

The Avocet

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

January 1994

Volunteerism Under Attack!

Almost one hundred years ago, the National Audubon Society initiated the nation's first coordinated bird monitoring effort, the Christmas Bird Count. The data base provided by the Christmas Bird Count constitutes the longest continuous record of bird populations available in North America.

The value of the data generated by the Count and the motives of volunteers like you were recently viciously attacked on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Late in October the House passed H.R. 1845, a bill to establish the National Biological Survey (NBS), a new agency within the Department of Interior. The purpose of the Survey is to better assess the nation's biological resources, including birds.

Unfortunately, when the House passed this bill it also adopted harmful amendments, including one by Rep. Billy Tauzin (D-LA) to remove a provision authorizing the Secretary of Interior to accept the

services of volunteers in conducting the Survey. Although attorneys are still evaluating the practical effect of this amendment (if it becomes the law), it is clear that the sponsors do not trust Audubon members and other volunteers to gather data, such as CBC results, for a national biological data base. Consider these comments made on the House floor:

"It is hard to believe that an interest group could actually be one of the volunteers, that we could have the . . . Audubon Society . . . qualify as volunteers to go out and collect data . . . And in essence we are creating an environmental Gestapo that will go on people's private property..." [Rep. Jack Fields, R-TX]

"Our complaint is that the volunteers, non-science volunteers with a special agenda . . . are going to be part and parcel of . . . the survey . . . You start with bad science, you end up with bad science..." [Rep. Tauzin] The members who supported this amendment insult the quality

and integrity of volunteers whose efforts date back almost a century. If the opponents of the National Biological Survey have their way the Secretary of the Interior would be prohibited from putting CBC results and other volunteer-generated bird data into a national data base. This would be a disaster for bird monitoring programs—CBCs and Breeding Bird Surveys, to name two—most of which rely heavily on volunteers in the field.

If you're a bird-counting volunteer and feel that your efforts mean something, write your Congressional representative (Hon. _____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515) and tell them you oppose the "volunteer provision" in H.R. 1845 as passed by the House, and ask them to support the use of volunteers to collect data that could be used in the NBS. Let them know that volunteer participation in meaningful scientific endeavors should be encouraged, not suppressed.

General Membership Meeting, Wednesday, January 19

7:30 PM Refreshments, 8:00 PM Program
Palo Alto Cultural Center

Newell & Embarcadero Roads

Birds of a Feather

Our speaker is the incredible Luis Baptista, Curator of Ornithology at The California Academy of Science. Luis has been doing bioacoustical research for many years. His life work is centered around the questions why birds sing and how they learn to do so. Luis has figured out all the song dialects that White-crowned Sparrows learn. At the Academy, you can now visit a fascinating exhibit called "Birds of a Feather." One of the displays talks about Luis' research and explains that he is using song dialects to trace the origins of island-dwelling White-crowns. This is what Luis will talk about in depth at our next meeting. It will be fascinating and lots of fun listening to Luis whistle bird songs and talk about each one. If you have already heard Luis talk about his research, this will be an update with lots of new information.

Chapter News

Third Annual SCVAS Education Day

The third annual Audubon Education Day will be held at McClellan Ranch Park on Saturday, March 5 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Again, the theme will be California Wildlife and Local Habitats. Santa Clara Valley students, their parents and teachers are invited to attend.

The popular poster contest will be held again for all kindergarten through sixth grade students. Posters should illustrate the theme of California Wildlife and Local Habitats. The poster may be done in any media but should be the student's own work. First, second and third place prizes will be awarded at every grade level and all participants will receive a certificate of participation. Winning posters will be displayed at the Audubon

office.

During Education Day there will be a great variety of ongoing activities including bird walks, bird banding, brine shrimp lab, Project Wild games, live animals and more. We have arranged for parking at nearby Monte Vista High School and a shuttle between the school and McClellan Park.

Please mark your calendar and help to make the third Education Day a successful one by volunteering some time. Help is needed setting up and taking down tables and displays, and with the day's ongoing activities. Call Jayne at the SCVAS office to sign up. More details in the Feb. Avocet.

Burrowing Owl Class at C.E.C.

SCVAS' Education Committee sponsored its first class at McClellan Ranch Park. We want to thank Lynne Trulio for doing such a fantastic job on her presentation on the Burrowing Owl. The class was well attended with 15 participants who thoroughly enjoyed the evening class on December 1 and the Saturday morning field trip to Shoreline Park. The group was thoroughly delighted to see so many of the little owls at such close range. Lynne gave all of us much insight and information about the species. We all plan to write to and/or call local city councils involved to help save these wonderful birds and their habitat.

If you are interested in future classes call Bobbie Handen 408/356-4263 or the Audubon office.

Nature Shop News

A Hummer's Endorsement: One sunny afternoon, I had the office door open. I was busy working at the computer when, suddenly, I heard a very loud humming noise. I looked up and saw a male Anna's Hummingbird in the Nature Shop trying to feed from one of our new hummingbird feeders! Not only did he try to get food from the open one on display, but also from the sealed ones behind it. Needless to say, I feel very confident in recommending that feeder!

—Jayne DiCandio

JANUARY SPECIAL

Remember, we sell birdseed all year 'round at the Nature Shop. This month get 20% off any birdseed with the purchase of any feeder!

Most *Avocet* subscribers receive the newsletter in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, some of you have been receiving your *Avocets* two, three, even four weeks late. We are aware of this problem and have contacted some of the local Post

Offices to remind them that our third-class mailing needs to be delivered more promptly. We also suggest that you contact your local Post Office if you have had difficulty receiving *The Avocet* on time.

SCVAS OFFICERS

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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

Office Mgr	Jayne DiCandio	408/252-3747
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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-'96	408/356-4263
Howard Johnson '93-'96	408/255-2422

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BAAC		
Delegate	Trish Mulvey	415/326-0252
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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

January 1994 Calendar

On all field trips carpool and share expenses. Bring binoculars, field guides, warm clothing, lunch (optional on half-day trips) and liquids.

**Denotes Field Trip

Wednesday Jan. 5, 7:30 PM. Environmental Action Committee meeting. Cupertino Environmental Center, 22221 McClellan Road, Cupertino. For more information call Tony Eppstein 415/326-1376.

Wednesday, Jan. 5, 7:30 PM. Bay Area Bird Photographers. Dr. Denny Mallory will present some of his outstanding work on Mono Lake at the Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center on East Embarcadero Road.

****Saturday Jan. 8, 8:30 AM. Post-CBC Rarities Chase.** Leader: John Mariani 408/997-2066. Meeting place and itinerary to be determined after Christmas Bird Counts. Come help us search for some of the holiday season's best bird finds! Bring a bag lunch, drinks, and a full tank of gas. Call leader for information after Jan. 1. Heavy rain cancels.

****Sunday Jan. 9, 8:30 AM. Half day. Beginners trip to Charleston Slough.** Leader: Bob Reiling 408/253-7527. Take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio Rd. in Mt. View, then north on San Antonio to its end at the Terminal Way parking area (1/4 mile). Emphasis on birding basics, and a chance to get acquainted with a variety of ducks, shorebirds, gulls, and other wetland birds. Bring binoculars (and a scope if you have one).

Tuesday Jan. 11, 9:30 AM. Eve Case Bird Discussion Group at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos 408/395-4264. Topic: Crows and Ravens.

****Wednesday Jan. 12, 9:30 AM. Half day. Alviso Environmental Education Center.** Leader: Lee Lovelady 408/723-4864. Walk with this San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge volunteer naturalist on the trails along the slough. Directions: from Hwy. 237 going east from Mt. View, turn left on

Taylor St., then right on Grand Blvd. Head straight on Grand to Ed. Center. Rain cancels.

****Saturday Jan. 15, 9:30 AM. Full day. Woodbridge Road/Delta.** Leader: Waldo Holt. Local contact: John Mariani 408/997-2066. Meet at Rocky's Restaurant, intersection of I-5 and Hwy. 12. Highlights: wintering raptors (including possible Swainson's Hawk), Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, and other Delta specialties. Bring lunch, liquids, and full tank of gas. Call local contact for reservation and carpool information.

****Sunday Jan. 16, 8:30 AM. Half day. Foster City.** Leader: Nick Coiro 415/349-1834. Directions: take Hwy. 101 north to Foster City, exit Hillsdale Blvd east for 1 mile to Shell Blvd. Turn right on Shell and meet at parking lot between the tennis courts and recreation building. Be prepared to carpool from meeting place as caravanning is difficult and parking limited. Highlights: Hooded Merganser, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red Knot, Peregrine Falcon.

Wednesday Jan. 19, 7:30 PM. General meeting in Palo Alto. Speaker: Luis Baptista on research of bird song dialects. See box on Pg. 1 for details.

****Saturday Jan. 22, 9:00 AM. Half day. Sunnyvale Sewage Treatment Ponds.** Leader: Nick Lethaby 408/435-2729. Take Hwy. 101 to Hwy. 237 east. Exit north on Caribbean Dr. to Borregas Ave., right on Borregas to sewage treatment plant, then left to public parking lot. Highlights: emphasis on gulls (nine species possible, including Thayer's and the rare Glaucous; at least seven likely). Also ducks and Tricolored Blackbird.

****Wednesday Jan. 26. Half day. Jasper Ridge, Stanford.** Docent leaders. \$5.00 gate fee. By reservation only. Meet at main entrance gate, Sand Hill Rd. west from I-280 approx. 2 miles to gate on left. Slide show if raining. Lunch optional. For reservations call 415/493-9546.

****Saturday-Sunday Jan. 29-30. Morro Bay weekend.** Leader: Jim Royer. Local contact: John Mariani 408/997-2066. Meet at Morro Rock 9:30 AM Saturday. Highlights: Peregrine Falcon, Brant, heron rookery; wide variety of waterfowl and passerines; also possible wintering rarities. Sunday's trip will—weather & birds permitting—visit Carrizo Plains, where possibilities include Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, Sage Sparrow, and more.

****Saturday Jan. 29, 8:30 AM. Full day. Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough.** Leader: Ken Kellman 408/336-8548. Meet at Jetty Rd. in Moss Landing. Take Hwy. 17 to Santa Cruz, south on Hwy. 1 to Moss Landing, go right on Jetty Rd., park before fee station. Highlights: loons, grebes, saltwater ducks, shorebirds, raptors. Due to limited parking, please try to carpool (call SCVAS office 408/252-3747 for carpool info.) Heavy rain cancels.

****Saturday Feb. 5, 8:30 AM. Half day. Grant Ranch/Hall Lake.** Leader: Alan Thomas 408/265-9286. Meet at Hall's Valley Reservoir parking lot, left side of Mt. Hamilton Rd. 100 yds. past main entrance to Grant Ranch Co. Park. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. east, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd., 7-8 miles to park entrance (there is a fee). Highlights: fresh water ducks, raptors including possible Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon, and oak woodland species. Lunch optional. Rain cancels.

Sunday Feb. 6, 9:00 AM. Full day. Grizzly Island. Leader: Harold Connor. Local contact: John Mariani 408/997-2066. Directions: Take Hwy. 680 north, across Benicia bridge to Cordelia, then north on Hwy 80 to Fairfield. Take Hwy. 12 east for about 4 miles and meet at parking lot next to McDonald's restaurant on left side of Hwy. 12 opposite junction with Grizzly Island Rd. Potential highlights: American Bittern, a variety of wintering ducks and raptors, Short-eared Owl, Tule Elk, and, if lucky, River Otter. Minimal walking. Bring lunch and full tank if gas; carpool if possible.

Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Loons to Egrets

The first **Common Loon** of the season was found on Shoreline Lake 17 Nov (AME) and was seen at least through 22 Nov (SCR, WCa). A **Red-necked Grebe** found at the mouth of the Palo Alto estuary 11 Nov (SCR) has not been seen again. Rottenborn and Rogers guessed that the storm of 10 Nov might blow something interesting into the South Bay. The storm front stalled and their expectations diminished but, nonetheless, a morning excursion to lower Coyote Creek near the Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS) trailers provided the first record of Ashy Storm-Petrel for the county. The storm-petrel was flying from east to west and, perhaps, had become disoriented during the hours of darkness and wound up over land. The odds of finding any pelagic species in the county are exceedingly small but at least the ground under foot is solid. **Brown Pelicans** have lingered very late this month, as they did last year. Twelve plus birds on Salt Pond A10 1 Nov (MMR) was the largest concentration noted. This has been the best fall in many years for **American Bittern**, especially in the Alviso area (m.ob.) Two birds were at Triangle Marsh 14 Nov (MJM,MMR) and two to three were seen nearby along Coyote Creek on 19 Nov (MMR,SCR). Singles have also been found at the Palo Alto Baylands 13 Nov (MiF), the Mountain View Forebay 21 Nov (JiC), and Artesian Slough 22 Nov (PJM,VL). Five **Cattle Egrets** were reported this month at the Arzino Ranch 10 Nov (MMR,SCR) and a single bird was off Santa Teresa Blvd. in the south county 26 Nov (SCR).

Waterfowl

The storm that finally came in on 11 Nov appeared to bring some **Tundra Swans** to the South Bay. Twenty-two were found in the Alviso salt ponds 12 Nov (MMR), with 32 counted on the Santa Clara side of Coyote Creek 14 Nov and three more were on the Alameda side (MJM,MMR). Seven birds were seen on

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Calaveras Res. on 14 Nov (MJM,MMR) and nine remained on the salt ponds and were seen 15 Nov (SCR). An imm. **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen at Hellyer CP 3 and 24 Nov (SCR) and two immatures found at Shoreline 9 Nov (MMR) remained at least through 22 Nov (m.ob.). A single **Snow Goose** was on Salt Pond A9 14 Nov (MJM,MMR), an imm. was seen on Calaveras Res. 24 Nov (SCR), and two adults were seen flying over the Palo Alto FCB after sunset 25 Nov (SCR,HLR). Almaden Res. has again become a good spot for wintering **Wood Duck** with 32 there 13 Nov and 35 on 26 Nov (AV). Single male **Blue-winged Teal** have been found in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) 1 Nov (SCR), and in the Mountain View Forebay 7 Nov (SCR,HLR) and 18 Nov

Ashy Storm-Petrel and a Common Black-headed Gull are both first records for the county.

(AME). A pair was found on Coyote Res. 26 Nov (DLSu). A male **Eurasian Wigeon**, perhaps the same bird, has been found in the Mountain View Forebay 7 Nov (WCa) and Charleston Slough the same day (SCR,HLR). The Palo Alto FCB **Redhead** flock has returned with five noted 11 Nov (WGB) and numbers building to 39 by 30 Nov (SCR). A pair was also found on Salt Pond A10 20 Nov (MJM) and a male was at Shoreline Lake 29 Nov (AME). The **Tufted Duck** discovered last month has remained on Salt Pond A10 at least through 18 Nov. The first **Barrow's Goldeneye** of the winter season was a male found at Shoreline Lake 17 Nov (AME). Numbers there since have built to three to four birds. A single male was found on Salt Pond A10 on 19 Nov (MMR,SCR) and a female was there on 20 Nov (AME). **Hooded Mergansers** are being found widely distributed again this fall with 15 on Lake Ranch Res. 14 Nov (MiF), 2-3 birds on the Los Alamitos ponds 14 and 25 Nov (AV), one on Almaden Res. 26 Nov (AV),

four on Coyote Res. 26 Nov (DLSu), nine on Lake Elsmar 26 Nov (DLSu), and 11 on the Oka ponds 27 Nov (AV).

Raptors

A first-year **Bald Eagle** at Calaveras Res. 24 Nov (SCR) is the first one found this season. **Ferruginous Hawks** have been found more frequently this month than in any previous autumn. An imm. was found at Santa Teresa and Highland 5 and 26 Nov (SCR). On 6 and 7 Nov an imm. and one to two adults were found in the vicinity of Bloomfield Rd. (DLSu). On 7 Nov an adult was seen at Monterey and Palm in Morgan Hill (MMR). On 11 and 12 Nov an adult was along Sierra Rd. (WGB,SCR). At Calaveras Res. two imm. were seen 13 Nov (SCR) and at least one of these birds was refound 14 Nov (MMR) and 19-20 Nov (SCR). Finally, a bird was seen off Cochrane in Morgan Hill 28 Nov (MiF). An imm. **Rough-legged Hawk** over the Sunnyvale Baylands 5 Nov (SCR) was our first record in two years. The first week in November provided a plethora of **Merrills** with at least eleven reports (m.ob.). Including two birds later in the month this provides more sightings that we've ever had during this period. The story with **Peregrine Falcon** is similar with both adults and immatures observed in many locations along the bay (m.ob.). Less expected was an adult on Calaveras Res. 8 and 20 Nov (SCR). Individual **Prairie Falcons** were seen in the Alviso area on 5 Nov (SCR), 7 Nov (WGB), 19 Nov (SCR), and 22 Nov (PJM,VL). Another bird was seen in Jos. Grant CP 20 Nov (SCR).

Rails to Woodpeckers

At least two **Black Rails** were at the Palo Alto Baylands on the November high tides 13 Nov (MJM,RWR). Two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were found 7 Nov (DLSu) near Bloomfield and Fairview Roads south of Gilroy in the underbirded southern Santa Clara Valley. This fall's exceptional **Lesser Yellowlegs** migration is over with a single report this month of one bird in the Palo Alto FCB 1 Nov (SCR). A number of observers this fall have lingered at the brine outlet pipe in

Salt Pond A11, admiring the quantities of **Bonaparte's Gulls** attracted to the salt pond delectables and hoping for the unusual gull. Steve Rottenborn was the first to find something when on 15 Nov he saw an adult **Common Black-headed Gull** in with the bonnies. This is the first record of this species in the county. Despite much searching no one was able to refine this bird, but on 18 Nov, the famous "Patagonia Rest Stop Effect" kicked in when an imm. **Sabine's Gull** was found there (RF). This bird remained at least through 20 Nov (m.ob.). A **Greater Roadrunner** was found 17 Nov across from the Gilroy Garlic Festival grounds (RAM, BMM fide DLSu). Two **Short-eared Owls** were in the Palo Alto FCB 1 Nov (SCR), but have not been found since. An imm. **Lewis' Woodpecker** was seen in Hellyer CP 3 Nov (SCR) for our second fall record away from their Diablo Range stronghold. Two **Pileated Woodpeckers** were found above Lake Elsmar on Wrights Station Road 26 Nov (DLSu). All of our previous records have been of late winter birds.

Swallows to Crossbills

A flock of ten **Tree Swallows** 7 Nov along Alviso Slough (AV) are probably wintering in the South Bay rather than being late migrants. A **Rock Wren** near Felt Lake 25 Nov (SCR) was away from known nesting areas. Wintering **House Wrens** have been found in a number of locations including one on Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 6 Nov (SCR, MJM), two on Llagas Creek at Bloomfield Rd. 7 Nov (DLSu), another bird the same day on the Pajaro River below Hwy 101 (DLSu) and

one on the edge of Grant Lake 21 Nov (MiF). Also wintering was an **American Dipper** at Alum Rock Park 25 Nov (MJM), but one found on Uvas Creek above Watsonville Road 26 Nov (DLSu) is not far from known breeding locations. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** have moved into the area this winter for the first time in several years. One banded 28 Oct at CCRS (fide WGB) is the first of the season. A male **Phainopepla** along Smiths Creek 20 and 21 Nov (SCR, MiF) is in an area where they are occasionally found. The incredible **Palm Warbler** invasion continues this month. One bird was banded at CCRS 10 Nov (fide WGB). Four birds were found at the Alviso EEC on 13 Nov (SCR, SBT) with one to two birds remaining there through 21 Nov (m.ob.). A single bird was along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 29 and 30 Nov (MMR). A female or imm. **Black-and-White Warbler** was seen along the Pajaro River 7 Nov and found there again 26 Nov (both DLSu). Another individual was seen in Los Gatos 9 Nov (JDuB et al.). The majority of our records for this eastern vagrant are from October and November. A **MacGillivray's Warbler** banded at CCRS 8 Nov and re-captured 10 and 17 Nov (fide SCR) is unusual. A **Western Tanager** found along San Francisquito Creek at Middlefield 28 Nov (AME) will probably winter here. A **Chipping Sparrow** found at Ed Levin CP 12 Nov (SCR) may be a wintering bird rather than a late migrant. The second **Brewer's Sparrow** of the season was found along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 28 Nov (MJM). A single **Vesper Sparrow** was found along Calaveras

Road 13 Nov (SCR) - is this species more common as a migrant or a wintering bird? **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were found again at the Palo Alto Baylands 11-13 Nov during the November high tides (RWR, MJM, MiF). The number of **Swamp Sparrows** found this fall is quite high. One was found along Alviso Slough 12 Nov (MMR). At the Palo Alto Baylands single birds were seen on 11 and 12 Nov (RWR, MiF). A single bird was found at the upper end of Coyote Res. 26 Nov (DLSu). A **White-throated Sparrow** returned to a house in Ladera 1 Nov (MW). A bird found last month along Coyote Creek above Kelley Park was re-found 13 Nov (MJM). A total of four birds were found on 20 Nov at Jos. Grant CP (SCR) and a single imm. was along Coyote Creek below Hwy 237 on 28 Nov (MJM). A flock of six **Red Crossbills** was over Morrill Road in the Santa Cruz Mountains 26 Nov (DLSu).

OBSERVERS: Bill Bousman (WGB), William Cabot (WCa), Jim Corliss (JiC), Jean DuBois (JDuB), Al Eisner (AME), Mike Feighner (MiF), Reid Freeman (RF), Valerie Layne (VL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Peter Metropulos (PJM), Randy Morgan (RAM), Bryan Mori (BMM), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Heather Rottenborn (HLR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), David Suddjian (DLSu), Scott Terrill (SBT), Ann Verdi (AV), and Mercedes Williams (MW).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Mountain Plover Census

The Western Regional Office of the National Audubon Society is coordinating a statewide Mountain Plover census to be held on Saturday, January 29, 1994. Personnel from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and California Department of Fish & Game are providing assistance and support. The Mountain Plover census is part of National Audubon's Birds in the Balance migratory bird program.

The Mountain Plover is in trouble. Its numbers are so low (2,000-6,000) that it may soon be listed under the authority

of the Endangered Species Act. The Plover nests primarily on the high plains of Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. The species winters almost exclusively in California with populations concentrating in the Central Valley, Carrizo Plain, and in Imperial County south of the Salton Sea.

Records of wintering Mountain Plovers in California are spread over several months over several years. The January 29th census will be an attempt to estimate California's Mountain Plover wintering population on a single date.

For further information, contact Bob Barnes, Birds in the Balance Program Coordinator, at Audubon's Western Regional Office in Sacramento (916-481-5332).



Environmental Action News

Sprawl Halted in South Almaden Valley

A combination of political leadership on the part of Mayor Susan Hammer and a coalition of environmental and citizens' groups resulted in a 7-4 San Jose City Council vote to oppose the General Plan Task Force proposal to plan to build up to 2,000 homes in the largely rural, habitat-rich South Almaden Valley. The mayor's compromise requires 5,000 jobs to be established in the North Coyote area of South San Jose; five years' projections of San Jose's budget in the black; and a full-scale General Plan Review before housing can even be planned.

A broad-based coalition of environmental groups, including Greenbelt Alliance, Santa Clara Valley Audubon, Sierra Club, Almaden Valley Residents, and local homeowners' and horsemen's associations mounted an intense campaign of one-

on-one lobbying of San Jose City Council members; letters and postcards; phone calls; petitions (1,000 signatures were gathered); and finally, City Council Hearing testimony. The San Jose Mercury News was also extremely helpful with excellent editorial and informational pieces on the Almaden and Coyote Urban Reserves.

Many thanks are extended to all of the SCVAS members who responded to our mailing with their calls and letters. Coalitions work! We can be effective!

—Jeannie Leavitt

Thanks, Jeannie, for all the hard work you put into this successful grass-roots effort!—Ed.

S.F. Bay-Delta Restoration Act

Your help is urgently needed to assure passage of H.R. 2320, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Restoration Act of 1993. Congresswoman Pelosi's legislation will establish an institutional implementation structure for the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary Project and authorize federal funds for CCMP implementation programs and activities.

Congresswoman Pelosi has requested that H.R. 2320 be included in the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. It is important for her to know that there is strong support for her bill.

Please write now to the U.S. Senators and Representatives listed below expressing your support for the legislation and stating imperatively that it should be included in the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. Key points to mention are as follows:

- The San Francisco Estuary Project is one of the nation's most important and biologically productive estuaries.
- It is one of the most altered estuaries in the U.S.
- There has been a 96% reduction in historic wetlands in the Delta and Central Valley, an 82% reduction of historic tidal

wetlands in the Bay, a 70% decline in the striped bass population and diversion of more than 50% of natural freshwater flows through the Estuary.

- The San Francisco Estuary Project was established in 1988 as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program to protect and restore the San Francisco Estuary.
- About \$8 million has been spent characterizing the Estuary and developing the CCMP.
- The CCMP was unanimously adopted by the Management Committee in March 1993.
- Passage of H.R. 2320 is essential for establishing an institutional structure and insuring adequate funding for implementation of CCMP programs and activities.

Send letters to the following:

- Congressman Norman Y. Mineta, Chair, Committee for Public Works and Transportation, 2165 RHOB, Washington, DC 20515
- Congressman Gerry E. Studds, Chair, Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, 1334 LHOB, Washington, DC 20515

- Congressman Douglas Applegate, Chair, Subcommittee on Water Resource & Environment, B-370A RHOB, Washington, DC 20515

- Senator Max Baucus, Chair, Committee on Environment and Public Works, 456 SDOB, Washington, DC 20510

- Senator Bob Graham, Chair, Subcommittee on Clean Water, Fisheries & Wildlife, 458 SDOB, Washington, DC 20510

Please send copies of your letter to the following members of Congress at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515:

The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums
The Honorable Anna Eshoo
The Honorable Don Edwards
The Honorable Dan Hamburg
The Honorable Tom Lantos
The Honorable George Miller
The Honorable Pete Stark
The Honorable Lynn Woolsey

A copy of your letter to the following would also be appreciated:

The San Francisco Estuary Project
c/o RWQCB
2101 Webster Street, Suite 450
Oakland, CA 94612

Cheeseman Safari to Benefit SCVAS

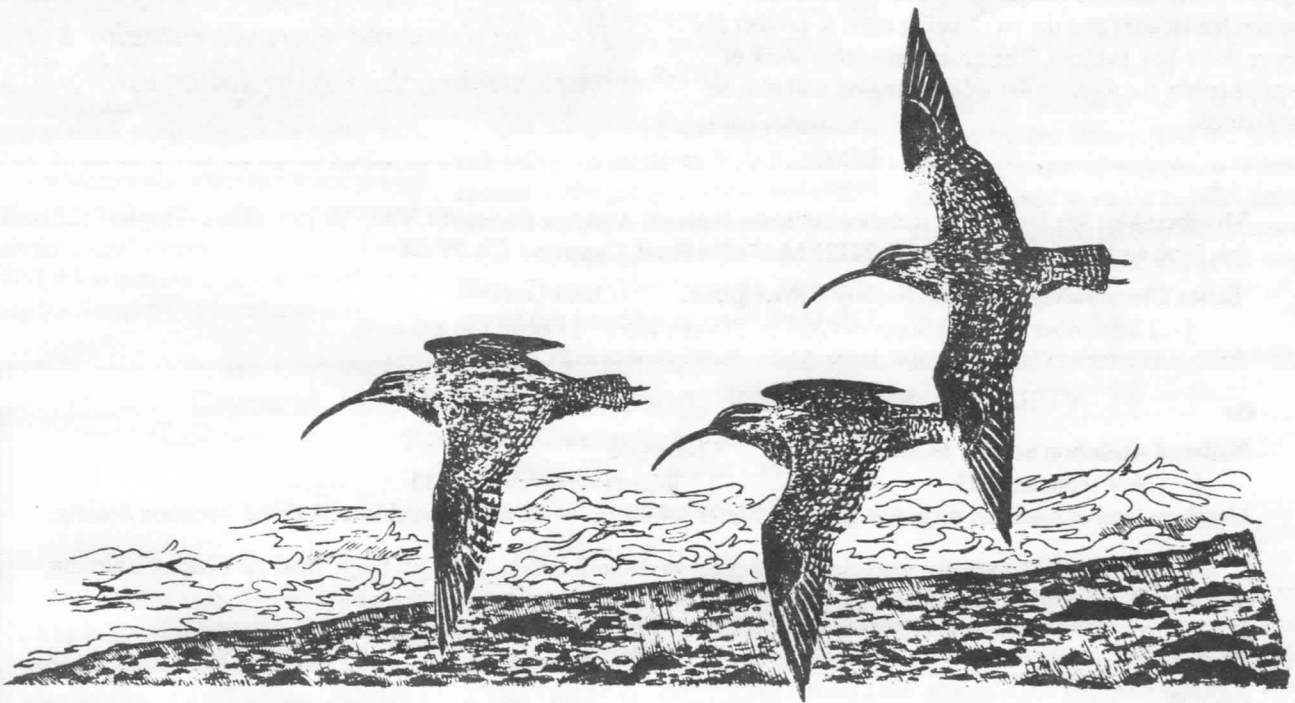
Benefit Audubon by taking wing to Venezuela on a 19-day tour (April 16 - May 4, '94). This tour has been arranged by Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris and by the Venezuela Audubon Society and will be a fundraiser for SCVAS and Venezuela Audubon. Resident Venezuelan naturalist David Ascanio and Houston Audubon President-elect Lynne Aldrich will lead this enticing birding tour, limited to 10 people. Highlights include the Rio Grande Forest Reserve, home to the Harpy Eagle, four days on La Escalera, with Guianan specialties including the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock, and on to the Gran Sabana, famed for its spectacular tepuis. In Amazonas take a boat trip up the Orinoco River to a national park in Columbia, replete with Umbrellabirds. Tour members will sojourn 4 days in the heart of the Lower Llanos at Hato El Frio. Laguna de Mucubaji at 12,000 feet in the northern Andes and the Sierra Nevada National Park provide a total contrast to Amazonas and the Llanos. Tour cost is \$2,750, including all lodging and domestic flights in Venezuela. A 3-day extension to Henri Pittier National Park is available.

Here's the local angle: Doug and Gail have generously offered to donate a significant chunk of the profits (up to \$2,000) from this trip toward the hiring of the SCVAS Environmental Advocate. Why? Because they care deeply about protecting our wetlands, creeks and foothills and believe that SCVAS can take a stronger role in local environmental issues with a staff person dedicated to that purpose. Help the Cheesemans help us! They need to fill up the Venezuela bird tour in order to make the donation, so call them at (408)867-1371 for more information on this blockbuster birding trip.

Field Trip Report

It was a beautiful but breezy day for the monthly Birdwald for Beginners at Charleston Slough on November 14th. A highlight was great looks at a male Blue-winged Teal among several Cinnamon Teal in the Mountain View Forebay. Two incidents occurred which will stand out in my memories as a field trip leader: 1) At the very beginning, just as I was saying, "Welcome to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon . . .", someone called out "Falcon coming over!" and we all looked up to see a Peregrine Falcon zip by. I said, "Well, that's a good start." 2) At the very end we spent a few minutes scoping the Flood Control Basin, then Lynn Miller came up to me and said, "What could this bird be that I've been watching for ten minutes in the bushes over here?" pointing to a spot right behind us. "It was staying in the bushes low to the ground and wagging its tail, and it had yellow underneath the tail." It was a good description of a Palm Warbler, a rare migrant in these parts, but, alas, we couldn't re-find it.

—Dick Stovel



This issue features artwork by John Mariani, our Weekend Field Trip Coordinator and a talented artist. *The Avocet* welcomes original artwork by SCVAS members for publication in future issues.

Santa Clara Valley
Audubon Society
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Birds In The Balance Western Regional Conference

Make plans to join hundreds of fellow Auduboners on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula on March 26-29 for the 1994 Western Regional Conference of the National Audubon Society. This year's conference theme focuses on Audubon's new and compelling Birds in the Balance Program. Among the most exciting new initiatives on the conservation horizon is the effort to sustain healthy and viable populations of neotropical migratory songbirds. These birds include warblers, vireos, tanagers, swallow, swifts, flycatchers, grosbeaks and buntings. Generally they winter in Latin America, breed in temperate North America, and expend a great deal of energy migrating back and forth in between.

Unfortunately, these birds are being squeezed at every stop on their annual migration. Their wintering grounds are often tropical forests of scrub habitat in jeopardy of wholesale conversion. They arrive at their breeding grounds to find their habitats gone or generally degraded.

This year's conference will feature top-notch speakers, interactive workshops and a variety of field trips. Presentations and workshops will draw special attention to key migratory bird habitats including forest, wetland, and riparian landscapes and the work being done to protect and restore those key habitats. The great restoration work of many chapters throughout the western region will also be highlighted.

We will also feature a full concurrent youth program directed by the educational staff of the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and assisted by chapter volunteers as part of the conference.

With a tradition begun 46 years ago, the Western Regional Conference of the National Audubon Society at Asilomar has grown into the largest regularly scheduled environmental gathering in the West.

The Birds in the Balance conference theme touches every part of the Western Region. It will be a truly valuable experience for the 800 people or more who will be in attendance.

The official conference announcement will be sent out very soon. When you get your announcement, register early as the conference grounds fill up quickly. And bring the whole family!

In Memoriam

A donation was made in memory of Vance Hopkins from the Curtner Faculty Fund and Curtner School Association in Milpitas.

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.

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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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