrows, early spring migrants, lush verdant hills. Leader: Clay Kempf (408) 462-6534.

Mar 22 Birdwalk for Beginners, Charleston Slough and Shoreline Lake. WEDNESDAY, 9 am. Half day. Meet at end of San Antonio Rd in Mtn. View. Leader: Bill Kirsher (415) 854-3936.

Mar 25 Almaden Quicksilver County Park. SATURDAY, 8 am. Half day. Meet at Park 'n Ride lot at Almaden Exp. and Camden Ave. Hiking of 3-4 miles expected. TRIP LIMITED TO 25 PARTICIPANTS BY RESERVATIONS. Highlights: poss. wild turkey, spring migrants, early returning residents. Leader and reservations: Tom Roach (408) 268-6100.

APRIL

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

Apr 1 Coal Mine Ridge. SATURDAY, 8 am. Half day. Take I-280 to Alpine Rd., 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. Leader: Phil Hand (415) 851-2623.

Apr 9 Coyote Lake Co. Park. SUNDAY, 8:30 am. Half to full day. Take Hwy 101 S from San Jose to Gilroy. Exit E on Leavesley Rd. Go over freeway then left into Denny's. Go to back of building. Bring lunch. Poss. entrance fee. Highlights: Rufous-crowned sparrow, warblers, turkey. Leader: Jean-Marie Spoelman (415) 797-0265.

Staff	Lynn Tennefoss	415/329-1811	DIRECTORS (1987-90)		Programs	Doug & Gail	
President	Dave Johnston	408/867-7278	Grant Hoyt	415/969-7892	Cheeseman		408/867-1371
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Nick Yatsko		408/865-4831					

General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call office for times directions. Avocet deadline is first Monday of month. Send contributions to Jim Schwertman, 1168 Willow Glen Way, San Jose, CA, 95125.

ANNUAL SPRING WILD BIRD SEED SALE

You may still order bird seed in our Spring Bird Seed Sale. **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, 2448 Watson Ct. Palo Alto on Tues, April 4** between 4 - 6 pm, **OR from Youth Science Institute, Vasona Park, Los Gatos, on Wednesday, April 5** between 4 - 6 pm, **OR from REI, Cupertino, on Tues, April 11** between 5 - 7 pm.

Unclaimed seed **MUST** be resold at the close of each sale unless alternate arrangements have been made in advance.

Bird Seed Sale Order Form - Spring 1989

PLEASE CHOOSE AND MARK ONE PICKUP LOCATION :

OR PCC, PALO ALTO, TUES, APRIL 4
OR YSI, LOS GATOS, WED, APRIL 5
OR REI, CUPERTINO, TUES, APRIL 11

	# bags	Cost
Premium Seed	20 lb @ \$ 8/bag	_____
	50 lb @ \$17/bag	_____
Western Wild	20 lb @ \$ 7/bag	_____
	50 lb @ \$15/bag	_____
Black Oil Sun.	20 lb @ \$13/bag	_____
	50 lb @ \$30/bag	_____
Striped Sunfl.	20 lb @ \$15/bag	_____
	50 lb @ \$34/bag	_____
Thistle	5 lb @ \$10/bag	_____
	20 lb @ \$35/bag	_____
	Subtotal	_____
	+ 7%Tax	_____
	Total	_____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ZIP _____
PHONE (____) _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS ORDER WITH A CHECK TO SCVAS,
415 Cambridge Ave, #21, Palo Alto, CA, 94306 BY MON., MAR. 14

FIELD TRIPS Cont.

Apr 9 Introductory Bird-walk for Beginners. SUN-DAY, 9 am. Half day. Same details as March 12. Leader: Rod Norden (408) 255-3033.

Apr 19 General Meeting

Frank Alameda will speak on Rain Forest Diversity.

NON-AUDUBON EVENTS

- See tropical rain forests on Cheesemans' Ecuador, June 11-20, & Indonesia trips, July 28-Aug 24. Ngorongoro Crater, June 19-23 added to Kenyo Safari, June 24-July 10, for info call (408) 741-5330.
- Look Tours offer Backroads of Scotland, inc. Orkney Islands, June 12-29, call (415) 948-6790.
- SFBBO tours: Arizona/West Texas, April 22-May 7; Michigan in June. Call (408) 946-6548.
- SFBBO owl id and natural history class, by Paul L. Noble. Wed's, Mar. 29-Apr. 12, 7:30pm, SFBBO, \$30. Call Paul (415) 948-3876.
- Grey Whale tour, Bodega Bay, Mar. 11, 9 am & 1pm, \$25; Monterey Pelagic Seabird Trip, May 13, \$35; call Roger Marlowe (707) 829-0705.
- PRBO Spring Shorebird censuses, April 22-23, (415) 868-1221.
- Audubon Canyon Ranch opens to public March 18 - July 16. 10 am-4 pm, (415) 868-9244 for info.

SCVAS GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 31,
call office for details

DONATIONS - Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general, or gifts in honor or memory of relatives and friends.
MEMBERSHIP - To join the Audubon Society or subscribe to Audubon Activist (\$9), send checks, payable to NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, to SCVAS office, 415 Cambridge Ave., Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Dues are :\$20 Intro.Membership; \$30 Individual; \$38 Family, includes AUDUBON magazine, the national publication, and The Avocet. Avocet subscriptions alone are \$6/year; mSFSfake checks payable to SCVAS. AVOCET published monthly except July and August. **SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO OFFICE.**