



The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

September 1993

Special October Event

World Renowned Photographer Coming to Palo Alto

On Wednesday, October 13, Santa Clara Valley Audubon will host a spectacular slide lecture by Frans Lanting on the subject of the Okavango Delta.

Frans Lanting, the award-winning photographer and naturalist hailed as the Wildlife Photographer of the Year by the BBC in 1991, is giving an international lecture tour this fall in conjunction with the September release of his book *Okavango: Africa's Last Eden*. In his lecture Frans will give us a rich, reverent look at Africa's breathtaking

Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta in the world, covering 8,500 square miles on the edge of the Kalahari Desert.

The Okavango supports an unparalleled diversity of aquatic and dry-land wildlife, including hippos, crocodiles, lions, hyenas, zebras, impalas, buffaloes, giraffes, a variety of bird species, and the last great unharassed herds of elephants left on the continent. *National Geographic* has called this region of the world "one of the best

preserved corners of wilderness, a place many call the last of old Africa."

The program will be presented in the Lucie Stern Community Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, starting at 7:30 PM. Advance tickets are available for \$10 from the SCVAS office, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014 (408/252-3747). Tickets will be available the night of the event at the theater from 7:00 PM for \$12.50. Half the net proceeds will go to SCVAS.

General Membership Meeting Wednesday, September 15

7:30 PM Refreshments, 8:00 PM Program

**Palo Alto Cultural Center
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.**

Birding the Venezuelan Llanos

Birding the Venezuelan Llanos may be like going back to North America before the loss of our great plains wildlife spectacle. From the Orinoco delta on the east across the heart of Venezuela to the Andes in the west, the Llanos is a vast grassland prairie that was once the bed of an ancient sea. The soils support little vegetation other than grasses, except along the many streams and rivers where gallery forests form dense thickets. Six SCVAS members will describe the incredible abundance of wildlife from Capybaras, Spectacled Caiman, eight species of Ibis and numerous other birds in the dry season to the breeding avifauna and wide variety of fish that spread out over the flooded land to spawn in the wet season.

Two potentially devastating projects threaten the low Llanos. One is the "development" of the Apure, Orinoco and Portuguesa Rivers to drain approximately 21,000 square kilometers of the low Llanos for agriculture despite soil studies by the University of the Llanos which show that these soils are too poor for agriculture. The other is an attempt to annul the entire Cinaruco/Capanaparo National Park in the low Llanos which is Venezuela's fourth largest park with 1,433,973 acres. The only way to stop these projects is to deluge the people making these decisions with an outpouring of outrage from all over the world. Come see this marvelous program and learn how you can help preserve these rich and biologically diverse lands!

Meeting is co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Open Space and Sciences Division.

Chapter News

Thank You, Cecily

After three years of dedicated service to our chapter Cecily Harris, our Managing Director, has resigned to pursue other environmental and professional interests. Those of us who worked with her know of Cecily's commitment to SCVAS and its programs and of her hard work on our behalf. Cecily played a major role in several of the chapter's important projects since 1990, including the publication of *Birding at the Bottom*

of the Bay, the move to our current location at McClellan Ranch Park, and the successful development of the Nature Shop. At the same time she introduced grant writing at SCVAS for the first time, co-edited the *Avocet* and handled the myriad of lesser tasks, from answering phones to writing reports, that are needed to keep the chapter running smoothly. We'll miss her, and wish her the best in her new pursuits.

SCVAS to Add Environmental Advocate to Staff

While moving forward in the search for Cecily's replacement, the Board has decided to add a part-time employee to serve as our Environmental Advocate.

This individual will advocate to city, county and area governing bodies our society's goals regarding riparian, wetlands and open space preservation, as well as other issues. We hope to have both positions filled this month.

Thanks to Hacienda School

Recently Hacienda School (SJUSD) honored a very special teacher, Elaine Gould, on her retirement. Elaine chose, rather than a personal gift, to instead request donations to the SCVAS Education Committee. These significant contributions from the Hacienda School faculty will assist us in continuing to educate our children. Hacienda, a science magnet school, is also dedicated to protecting our environment by educating our young people. With sincere thanks,

Nancy Caro-Schneider
Hacienda Faculty Fund

Thanks to the following members for their contributions to the ever-expanding SCVAS library: Virginia Bennett, Gail and Doug Cheeseman, Al Eisner, Stan Tish, Winona Walker, and Betty Wyatt.

Reid Freeman, Library Chair

SCVAS Receives Grant from IBM

Board member and Education Chair Bobbie Handen presented a \$1,000 check to SCVAS to be used for a chapter environmental education project. The funds were received as a grant from the IBM Fund for Community Service Program.

IBM's Fund for Community Service is a program designated to recognize and encourage employee participation in local community activities. Under the program employees, retirees, or spouses can apply for financial support for specific projects of organizations in which they have a continuing involvement. Bobbie's husband, Carl, is an IBM retiree.

Many thanks to Bobbie, Carl, and IBM for this generous gift!

SCVAS OFFICERS

President	Rob Colwell	415/326-2400
Past Pres.	Grant Hoyt	415/969-7892
1st VP	Tony Eppstein	415/326-1376
2nd VP	Nick Yatsko	408/247-5499
Treasurer	John McLemore	408/261-9431
Rec. Secty.	Clysta Seney	408/261-9431

STAFF

Managing Dir. Vacant

DIRECTORS

Earl Cilley '91-'94	415/854-6285
Mike Rigney '91-'94	408/262-9204
Alan Thomas '91-'94	408/265-9286
Reid Freeman '92-'95	408/255-4969
Jane Becker-Haven '92-'95	415/321-0776
Bobbie Handen '93-'94	408/356-4263
Howard Johnson '93-'95	408/255-2422

CHAIRPERSONS

CBC	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
Editor	Chrys Fitzpatrick	408/245-3860
Education Programs	Bobbie Handen	408/356-4263
	Doug & Gail Cheeseman	408/867-1371
Library	Reid Freeman	408/255-4969
Field Trips	John Mariani	408/997-1429
Aud Adven	Elaine Gould	408/448-0622
Photo Club	Pete LaTourrette	415/961-2741
Finance	Don Price	415/327-1254
BAAC		
Delegate	Trish Mulvey	415/326-0252
Membership	Vacant	
North County Field Trips		
	Alberta Jasberg	415/493-9546
South County Field Trips		
	Shirley Gordon	408/996-9863
Birdathon	Tony Eppstein	415/326-1376

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 the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

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Rare Bird Alert: 510/ 524-5592

September 1993 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 September: Mike Feighner 408/742-8660.

**Denotes Field Trip

****Wednesday, September 8, 9:00 AM. Half day. Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough.** Leader: Gail Cheeseman 408/867-1371. Meet at Jetty Rd. and Hwy 1 just north of Moss Landing. Highlights: shorebirds and waterfowl. Lunch optional.

Wednesday, September 8 Environmental Action Committee Meeting, 7:30 PM. at Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Rd. Open to everyone who wants to work on preserving habitat for future birding. For more information, call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376.

Wednesday, September 8, 7:30-9:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers. The traditional September all-members' slides program at the Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Road. Meetings, which are open to the public, are co-sponsored by the Recreation/Open Space and Sciences Division of the City of Palo Alto.

****Saturday, September 11, 9:00 AM. Full day. Point Reyes.** Leader: Peter LaTourrette 415/961-2741. Meet at Drakes Beach parking area. From Olema take Sir Francis Drake Highway about 14 miles west. Turn left to Drakes Beach. Bring lunch, liquids, full tank of fuel. Highlights: fall migrant/vagrants.

****Sunday, September 12, 9:00 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Reid Freeman 408/255-4969. Directions: from US 101 in Mountain View exit San Antonio Rd. east to end at Terminal Way. Basics of birding with emphasis on ducks and shorebirds.

Tuesday, September 14, 9:30. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: Summer birding experiences.

Wednesday, September 15, 7:30 PM. General Membership Meeting. Please see box on page 1.

****Saturday, September 18, 9:00 AM. Full day. Moss Landing and environs.** Leaders: Jean-Marie Spoelman 510/797-0265 and Audrey Stoye 408/249-2108. In Moss Landing, meet on Jetty Road just off Highway 1. Bring lunch, liquids, and full tank of fuel. Please carpool if possible. Highlights: shorebirds.

****Wednesday, September 22, 9:00 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader to be announced. Directions: take 101 to Mountain View and exit San Antonio Rd. east to end at Terminal Way. For more information call 415/493-9546.

****Saturday, September 25, 8:30 AM. Full day. Hawk Hill/ Marin Headlands.** Leader: Don Schmoltdt 510/215-1910. Carpool from Park'N Ride lot in Palo Alto at I-280 and Page Mill Road (leave by 7:30 AM). Meet at Vista Point parking lot at north side of Golden Gate Bridge by 8:30. Bring lunch and liquids. Highlights: migrating hawks, possible Broad-winged Hawk.

****Sunday, September 26, 8:00 AM. Half day. Bird-banding at CCRS.** Demonstration and tour of riparian and wetland habitat. Leader: Mike Rigney 408/262-9204. Call for directions and to sign up. Trip limited to 12.

NON AUDUBON EVENTS

REI FALL OFFERINGS

Thursday, September 9, 7:00 PM. Free slide show with Debbi Shearwater of "Shearwater Journeys" on Monterey Submarine Canyon and sea birds there.

Thursday, September 30, 7:00 PM. Free clinic and Steve Shunk talk on "Birding at The Bottom of The Bay", an introduction to bird watching in the South Bay.

For more information call Steve Shunk 408/446-1991.

FALL BIRDING CLASSES IN MENLO PARK

Sequoia Adult School is offering two classes of 8 slide lectures each for birders at Little House, 800 Middle Avenue in Menlo Park. Instructor: Maryann Danielson. Fee: \$30. Register at the first class. Four field trips will be offered with each class for an additional fee.

BIRDING BASICS—for beginning and intermediate birders—backyard birds, their identification, basic biology and natural history. Wednesdays, 7:30-9:30 PM, starting September 15.

FOLLOWING BIRDS THROUGH THE FALL SEASON—for intermediate and advanced birders—the fall migration of raptors, passerines and shorebirds through the Bay Area. Mondays, 7:30-9:30 PM, starting September 13.

For more information, call Maryann Danielson 415/325-9349.

FALL BIRDING CLASSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY I. Tuesdays. An Introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A: September 14-October 26 and Part B: November 2-December 14.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY II. Wednesdays. A continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American waterbirds. Part A: September 8-October 20 and Part B: October 27-December 15.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY III. Thursdays. A continuing study of land birds. Part A: September 9-October 21 and Part B: October 28-December 16.

Fees are \$65 for each seven week course. Pre-registration is recommended. For information call the San Francisco City College Continuing Education Office at 1-415-267-6514 or 1-415-561-1840.

Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Loons through Cormorants

An alternate-plumage **Common Loon** flying northwest of Mt. Madonna County Park (CP) 3 May (DLSu) is part of the normal spring migration. A basic-plumage bird seen intermittently at Shoreline Lake 14-24 May (PJM,MMR,WGB,WC) may have been overwintering coastally. **Eared Grebes** have nested again locally this year. At least 12 nests were seen in the Mountain View salt ponds 11-24 May (PJM), but it does not appear that these were successful. However, precocial young were seen in Crittenden Marsh 5 Jun (WC), at least five fledged young were seen there 10 Jul (MJM), and at least one pair was nest building on 24 Jul (MJM). Three pairs of **Western Grebes** and a pair of **Clark's Grebes** were seen building or occupying nests on Calaveras Res. 10 Jun (MMR,SCR) for the first record of breeding within the county. However, this nesting was not successful as no nests were observed on 29 Jun. Paired birds were seen here last year, but breeding evidence was not obtained during the atlas season. This range extension is not unexpected as these grebes have been nesting on San Antonio Res. in Alameda County in recent years. The first major influx of **American White Pelicans** noted this season was of 270 on Salt Pond A1 and another 42 in the Palo Alto Baylands on 6 Jun (MMR,JC). The peak count for the season was of 516 at Charleston Slough on 18 Jul (MJM). **Brown Pelicans** have returned as well with an adult seen in outer Charleston Slough 16 Jun (SCR). Peak numbers so far this year were 12 seen at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) 9 Jul (SCR). **Double-crested Cormorants** have nested again this year with four to five nests seen in the transmission towers at Long Point 5 Jun-10 Jul (MMR,JC,MJM).

Bitterns to Ibis

A **Least Bittern** was flushed out of reeds in South Coyote Slough 3 Jul during a

botulism survey (MJM,VL,SM). Although this secretive and rare bittern occasionally breeds in the Central Valley a summer record in South San Francisco Bay is unexpected. This species may benefit from the stewardship of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, just as our nesting was observed in the Alviso heronry for **Great Egret**, **Snowy Egret** herons have. During the same botulism survey successful nesting and **Cattle Egret** (MJM *et al.*). An adult **Little Blue Heron** was also seen in

Breeding evidence for five species not recorded breeding in the county was found this summer

the heronry. Between one and three adult **Little Blues** have been seen regularly in the Alviso vicinity since late April (m.ob.). More surprising was an adult at the Cooley Landing OSP at the end of Bay Road 5 Jun (SCR) for one of the few San Mateo County records. **White-faced Ibis** attempted to nest in the Alviso heronry last summer (PW). Single birds seen near the Alviso Environmental Educational Center (EEC) 1 May (MJM) and 12 Jun (CMG) were the only reports this season and far fewer than were present last year.

Waterfowl

The **Ross' Goose** at the Sunnyvale WPCP was last seen 15 May (MJM). Who knows what distant drummer this bird is listening to. A few **Blue-winged Teal** appear to have summered locally, but there has been no evidence of breeding. Two to three birds were in Crittenden Marsh 2-16 May (SCR,PJM). A male has been noted at the Mountain View Forebay 8-11 Jul (SCR,MJM,RWR) and three birds were at the Sunnyvale WPCP 9 Jul (SCR). Three to four overwintering **Ring-necked Ducks** on Calaveras Res., 10-29 Jun (MMR,SCR) are unusual. **Common Merganser** have been noted breeding in some of their Diablo Range haunts, but two female/immatures over the Waterbird

Management Area (WMA) on lower Coyote Creek 18 Jul (SCR) were unexpected.

Raptors

An **Osprey** was over Vasona Res. 4 Jul (JDuB). We have a number of summer records in recent years. It seems likely that these are nonbreeding birds. An adult **Bald Eagle** flying east over Casa de Fruta 18 Jun (MMR,SCR) is the only summer record I have for this species. **Sharp-shinned Hawks** have been found in a number of locations during atlas field work this summer. This species is clearly more common than we believed when we started the atlas work in 1987, but it still remains a rare or uncommon nesting species and can be quite secretive. An imm. **Golden Eagle** at Portola Ranch 7 Jun (AR) is unusual for the northern Santa Cruz Mountains.

Quail though Shorebirds

A **Mountain Quail** was heard again on Table Mountain on 21 Jul (SCR) and 24 Jul (MJM). A **Lesser Golden-Plover** was seen at the WMA on lower Coyote Creek 24 Jul (MMR,SCR). Nine **Snowy Plover** on Salt Pond A8 near Alviso 4 Jun (MMR,SCR,WGB) are in one of the few spots in the county where they may nest. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the pond on Disk Drive in Alviso 3 May (SCR) was the last of our spring migrants. The first returning bird was one found in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 6 Jul (AME). Numbers have increased in typical locations with a peak count of nine in the Mountain View Forebay 23 Jul (AME). A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** has been observed in the WMA on Coyote Creek 19-24 Jul (MiF,SCR,MJM); the bird was described as an adult. A spring **Ruff**, perhaps a female, was last seen 8 May (AME) near the Alviso Marina. A returning bird was at the WMA on Coyote Creek 16 Jul (RC) and is the earliest fall record we have for the county. Flocks of alternate-plumage **Wilson's Phalaropes** were first noted at the WMA on 17 Jun when 81

were counted (SCR). The numbers increased rapidly through early July with a peak count of 2065 on 18 Jul (SCR). By this latter date at least 15 juveniles were in the flock. We seldom see this phalarope locally in June but this phenomenon, of breeding plumaged birds occurring in June, is typical of east bay sites (HC).

Terns through Woodpeckers

Our first reports of **Least Terns** staging in the South Bay as they leave their breeding areas were of three adults on Charleston Slough 8 Jul (SCR). At least five birds were seen there 9 Jul (WGB) and 11 Jul (RWR). The 9 Jul report included four juveniles. **Greater Roadrunner**, one of our rarest resident birds, was well reported over the summer. Records include one north of San Antone Junction 22 May and 27 Jun (MJM), a bird on Mt. Hamilton Road above Clayton Road 27 May (MMR,SCR), birds in two spots in the Isabel Valley 7 Jul (MMR,JY,GHt), and a bird just over the county line in Del Puerto Canyon 17 Jul (MMR). This was a banner year for migrating **Black Swifts**. A total of 38 were counted along the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains between Croy Ridge and Maymen's Flat 12 May (DLSu) and 70 were seen moving north at Monte Bello OSP 22 May (SCR). **Vaux's Swifts** also moved through in large numbers in May with 44 at Monte Bello OSP 7 May (SCR), 105 along the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains near Croy Ridge on 9 May (DLSu), and 327 in the same area 12 May (DLSu). Careful notes taken by JDuB in Los Gatos show that anywhere from one to six birds are regular there from their arrival in April throughout the summer. These birds are local residents and are seen nearly every day. **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** have been found regularly along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 this summer. A nest with eggs there 24 Jul (MJM) is very late. Four black-chinneds along Coyote Creek between Blossom Hill Road and Hellyer CP 15 Jun (SCR) may represent another breeding population. **Costa's Hummingbirds** are regular in lower Del Puerto Canyon in Stanislaus County so two males showing

courtship behavior higher in the canyon just beyond the county line 29 May (MMR) were not unexpected. However, a single male was found along Colorado Creek north of San Antonio Valley on 1 Jun (MMR,SCR) and was showing courtship behavior. This is the first acceptable breeding evidence we have of this species in the county. Always a rare migrant, a **Calliope Hummingbird** was banded at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) 2 May (*fide* WGB). As expected, **Lewis' Woodpeckers** have been seen regularly in San Antonio Valley. Four plus birds seen in Isabel Valley 7 Jul (MMR) and six birds seen south of Del Puerto Canyon Road 17 Jul (MMR,MJM) are probably a part of this population. A single bird on the east side of Jos. Grant CP 3 May (LG et al.) is away from known breeding areas.

Flycatchers through Phainopepla

A **Willow Flycatcher** at Jos. Grant CP 15 May (AV) was our only report of this increasingly rare migrant this season. **Hammond's Flycatcher**, on the other hand, was well reported during the spring migration. Additional reports include two along the Middle Fork of Coyote Creek 8 May (SCR,HR), one in Jos. Grant CP 15 May (MMR), and a single bird on Smiths Creek 16 May (SCR). A **Gray Flycatcher** was banded at CCRS 2 May to round out our rare Empidonax. We are at the edge of the breeding range for **Say's Phoebe** so a report of a single bird from the upper Blackbird Valley on 12 Jun (MMR,SCR) and an adult with two juveniles northeast of Anderson Res. 4 Jul (MJM,AL,JY) are of interest. A bird north of San Antone Junction 1 Jul (MJM et al.) is in an area where they are known to have nested. Migrant **Purple Martins** were seen this spring with seven birds seen in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains 12 May (DLSu) and a single male at Monte Bello OSP 22 May (SCR). They occasionally breed in the Santa Cruz Mountains. A **Bank Swallow** over Mountain View Forebay 11 Jul (SCR) is well away from all known breeding colonies. **American Dipper** is another of our rare residents. A juvenile was seen at

Twin Creeks 19 May (MiF), an adult was feeding young in Uvas Canyon CP 30 May (SCR), and two were along Arroyo Hondo 10 Jun (MMR,SCR). **Phainopepla** have been found in a number of locations in the Diablo Range this summer. A female was found on a nest 1 Jul in San Antonio Valley (MJM et al.) and nearly grown nestlings were there 17 Jul (MJM,MMR). Less expected was a male in Almaden-Quicksilver CP 2 May (AV).

Warblers through Finches

A female **Tennessee Warbler** along Shoreline Lake 25 May (SCR) is unusual vagrant for the season; it is the sixth county record for this species. There were substantial landings of migrating **Hermit Warbler** this spring both in the Diablo Range and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Seventy-eight were counted in the vicinity of Summit Road in the southern Santa Cruz Mountains 4 May (DLSu), 12 were at Henry Coe SP 8 May (SCR,HR), 16 were along Summit Road on 9 May and 11 were there 12 May (DLSu). More surprising was a female with a dependent fledgling on Charcoal Road in Upper Stevens Creek CP 21 Jul (SCR). This is the first breeding record I am aware of for the county although they have bred regularly just over the county line in the Santa Cruz Mountains in small numbers. A **Northern Waterthrush** was banded at CCRS 2 May and re-captured the next day as well. It was seen along the creek on 5 May also (SCR,MJM). Our most exciting vagrant for the season was a male **Hooded Warbler** banded at CCRS 23 May (*fide* WGB). It was found singing upstream from the station on 24 May (SBT), but not after that. This is either the first or second record for the county. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** along Llagas Creek west of Santa Teresa

Continued on page 6

If you find a rare species in the county please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

KERN RIVER

The fourteen SCVAS birders who travelled southward for an early June field trip to the Kern River area experienced some unsettling weather conditions—intermittent rain, wind, and cool temperatures instead of the expected blazing sun and heat—but spirits weren't dampened as leading Kern Co. birder and environmentalist Bob Barnes managed to show us numerous specialty species of the region as well as giving us a perspective on local habitat restoration and land use issues.

The spectacular and varied habitat we visited included the extensive (miles and miles!) riparian forest along the Kern River itself; adjacent marshes and agricultural/cattle pastures; scrub, chaparral, and mesquite-covered hills; pine and juniper woodland at higher elevations; and even a remote birding hotspot in the dry desert hills to the east. (It was here, at the renowned Butterbred Springs, that we had perhaps the best bird of the trip, a rare Kentucky Warbler, which was a "lifer" for several participants. Also noteworthy was the family of Long-eared Owls that sat cooperatively for lengthy scope looks.) Although we missed one of the Kern River specialty birds, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, by a few days, the Summer Tanagers, Blue Grosbeaks, Willow Flycatchers and Scott's Orioles were handsome compensation. (A second SCVAS trip in late June did indeed turn up the elusive cuckoo, including close-up telescope views for all participants!)

Our trip included visits to the Nature Conservancy's Kern River Preserve and also the Kern River Research Center, where noted bird researcher Steve Laymon and other staff gave us insight into their studies of riparian bird biology, including the effects of Brown-headed Cowbird parasitization of Willow Flycatcher nests. Bob Barnes described to us how birders like himself had made a significant impact in habitat restoration and protection projects as exemplified by the Kern River riparian forest acquisition, the designation of parts of the Kern River as official U.S. Wild and Scenic River habitat, and inclusion of thousands of acres in the adjacent high-desert region in the proposed Cranston Desert Protection legislation now awaiting approval. Bob is living proof that you can be a serious birder and an effective environmentalist at the same time, and we thoroughly enjoyed his ebullient and knowledgeable leadership on this field trip.

(In July, Bob Barnes was hired by National Audubon's Western Region Office to work on the new *Birds in the Balance* program, with special emphasis on riparian habitat preservation and restoration in California. Look for further news about this exciting new program and its potential linkage with Coyote Creek Riparian Station and SCVAS as we work with Bob to protect neotropical migrant and local bird species habitat here in Santa Clara County and throughout the West.)

—Grant Hoyt

"I never for a day gave up listening to the songs of our birds or watching their peculiar habits, or delineating them in the best way that I could."

—From the journal of John James Audubon

Field Notes (Cont. from P. 5)

Boulevard 14 Jun (MMR) and 18 Jul (MJM) was probably nesting in this area. A 1st-year male **Summer Tanager** found at Stanford 5 Jun (DS) could not be refound. This is the fifth county record for this tanager. A 1st-year **Indigo Bunting** in a somewhat atypical plumage was found along Colorado Creek 1 Jun (MMR, SCR). This bird was paired with a female Lazuli Bunting and was tentatively identified as a hybrid. However, an extensive review of the literature indicates that 1st-year Indigo Buntings can have extensive white on their underparts and can be quite confusing. The male was still on territory during a return visit on 12 Jun (MMR), but the nest found on the first visit had been abandoned. This represents the first record of breeding for this species in the county. **Black-chinned Sparrows** were much more numerous this year than in recent years. Locally, one to three males set up territories along the Indian Ck. Trail at Monte Bello OSP (m.ob.). Singing birds were found in a number of areas in the Diablo Range, on Loma Prieta as expected, and on the west side of Uvas Res. **Grasshopper Sparrows** also seemed more widespread this season and were reported from numerous locations in the county. A number of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found this spring. A female was along Disk Drive in Alviso 9 May (SCR), two females were at the Sunnyvale WPCP 11 May (PJM), and a 1st-year male was at the Mountain View Forebay 18 May (SCR). Three **Red Crossbills** were seen on Table Mountain 21 Jul (SCR) and are a harbinger of autumn.

Observers: Bill Bousman (WGB), William Cabot (WC), Howard Cogswell (HC), Jim Corliss (JiC), Rita Colwell (RC), Jean DuBois (JDuB), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MLF), Christina M. Garcia (CMG), Leda Beth Gray (LG), Grant Hoyt (GHt), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Valerie Layne (VL), Sue Machias (SM), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Armin Ramel (AR), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Dick Stovel (DS), David Suddjian (DLSu), Scott Terrill (SBT), Ann Verdi (AV), Peg Woodin (PW), and James Yurchenco (JY).

Letters Needed

Endangered Species Act Legislation Introduced

Earlier this year legislation was introduced in Congress to strengthen the Endangered Species Act (ESA). If you are concerned about our environment please take a few minutes to express your views by writing your Senators and Representative and urging them to support this new legislation.

The two bills, drafted with the help of conservationists, would focus the

ESA on protecting entire ecosystems and set deadlines for the development of species recovery plans. They would also provide incentives for private landowners to assist in species recovery and would increase funds to implement the 20-year-old law.

Both measures (H.R. 2043 and S 921) are improved versions of a bill introduced last year. Seventy-seven co-sponsors of that bill are back in the House

this year, a fact that should give the 1993 House bill a strong start. In the Senate, the bipartisan sponsorship should help the ESA bill's chances. Meanwhile, Rep. Billy Tauzin (D-La.) has reintroduced ESA "reform" legislation—a bill that would water down the act and add reams of paperwork to the listing and recovery processes. The new administration has signaled support for strengthening the ESA.

Pollution Trading?

For the first time in history, pollution has become a commodity that can be traded like wheat or soybeans. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Chicago Board of Trade have completed the first sulfur dioxide allowance auctions under the Clean Air Act.

The act calls for reductions in emissions of sulfur dioxide—the main component of acid rain—but it allows utilities that pollute less than their allowance to sell pollution rights, which can be purchased by other utilities to stay within their allowance. The pollution credits can be bought by anyone, including private citizens and environmental groups.

This new approach has been lauded by some as the free-market environmentalism of the future. They say that the system financially rewards utilities that control emissions in the most efficient and economic way possible. But critics of the program see it merely as an attempt to shift the air pollution around—from one region or community to another.

Environmentalists are closely monitoring the trading system because such market-based strategies are being considered for reducing greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide, for allocating natural resources such as water, and for controlling regional smog.

"This is an experiment in regulation," says Jan Beyea, Audubon's chief scientist. "If it works, we'll see more attempts at market mechanisms as regulatory tools."

The allowance trading system was born out of compromise between environmentalists and the Bush administration after a dozen years of stalemate over reauthorization of the Clean Air Act. The Bush White House agreed in 1990 to a 50 per cent cut in sulfur dioxide emissions by the year 2000 in exchange for the market-based approach that gives utilities the flexibility to swap emissions rights or install anti-pollution devices on their plants.

SCVAS Wish List

- Volunteers
- Brochure display rack
- Hardware & software for Mac
- Ice tray, dish rack & tray
- Desk organizers
- Metal paper stackers

Teaching About Creeks

The Aquatic Habitat Institute, Contra Costa County Science and Math Educators and Mills College will present a conference at Mills College in Oakland featuring symposia, workshops, a curriculum fair, and field trips to demonstrate how to teach about creeks more effectively. Presenters include leading Bay Area scientists, educators, and representatives from environmental groups. Professional credit from Mills College is available.

The conference will be held Saturday, November 6, and Sunday, November 7. Field trips will take place on Saturday and Sunday, November 13 and 14.

To obtain a registration form or more information, write the Aquatic Habitat Institute, 1301 S. 46th St. #180, Richmond, CA 94804 or call 510/231-9539.

<p>Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society 22221 McClellan Road Cupertino, CA 95014</p> <p>Address Correction requested</p>		<p>Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid San Jose, CA Permit No. 5869</p>
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Birds of a Feather—An Exhibit

California Academy of Sciences
San Francisco

June 19, 1993— January 2, 1994

What's all the fuss about a feather? Feathers are the single feature which set birds apart from all other creatures: only birds have them and all birds have them. A feather is a beautiful and complicated structure which first appeared on dinosaurs more than 140 million years ago. Birds are modern dinosaurs which still harbor characteristics from their ancient, huge relatives who walked the planet in the Mesozoic period.

This exhibit examines more than just the fascinating world of feathers and flight. Elegant historic dioramas

painstakingly restored to their original splendor, rarely seen eggs and nests, colorful graphics, hands-on displays, and a sound gallery immerse visitors in the incredible "secret life" of birds.

In this new exhibit, Academy Ornithology Curator Dr. Luis Baptista and other Academy scientists share new discoveries about bird evolution, migration, communication, conservation, courtship and nesting behavior.

Coming in The October *Avocet*

Preliminary results of the '93 Birdathon show that we broke the \$10,000 mark for the second straight year! The final total will be printed in the next issue of the *Avocet*, along with the list of all members and supporters who donated at the Patron level of \$50 or more.

Also in next month's *Avocet*, look for a report on the recently completed Burrowing Owl Census in Santa Clara County, a project SCVAS has sponsored for the last three years. Find out about the status of *Athene cunicularia* as it struggles to maintain a breeding presence in our increasingly over-developed county.

Membership: We invite your membership in the National Audubon Society/SCVAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SCVAS, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Subscription: Check One
 Subscriber \$10 Supporter \$20 Donor \$35 Patron \$50 and more
 Members receive *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to SCVAS.

Or

National Audubon Society Membership: Check One
 New members \$23 Membership renewal \$35
 Members receive *Audubon* magazine and *The Avocet* newsletter. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Donation: SCVAS greatly appreciates your tax-deductible donation. Your gift helps fund the Chapter's birding, education, conservation and research programs.

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