



The Sequoia

Volume 23, No. 7

March, 1974

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

MEETINGS:

MARCH 7, THURSDAY 7:30 PM BOARD MEETING at the home of President Bergeron. Board members and committee chairpersons should attend. Other members are welcome.

MARCH 14, THURSDAY 8:00 PM REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING at Roosevelt School, Broadway and Vancouver in Burlingame.

Our March program will feature a talk by Paul Knutson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the National Engineering Week theme, "Engineering -- Our Greatest Energy Resource." While in the past the Corps of Engineers has often been a symbol of dams, dredging and channelization, they have recently been responsive to environmental concerns. Bring your questions for discussion.

FIELD TRIPS: Mark Zumsteg, Chairperson 343-7365

SAWYER CAMP ROAD Saturday, March 8, 8:30 AM

Meet at Crystal Springs Dam. This local favorite has lots to offer. Many interesting observations have been made here, most recently a glut of Bald Eagles. Wildflowers will be on display as well. Bring a lunch and we can make a day of it.

ECO-SERIES NO. 4 BUTANO STATE PARK Saturday, March 30, 8:15 AM

Butano State Park has an undisturbed second growth Redwood Forest that will give us a chance to see all the components of this important local habitat. Flowers such as Trillium, Clintonia and the orchid, Calypso bulbosa, should be blooming. This area is also the home of the Pacific Giant Salamander, Rough-skinned Newt, Sharp-tailed Snake and several birds.

Meeting place will be the turnout immediately west of the causeway crossing Crystal Springs Lakes. This is on the way to Half Moon Bay.

CHRISTMAS COUNT REPORT:

Somehow, the Crystal Springs Count this year turned out to be one of the most successful ever. It is hard to believe that we did so well when I think of all the disappointments we had on count day. Conditions just were not right on the big day. A few species that had been in the area were no longer there. In the three weeks prior to the count many excellent observations were made: Bald Eagles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, MacGillivray's Warbler, European Widgeon, Ferruginous Hawk, Cattle Egrets, Pygmy Owl, Barrow's Golden-eye, Oldsquaw, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Fulmar, Sooty and Slender-

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billed Shearwater, Black Scoter, and so on. Out of all of these scotti finds only three were seen on count day. In addition to missing most of these, a couple of common ones escaped us. Nevertheless, 169 species is a good count. If we add on a few more next year we will have a nationally respected count. Also, we had the best year of participation with 56 observers and helpers.

I must say something about some new methods that are really helping us. Tape recorders are proving to be extremely effective. With pre-recorded calls we were able to find Virginia, Sora and Clapper Rails, Barn, Short-eared, Screech, Saw-whet and Pygmy Owls, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Sapsuckers, Red-shouldered, Cooper's, and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Tapes have become real timesavers. This is the first year that we have tried to set up a midday communications system that enabled all the different parties to get some feedback as to what was missing. My thanks go out to the Tomascellis', who had to put up with some miserable planning, and Ed McElhany for roles as couriers. With some fine tuning next year this system should really work. The ultimate answer is to have a Citizen's band radio set. With such a system all the parties could keep in constant touch with each other. I believe that this approach should be seriously considered for the next year.

Here is the cream of the crop:

A total of 91 Horned Grebes were reported, mostly from the bay. An American Bittern was at Belmont Slough. A fine total of 186 Canada Geese were reported. No Cinnamon Teal (Heavy hunting pressure on Belmont Slough hurt all the duck counts).

I decided a report of 200 Gadwall was spurious. A little more careful identification, please.

One Oldsquaw was seen along the coast.

Ruddy Ducks numbered 1848.

Red-breasted Mergansers were very common.

A terrific count of 25 White-tailed Kites was exceptional.

Thirteen Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported.

We all know about the Rough-legged Hawk explosion this year. The count for them was 28!

Two Bald Eagles were seen, which is low since at least six have been seen in the area.

Virginia and Sora Rails sang for us at Princeton.

Lesser Yellowlegs were reported from three different locations.

One lonely Red Phalarope was seen in Princeton Harbor.

When it comes to Owls we are about the best in the nation. Last year only one count out of the total of 1002 reported seven species of owls, that one being Pt. Reyes with 183 observers. This year we reported seven species, Barn, Screech, Great Horned, Pygmy, Burrowing, Short-eared and Saw-whet. There is an outside chance that two more could be added some day.

Casting his eyes to the sky, Byron Davies found 7 White-throated Swifts.

A Selasphorus Hummingbird was in an observer's backyard.

All three local nuthatches were reported this year.

One Lincoln's Sparrow was seen near San Andreas Lake.

Now comes several interesting items that reflect something new and encouraging for they indicate good coverage of certain areas. Usually only one or maybe two individuals are reported for several

species but this year several parties were reporting these hard-to-find birds. Good Job!

Western Bluebirds -- 17.

Golden-crowned Kinglet -- 119!!!!

Hutton's Vireo -- 12.

Orange-crowned Warbler -- 4 (terrific!).

Wood Duck -- 11

Pygmy Owl -- 3 These have never been reported before!

Screech Owl -- 6.

Short-eared Owl -- 7.

Last, but far from least, is the topper of the day: A Snow Goose at Belmont Slough seen by Jim Ginestra and Barry Sauppe.

The total individual count was 54,891. The ten most common species: California Gull, 7558; Lesser Scaup, 5124; Western Sandpiper, 5047; Marbled Godwit, 3444; Dunlin, 2536; Willet, 2309; Ruddy Duck, 1848; Starling, 1732; Robin, 1591; and Ring-billed Gull, 1229. Those species with less than 10 individuals reported: 9 Loggerhead Shrike, Townsend's Warbler; 8 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; 7 White-fronted Goose, Short-eared Owl, White-throated Swift, California Thrasher; 6 Virginia Rail, Common Murre, Screech Owl; 5 Hooded Merganser, Cooper's Hawk, Barn Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Brown-headed Cowbird; 4 Clapper Rail, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pigeon Guillemot, Orange-crowned Warbler; 3 Redhead, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pygmy Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Say's Phoebe, Common Raven; 2 Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Surfbird, Thayer's Gull, Cassin's Auklet, Marbled Murrelet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch; the all important 1 American Bittern, Green-winged Teal, Oldsquaw, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sora, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Selasphorus Hummingbird, White-throated Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Snow Goose.

-- Mark Zumsteg, Chairperson

FIELD TRIP REPORT:

Sixteen birders visited the Pacifica fishing pier and Princeton harbor on Saturday, January 19 and were rewarded with a count of 71 species. Highlights were a female Oldsquaw at Princeton and a dark phase Fulmar at Pacifica. The trip commenced at 9:00 AM and ended about 1:00 PM. Weather was foggy with a northwest wind of 5/20 mph. Consensus was that the Pacifica Pier is not a great place for birding.

Birds seen were: 2 Common, 4 Arctic and 2 Red-throated Loon; 1 Horned, 25 Western Grebe; 14 Brandt's, 18 Pelagic Cormorant; 1 Great Blue Heron; 5 Mallard; 6 Pintail; 3 Teal; 3 American Widgeon; 12 Canvasback; 142 Scau; 16 Common Goldeneye; 6 Bufflehead; 1 Oldsquaw; 21 White-winged, 265 Surf Scoter; 123 Ruddy Duck; 47 Red-breasted Merganser; 3 Red-tailed, 1 Red-shouldered, 4 Rough-legged Hawk; 1 Marsh Hawk; 8 Sparrow Hawk; 2 Virginia, 1 Sora Rail; 212 American Coot; 1 Oystercatcher; 8 Killdeer; 14 Black-bellied Plover; 12 Black Turnstone; 2 Common Snipe; 6 Willet; 8 Dunlin; 12 Sanderling; 14 Glaucous-winged, 8 Western, 26 Herring, 5 California, 12 Ring-billed, 43 Mew, 4 Heermann's Gull; 6 Common Murre; 4 Anna's Hummingbird; 1 Belted Kingfisher; 3 Red-shafted Flicker; 1 Downy Woodpecker; 2 Black Phoebe; 8 Common Bushtit; 6 Wrentit; 2 Bewick's, 3 Long-billed Marsh Wren; 49 Robin; 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglet; 1 Loggerhead Shrike; 173 Starling; 3 Myrtle Warbler; 5 Yellowthroat; 13 House Sparrow;

7 Western Meadowlark; 12 Redwinged Blackbird; 35 Brewer's Blackbird; 53 House Finch; 2 Lesser Goldfinch; 6 Savannah Sparrow; 4 Oregon Junco; 1 Brown-headed Cowbird; 9 Song Sparrow.

SIGHTINGS:

White-tailed Kites: Brian Sandell reports seeing two White-tailed Kites on January 20 and again on January 27.

Rough-Legged Hawks: Two seen by Brian Sandell along the coast between Half Moon Bay and Pescadero Road on January 20 and January 27.

Peregrine Falcon: K.R. Lajoie reports that he and Shirley Doell and Pat Hayes watched a Peregrine Falcon and a White-tailed Kite dive at each other in flight on December 17 near the P.G.&E. relay station at the west end of Dumbarton Bridge.

Varied Thrush: Of course Varied Thrushes are not rare or unusual in San Mateo County at this time of year but it is pleasant to hear that Liv and Howard Gurevitz' garden in Hillsborough was full of these Beautiful birds on February 11. The same garden was visited on February 12 by a Red-breasted Nuthatch also, and by a large flock of Band-tailed Pigeons.

Waxwing and migratory Robins: The Cedar Waxwings and the migratory Robins have now arrived in the towns in large numbers to harvest the Pyracantha berries.

Common Teal: Barry Sauppe observed a Common Teal at Belmont Slough on February 11. Fran and Roy Nelson also saw this rare visitor on February 14. Those who read the article in November AUDUBON about AOU check list changes by Robert Arbib may recall, "The common teal -- that Eurasian bird with the horizontal wing strip so rare in North America --- is now at one with the green-winged teal,...."

Bald Eagles: Nancy Bentz, Fran and Roy Nelson and Barry Sauppe observed 3 and maybe 4 immature bald Eagles at Crystal Springs Lake on February 9.

Note: Please continue to report interesting sightings to the Sighting Committee so that they may be published in the SEQUOIA. While sightings of rare birds are always interesting, those of other birds may be of interest, too, if there is something unusual involved. Marking variations, early arrivals, "wrong" habitat, unusually large numbers, behavior variations, all make interesting reading. Report them.

THE SIGHTING COMMITTEE:

J.Ed. McClellan, Chairperson	344-3486
Aveline Butler	593-4489
Neil Dickinson	366-7661
Liv Gurevitz	347-0912

FEBRUARY MEETING

By Nancy Bentz

The February meeting featured Jed McClellan's "Expanded Plant of the Month," an impressive collection of slides taken by Jed and his wife, Bonnie, of all but four of the entire 29 species of California Orchids. Jed and Bonnie's plant-finding treks have taken them all over the state and rewarded them with slides of some extremely rare and inconspicuous orchids. However, their work is not done when they get home -- they then have to "hit the books" to verify the genera and species of their plant finds. The result is a thorough and stunning slide presentation showing the diverse varieties of orchids growing wild in California.

The Orchid Family, explained Jed, is one of the largest in the plant kingdom, with as many as 800 genera and 30,000 species growing world-wide, some as far north as Alaska and the Arctic Circle. A few examples of the interesting varieties growing in California are the Phantom Orchid, sometimes called "Ivory Plant," completely white with no green leaves or stems, which means it does not produce its own food but absorbs food from decaying matter; the lovely Lady's Tresses that look like spirals of braided hair; delicate Lily of the Valley, like the plant it's named after; and the prim Ladyslipper.

We at Sequoia Audubon are very fortunate that Jed and Bonnie McClellan are so willing to share with us their enthusiasm for and understanding the the fascinating world of plants.

BIRD CALL OF THE MONTH: Charlie Newman shared a recording he made early in the morning of December 22 during the Ano Nuevo Christmas Count of the hooting of a pair of Great Horned Owls, not more than 40 feet away, with chickadees and bushtits in the background. It was a hauntingly beautiful interchange between the two owls, the male's call high pitched, the female's low and deep.

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH:

Once again the call is out for volunteers at Audubon Canyon Ranch for duty as hosts and hostesses. Sequoia has been assigned the period of April 20 (Saturday) through May 27 (Monday, Memorial Day). Needed are three or four volunteers for each Saturday and Sunday in this period plus Memorial Day. Some find the "duty" so enjoyable they sign up for several days. It is possible to find a motel in the area and cover two consecutive days. Car-pooling is encouraged. Hours are 9:00 AM until 4:30 PM. Bring a lunch. No experience is necessary. Duties will be explained upon arrival and are very simple: Greet the visitors, point out the parking area and trail access to the heronry overlook and register the visitors. It's a fun job and you will meet many interesting people and become acquainted with the nationally-known and unique Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Call John or Pat Prime at 345-4968 for details and sign-up.

By way of explanation for those not acquainted with the Ranch or its activities, Audubon Canyon Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary and a center for nature and conservation education located on Bolinas Lagoon, four miles north of Stinson Beach on State Highway 1. It was started in 1961 by Marin Audubon Society and soon joined by Golden Gate Audubon for the purpose of preserving Canyon Ranch which had been slated for subdivision and development. In 1968 Sequoia Audubon joined the ranch sponsorship. Canyon Ranch included a major rookery for the Great Blue Heron and that today is the principal public attraction for the visitors. The house at the Ranch was built by Captain Peter Bourne in 1875 and the Bourne family lived there for many years.

Audubon Canyon Ranch has expanded its goals and activities over the years and has been specatcularly successful in environmental protection and conservation education. Today ACR is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation supported by private donations and foundation grants.

The heronry is located up canyon from Ranch headquarters and consists of something over a 100 nests perched in the flat tops of the

second growth redwoods of Schwarz Grove. An excellent view of nest activity is afforded by Henderson Overlook reached by a short, somewhat steep trail. The Great Blue Herons stand four or five feet tall with a wing spread of up to six feet and arrive in January or February. Common Egrets join the herons in March. They are somewhat smaller with wing spread of perhaps five feet. About 100 herons and 170 egrets comprise the total nesting population. The ranch is open to the public during the height of the nesting season -- March 2 through July 4. The Sequoia host assignment period (April 20--May 27) is really a prime time and should provide the visitors with excellent observations of heronry activity.

Aside from the heronry there are wild flowers, smaller birds, water birds in the lagoon, a museum, a book store and a picnic area.

The Ranch became a Registered Natural Landmark in dedication ceremonies by the U. S. Department of the Interior on May 18, 1969.

CONSERVATION NEWS:

Ruth Smith is "On Vacation." We will look forward to her Conservation News next month.

ENERGY:

In the February Natural History magazine, Kenneth E. F. Watt presents a most interesting article entitled, "The End of Energy Orgy." Mr. Watt is professor of zoology at University of California--Davis. His closing paragraph:

The time has come, in a sense, for America to grow up. For some two centuries we have lived luxuriously off the energy-rich land, like a spoiled child off wealthy parents. Now crises are forcing us into a period of maturity, to an awareness of the consequences of high energy consumption. The development of this maturity could bring a style and richness of life that Americans have never known. But it will take all our Yankee ingenuity -- and more -- to reach such a golden age.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

The Sequoia board of directors met at President Bergeron's residence on Thursday, February 7.

We heard a presentation on the use of a herbicide in Marina Lagoon to destroy at least some of the widgeon grass which has become so objectionable there. It was felt that we should take no position in this matter.

President Bergeron announced that as a result of a board poll, Sequoia will sponsor attendance at the Audubon Workshop of the West of Nancy Bentz, Bill Clow and Art Earle. Sequoia will pay for two scholarships at \$235 each and an anonymous donation the third.

There was discussion regarding a talk at Bay Area Audubon Council meeting on January 5 by Michael Keffer, a biologist with the State Department of Food & Agriculture. Mr. Keffer's concern was with exotic birds destructive to agriculture. He described this situation as biological pollution and said it was the most difficult pollution to overcome. It was suggested that our Sightings Committee could be our "clearing house."

A pledge of \$100 was made toward the Holmes Grove purchase. This is a 37-acre tract of first growth redwoods near La Honda which

can be preserved with County assistance if enough volunteer money is pledged.

Plans are afoot to open an area in the southeast part of the Watershed to recreational development. An investigation will be made to see what position Sequoia should take.

EDUCATION -- PT. REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY COURSES:

May 17--19 Breeding Ecology of Pt. Reyes Birds. (Field Course)
\$45 -- Enrollment deadline May 10
May 14--21 Birds of Southeast Arizona. (Camping trip)
\$200 -- Enrollment deadline April 25
June 21--27 Transect of California (Mono Lake to Monterey).
\$185 -- Enrollment deadline May 15.
July 12--18 Transect of California. Same as 6/21--6/27 course.
Enrollment deadline June 15.
Sept. 6--8 Shorebird Ecology, Land Bird Migration (Field Course).
\$45 -- Enrollment deadline Sept. 1.
Nov. 9--17 Birds of San Blas, Mexico (Field Course).
Nov. 23--Dec. 1 Birds of San Blas, Mexico (Field Course).
Dec. 7--15 Birds of San Blas, Mexico (Field Course).
\$200 from Mazatlan plus lodging and food
Enrollment deadline Oct. 10 for all three sessions.

For further information write Meryl Stewart, Box 442, Bolinas, CA 94924.

SEATTLE AUDUBON COSTA RICA---GUATEMALA TOUR:

A wildlife tour to Costa Rica is planned for April 15--29 at the Field Stations of the Organization for Tropical Studies. There will be an extension ending May 1 to Guatemala. Write for brochure to: Seattle Audubon Society, 712 Joshua Green Bldg., Seattle, WA 98101.

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY 1973-1974

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President:	Albert Bergeron	Director:	Charles Newman
Vice Pres:	Byron Davies	"	Ruth Smith
Secretary:	Sheila Davies	"	Jon Tatomer
Treasurer:	Clifford Daniels	"	Norman Fox

Chairpersons

Membership:	Liv Gurevitz	Sightings:	J. Ed. McClellan
Conservation:	Ruth Smith	Youth:	Jon Tatomer
Program:	Byron Davies	Habitat Acquisition:	Charles Newman
Education:	Jean Jones	Social:	Eila Fox
Publicity:	Nancy Bentz	SEQUOIA:	Amy & Ed McElhany
Field Trip & Christmas Count:	Mark Zumsteg	Audit & Tax:	Leroy Nelson

Audubon Canyon Ranch Directors: Al Bergeron, Charles Newman, Maryann Danielson, Byron Davies, Ed McElhany, A. E. Montgomery, Charles Newman, John Prime

Bay Area Audubon Council: Norman Fox, Ruth Smith, Jon Tatomer

Bentz, Nancy	591 Cedar St. San Carlos	94070	592-2547
Bergeron, Albert	251 Killdeer Ct. Foster City	94404	349-2960
Daniels, Clifford	1009 Haddon Dr. San Mateo	94402	341-5366
Danielson, Maryann	848 Edgehill Dr. Burlingame	94010	342-6919
Davies, Byron & Sheila	606 Cambridge St. San Francisco	94134	334-2851
Fox, Eila & Norman	51 W. Bellevue San Mateo	94402	343-1406
Gurevitz, Liv	1400 Southdown Rd. Hillsborough	94010	347-0912
Jones Jean	1417 Sanchez Ave. Burlingame	94010	344-9339
McClellan, J. Ed.	1356 Bernal Ave. Burlingame	94010	344-3486
McElhany, Amy & Ed	1009 Laguna Ave. Burlingame	94010	343-3219
Montgomery, A. E.	2270 Summit Dr. Hillsborough	94010	344-4249
Nelson, Leroy	1035 Lassen Dr. Belmont	94002	593-7941
Newman, Charles	25 Corte Alegre Millbrae	94030	697-5601
Prime, John	848 W. Hillsdale Bvd. San Mateo	94403	345-4968
Smith, Ruth	1231 Hoover St. Menlo Park	94025	322-5279
Tatomer, Jon	#4 East Carol Burlingame	94010	347-2020
Zumsteg, Mark	41 Arundel Rd. Burlingame	94010	343-7365

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Address Correction Requested

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