



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

January 2001

County Plan for Stanford Protects Foothills

Citizens help shape crucial land use decisions

by Craig Breon
Executive Director

After the longest, most thorough outreach effort I have ever seen on a local land use issue, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted on November 7 to allow Stanford University to develop nearly 5 million square feet of new academic facilities and housing over the next ten years. The Supervisors also attempted to protect 2200 acres of Stanford's foothills for 25 years. Whether they succeeded in those preservation efforts is uncertain, but I remain optimistic.

More than 40 public hearings informed the debate. Hundreds of people commented at those hearings; thousands more signed petitions or sent e-mails for one side or another. I have worked on the issue for nearly two years, attending perhaps half of the public hearings and sit-

ting on an advisory committee for the county. Was it all worth it? Absolutely. Did we get a satisfactory conclusion? That remains debateable.

It is important to understand the unique relationship Stanford has with Santa Clara County. Unlike other counties in the Bay Area, our County Board has made it quite clear that urban-scale development should only occur in incorporated cities, while unincorporated county lands should remain rural in character. The big exception to that rule is Stanford, which remains under county control despite having the population and building densities of a city. This relationship has benefited Stanford tremendously, allowing it to avoid traditional zoning for its lands as well as other restrictions a city would impose that the county did not.

Under California planning law, this loose relationship was probably illegal. At a minimum, the *San Jose Mercury* was accurate in calling it a "sweatheart deal."

A couple examples may suffice to illustrate this point. Some of Stanford's lands look like normal city neighborhoods. However, homeowners in those neighborhoods were alarmed to find out that Stanford had planned additional housing in what they considered their parks. Without the protection of zoning and other land use regulations, a park on campus could become housing, or classrooms, or a research facility, with very little notice.

A similar situation existed in the foothills. Officially termed "Academic Reserves," Stanford's open lands near Interstate 280 could be developed with almost any type or size of building. When and where foothill development would occur was up to the University, with very few protections in place. To its credit, Stanford has not proposed much foothill development in recent years. To the credit of the surrounding communities and local conservationists, some of what Stanford has proposed was defeated.

Now, however, the relationship between the county and Stanford has fundamentally shifted. When and where Stanford can build is more clear. In the

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General Membership Meeting Wednesday, January 17 "The Magic of Malheur—Birding Mecca in Oregon's High Desert"

with Steve Shunk and Terry Steele

Palo Alto Art Center
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.
7:30 Hospitality 8:00 Program

Join former SCVAS board member and Oregon naturalist Steve Shunk as he partners with renowned Northwest photonaturalist Terry Steele for a grand tour slide show of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Malheur boasts over 340 species of birds with nearly 140 breeding species, including Eastern Kingbird, Bobolink, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, Sandhill Crane, Sage Grouse, Sage Thrasher, and Black-throated Sparrow. The Malheur-Harney Lakes Basin lies at the northwest corner of the Interior Great Basin. *continued on page 7*

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Volunteer Ventures

by Ulrike Keyssner



Yikes! This is the first time I have written the year 2001. Time has definitely flown and I'm happy to say I've had fun working at SCVAS, especially with our volunteers. Happy New Year and best wishes to all our wonderful volunteers.

I know many members have been intending to give me a call or drop by the office and take the first steps towards volunteering. It's now a new year and millennium—don't let this one get away from you, too. Just call or e-mail me and we can take the first small steps. I understand time is a precious commodity but we can work out an assignment that will work with your schedule. You'll have fun and feel great doing it.

A big **thank you** to our volunteers who helped address and stuff envelopes for our Fall Fundraiser. Thanks especially to SCVAS member Sandy Cortright who hosted an afternoon of envelope-stuffing with 26 volunteers from "Meeting for Good." This is the second year this organization has helped us with the Fall Fundraiser. As a thank you to these energetic "stuffers" Sandy led an afternoon nature walk around McClellan Ranch. Thank you "Meeting for Good" members!

Thursday is still open for anyone wishing to volunteer in our office and Nature Shop. New volunteer Anne Creevy is working in our office and Nature Shop on Tuesday mornings. Anne perfectly illustrates how volunteers can choose what they want to do at Audubon. Although Anne is a retired teacher and is an experienced naturalist, she has chosen an entirely different job at SCVAS. We want our volunteers to enjoy what they are doing, learn new skills, and to look forward to working with us. We encourage our volunteers, and those still thinking about it, to try the variety of opportunities we have to offer.

Ulrike Keyssner,
Volunteer & Education Programs Coordinator,
(408) 252-3747; e-mail <ulrike@scvas.org>

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

by Freddy Howell



The November general meeting at the Campbell Community Center, featuring author Kenn Kaufman, was a grand success. Over 150 people attended and were treated to an informative (and humorous) presentation by the author of Birds of North America, a new field guide. After the talk he patiently signed copies of his various works for everyone. Susan reported that we did over \$1,300 in sales this evening.

Many members mentioned that they appreciated having the meeting at the Campbell location as it was closer and had more parking. Since SCVAS' membership is spread all over the county, we decided to begin alternating venues between Palo Alto and Campbell to better serve our South County membership. Doug and Gail Cheeseman have lined up outstanding programs for the chapter this year and we need to make it more convenient for as many people as possible to attend. Please let us know your feelings on this issue at the next meeting.

As reported in the *Avocet*, Craig Breon, our long time environmental advocate, is now the chapter's Executive Director and as such must start shifting the advocacy work to his successor. The Board is actively looking for an new advocate, either on a 3/4-time or full-time basis. A complete job description is available at the office. If you know anyone who has a passion for environmental advocacy and would like to learn from one of the best, please contact the office. As an assist in the hiring process, the Board would like to offer an affordable housing opportunity. Do any members have a cottage or apartment that could be rented to the new advocate at a below market rate? Please let Craig or Susan know. This would go along way in 'sweetening' our offer to prospective applicants.

SCVAS 2001 WISH LIST!

Freezer for birds awaiting Taxidermy • **Bookshelves** (6 feet tall) for Library
Laser Printer (Mac) for Craig Breon • **56K Modem** for Environmental Advocate
Powerbook 180 (or better) for Craig Breon • **Power PC** (Mac) for Craig Breon
Power Strips (3 prong) & **Extension Cords** • **Portable CD Player/Boom Box**
Fridge for Kitchen • **Office Chairs** (on rollers) • **Vacuum Cleaner** for Office

Our office runs almost entirely on donated furniture and equipment. We would appreciate any of the items above in good working order. We can provide a Donation Receipt for tax reimbursement.

Thank you!

January 2001 Calendar

****Denotes field trip. On all trips carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing. LO=Lunch optional; RC = Heavy rain cancels.**

Starting this month Steve Rutledge will lead the first of a series of three field trips designed for beginning and intermediate birders. These trips will be run more like introductory seminars than bird walks. Steve will emphasize birding fundamentals and will provide free bird lists and other appropriate handouts on each trip.

Wednesday Jan. 3, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents Eleanor Briccetti with slides of birds and wildlife of the Pribilof Islands. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

**Saturday Jan. 6, 8:00 AM

Panoche Valley. Full day. Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Meet at Paicines Store on Hwy. 25 approx. 11 miles south of Hollister. Expected species include Phainopepla, Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle; possible Mountain Plover, Vesper Sparrow, Roadrunner, Chukar. Bring lunch and a full tank of gas, carpooling is strongly recommended due to limited parking on the narrow roads.

**Sunday Jan. 7, 8:00 AM

Post CBC Rarities Chase. Full day. Leader: John Mariani (408) 997-2066. Bring a full tank of gas, lunch, and field guides as we attempt to track down some of the unusual birds seen on Christmas Bird Counts from Monterey to Santa Cruz. Meet at ranger's kiosk on Jetty Rd., just north of Moss Landing harbor on Hwy 1. **RC**

Tuesday Jan. 9, 9:30 AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave, Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Merlin.

**Wednesday Jan. 10, 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park. Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Alum Rock Rd. is closed at park entrance; park at Penitencia entrance. From Alum Rock Rd. turn left on White, right on McKee, left on Toyon, right on Penitencia Rd. to end at parking lot. **LO, RC**

**Saturday Jan. 13, 8:30 AM

Grant Ranch Co. Park. Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave. northeast, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. and go approximately 9 miles to park. Meet at Hall's Valley Lake parking lot located on left, just past main park entrance. Fresh water ducks, oak woodland birds, possible Golden Eagle. Moderate 2-mile walk. **LO, RC**

**Sunday Jan. 14, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough. Half day. Leader: Steve Rutledge (650) 328-5097. "Getting your ducks in a row"—first in a series of trips designed for beginning and intermediate birders. Today's focus will be on waterfowl. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mt. View. **LO** (Following lunch, interested participants will be invited to travel to nearby wetlands to seek additional waterfowl species).

**Saturday Jan. 20, 9:00 AM

Merced National Wildlife Refuge. Full day. Leader: Don Schmoltdt (916) 739-8821. Meet at NW corner of Rte. 59/Sandy Mush Rd. From Hwy 101 in Gilroy take Hwy 152 east past Los Banos approx. 20 miles, then north 7 miles on Rte. 59 to meeting place. Allow 2.5 hrs from San Jose, more if foggy. Raptors, ducks, geese, Sandhill Cranes, White-faced Ibis.

**Sunday Jan. 21, 9:00 AM

Charleston Slough. Half day. Leader: Steve Rutledge (650) 328-5097. "Waterbirds in depth."—second in a series of field trips designed for beginning and intermediate birders. Leader will highlight field identification of common waterbirds and some basic biology of

shorebirds, herons, gulls and grebes. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy. 101 in Mt. View. After an optional lunch those interested will seek additional waterbirds at Palo Alto Baylands.

**Wednesday Jan. 24, 9:00 AM

Foster City. Half day. Leader: Rose Green (650) 493-8378. From Hwy 101 north take Hillsdale Blvd east to Shell, then go right to parking area on right just past Foster City Rec. Center. Possible Red Knot, Hooded Merganser, Barrow's Goldeneye. Bring scopes. **LO, RC**

**Saturday Jan. 27, 8:00 AM

Sunnyvale WPC Ponds. Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. From Hwy. 101 take Hwy. 237 east, exit north on Caribbean Dr., turn right on Borregas Ave. then left to parking area. A great place to study ducks. Scopes highly recommended. A fairly easy but long walk. **RC**

**Sunday Jan. 28, 9:00 AM

Foster City. Half day. Leader: Robin Smith (650) 325-3306. See directions under Jan. 24 listing. Gulls, terns, cormorants, dabbling ducks, sea ducks, grebes, shorebirds, raptors; possible Hooded Merganser, Barrow's Goldeneye.

**Saturday Feb. 3, 9:00 AM

San Francisco's Southern Parks. Half day. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. Meet at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, a good place for shorebirds, bay ducks, loons and raptors. We will then visit San Francisco's second largest park—McLaren Park—for land birds and dabbling ducks. Other lesser known but birdy parks may be visited, time permitting. From Hwy 101 exit just past Brisbane Lagoon at Candlestick/3Com Park off-ramp. Continue east along Harney Way and turn right onto Jamestown/Hunters Point Expressway. Entrance to Candlestick State Recreation Area is on right (no fee). Meet at end of paved road that runs through park. **RC**

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Field Notes

By Bill Bousman

Loons through Waterfowl

A **Pacific Loon** was seen on Shoreline Lake on 30 Nov (WGB, MMR); it is the rarest of our three wintering loons. A **Common Loon** was found off the Palo Alto Baylands on 7 Nov (MMR), just over the county line. Thirteen **Brown Pelicans** on Salt Pond A2W on 1 Nov (WGB) were a good number for November. A smattering of **American Bittern** reports brightened the last half of the month with single birds near the mouth of Alviso Slough on 20 Nov (CM, YMcH), at Charleston Slough on 20 Nov (JC), in the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) on 23 Nov (MDo), and just over San Francisquito Creek in a pond opposite the Palo Alto Municipal GC on 28 Nov (MiF, JC). Our token **Cattle Egret** this month was a single bird at Lake Cunningham on 24 Nov (JDa, DW). Overlooked in last month's column, an immature blue phase **Snow Goose** was seen in San Martin on 18 Oct (RWH). This month, a typical immature white phase Snow Goose, first found on 18 Nov (CL) and seen again on 28 Nov (RWR, FV), joined the domestic goose flock at Lake Cunningham. A single adult **Ross's Goose** was found in San Martin with the Snow Goose mentioned above on 18 Oct (RWH), and another adult was seen at Lake Cunningham on 28 Nov (RWR, FV) with the domestic geese there. Two adult and three immature **Tundra Swans** stopped briefly at the Palo Alto Baylands on 7 Nov (CI, DB *fide* MMR), but didn't linger. Almaden Reservoir continues to be the center of the Wood Duck's universe and a high count of 63 was obtained on 12 Nov (AV). The **Eurasian Wigeon** found last month at Calero Reservoir has remained there through November (v.ob.). Four birds were counted on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 8 Nov (MMR, CM) and again on 20 Nov (CM, YMcH). Another two birds were found on Salt Pond A4 in Sunnyvale on 10 Nov (CM). Small numbers of **Blue-winged Teal** have been

found regularly in the Palo Alto FCB in November, but 35 there on 18 Nov (MDo) was an exceptional total. Two birds were found on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 8 Nov (MMR, CM) and a single bird was there on 20 Nov (CM, YMcH). Thirteen **Red-head** on the Alviso salt ponds on 8 Nov (MMR, CM) were the only birds found this month. A male **Barrow's Golden-eye** on Shoreline Lake on 18 Nov (FV) was the first of the season. Two males were noted by 23 Nov (MDo) and were regular through the end of the month

Late fall surprises were a Tropical Kingbird and two Summer Tanagers

(v.ob.). Twenty **Hooded Mergansers** were counted on the Oka percolation ponds on 5 Nov (MW), one of the best spots in the South Bay to see this handsome duck.

Hawks through Skimmers

Regular observations at Vasona Reservoir (JD) have documented the continuing roosting of a female **Osprey** there through the month. Birds have been seen regularly at other reservoir areas in November as well (v.ob.). An immature **Bald Eagle** was found on the Alviso salt ponds on 11 Nov (CM) and again on 20 Nov (SM, YMcH *fide* CM). An adult **Ferruginous Hawk** was seen along Felter Road on 1 Nov (MMR) and is the only report this month. Much more rare, a **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen over Calero Reservoir on 4 Nov (JMa) and another was north of the county line at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve on 26 Nov (JH, DE). By November the passage of **Lesser Yellowlegs** is over and only a few overwintering birds linger. Birds at the New Chicago Marsh on 2 Nov (MJM)

and 18 Nov (MW) are typical of this pattern. A **Stilt Sandpiper** at the New Chicago Marsh on 2 Nov (MJM) was quite late. The Lake Cunningham **Lesser Black-backed Gull** has been seen more-or-less regularly in November (v.ob.), but there has been no report of the Alviso bird. A wintering flock of 12 **Black Skimmers** appears to have settled in at Charleston Slough (m.ob.).

Owls through Orioles

The first **Short-eared Owl** of the season was seen in the Palo Alto FCB on 6 Nov (RMC). Observations there of a single owl on 7 Nov (MMR) and 27 Nov (RWR, FV) are probably of the same bird. Another Short-eared was at the mouth of Alviso Slough on 20 Nov (SM, YMcH *fide* CM). A male **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen along the county border on Skyline Boulevard west of Table Mountain on 11 Nov (MCh). For the fourth fall in a row a **Tropical Kingbird** on reverse migration has graced our bayside habitats. This fall's kingbird was found at the Palo Alto Municipal GC on 26 Nov (DSt) and was seen there again on 28 Nov (RWR, FV), but spent most of its time just over the bike bridge in San Mateo County where it was seen by many enthusiasts. Apparently it moved north from the small pond near the bike bridge about a third of a mile, where it was last seen on 29 Nov (JH). This is the seventh county record—six previous birds have occurred in either October or November. None have stayed more than two days in the past, so this bird was relatively sedentary. Casual in late fall, four **Violet-green Swallows** were over Charleston Slough on 16 Nov (WGB). Conventional wisdom suggests that autumn **Red-breasted Nuthatches** are much more likely in even years, so one bird in Los Altos on 3 Nov (LB), another at Lake Cunningham on 23 Nov (MDo), and at least five there the next day (JDa, DW) represents a moderate fall invasion, but nothing like the major incursions in 1996 and 1998. Late **House Wrens** included three along Stevens Creek below

Field Notes *continued*

L'Avenida on 2 Nov (MMR) and one along Coyote Creek below Highway 237 on 11 Nov (MJM). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** show a similar pattern of odd and even years as the Red-breasted Nuthatches, although never so pronounced. At least one bird was heard near Loma Prieta on 11 Nov (MMR) and a bird banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) on 18 Nov (LCh) was the fourth of the season. A **Yellow Warbler** at the Los Gatos Creek percolation ponds on 17 Nov (CJC) was either very late or attempting to overwinter. Similarly, a **Hermit Warbler** found along Alamitos Road near Almaden Reservoir on 19 Nov (AV) may be attempting to overwinter. An immature **Palm Warbler** was banded at CCFS on 19 Nov (RCO), not far from where another Palm Warbler was seen last month. A **Summer Tanager** was seen in Menlo Park near the Bryant Street bike bridge over San Francisquito Creek on 1 Nov (KN *vide* LCh). This is near where a bird wintered for three years in the mid-1990s (*vide* DSt). Another Summer Tanager was seen at Joseph Grant CP on 8 Nov (HG, LB *vide* LCh) and remained at least through the next day (RWR, FV). Individual **White-throated Sparrows** were found at Joseph Grant CP on 11 Nov (MMR) and along Alamitos Road near Almaden Reservoir on 19 Nov (AV). Additionally, birds were at separate feeders in Los Gatos on 2 Nov (GLEB) and 5-8 Nov (JD) as well as at a Los Altos feeder on 4 Nov (RCO). Wintering orioles are always rare so the three **Bullock's Orioles** found at the end of Geng Road in Palo Alto on 28 Nov (JC) were particularly noteworthy.

Observers: Deborah Bartens (DB), Lou Beaudet (LB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Jesse Conklin (JC), Les Chibana (LCh), Mary Chibana (MCh), Richard M. Clark (RMC), Rita Colwell (RCO), Chuck Coston (CJC), Jim Danzenbaker (JDa), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Jean Dubois (JD), Dennis Eccles (DE), Mike Feighner (MiF), Harriet Gerson (HG), Robert W. Henry (RWH), John Hutz (JH), Chris Illes (CI), Gloria LeBlanc (GLEB), Calvin Lou (CL), Sue Macias (SM), Mike Mammoser (MJM),

Raptors and Waterfowl Abound on Sacramento Valley Trip

Sacramento/Colusa NWR's Gray Lodge Nov. 24 - 25

The Audubon field trip to the Sacramento area wildlife refuges in winter offers some of the most exciting birding of any field trip, especially for ducks, geese, and raptors. This year's trip was no exception.

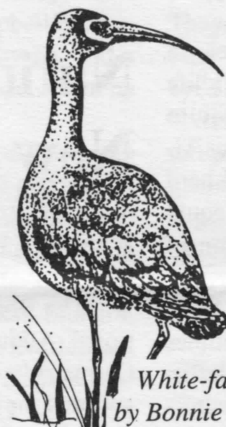
A bright, sunny day greeted us at the headquarters of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, just north of the town of Williams on Interstate 5. Lines of Snow, Ross', and Greater White-fronted Geese flying overhead were just a prelude to the thousands seen along the auto tour loop. One large flock of geese along the tour loop produced 3 'blue morph' Snow Geese, 1 'blue' Ross' Goose (truly a rarity in California), and the trip's only Canada Goose (probably a 'cackler').

The variety of duck species included a single male Eurasian Wigeon. Overflights of small groups of White-faced Ibis, a single male Yellow-headed Blackbird, and 2 Cattle Egrets added some spice.

The raptor show was especially entertaining at Sacramento NWR. It included the usual mix of Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, with dozens of North-

ern Harriers and a handful of White-tailed Kites. Add to this a Cooper's Hawk, a Rough-legged Hawk, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 2 Prairie Falcons, at least 2 Golden Eagles, and an adult Bald Eagle, and you have the makings of possibly the greatest show on earth.

The stop at Gray Lodge Waterfowl Management Area started with a bang, as an adult Swainson's Hawk soared overhead for an unexpected addition to the trip list. When you talk of Gray Lodge, however, you talk of ducks; especially wigeon. True to its reputation, this refuge



White-faced Ibis sketch
by Bonnie Bedford-White

produced at least 4 Eurasian Wigeon, and threw in a single Redhead to boot. The truly spectacular thing about Gray Lodge occurs later, however. As the sun sets, lines of Sandhill Cranes fly into the refuge for

the night, just as thousands of geese are flying out to feed. A little later there are perhaps hundreds of thousands of ducks flying out in the twilight for the same purpose, and to watch this event simply boggles the mind.

The next day dawned cold and foggy. At Colusa NWR, we had to initially content ourselves with some land birding. This did produce some new birds such as Orange-crowned Warbler, Scrub Jay, and a probable House Wren, which called from the thickets but refused to show itself.

On the way home, some of us stopped along Highway 505 to look for longspurs in the fields. Though we found plenty of Horned Larks, the longspurs were a no-show.

Any way you slice it, a trip to the Central Valley in winter is a must for beginning and experienced birders alike.

—Mike Mammoser

John Mariani (JMa), Yvonne McHugh (YMCh), Cheryl Millett (CM), Kristie Nelson (KN), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Dick Stovel (DSt), Ann Verdi (AV), Frank Vanslager (FV), Michael Wienholt (MW), and Denise Wight (DW).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, or: bousman@merlin.arc.nasa.gov

Stanford Foothills *continued*

foothills, for example, there will be some development in a 140-acre area called the Lathrop District, and a small amount of development is possible in other areas, but that development is restricted only to uses that support field research.

Perhaps the most important new addition to Stanford's plans is an Academic Growth Boundary—intended to be in place for 25 years—beyond which the core campus development is not to spread. SCVAS and other conservation organizations were trying to assure that this 25 year commitment would last. In the end, we were partially successful. While Stanford could try to move the line prematurely, several protections are in place to deter it.

In addition, Stanford must develop a management plan for sensitive wildlife areas, particularly San Francisquito Creek, Matadero Creek, and various Tiger Salamander habitats. If we work hard and the university cooperates, we could see a plan that calls for restoration of these unique resources.

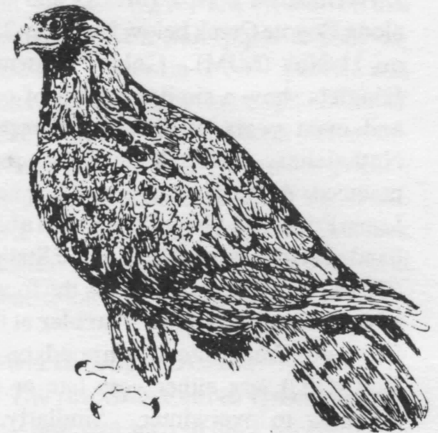
Stanford must also prepare a "sustainable development study," sometimes referred to as a build-out study, to define the ultimate limits of the University's growth. Without that, there are legitimate fears that every ten years or so Stanford could turn more of the foothills into core campus areas, as it has just done with the Lathrop District. In addition, this study may address concerns regarding the pace of Stanford's development. That pace will double over the next ten years, with significant impacts on surrounding communities. We want to make sure that the rate of development moderates at some point.

The build-out study should be completed within five years, and must be satisfactory to the County Board in order for Stanford to continue its growth. We had hoped to settle those issues in this permit by calling for permanent protection for portions of the foothills and a build-out scenario. The delay in that part of the decision means that considerable effort will again be needed in a few years.

In the end, without declaring victory, we can say that the combined efforts of

environmental organizations, surrounding communities like Palo Alto and Menlo Park, and concerned citizens fundamentally altered the way our county oversees Stanford's development. The approved plan calls for extensive housing (which is desperately needed in the area), strong measures to control traffic (Stanford already does more than most, but major traffic impacts will occur), and a degree of protection for some of the Peninsula's most prominent grasslands, creeks, and oak woodlands.

Thanks to the many Audubon members who attended numerous public meetings to make your voices heard. The effort was worth it.



*Golden Eagle sightings are becoming more frequent in the Stanford foothills
—Sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White*

National Audubon Adopts New Membership Strategy

Adapted from an article by Darrel Whipple, Willapa Hills Audubon, Longview, WA

The Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society, meeting in Casper, Wyoming, on September 16-17, adopted new "Membership Strategy Guidelines."

The new plan is designed to increase total membership numbers by providing stronger financial incentives to chapters to recruit new members at the local level. It is also designed to eliminate the shortfall in NAS's membership department budget by substantially cutting the dues share—the amount of each member's dues that National sends back to the member's local chapter.

The primary feature of the plan is the concept of "net dues share." Net dues is the money the membership-and-magazine budget has left over when all recruitment expenses, renewal expenses, and magazine production and distribution expenses have been deducted from the total of membership dues revenue, magazine advertisement revenue and mailing list rental revenue. Starting in July of 2001 NAS will calculate the net dues share per member, and send that amount to the chapter to service each of its chap-

ter-recruited members, along with half that amount for each of its NAS-recruited members.

For many years the dues share to chapters has been a fixed amount: \$5.50 per member. But under the new plan the amount will depend upon the budget factors mentioned above. If all the budget factors and the membership numbers remained the same the new figure would be about \$2.75 per member. And for a certain category of members—those recruited by National after July 1, 2001—that amount is to be shared equally with the chapter's state office.

Because of the likely severity of this reduction in chapter income from dues share, the NAS plan includes a "safety net" feature, whereby the chapter is protected from the full impact of the change during a three-year trial period. Letters to the NAS board from at least 45 chapters protesting the new plan or requesting it be tabled helped delay the start of the new plan until June 2001.

Financial incentives to chapters to recruit new members include an offer whereby the chapter is rebated 100 percent of the first-year dues of each new member recruited by the chapter. They

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Calendar *continued*

**Sunday Feb. 4, 9:00 AM

Ogier Ponds. Half day. Leader: Dave Cook (408) 871-9552. From Hwy 101 in Morgan Hill take Cochrane Rd. west to Monterey Hwy, turn right, go north 2.6 miles, turn right towards Model Airplane Park where power towers cross highway. Follow the road for 1/2 mile, park in gravel lot at bend in road.

**Saturday Feb. 10, 8:00 AM

Arastradero OSP. Half day. Leader: Steve Rutledge (650) 328-5097. "Woodland birds of winter"—last of a series of field trips designed for beginning and intermediate birders. Identification of common woodland birds and basic biology of groups such as hawks, sparrows, jays and woodpeckers will be covered. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west, turn right on Arastradero Rd. and meet in parking lot about 1/2 mile on right. Optional extension is offered for those interested in lunch and a little birding in Foothills Park where non-Palo Alto residents will be guests of the leader. **RC**

**Wednesday Feb. 14, 8:30 AM

Coyote Reservoir. Half day. Leaders: Emelie Curtis (408) 779-2637 & Jane Glass. Take Leavesley exit EAST off Hwy 101. Go east 1.5 miles and turn left on New Ave., then right on Roop Rd. to lake. Meet at Lakeview Picnic area. Waterbirds and raptors. **LO, RC**

National Audubon *cont'd*

also plan to offer special recruitment incentives, including the current \$30 bonus for each new member we recruit before December 31, 2000.

The net dues share from NAS to SCVAS over the past few years amounted to about 5% to 10% of our annual budget. Since the net dues share portion of our budget will essentially be cut in half, SCVAS will have to be more creative in raising money in the future to fund our expanding conservation and educational programs.

—Debbie Thompson

Trip Reports

Los Gatos Creek Park December 2

On Saturday, Dec. 2, an SCVAS field trip visited the Oka and Campbell Ponds at Los Gatos Creek Park. At the Oka Ponds we saw approximately twelve Hooded Mergansers. It was difficult to get an accurate count as the ducks flew from pond to pond, but two more were also seen in the creek. Also seen in Los Gatos Creek were a Green Heron by the foot bridge, three Common Snipe on "snipe island" in the middle of the creek, and a nice male Cooper's Hawk on the far bank who circled around and over the creek and then was up and away. Two loons were on the main Campbell Pond—a Pacific Loon, well seen by all, and a more elusive Common Loon, seen by some.

Of interest among the gulls were an adult Glaucous-winged Gull perched on the cormorant-roosting tree and an adult Mew Gull on a small settling pond. In total we saw 40+ species of birds including a good selection of ducks: Mallard, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, and Ruddy Duck. A good field trip on a sunny fall morning.

—Ann Verdi

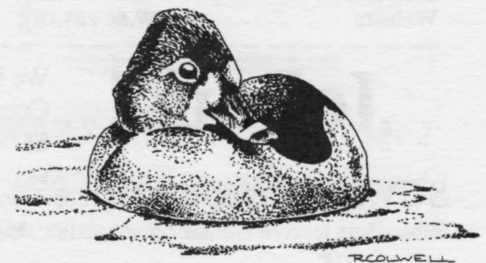
Malheur Slide Show *cont'd*

Malheur Lake alone can easily reach over 140,000 acres in size, yet it remains only about eight feet deep, making it one of the most productive freshwater marshes in North America. At the southern end of the refuge's Blitzen River Valley, Steens Mountain rises over 5,000 feet from the valley floor. The mountain's snowfall and springs fill the Blitzen River to create a series of marshes and ponds in the shadow of spectacular basaltic rimrock. Thousands of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese pass through in migration; Northern Shrikes and Bohemian Waxwings are regular wintering birds. Both Steve and Terry lead birding tours of the Malheur region and are thrilled by this opportunity to share their enthusiasm for this area with a Bay Area audience.

Ogier Ponds December 3

On Sunday's field trip to Ogier Ponds we had good views of a Prairie Falcon, a male and a female Osprey (at the same time), Hooded Mergansers, a Common Merganser (fly-over), a Spotted Sandpiper, a Greater Yellowlegs, a calling Sora and three American Bittern (one posed in the reeds until after we left). Ducks included large numbers of Ring-necked Ducks (a good year for them?), Canvasback and Lesser Scaup (the latter two not always seen there). The normal gull species count was boosted by the presence of an adult Mew Gull, an adult Thayer's Gull and a first winter Glaucous-winged Gull (having several sharp-eyed birders didn't hurt). It would seem that the cold mornings might be taking a toll on the passerines as the quality and quantity of these species were very low. Big misses included Wood Duck, American Kestrel and Northern Harrier.

—Bob Reiling



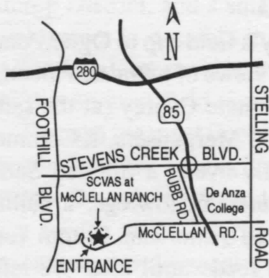
Ring-necked Ducks were seen both at Los Gatos Creek Park and Ogier Ponds.

—Drawing by Rita Colwell

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