

# The Avocet

May 1989

Volume 36, Number 35

## Bird Seed Sale a Big Success

The Spring 1989 Bird Seed sale was another big success, raising over \$1700 for SCVAS. Thanks to all volunteers who helped it run smoothly: Nick Yatsko, Jerry Waldorf, Tibby Simon, Kathy Parker, Dave Johnston, Rose Green, Susan Dieterich, and Yana Arnold, and to all members who supported SCVAS by purchasing seed! We still have some seed left for sale if you need more.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A GOOD SOUTH COUNTY LOCATION FOR A NEW PICKUP SPOT - IF YOU KNOW OF A CENTRALLY LOCATED SITE THAT WE COULD USE FOR 1 DAY (eg. a school, store, home) PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT (415) 329-1811.

## SCVAS Supports New Bottle Bill

State Senator Gary Hart (D-Santa Barbara) has introduced SB 1221, a proposal to raise the redemption value to five cents for containers that fail to achieve 65% recycling by the end of 1989. As stated in an L.A. Times editorial March 20, 1989, "California's bottle law is not working.... In states where a nickel refund is the

*Continued on Page 4*

### Wed, May 17, 7:30 PM General Membership Meeting

Palo Alto Cultural Center, Embarcadero at Newell  
Refreshments at 7:30; bird ID workshop at 7:45; program with Terry Gosliner at 8.

The Bird Identification Workshop will feature terns. Greg Myers will show slides of four species.

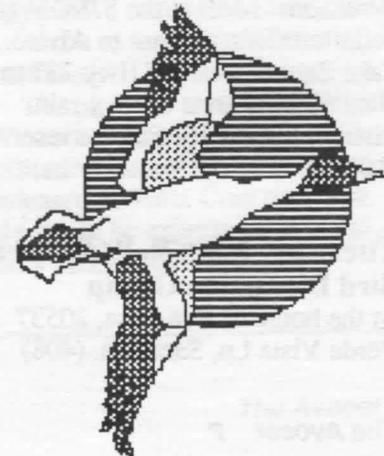
Surely you have marveled at the diversity of life and wondered about their origins and evolutions. Terry Gosliner, the nudibranch man from Cal Academy of Sciences, will talk about his many years of research and show spectacular slides of nudibranchs of great beauty and some of not so great beauty. But beyond identifying these exciting invertebrate animals he will explain some of the ecological roles that each species plays within a locality. Mr. Gosliner has studied nudibranchs around the world. You will really enjoy nudibranchs. They rival birds in the field of flamboyant body ornamentation.

## Palo Alto Breeding Bird Count

The Palo Alto Breeding Bird Count will be held on Saturday, June 3rd this year. The same count circle (divided into eight regions) is used as on the Christmas Bird Count, but there are no fees as the results are not published in American Birds.

If you wish to participate in a particular region, contact the Region Leader directly. Otherwise, contact Clark Blake or Bill Bousman.

Region Leaders are: One - Mike Mammoser 408-248-2288; Two - Bill Bousman 415-322-5282; Three - Clark Blake 415-747-0601; Four - Phyllis Browning 415-494-6360; Five - Clark Blake 415-747-0601; Six - Ruth Troetschler 415-948-4142; Seven - Gloria Heller 415-851-2356; Eight - Clark Blake 415-747-0601.



# 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.

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

**Wed, May 3, 7:30 PM**  
**Bay Area Bird Photographers**  
Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center  
Bill Ferguson will present a program featuring the Natural History of the Falkland Islands.

**Saturday, May 6, 8 AM**  
**Mines Road/Del Puerto Cyn.**  
Leader: Art Edwards: (415) 447-3720

*Directions:* Meet at the Nob Hill Shopping Center in Livermore. Take N. Livermore exit off I-580. Go past "flagpole". Now on S. Livermore 7 blocks to Center on left. Carpooling from here. Highlights: Lewis' Woodpecker, Phainopepla, G. Eagle, Lawrence's Goldfinch, poss. Lesser Nighthawk at dusk. Bring full tank of fuel, water and food. Full day

**Sunday, May 7, 8 AM**  
**CCRS Banding Demo**  
Leader: Allen Royer (408) 288-7768

*Directions:* Meet at the SJSC Water pollution Control Plant in Alviso. Take Zanker west off Hwy 237 to plant parking area. Heavy rain cancels. Ltd. to 10. Call for reserv. Half day

**Tuesday, May 9, 9:30 AM**  
**Bird Discussion Group**  
At the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Ln, Saratoga. (408)

867-4748. Topics: Ratites. All members are invited to attend these monthly discussions about different species. Call for details and directions.

**Wed, May 10, 9 AM**  
**Elkhorn Slough**  
Leader: Gail Cheeseman (408) 741-5330

*Directions:* Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1, N of Moss Landing. Terns, loons and other species in breeding plumage.

**Sat., May 13, 7:30 AM**  
**Durham Ferry/Caswell S.P.**  
Leaders: Betty Wyatt (408) 255-6091 & Audrey Stoye (408) 249-2108

*Directions:* Meet at McDonald's, northernmost Mission exit and I-680 in Fremont. Carpooling from here. Bring lunch, liquids, etc. Park fee \$3. Swainson's Hawk, Blue Grosbeak. Full day

**Sunday, May 14, 9 AM**  
**Charleston Slough**  
Birdwalk for beginners. Basics of birding with emphasis on shorebirds and waterfowl. Half day

**Sat., May 20, 8:30 AM**  
**Alum Rock Park**  
Leader: Dave Johnston (408) 867-7278

*Directions:* Meet at Youth Science Institute next to main parking area. Beginners welcome. Park fee \$3. Half day

**Sat., May 27, 6:30 AM**  
**Black Mountain**  
Leader: Paul Noble (415) 949-1743  
*Directions:* Meet at small pulloff on Page Mill Rd. 1/4 mi. before main parking area for Monte Bello OSP. Strenuous 3-4 mi. hike. Bring water and breakfast. Hvy wet fog may alter plans. Woodland and grassland species.

**Memorial Day Weekend**  
**May 27-29**  
Desert Bird Blitz  
Leader: Rod Norden (408) 255-3033 & Marc Fenner (415) 329-1811

Dawn to dusk birding and non-stop driving to visit Death Valley and other desert "hot" spots for some of the finest rarities in the state. BYO transportation, lodging, food, etc.

**Wed, June 21**  
**SCVAS Annual Potluck**  
See June *Avocet* for details.

**June Field Trip Coordinator:**  
**Ron Norden: (408) 255-3033**

## **Environmental Campaign** **ATTN SYNTEX EMPLOYEES**

If you work at Syntex, I need to talk to you. The Environmental Federation of California is the "United Way" for environmental organizations supporting 20 conservation groups including the Audubon Society. EFC wants to participate in Syntex's payroll deduction campaign. We need employee support. Please call Wick Kenney at 415-771-0400.

# Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

## Marsh birds

*American Bittern* were seen again at the Palo Alto Baylands 12 Mar (TAC) and the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin the same day (LT et al.). An earlier sighting at the Environmental Education Center in Alviso 8 Feb (LL) raises the

number of locally wintering birds to three. Seven *Cattle Egret* t the San Jose sewage plant on Zanker Road 17 Mar (WGB) were near the Alviso heronry where they have nested in the past. We have no notice-

able spring movement of *Lesser Yellowlegs* through the south bay so a single bird at the mouth of Coyote Creek 18 Mar and three there 2 Apr are of interest (GH). Approximately 50 male *Tricolored Blackbirds* were noted displaying at Grant Lake 19 Mar (MJM). This is the only regular colony in the county that I am aware of although they nest sporadically in other freshwater marshes. This species is undergoing a decline in California for unknown reasons.

## Waterfowl

Three *Blue-winged Teal* have been in Charleston Slough 15 Mar-3 Apr (WGB); they've been unusually scarce this winter. An apparent first-winter male *Barrow's Goldeneye* was at the Palo Alto Baylands 12 and 13 Mar (TAC, WGB). The timing and development of the first-winter male's facial pattern tends to be erratic; this bird had only a very

thin white patch behind the bill. Reports of *Hooded Mergansers* have continued with seven seen at Stevens Creek Res. 5 Mar (NY, KCY). A *Glaucous Gull* at the Alviso Marina 4 Mar was a second-winter bird which is less expected (H&SR).

## Hawks

An *Osprey* over Smith Creek 19 Mar (GH, KH, MJM) was a typical migrant. An adult *Northern Goshawk* southeast of Mt. Bielawski on the county border 21 Feb (DLS) is one of our few county

## Rare Laysan Albatross lands in Santa Clara backyard.

records (as well as the central coast). An imm. male and female *Golden Eagle* were over Almaden Quicksilver Park 25 Mar (MF et al.) for our only west side report this month. A *Peregrine Falcon* was in the lower portion of Coyote Creek on 12 Mar (GH).

## Roadrunners et. al.

A *Greater Roadrunner* off Hwy 101 near the Aromas Road 22 Mar (SM) is at the very edge of its range. Another in Henry Coe SP 29 Mar (CB) is in a more typical location for this locally rare cuckoo. A *Pileated Woodpecker* on Table Mountain near the intersection of Hwys 9 and 35 is only the third record from Santa Clara County (PC). All of our observations have been in March, but the previous records were in the Diablo Range away from any known population while this one was at the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains not too far from the Santa Cruz and

San Mateo breeding populations. Four to six *Phainopepla* above Smith Creek 19 Mar (GH, KH, MJM) is an unusual concentration.

## Warblers and Sparrows

A female *Black-and-White Warbler* in Mountain View 26 Mar (DLS) probably wintered locally. Misoriented spring birds of this eastern species do not normally show up until May or June. Most of our county records are of fall birds. A *Wilson's Warbler* near the mouth of Coyote Creek on 12 Mar (GH) was not singing and was probably one of the two birds banded there this winter. Migrants normally show up in the first two weeks in April. Wintering *White-throated Sparrows* are still coming to feeders in Los Altos (GH, KH), Palo Alto (SG), and Menlo Park (WGB). A non-feeder bird was seen at Smith Creek 19 Mar (GH, KH, MJM).

Continued on Page 4

## Laysan Albatross

Top honors for the most unbelievable bird of the year has apparently been claimed early with the capture of a *Laysan Albatross* in a Santa Clara backyard 29 Mar (fide NY).

The Laysan Albatross, rarely seen by humans, spends its life at sea with the exception of its short mating season on the Hawaiian islands. It is believed that all of the albatrosses found in the Bay Area are birds that have come here following ships. As the ships approach a harbor the birds attempt to return to sea, but are often confused.

The bird was treated by the Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Santa Clara and released at Santa Cruz on 1 Apr. As might be expected this is the only county record.

Staff	Lynn Tennefoss	415/329-1811	DIRECTORS (1987-90)		Education Programs	Judy McEuen	408/251-3086
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			Editor Jim Schwertman	408/298-4333	Grants	Donna Zetterquist	408/429-9716
					Photo Clb	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 directions. *The Avocet* deadline is the first Monday of each month. Send contributions to the editor, Jim Schwertman, 1168 Willow Glen Way, San Jose, CA 95125.

## Field Notes

Continued from page 3

### Early arrivals

Caspian Tern, Santa Clara, 21 Mar (EF vide DLS); *Western Flycatcher*, Coyote Creek, 12 Mar (GH); *Western Kingbird*, Henry Coe SP, 29 Mar (CB); *lue-gray Gnatcatcher*, Arastradero Preserve, 15 Mar (GH); *Warbling Vireo*, Saratoga Creek, 24 Mar (MJM); *Black-headed Grosbeak*, Los Gatos, 25 Mar (MF); *Hooded Oriole*, Los Altos, 10 Mar (PLN); and *Northern Oriole*, Los Gatos, 16 Mar (MF).

### Contributors:

Clark Blake, William G. Bousman, Ted A. Chandik, Patrick Congdon, Mike Feighner, Eric Feuss, Shirley Gehman, Grant Hoyt, Karen Hoyt, Michael J. Mammoser, Scott Mitchell, Paul L. Noble, Lee Lovelady, Harold & Sherrie Reeve, David J. Suddjian, Lynn Tennefoss, Nick Yatsko, K.C. Yatsko.

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

## Bottle Bill

Continued from page 1

standard and empties can be returned to most stores, nearly 90% of beer and soda containers are returned." At the April Board Meeting, the SCVAS Board voted to support SB 1221, and re-emphasized the chapter's commitment to saving energy, reducing litter and lessening the amount of trash headed for landfills by recycling.

## Chapter Elections

SCVAS members present at the May 17 General Meeting will vote on the following nominated officers and directors for 1989-90:

President - Dave Johnston  
 1st Vice-President - Grant Hoyt  
 2nd Vice-President - Trish Mulvey  
 Treasurer - Don Price  
 Recording Secty -Theresa Spinler  
 Directors for three years (1989-92)  
 Rob Colwell  
 Nick Yatsko  
 Kim Dreyfus

Any member present at the meeting may place names in nomination providing the written consent of the candidate has been obtained.

## Non-Audubon Trips and Events

- Nature Sound Society Fifth Annual Sound Recording Workshop, June 9-11, Yuba Pass Field Station, for info call (415) 273-3884. Oakland Museum Natural Sciences Guild sponsors: Illustrating Nature Workshops, May 6 (birds/mammals) and May 13 (plants), \$20 ea, call (415) 284-4181; Learn Birding by Sound Workshop, May 20-21, \$25, call (415) 284-4181.

- California Creeks Conference, Sat. May 6, 9 am-4:30 pm, Krutch Theatre, Clark Kerr Campus, UC Berkeley; field trips Sun, May 7. For info, call SCVAS, 415-329-1811.

- YSI 7th Annual Wildflower Show and Open House, Sun., May 7, Noon-4:30 pm. YSI, Vasona Discovery Center, Vasona County Park, Los Gatos. Free. For info, call (408) 356-4945.

## SCVAS is Looking for Bookkeeping Help

SCVAS is looking for an experienced volunteer who can help us review our records, and set up a new bookkeeping system in the office. Please call Lynn at (415) 329-1811 if you can help.

**DONATIONS** - Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general, or gifts in honor or memory of relatives and friends. Donations will be used as specified, or, if unspecified, will be used to support environmental education and conservation projects. All gifts and donations are tax deductible.

**MEMBERSHIP** - To join the Audubon Society or subscribe to the Audubon Activist, send checks, payable to NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, to SCVAS office, 415 Cambridge Ave., Suite 21, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Membership includes AUDUBON magazine, the national publication, and *The Avocet*. Subscriptions to the *The Avocet* alone are \$6/year. Make checks payable to SCVAS. *The Avocet* is published monthly except July and August. **SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE OFFICE PROMPTLY.**