



# The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

February 1992

## Our Homes or Theirs?

### The California Gnatcatcher Struggles to Survive

California Gnatcatchers and their habitat of choice — coastal sage scrub — may not seem to be headline material. First there's the gnatcatcher — an unassuming, small, black and grey songbird. Contrary to its name, gnatcatchers don't even include gnats on their list of favorite fare, preferring aphids, beetles, and other small insects. Then there's the habitat — waist high, non-descript brush often mistaken for dead weeds. Nevertheless, the California Gnatcatcher and its coastal sage scrub home have been making headlines of Southern California's newspapers on an almost daily basis since last December.

It all started when Manomet Bird Observatory Senior Biologist Jonathan Atwood showed in his Ph.D. dissertation that the California Gnatcatcher, whose distribution is limited to a stretch of coastal sage scrub extending from Los Angeles to

just below the Mexican border, is a separate and distinct species from the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher of North America's desert regions. In the course of his studies, Atwood realized that the California Gnatcatcher in southern California had declined to about 2000 pairs.

The decline in the numbers of California Gnatcatchers is the result of destruction of its habitat- the dead-looking, seemingly expendable coastal sage scrub — the stuff that developments are made of. But, just as a drop of stagnant — looking pond water yields a plethora of life when scrutinized under a microscope, so too does coastal sage offer a pleasant mosaic of subtle colors, fragrant scents, and a myriad of natural sounds when one gets past its scrubby facade. Each spring, coastal sage scrub blossoms with buckwheat, white and black sage, lemonade

berry, yucca, yerba santa, prickly pears, and a host of delicate annual flowers. This diverse plant community provides a home for a variety of birds and mammals besides the California Gnatcatcher including the Coastal Cactus Wren, the San Diego Horned Lizard, the Orange-throated Whiptail, and the Los Angeles Pocket Mouse. All told, around 40 species of plants and animals call coastal sage scrub home.

Unfortunately, there are less than 75 square miles of *unfragmented* coastal sage scrub left on Earth — ecologists estimate that this vegetation type's historic distribution in the United States has been reduced by more than 90%. Like the Northwest's old growth forests, the California Gnatcatcher serves as an indicator species for a habitat type that occurs no-

*(continued on page 5)*

## First Annual Audubon Education Day

SCVAS's Education Committee is pleased to sponsor the 1st Annual Audubon Education Day at McClellan Ranch Park on Saturday, February 29th from 10:00-2:00 PM. The theme of the day is Native Wildlife Habitats, chosen to coincide with our interest in preservation of native flora and fauna and their habitats. All Kindergarten through 6th grade students, their families and teachers are invited to participate.

A Native Wildlife Poster Contest open to all Kindergarten through 6th grade students is explained on page 6. Students are allowed to choose from a number of top-

ics. The posters are due Friday, February 14 and can be brought to a number of locations. Prizes will be awarded for each grade level at the Education Day.

Scheduled Audubon Education Day activities include:

Birding at McClellan Park	10:15 AM
Brine Shrimp Lab	10:30 AM
Project Wild Games	11:30 AM
Brine Shrimp Lab	12:30 PM
Project Wild Games	1:30 PM

On-going Education Day activities will include: A Scavenger Hunt, nature walks, Burrowing Owl presentation, showings of National Audubon Society

videos, microscope stations, wetlands activities, slide shows including "The Birds Around Us" and much more.

Every attendee will receive participation awards. Special participation packets and door prizes are available for teachers. Refreshments will be provided.

You'll need to park at the Monta Vista High School on McClellan Road and take the free shuttle bus over to McClellan Ranch Park. Shuttle service runs from 9:30 to 2:30 PM. Please call SCVAS for Audubon Education Day flyer at (408) 252-3747.

# Chapter News

## New from the SCVAS Nature Store

We are rapidly increasing the number of birding book titles in stock. Some new arrivals include: *Audubon Handbook of Western Birds* \$14.95, *Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds* \$24.95, *Stoke's Bird Behavior*, volumes I-III \$10.95 each, *Birds of Costa Rica* \$35.00, *Birds of Yosemite and the Eastern Slope* \$14.95, *Familiar Birds of the Northwest* \$8.95, *Guide to Western Birdfeeding* \$7.95, *List of North American Birds* \$12.95, *Peterson Field Guide to Mexican Birds* \$15.95, *Seabirds* \$24.95, *Shorebirds* \$24.95, *South Bay Trails* \$13.95 and *Waterbirds of California* \$10.95. Give us a call about other titles at (408) 252-3747.

## SCVAS Sweatshirts Have Arrived!!

Edward Rooks, SCVAS member and wildlife artist, designed an American Avocet in flight for this sweatshirt. The three-color Avocet design is on a gray sweatshirt. Order yours now for all those cold weather birding trips you have planned this winter. Available now at the SCVAS Nature Store or at any General Meeting for \$27 in S,M,L and XL sizes.

## Christmas Bird Count 1991 Results

With temperatures milder than last year, 113 counters took to the field on Sunday, December 15 to participate in the annual San Jose Christmas Bird Count sponsored by SCVAS. All counters expressed opinions that overall bird numbers were down from last year, particularly insectivores. Reasons for this decline were many but mostly revolved around the drought and last years freeze.

Highlights include a first ever for the Count. A White/Black-backed Wagtail found in the Alviso section. This Siberian lost soul has been seen most recently on last years Moss Landing Count. Other 'candy' birds included a Ross' Goose in

## Newsletter Editor Wanted

Would you like to be the editor of the *Avocet*? This is a volunteer job and requires about 10-15 hours a month to complete. Needed is someone who can edit and produce a newsletter, preferably on a Macintosh using PageMaker. Some training is available. Please contact the SCVAS if you are interested at (408) 252-3747.

## Thank you to SCVAS members

■ Thank you to Gail Golden for donating the standing brochure rack.

■ Thank you to some special December volunteers: Alberta Anaclerio, Reid Freeman, Harriet Gerson, Helen Heck, John McLemore, Don Price, Joyce Todd. And a special thanks to Bill Bousman and Paul Noble for coordinating the Palo Alto and San Jose Christmas Bird Counts.

## Volunteers Needed

■ A volunteer(s) is needed to create a display booth on "Birds of the Forest".

■ Volunteers are needed to help out with the Bird Seed Sale beginning in mid- February.

■ A volunteer is needed to help staff an Arbor Day booth at Villa Montalvo on March 7, 10 AM - 4 PM.

Evergreen, a Palm Warbler in Alviso, a Mountain Bluebird in Calaveras and a Northern Rough-wing Swallow in Alviso. A total of 86,961 individuals were seen representing 162 species - a good number for this Count.

I would like to thank all my section leaders who really made this count possible: Jean Dubois, David Suddjian, Mike Feighner, Dave Johnston, Rich Healy, Alan Thomas, Grant Hoyt, Anne Wilson, Jim & Sue Liskovec. Also much thanks to Cecily Harris who handled all the pre-count drudgery. Thanks to everyone for a great count!

— Paul Noble, CBC Compiler

## SCVAS OFFICERS

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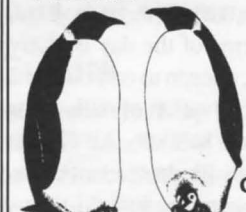
General meetings are open to the public. Board of Directors meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

*The Avocet* is published monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, 22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send contributions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

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**Wildlife Gifts...**



**A Whale of a Choice.**

**Whales & Tales**  
Wildlife Store and Gallery

800-422-8253 415-326-1130  
429 University Palo Alto

# February 1992 Calendar

*On all field trips carpool and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids. Field Trip Coordinator for February is Edward Rooks (408) 867-4748*

## **\*\*Denotes Field Trip**

**HD = Half Day FD = Full Day**

### **\*\*Saturday, Feb. 1, 9:00 AM. HD.**

Princeton Harbor. Leader: Dan Keller (415)365-2032. Directions: Meet at West Point and Stanford Ave.'s in Princeton, approx. 4 mi. N. of HalfMoon Bay on Hwy.-1. Highlights: Oldsquaw, Harlequin Duck, Rock Sandpiper, wintering sparrows.

### **Wednesday, Feb. 5, 7:30-9:30 PM**

**Bay Area Bird Photographers Meeting.** Mark Rauzen will be showing his slides of the Peruvian Amazon. He just returned from a very successful trip and has some pictures of some terrific birds. All meetings take place at Palo Alto's Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Road.

### **\*\*Saturday, Feb. 8, 9:00 AM. HD.**

**Palo Alto Duck Pond and vicinity—gull identification trip.** Leader: Bill Bousman (415) 322-5282. Directions: Take Embarcadero Rd. E. of Hwy 101, follow signs to duck pond. "Gull-ible" participants are invited to study challenging plumages of wintering gull populations with knowledgeable, patient leader.

### **\*\*Sunday, Feb. 9, 8:00 AM. HD.**

**Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499. Directions: Meet in parking area on Terminal Way at E. end of San Antonio Rd. Take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio exit in Mountain View. Highlights: Ducks, shorebirds, waterfowl.

### **Tuesday, Feb. 11, 9:30 AM**

**Eve Case Bird Discussion Group** at the home of Edward & Janice Rooks, 20537 Verde Vista, Saratoga. (408) 867-4748. Topic: Tropicbirds.

### **\*\*Wednesday, Feb. 12, 9:00 AM**

**Alviso Environmental Center.** Leader: Lee Lovclady (408) 723-4864. Walk with this Wildlife Refuge's volunteer naturalist on the trails along the sloughs. Directions: From Hwy 237 in Mnt. View, turn left on Taylor St. Turn right on Grand Blvd. Head straight to Ed. Ctr.

### **Wednesday, Feb. 15, 7:30 PM**

**February General Meeting.** Topic: Bob Nansen, Field Coordinator for Betchart Expeditions will give a short educational talk about Belize's terrestrial and marine conservation programs. (See box for more details.)

### **\*\*Sunday, Feb. 16, 8:00 AM. HD.**

**Coyote Hills Regional Park.** Leader: Phil Hand (415)851-2623. Directions: Take Hwy. 84 to Newark, exit N. on Thornton, which becomes Paseo Padre. Turn left at Patterson Ranch/Commerce Rd. (approx. 1 mi.) into Park, meet at parking lot at entrance. Possible day use fee. Highlights: Migrant shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors. Lunch optional.

### **\*\*Saturday-Sunday, Feb. 22-23, two days.**

**Morro Bay/Central Coast weekend.** Leader: Jim Royer. Meet on Sat. 9:00 AM at Cerro Alto campground on Hwy. 41 approx. 6 mi. W. of Atascadero/Hwy. 101. We'll study Pygmy Owls at this spot until 10:00, then drive to Morro Rock for Peregrine Falcon and waterbirds; later we'll visit Morro Bay and Montana de Oro State Parks for a variety of wintering species including possible rarities (Arctic Loon, Oldsquaw and Eastern Phoebe have been around this winter). On Sunday we'll either drive to Carrizo Plain for Sandhill Cranes, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Mountain Bluebird, Sage Sparrow and other specialties, or bird the Santa Maria River vicinity for more coastal species. To reserve space call Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499.

### **\*\*Sunday, Feb. 23, HD.**

**Coyote Creek Riparian Station.** Leader: Mike Rigney (408)262-9204 weekdays. Bird-banding demonstration and bird walk. Highlights: wintering shorebirds and waterfowl; close-up, in-the-hand study of wintering passerines. Limited participation; call leader for reservations and directions.

### **\*\*Wednesday, Feb. 26, 9:00 AM.**

**N. County Field Trip to Foster City** Leader: Rose Green (415)493-8378. Directions: Take Hwy. 101 north to Hillsdale Blvd and head east. Follow Hillsdale about 1 mile to Shell Blvd. Turn right and park on right at the Community Center. Highlights: Wintering Ducks and shorebirds. Rain cancels. Very little walking.

### **Thursday, Feb. 27, 7:45 PM.**

**Special February General South County Meeting** at the Saratoga Community Library (at the southwest corner of Fruitvale and Saratoga Avenues). This special presentation features three guest speakers presenting slides and information about the Burrowing Owl. The first speaker, David DeSante of the Institute of Bird Populations, coordinated the Burrowing Owl Census for 1991. He will provide us with some of his preliminary conclusions from year one of the census. The second speaker, Dr. Lynne Trulio of San Jose State University is project coordinator for the Burrowing Owl Alliance. She will explain how habitat can be acquired, how burrows have been created and how they will be maintained for the future. The final speaker, Janis Taylor Buchanan, a graduate student at SJSU will speak about the impact of weed abatement on Burrowing Owls in the Bay Area. Come join us for an information-packed program about the Burrowing Owl!

### **\*\*Saturday, Feb. 29, 8:00 AM. HD.**

**Hayward Regional Shoreline and vicinity.** Half day plus optional afternoon rarities chase. Leader: Bob Richmond (537-7408). Directions: From Hwy. 92(San Mateo Bridge) take Eden landing/Clawiter Rd. exit N. then immediately turn left (W.) on Breakwater Ave. parallel to bridge. Follow Breakwater to Hayward Interpretive Center meeting place. Highlights: ducks, waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors; possible Peregrine Falcon and Eurasian Wigeon. After lunch leader will try for overwintering Sage Thrasher and Red Knots at different Hayward R.S. site for those interested.

### **\*\*Sunday, March 1, 7:00 PM.**

**Alum Rock Park owling trip.** Leader: Dave Johnston(408)356-4945 weekdays. Meet at Youth Sciences Institute parking area in Alum Rock Park. From Hwy. 101 or 680 in San Jose take Alum Rock Ave. E. to park. Call leader for reservations; limit of 16 participants.

### **\*\*Sunday, March 8, 9:00 AM. HD.**

**Beginners Trip to Charleston Slough.**

## **February General Meeting Wednesday, February 15, 1992 7:30 pm.**

### **Topic: Conservation Programs in Belize**

Bob Nansen, Field Coordinator for Betchart Expeditions will give a short educational talk about Belize's terrestrial and marine conservation programs. His slides will take you to reserves on the reef, a private nature reserve and a national park. He will also explain how you can become involved in this country's Programme for Belize. Luis Tam, a naturalist and tour leader for Cheeseman's Ecological Safaris, will present a unique multi-image slide program on the National Parks of East and Central Africa and Northern India. Using beautiful images from these two fascinating countries, he will compare and contrast the wildlife, park management and conservation efforts presently adapted for the survival of these diminishing areas. Meeting will be held at Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd. (at Embarcadero Rd.) in Palo Alto and is co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Open Spaces and Sciences Division.

# Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

The three Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) that are held in the County supply us with a great deal of information on early winter bird populations in the area. As of this writing I do not have all of the information from these counts so my summary will be sketchy. The San Jose and Palo Alto CBCs were held back to back on 15 and 16 Dec and the Mt. Hamilton CBC took place on 19 Dec.

## Loons through Ducks

Two **Pacific Loons** were found on Shoreline Lake 12 Dec and remained at least through 26 Dec (DCu, m.ob.). These are the first we have had in two winters. A **Common Loon** was also on Shoreline Lake on 16 Dec for the Palo Alto CBC (MMR, JCo). A second bird was found for the CBC on Redwood Creek (JAC, CW). An imm. **Tundra Swan** visited the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds briefly about 19 Dec (JCh). Just as brief was a **Snow Goose** species at the Mountain View Forebay on 28 Dec (MS). This has been a **Ross' Goose** winter locally. The first reports were of two birds grazing at Mission College 28 Nov (JT). An imm. was then found at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) ponds on 10 Dec and has remained at least through 29 Dec (MiF, m.ob.). This bird associates with a flock of domestic geese that have been present at these ponds for many years. The Ross', as with many geese, is social on its wintering grounds and often chooses strange friends. (By the way, a Ross', released as a rehab bird, has been at Vasona Res. off and on since the spring of 1990.). Another bird has been at Lake Cunningham and seen on the 15 Dec (RH, DJ) and 30 Dec (MJM). I have only three records of this species prior to this winter!

Wintering **Wood Ducks** continue to be found along Los Gatos Creek with two at the Oka Ponds 6 Dec (MJM) and three on the Los Gatos Creek ponds 13 Dec (MiF). A male **Blue-winged Teal** was in the Palo Alto estuary 1 Dec (JCo). Three blue-winged teal were found on Calabazas Creek on the San Jose CBC (GvdE *et al.*).

and two the next day at the Palo Alto Baylands (MMR, JCo). Apparently four different **Eurasian Wigeon** have been seen this month. A male on Charleston Slough has been seen regularly from 23 Nov-27 Dec (AL, JY, m.ob.). This male has also been seen in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 16 Dec (MMR, JCo), but a second male has been there as well 16-24 Dec (MMR, JCo, MJM) and this wigeon quartet is rounded off by a male in the Los Capitancillos perc ponds 14-22 Dec (AV).

**Redhead** numbers have continued to build at the Palo Alto FCB with 16 there

## ***A White/Black-backed Wagtail on sludge ponds was the rare bird of this season (or any other).***

16 Dec (MMR, JCo) and approximately 45 on 22-27 Dec (MJM, JAC). Five were also in Salt Pond A1 in Mountain View 16 Dec (MMR, JCo). **Barrow's Goldeneyes** have been found this winter in unprecedented numbers. Birds continued to be seen on Shoreline Lake [last month's column was garbled: a male was seen 11 Nov (RSch) and 17 Nov (AME)]. A pair was there 23 Nov (AL, JY) and by 16 Dec four were present (MMR, JCo). Up to three males and four females have been seen from 16-27 Dec (MJM, AV) although never at one time. Less expected were two males and two females on an Alviso salt pond during the San Jose CBC 15 Dec (CC, DL). We are finding **Hooded Mergansers** again locally this winter. Two females were on Windy Hill OSP 1 Dec (AL, JY). On 6 Dec eight birds were seen on the Oka ponds (MJM). Three were on Felt Lake 16 Dec (AME *et al.*) and one on Shoreline Lake the same day (MMR, JCo) probably remained through 27 Dec (MJM).

## Raptors

Despite the low water in Calaveras Res. and ad. and an imm. **Bald Eagle** were found there on the San Jose CBC (MiF, KP *et al.*); KS, AV, *et al.*). A single ad. was on Isabel Res. (CB, GHt). Adult **Ferruginous Hawks** were found at the San Jose Airport 15 Dec (MM, SM, *et al.*), the Isabel Valley on 19 Dec (CB, GHt), and San Antonio Valley the same day (WGB, JAC). These are all locations where we expect to find this buteo wintering. Less expected was a **Rough-legged Hawk** east of Calaveras Res. 15 Dec (MD, J-MS). **Merlins** have been well reported this winter as we have come to expect. Five were found on the Palo Alto CBC and only two of these were near the bay. Two more were found in San Antonio Valley 19 Dec on the Mt. Hamilton CBC (WGB, JAC). Christmas Bird Counts give us an interesting perspective into how many **Peregrine Falcons** are using the South Bay. Two were found 15 Dec on the San Jose CBC, one on Calaveras Res. (KP, MiF *et al.*) and another in Alviso (SF *et al.*). On the next day 4-5 were found on the Palo Alto CBC: two on Ravenswood Point (GHt, EG), another south of Ravenswood Point (KL), one on San Francisquito Creek (PMB, SG), and a pair off of Palo Alto FCB (MMR, JCo); all were adults. There may be some duplication in these sightings - this is difficult to disprove with such a wide ranging bird. However, our coverage of their habitat on these CBCs is not that good and I believe that six birds represents a minimum local wintering population. A **Prairie Falcon** on Stevens Creek below Hwy 101 16 Dec (ADeM) is rare away from the Diablo Range. Five birds reported on the San Jose CBC 15 Dec (*fide* PLN) and five more in the Isabel Valley 19 Dec (CB, GHt) are high numbers even for the Diablo Range.

## Rails through Gulls

One to two **Black Rails** were found at the Palo Alto Baylands 20-21 Dec on the high tide (MMR, MJM, AV). The CBCs are frequently our best chance to estimate **Snowy Plovers** populations as we gain access to Cargill Salt Co. dikes that

## (Field Notes, cont.)

are normally closed to us. None were found near Alviso on the San Jose CBC which is unexpected (*vide* PLN). One was found on the Palo Alto CBC at Ravenswood Point (GHt, EG). A single bird was found on the Mountain View Forebay 21 Dec (AV) where they rarely visit. Three **Lesser Yellowlegs** were seen on Ravenswood Point 16 Dec (EG, GHt) and a single bird was seen along San Francisquito Creek the same day (PJM). Two **Ruddy Turnstones** at the creek mouth on 16 Dec (MMR, JCo) were in one of the few places we find them in the county. A 1st-winter **Glaucous Gull** was at the Sunnyvale WPCP 15 Dec (MMR) and is the first report of the season.

## Owls through Woodpeckers

Short-eared Owls seem to become more and more scarce. Both the San Jose and Palo Alto CBCs were skunked this year - maybe it's just a bad microtine year, let's hope so. It can be extremely difficult to separate **Yellow-bellied** and **Red-naped Sapsuckers** in the field. Individuals of this species group were found on our CBCs this winter with one 15 Dec on the San Jose CBC (DES) and another 16 Dec along San Francisquito Creek (DS). The careful descriptions and the final (unhappy) determination to species group speaks volumes about the quality of observers in our local area. A meticulously described **Red-naped X Red-breasted** hybrid at Jasper Ridge Biological Reserve 16 Dec (JB-H, CH) shows the same qualities.

## Swallows through Sparrows

A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** reported last month along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 remained at least through 20 Dec (MRi, m.ob.). Another bird, seen along Los Gatos Creek 14 Dec (MiF), appeared sickly. Red-breasted Nuthatches were not found on any of the CBCs, a sign that the food crop is good on their breeding grounds. Good news for them, probably, but it takes some of the excitement out of our winter birding. A **House Wren** near Sandy Wool Lake 2

Dec (MMR) is rare in the winter. Golden-crowned Kinglets, like the Red-breasted Nuthatches were missed on all the CBCs. A single **Mountain Bluebird** was found east of San Antone Jct. 19 Dec (RJR). We don't find this bluebird wintering locally in most winters. Almost as rare, the **Townsend's Solitaire** is having a good winter. Individuals were seen on 1 Dec in Portola Valley (PH) and at Henry Coe SP (AV). One was also found in Del Puerto Canyon on the Mt. Hamilton CBC 19 Dec (*vide* DES).

The bird of the season is undoubtedly an adult **White/Black-backed Wagtail** that was found at the San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant on 15 Dec (AF, MRi, ER) and again on 17 Dec (MRi, MD). Until recently these Eurasian species were considered one, but they have been split by the taxonomists and are now considered two species. Even in the case of the adults, distinguishing between the two species can be very difficult. The final judgement on this bird must await the deliberations of the California Bird Records Committee.

A **Palm Warbler** was found 5 Dec east of Calabazas Creek and north of Hwy 237 (SBT) and has been re-found at least once on 15 Dec (MMR). A male **Western Tanager** at the Carmelite Monastery 15 Dec (LF, PP) still had red on its head. Seven **Chipping Sparrows** were found along the Palo Alto Hills GC 16 Dec (AME *et al.*). This bird is rarely found in the winter, but then again, few of us bird

golf courses. A **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was found in the Palo Alto Water Quality Control Plant 16 Dec (PJM). **White-throated Sparrows** have been relatively abundant in recent winters, but not so this one. A bird at a Ladera feeder 16 Dec (MW) has been the only report.

*Observers: Jane Becker-Haven (JB-H), Clark Blake (CB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Phyllis Browning (PMB), Jo Ann Choate (JCh), Jack Cole (JAC), Jim Corliss (JCo), Charles Coston (CC), Derek Currall (DCu), Maryann Danielson (MD), Al DeMartini (ADeM), Al Eisner (AME), Ger van den Engn (GvdE), Mike Feighner (MiF), Aaron Fink (AF), Susie Formenti (SF), Linda Foster (LF), Shirley Gordon (SG), Ed Gustafson (EG), Chip Haven (CH), Richard Healy (RH), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Dorothy Johnson (DJ), Ken Lajoie (KL), Amy Lauterbach (AL), David Lee (DL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Mark Miller (MM), Steve Miller (SM), Paul Noble (PLN), Kathy Parker (KP), Pam Price (PP), Bob Richmond (RJR), Mike Rigney (MRi), Mike Rogers (MMR), Ed Rooks (ER), Rick Schermerhorn (RSch), Don Schmoltd (DES), Jean-Marie Spoelman (J-MS), Kep Stone (KS), Dick Stovel (DS), Janis Taylor (JT), Ann Verdi (AV), Mercedes Williams MW), Chuck Wilson CW), and James Yurchenco (JY).*

RARITIES: Please drop me a note:  
Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way,  
Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 322-5282.

## California Gnatcatchers, (cont. from page 1)

where else in the world. Protecting the gnatcatcher will go a long way towards ensuring not only its survival but also the survival of the entire natural community which it is a part. Last December, Dr. Atwood's scientific studies prompted MBO and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to formally petition to have the California Gnatcatcher added to both state and federal endangered species lists.

Most of us would assume that support would be unanimous for saving this

non-migrant songbird and its fragmented habitat from extinction. After all, the key word is *biodiversity*. We've heard the scientists' concerns: for each species lost, for each habitat that vanishes, there goes another potential medical cure, another piece of the evolutionary puzzle, another earth-enriching element. But people seem to have a hard time warming up to coastal sage scrub. Dr. Atwood finds this frustrating. "Coastal sage scrub looks like dead weeds, so protecting the habitat is a hard

(continued on page 8)

# Environmental Action News

## Discover Belize! Reef, Rainforest & Maya Ruins

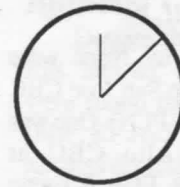
A special expedition to Belize and Tikal has been created by Betchart Expeditions for members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society from April 1-11, 1992. Trip Leader Dr. James McIver, entomologist and rainforest ecologist, will guide you through the rainforests, marine reserves and archaeological wonders. The itinerary covers Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, Ambergris Caye, the Barrier Reef, Bird Caye and Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Chan Chich, the Belize Zoo and Tikal!

This trip is designed for the nature enthusiast. You'll be exploring a number of different types of ecosystems with many exotic animals to see and learn about. For all you life-listers, could you pass up an

opportunity to see some of Belize's bird species including the Northern Jacana, the Olivaceous Cormorant, Roadside Hawk or Gray-necked Wood-Rail?

There are seventeen spaces available on this trip. For each SCVAS member signed up, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will receive \$200! Please support our Chapter by joining this special SCVAS-sponsored trip. Expedition fee is \$2490 plus airfare (approximately \$500-\$600).

For more information, call Bob Nansen, Betchart Expeditions at (800)-252-4910. At one of our February General Meetings, we'll have some slides and more information available about Belize and about this special expedition.



## Ten-Minute Activist

**"Act for Wildlife in '92, Endangered Species Need You!"**  
Audubon Convention,  
Washington, DC - June 13-19, 1992

Audubon is planning its first ever national convention in Washington, DC in June, 1992. Entitled "Act for Wildlife in '92: Endangered Species Need You!," this convention is scheduled to enable Audubon members to join forces at a critical time for wildlife in the nation's capital. Not only is it an election year, but 1992 will be one of the biggest ever for environmental legislation affecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization in 1992, and next June will be a critical time for decision-making on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge legislation, Clean Water Act, and the Ancient Forest bill.

At least 1000 Auduboners are expected to come to Washington, DC this June to learn about the threats to wildlife and the Endangered Species Act and to make their views known on this and other environmental bills before Congress. "Act for Wildlife in '92" will open Saturday, June 13 at American University. It will include three days of workshops on issues, lobbying and organizing skills, a day on Capitol Hill topped off with a Congressional reception, both day-long and multi-day field trips to outstanding natural areas in Mid-Atlantic region including the Chesapeake Bay, Canaan Valley (a unique subalpine ecosystem tucked in the mountains of West Virginia), historic Harper's Ferry, the C & O canal, and birding in little-known, local wetland areas — not to mention the many museums, cultural and historic sights of Washington, DC.

Call SCVAS office for brochure giving details on program, registration, lodging and field trips.

## Attention Santa Clara County Teachers!

*The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is pleased to announce the 1st Annual Native Wildlife Habitats Poster Contest*

- Grades: Open to all Kindergarten - 6th grade students in Santa Clara County.
- Theme: Wildlife Habitats.

### *Choose one of the following categories:*

- Wetlands, Creeks or Streams, Forests, S.F. Bay, Parks, or your own Backyard.
- Medium: Any medium such as crayon, paint, collage is acceptable.
- Size: 12" X 18" page.
- Label: On each poster, we need the following information:  
student's name, grade, school, category or theme of poster.
- Prizes: 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes awarded for each grade level.

### *Participation Awards For All*

Questions? Please call SCVAS at (408) 252-3747.  
Deadline: 5:00 PM on Friday, February 14, 1992.

Bring posters to:

Elaine Gould, Hacienda Magnet School (San Jose Unified);  
Bobbie Handen, Country Lane School (Moreland School District);  
Allen Royer, Edenvale School (Oak Grove School District);  
Fran McTamaneay, San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge  
or to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society in Cupertino.

# SPRING BIRD SEED BONANZA



## BIRDSEED:

**Audubon Special Mix:** A custom-blend formulated by National Audubon Society staff specifically for Northern California birds. This high protein mix contains white proso millet and black-oil sunflower seeds with no inexpensive fillers. Specifically blended to attract songbirds.

**Western Wild Mix:** This classic blend of red millet, white proso millet and red milo is priced to compete with super-market seed. Does not contain sunflower seeds.

**Black-Oil Sunflower Seed:** All-time favorite for all seed-eating birds. Has broad appeal because of high fat and protein. Especially good for winter residents. Can be offered in a feeder alone or mixed with other seeds.

**\*NEW\* Sunflower Chips:** The heart of the sunflower is by far the most favored and nutritious food for small as well as large birds. The heart is also favored by people who feed birds because with sunflower chips there is little to no waste! The birds will eat all that is put in the feeder. The high percentage of oil in chips means greater food value to each and to every bird that will come to your feeder.

**Niger Thistle:** A small black oil-rich seed imported from Asia and India. (This exotic will not sprout in your yard!) Attracts many birds with small beaks such as finches. This excellent source of fat and protein is generally unappealing to squirrels and large birds.

February 1992

## BIRDFEEDERS:

### \* NEW\* Cling-a-Wing \$9.95

Made especially for small songbirds. Chickadees, nuthatches, titmice and finches are the birds the Cling-a-Wing was designed to attract. They cling to its four portholes, pop in their heads and feast away. 6" diameter holds one quart of sunflower seed, which we recommend for this feeder. Clear globe perfectly shelters seed. Pigeon-proof for city feeding, too!

### Sunflower Tube Feeder \$9.95

Duncraft's best-selling sunflower tube feeder features a long-lasting aluminum hanging system, eight feeding stations with wooden dowel perches, weather-proof plastic tubing, 16" long. This tube feeder works well with sunflower seeds, sunflower chips or a mixture of both!

### Window Feeder \$9.95

Lets you see small songbirds birds up close! 7" wide clear acrylic feeder adheres to any window with sturdy suction cups. Unique keyhole design allows feeder to be lifted free of suction cups for easy refilling. Seed capacity of 1 and 1/2 pints.

### Soda Bottle Feeder \$9.95

A 2 liter soda bottle can be filled with a mixed seed variety or sunflower seed, then inverted into a cast-zinc dispenser. Has two metal perches. Seed flows out as the birds eat it. Holds up to 3 lbs. of seed and keeps it dry. A great way to re-use your old soda bottles!

### Thistle Stocking \$2.95

This nylon stocking is specially designed to dispense thistle seed. People love to attract the more unusual songbirds, and thistle does it better than anything else! The Thistle Stocking is 12" long and has a drawstring for easy hanging. Can hold 8 oz. of seed.

### Four-Fountains Hummingbird Feeder \$11.95

The most popular hummingbird feeder ever made! Easily-cleaned glass bottle with 8 oz. capacity. Special features include four bee-guards that keep insects away from nectar supply, and four feeding stations.

## THIS IS A PRE-PAID SALE. ORDERS DUE MARCH 20!

Your order, including a check payable to SCVAS must be received by Friday, March 20. All orders must be picked up from one of the following sites. *No exceptions please.* Confirmation of order and directions will be sent upon receipt of order and check.

Please tell your friends and neighbors about the Spring Bird Seed Sale. We will all benefit — you, the birds, and your Audubon Chapter. Have any questions? Please call the SCVAS office at (408) 252-3747.

## Pick-up locations:

- Peninsula Conservation Center  
2448 Watson Court  
Palo Alto
- Pets Friend Animal Clinic  
101 W. Hendy  
Sunnyvale
- REI  
20640 Homestead Road  
Cupertino
- Youth Science Institute  
Vasona Park  
Los Gatos
- San Jose Site TBA in March *Avocet*



## WHO...

Do you ask for expert advice on bird feeding?

- Feeders • Seed • Houses • Books
- Tapes/CDs • Baths • Binoculars • Gifts



Wild Bird Center  
926 El Camino Real  
San Carlos  
(415) 595-0300

Santa Clara Valley  
Audubon Society  
22221 McClellan Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014

480 J

Mr. & Mrs. R Jay Andree  
12579 Radoyka Dr  
Saratoga, CA 95070

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
San Jose, CA  
Permit No. 5869

## BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM – SPRING 1992

### PICK-UP LOCATIONS: PLEASE CHECK ONE

- REI, Cupertino \_\_\_\_\_ Tues., Mar. 24, 4-6 PM
- Pets Friend, Snyvl. \_\_\_\_\_ Tues., Mar. 31, 5-7 PM
- PCC, Palo Alto \_\_\_\_\_ Sat., Mar. 28, 1- AM-12 PM
- YSI, Los Gatos \_\_\_\_\_ Wed., Apr. 1, 5-7 PM
- San Jose Site TBA in March *Avocet*

	# bags	Cost
AUDUBON SPECIAL _____ 20 lb @ \$ 9/bag		
50 lb @ \$17.50/bag		
WESTERN WILD _____ 20 lb @ \$8/bag		
50 lb @ \$16.50/bag		
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER _____ 25 lb @ \$14/bag		
50 lb @ \$25/bag		
THISTLE _____ 5 lb @ \$11/bag		
*NEW* SUNFLOWER CHIPS _____ 25 lb @ \$22.50/bag		
50 lb @ \$13/bag		
Bird Feeder(s) ( <i>Please specify</i> )		
Subtotal		
Add 8.25% Tax		
Contributions to SCVAS ( <i>tax deductible</i> )		
<b>Total</b>		

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

### California Gnatcatchers,

(cont. from page 5)

sell even to the conservation community. And 4-inch long gnatcatchers hardly have the sex-appeal of a Whooping Crane or a California Condor. It's time for conservationists to wake up and realize that protection of biodiversity will require, in many cases, a commitment to preserving the drab and unappealing corners of the world."

The plight of the California Gnatcatcher and its coastal sage scrub home reaches to the heart of the biodiversity issue and raises the question whether a species has the right to exist for its own sake, even if it is stuck with a boring name or lives in an aesthetically unappealing habitat. The outcome of the petition to list it as an endangered species will determine whether coastal sage scrub is the stuff that developments are made of or the stuff that dreams are

made of- the dream that humans can co-exist with all species and their habitats.

— from MBO Quarterly, Summer 1991 and Santa Monica Audubon *Audubon Imprint*, December, 1991/January 1992.

### Non Audubon Events

**Hawaii Native Forest Birds Trip:** May 12-21 \$1400. Group size: 12 including 3 leaders on Hawaii's Big Island. Leaders are SCVAS members Pete LaTourrette, Doug Cheeseman, and Jack Jeffrey, who is head biologist at Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge and an expert resident guide. This is a rare opportunity to see and photograph endangered Honeycreepers. There are still 5 spaces left. Call the Cheesemans at (408) 741-5330 or Pete LaTourrette at (415) 961-2741.