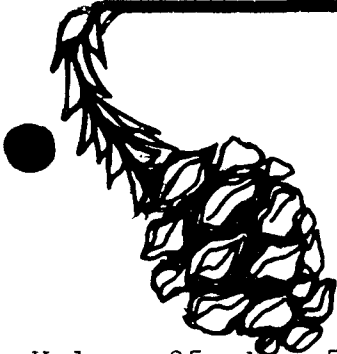




The SEQUOIA

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 25, No. 5

January, 1976

MEETINGS:

JANUARY 8, THURSDAY, 7:00 PM BOARD MEETING at the San Mateo Garden Center prior to regular monthly meeting. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

JANUARY 8, THURSDAY, 8:00 PM REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING at the San Mateo Garden Center. The Garden Center is located on Parkside Way--between 26th and 27th Avenues--just west of Alameda de las Pulgas, in San Mateo. Jon Winter, well known ornithologist, will speak on owls. His illustrated discussion will include the ecology, sensory abilities and distribution of the owls of California. This should be a very interesting and informative lecture. Jon is considered one of the top experts on owls on the West Coast.

The Plant of the Month is the Hazelnut, *Corylus cornuta*. January is not a month of abundant wildflowers. The wild Hazelnut does produce its flowers, however, in that wintry month. The male catkins begin to decorate the bushes as early as October but do not normally open up and begin dropping their pollen until January. The female flowers, which are separate but come on the same bushes with the male flowers, do not appear until January or, sometimes, February. The female flowers are very small but quite pretty. They are red. The nuts ripen in late summer and are good to eat.

Frank Allen and Charles Newman will present their slides and taped Birdcall of the Month.

FIELD TRIPS:

JANUARY 11, SUNDAY RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

This non-group activity could be a comfortable Do-It-Yourself birding and Nature Experience, crowned with the showing of an unusual Audubon Film, "THE GREAT HORNED OWL" at 3:00 PM by Managing Ranger, Phil Shaeffer of National Audubon. An ideal "lazy" Sunday Project, we suggest you arrive at the Sanctuary early, browse through their bookstore (called the BOOK NEST, what else?) and take your binoculars and bird and plant books, etc., on a leisurely walk around the Sanctuary. Then enjoy this outstanding movie giving us a closeup look at the life history, mating habits and ecological impact of this fascinating bird. How to get there: see January 31st trip.

JANUARY 17, SATURDAY Marshlands exploration walk for youngsters and their parents and "new birders" young and old. We'll seek the residents of the area, their homes and food sources; play nature games and

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look at skins, tracks, feathers and such.

Interest in the bayshore is the only requirement for this program designed especially for elementary school children. Binoculars and magnifying glasses will be useful, but not necessary.

Starting point will be Beach Park Boulevard and Swordfish, Foster City, 9:00 AM. Please call if you have any questions:

Nancy Horn 342-9902

Nancy Huff 524-9983

JANUARY 31, SATURDAY, 9:00 AM, RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

As far as real estate value goes, this is perhaps one of the most expensive pieces of unspoiled land the Audubon Society was ever fortunate enough to acquire. Its scenic setting could be called "elegant" (what else would you call Tiburon?). Yet, it remains so easily accessible even to Peninsula Members.

After crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, stay on U.S. 101. After passing the "Seminary Drive" turnoff get ready to turn right when you see the "TIBURON BLVD." sign. After about a mile on Tiburon Blvd. turn off to your right onto Greenwood Cove Drive and follow it to 376 Greenwood Beach Road. Managing ranger Phil Schaeffer of National Audubon will lead the trip. Anyone willing to offer a ride or in need of one, call the Field Trip Person(s) for January, Ernie and Jean Fremont at 755-9596 (Eves).

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

BURLINGAME BAYSIDE FIELD TRIP November 22, 1975 Jean Jones, Leader

Shorebirds were out in full force for the Burlingame Recreation Department family bird walk. Avocets by the hundreds lined the shore, interspersed with willets, godwits, sandpipers, and dowitchers. We had California, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls to compare, and both the resident Clapper Rail and a Marsh Hawk made their appearance for the group. On the trip were seven adults and seven young people eager to learn about our environment. Twenty-three species were sighted:

Western Grebe - Brown Pelican - Snowy Egret - Mallard - Pintail - Marsh Hawk - Clapper Rail - American Coot - Semipalmated Plover - Killdeer - Black-bellied Plover - Wandering Tattler - Least Sandpiper - Short-billed Dowitcher - Western Sandpiper - Marbled Godwit - Sanderling - American Avocet - California, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls - Forster's Tern - Mourning Dove.

BOOK - THE BIRDS OF THE SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION:

Written by Charles G. Sibley and published in 1952, this 54-page booklet has now been re-issued in offset printing and is available from the Peninsula Conservation Center Gift Shop. (1176 Emerson Street, Palo Alto 94301.) Price is \$2.50 plus .75 for mailing.

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH NEWS:

Audubon Canyon Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary and education center located on Bolinas Lagoon about three miles north of Stinson Beach on State Highway 1. It is open to the public during March through June. For special visits phone 383-1644. The Ranch is sponsored by Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies.

Marin Audubon Society has made a contribution of \$5,000 in memory of Dudley S. Hubbard who was twice President of the Society and three times Chairman of ACR. The money has been added to a fund for the con-

struction of an educational facility for overnight students in Volunteer Canyon. The building will be named in memory of Mr. Hubbard. Sequoia and Golden Gate Audubon Societies, the Marin Conservation League and many of Dudley's friends have also made contributions to this fund.

In addition to the new educational facility, work is progressing in Volunteer Canyon on the Crum House which will soon be moved several hundred feet and remodeled. It will then become the residence of the Naturalist-Biologist. The present residence will eventually be altered and become a part of the educational facilities.

BIRDING FROM A KITCHEN WINDOW:

--by Fran Nelson

Today, November 26, the strong winds of yesterday have subsided and it is beautiful, calm and sunny and the birds seem to be enjoying it just as I am. The Anna Hummers are flitting about in the Camellia Sasanquas vying with the bees for nectar. The American and Lesser Goldfinches along with the Pine Siskins fill the birch and are as active as warblers. A Lesser is hanging precariously onto the end of a very small branch that is bent, even with his weight. A Pine Siskin sidles down the same tiny branch as if it were the only one bearing catkins. It bends more. The Lesser gives way and goes to another and the Siskin is no longer attracted to that branch so it, too, goes to another. They are also gleaning insects from the branches and the few remaining leaves. The ripened catkins are yielding tiny, tiny seeds.

Two warblers come. I am frantically trying to see them both. I finally see that one is a Yellow-rumped Warbler and just about that time one decides there isn't room in that clump of three birches for two warblers and gives chase. I'm still trying to see them when they both disappear.

A violent House Sparrow scolding erupts. It's very persistent and when I locate the problem I'm with them a hundred percent. Two Starlings are already thinking about spring and are eyeing the place in the roof next door that is the House Sparrow home. I go out to help them. One move out of me and the Starlings go. The Sparrows stay. They know. I've helped them before.

All is quiet. The Robins are here en masse for pyracantha berries and cotoneaster, too. Some of them are so deeply colored--all are beautiful. Four lovely Cedar Waxwings grace the birch top in between forays to a berry bush. And at least four Purple Finches have joined the throng of House Finches for a catkin feast.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk flies over rather high--not as if he has mayhem in his heart at the moment. I glance down and see only two birds in the yard after seeing him. They are two Robins who are watching him intently just in case he decides not to keep moving on.

A half an hour of bird-watching out my kitchen window isn't enough but now to my chores. I lay down my binoculars, start washing the breakfast dishes--but, I can still see the birch tree! More birds come in. I dry my hands and pick up my binoculars....

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY - 1976 NATURAL EXCURSIONS:

The Observatory, a non-profit research, conservation and educational institution since 1965, offers these natural excursions to California, Arizona and Central America:

February 27-29	Winter Wild Fowl of California	\$35
	A long weekend with Rich Stallcup. Honey Lake, Gray Lodge	
April 24-25	Ecology of Plant Reproduction	\$25
	With Steve McCormick. A field course on flowering plants.	

- April 24-25 and May 15-16 Birds of the Bay Area \$40 or \$25 per weekend
Bill Clow spends four days showing us the best birding areas in the Bay Area.
- May 1-2 Bird Song \$25
Marie Mans and Bob Stewart will call in Marin birds for our viewing
- May 22-23 Land Bird Ecology \$30
Bob Stewart and Bill Clow will teach us some facts of nesting behavior, songs, general ecology.
- May 31-June 6 Birds of Southwest Arizona \$210
Three nights of camping and three more of lodging. Rich Stallcup and Art Earle will escort us through this outstanding bird area
- June 20-26 Transect of the Sierra \$170
Rich Stallcup and Art Earle lead a six-day camping tour of Yosemite Park
- July 4-9 East of the Sierra \$100
Bob Stewart and Steve McCormick guide this tour from the Ancient Bristlecone Pines Area in the White Mts. to Tioga Pass. Some camping and hiking around 10,000 feet.
- August 2-6 Ecology of Plants & Birds of Lake Tahoe Region \$65
Bob Stewart and Steve McCormick conduct a field course based at Donner State Park. Plant and bird identification, ecology, etc.
- August 14-15 Plant Ecology \$25
Steve McCormick teaches this course in Marin County
- August 21-22 or August 23-27 Natural History of Pt. Reyes and Mt. Tamalpais \$30 weekend or \$75 for week
- August 27-29 Monterey Bay Experience \$100
Rich Stallcup and Art Earle. Three days in Monterey at height of fall migration. Includes a boat trip.
- September 10-12 Owls of California \$45
Bill Clow and Bob Stewart take us for a weekend of owling in Carmel Valley, Chews Ridge
- November 19-27 or December 22-30 Birds of San Blas, Mexico \$300
Bill Clow and Art Earle will take some experienced birders into this outstanding area where 250 species can be observed. Fee is from Mazatlan.

For detailed information, write Bob Stewart at 27 Cedar Street, San Anselmo, CA 94960.

TOUR TO INDIA:

February 6-29, 1976. Sponsored by National Wildlife Federation in conjunction with National Audubon Society. Price is \$1990 from New York. You can probably obtain a brochure from the Government of India Tourist Office at 685 Market Street, San Francisco, 94105. Phone 397-0066.

DECAL:

DECAL is a program of the California Department of Fish and Game instituted to provide funds for the conservation of nongame birds, fish and animals. The program needs and merits the support of all Californians and especially Audubon members. Make your check for \$5 or more payable to DECAL and send it to DECAL, Box D.F.G., Sacramento, CA 95801. You will receive a handsome decal which you can display with pride and satisfaction.

THE JAY WHO CAME TO STAY:

An excerpt from a letter from Sequoia birder, Liv Gurevitz, to a friend describing the behavior of Capt. Queeg, a rescued fledgling Scrub Jay:

We released Capt. Queeg the day after you left as we had planned to do. He didn't fly very well at first but was able to get up into the trees where he was relatively safe. The other young jays in the yard, both scrub and Steller's, accepted him without any fuss whatsoever. After awhile I had trouble telling him from the others of his kind except that he came to beg for food from time to time. Since most young birds are fed by their parents for awhile after they are fledged, I decided to do as much for Capt. Queeg.

Believe it or not, we had a heat wave the week after your visit. I had a lot of watering to do and so got into the habit of leaving the kitchen door open as I went in and out. One day, as I was working at the kitchen sink, Queeg walked in the door. There was some raw hamburger defrosting on the counter top by the stove and he found it almost immediately. He helped himself to small pieces of the meat but did not eat them. Instead, he hid the meat, piece by piece, under the refrigerator, under the wastebasket, behind the coffee bean containers, under the burner grills--all over the kitchen. The furred members of our family heartily approved this jay habit for they later sought out and ate the hamburger Queeg had so carefully stored away. After Queeg had completed this task to his apparent satisfaction, he took a bath in the animals' water dish on the kitchen floor and then flew out again.

His visits became regular events that week. Whenever we left a door open, in would come the Queeger. It was a bit disconcerting to have this bird fly past us from time to time throughout the day. If he could get into the dining room (when the door between the kitchen and the dining room was open or when he could come in through an open living room door) he would immediately go to visit *William. Perhaps he thinks William is in jail? Queeg would then sit on the back of the chair next to William's cage and William would face him and talk to him. After what would appear to be a congenial visit, Queeg would take a nap and then go back outside for awhile.

Well, this charming Jay who has decided to make his home with us is destroying my nervous system. There are four cats who live here now and therefor it is definitely not a safe place for an uncaged bird. However, since Queeg seems determined to share our home (he flies at the windows if we do not open a door for him) he is allowed to do so, but in his cage. This seems to be perfectly alright with him and a pattern seems to be developing. He spends his mornings and a part of the afternoon outside and the rest of the day, and nights, inside in his cage.

The whole situation seems so ridiculous though I do remember reading somewhere that young jays often return to the nest after they are fledged, an unusual trait. But I had visions of him sitting in the tree-tops at dusk (as we might sit around a fire) telling the other birds about the days he had spent with the strange unfeathered creatures and about their peculiar habits and customs. I do hope that he will eventually decide that the place for him to live is outdoors. Otherwise, he may have a short life. Queeg's cage is now on the kitchen patio with its door open. I peeked outside and see that he is inside the cage with two jay friends. Howard predicted that someday I would bring in the wrong bird. Perhaps he has a point!

*William is the pet Mynah.

CONSERVATION NEWS:

Partial rezoning of San Bruno Mountain was approved by the San Mateo County Planning Commission at its November 26th meeting. The final decision is up to the Supervisors--after the Planning Commission considers the environmental impact report at its December meeting. A \$4 million appropriation for San Bruno Mountain Park as a part of AB2329 will be considered when the legislature reconvenes. This bill was introduced by late Assemblyman Z'berg.

There will probably be an Assembly floor vote on AB15 in January. This bill is designed to protect prime agricultural land from urban sprawl--a purpose served by the Williamson Act with indifferent success. AB15 provides that building permits may not be issued for developments on prime agricultural land unless it is required to provide essential services or to mitigate a state or national emergency. It also provides that such land be taxed on its present use rather than its potential value. The importance of this bill is emphasized by the current world food problem. Readers may want to write their Assemblyman and tell him their views. Address him at State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

One piece of good news! A bill establishing Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area on the Snake River has cleared the House and Senate and is awaiting President Ford's signature.

A lawsuit of statewide significance has been filed against Contra Costa County by the Sierra Club, People for Open Space and a local group, Amigos de Diablo. The suit alleges that the rezoning of Blackhawk Ranch on Mt. Diablo to permit a community of 15,000 plus 28 acres of commercial usage was not, "in substantial conformance" with the County General Plan. The suit may provide a useful precedent in defining, "substantial conformance" and may lend greater force to general plans by inhibiting capricious changes through rezoning or variances. Litigation is always expensive. Contributions--large or small--will be gratefully accepted by the Sierra Club Foundation, Blackhawk Legal Fund, 220 Bush Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. Tax-deductible.

Some Sequoia members may have received a plea for financial help from Maricopa Audubon in Phoenix in connection with their lawsuit seeking to block construction of the Orme Dam. The Bureau of Reclamation is the defendant and the suit alleges failure to comply with the National Environmental Protection Act. The project would destroy the last remaining streamside habitats of the Arizona Sonoran Desert and endanger the Gray Hawk, Black and Zone-tailed Hawks and destroy a population of Bald Eagles. Contribution may be made payable to CAP Fund, Maricopa Audubon Society and addressed to Monica A. Szostak, Treasurer, Maricopa Audubon Society, 4242 N . 32nd Street, Phoenix, AR 85018.

The Safe Nuclear Energy Initiative, endorsed by the Sierra Club, has qualified for the June, 1976 ballot. The Environmental Pollution Committee of the San Mateo Medical Society, of which both Norman Fox and I are members, will be conducting a forum on this very important issue sometime in January at Canada College. Watch for the date in your local paper and try to attend.

-- Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

METRIC SYSTEM:

Ornithology seems to have adopted the metric system so soon, perhaps, the Christmas Count Circle will be described as 24.14 km in diameter. We should therefore become acquainted with the metric system and here is the first lesson:

A meter measures three foot three.
It's longer than a yard you see.
And two and a quarter pounds of jam
Weigh about a kilogram.

THE LEAD SHOT CONTROVERSY -- from OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA Sept/Oct 1975
This is the second and concluding part and is continued from the December SEQUOIA

Recent lead poisoning management has dealt with steel shot. Emphasis should also be placed on other methods of control.

Some management actions to eliminate or reduce losses are the following:

1. Change shot type from lead to something that retains ballistic efficiency and does not cause sickness when ingested by waterfowl.
2. Change marsh management practices to prevent access to spent shot; for example, rotation of hunting areas and soil cultivation.
3. Emphasize natural food production in marsh areas rather than cultivation of grain crops. Corn especially accentuates production of poisoning in birds which have ingested lead shot.
4. Place gravel for grit in marshes where little or none exists to reduce the possibility of ingesting shot, since it is felt that the shot is picked up instead of gravel. Grit is required to enable the gizzard to grind seeds.
5. Adjust water levels to make heavily shot-over areas less desirable to feeding waterfowl, thus reducing availability of shot.

Changing or altering the type of shot has received a great deal of interest in the past 15 years. Lead shot was coated in hopes this would prevent lead sickness--results were unsatisfactory. Copper was substituted for lead, but the results were negative since it also caused poisoning.

Steel was substituted and results were mixed--it didn't cause sickness but it could result in 200,000-400,000 additional crippled ducks a year (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service EIS 1974-76) if required on a national basis. Various lead alloys were tried such as lead/selenium and lead/magnesium, but results were generally negative.

Currently, the best substitute appears to be shot made from a mixture of lead and iron. The research with the lead/iron mixture was started by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the University of Guelph. They found that lead/iron shot is much less toxic than lead shot and ballistically more efficient than the steel shot. Currently, research on this compromise shot is being carried out in the United States by Illinois Natural History Survey and Winchester-Western.

In summary, marsh management practices can be carried out that will prevent access to the shot. Flooding, draining, gravel dumping, tilling of marsh soils and changing the type of food plants can all be used to prevent lead poisoning.

We have learned much from our research experience during the past two years. Our new knowledge strengthens our position given in 1973 as expressed by Red Hunt:

"The department must continue its current assessment of the lead poisoning problem in California. If a problem is identified, we will take whatever measures are necessary to alleviate it.

"This could be elimination of the source of the shot causing the problem through manipulation of pond water levels or by plowing under surface deposits of shot. It might mean placing sand in strategic areas where waterfowl may ingest lead shot for grit (i.e. substitute sand for lead shot).

"Consideration could also be given to closing the season in problem areas or switching to steel shot in problem sites only. The point is this--let's first determine if a problem exists, then choose the most appropriate remedial action."

A closing point--we have been looking statewide for evidence of lead poisoning problem areas--we have yet to find one of any consequence.

Your SEQUOIA editors would be pleased to publish remarks from our readers concerning the findings and position of the Department of Fish and Game. Write us a note.

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

--by Sheila Davies

Everyone who attended the December general meeting enjoyed a particularly interesting evening. Any sadness at leaving our old home at Roosevelt School was softened by the warm welcome from the San Mateo Garden Center. The Center was decorated for the Christmas season and greatly enhanced our always popular December turkey pot luck.

We hope that our new mid-Peninsula meeting place will make it easier for more members to come and enjoy our regular monthly meetings. After brief general announcements, the program began with the usual "featured shorts." Jed McClellan gave us his Plant-of-the-Month feature which, though brief, is worth a visit to a meeting for itself for its good photography, well researched explanation, and continuity. Jed always shows us slides of a plant that is interesting in the current month. December was the currant month because we saw three species of the Wild Currant (*Ribes* species), the Chaparral, the Red-flowering, and the Bugle. We also saw slides of the berries and learned that they are all edible.

Charles Newman and Frank Allen presented their "Birdcall-of-the-Month" with slides and tapes. This month was really the "Bird Sound" rather than song of call because we heard the wing sounds of the Anna's and Rufous hummingbirds. Frank's excellent slides accompanied Charles' well recorded tapes, putting together an interesting and educational presentation.

Following the same theme of scientific knowledge without pedantic jargon, our guest speaker, Dr. Harry Thiers, gave a lively program on "Common Mushrooms of the Bay Area", taking us on an imaginary walk through a coastal forest. Dr. Thiers is with the Department of Biology of San Francisco State University and has published texts on fungi. His excellent slides and enthusiasm will very certainly make many birders take their eyes from the trees and discover what he describes as the "wonderful world of mushrooms at your feet." Dr. Thiers told us that mushrooms are things of great design and lovely to look at, and his slides bore out his words. We saw green mushrooms, and yellow and lavender; mushrooms that appear to bleed when cut; we learned that some mushrooms have a distinctive smell; and of course we saw slides of the mostly poisonous *Amanita* genus.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

Your editors express their appreciation to all of the fine Sequoia people with whom they have worked during this past year.

To those Sequoia members who have not been especially active, may we suggest that an appropriate New Year's Resolution might be one which would encourage more participation in meetings, field trips and committee work? Some members' interest involves birding, some natural history in general, some conservation and many a combination of all three. In addition you will find yourself associated with a dedicated, interested and interesting, unselfish group of people.

Thanks to all and best wishes for 1976.

Ed and Amy McElhenny

The SEQUOIA is the newsletter of Sequoia Audubon Society and is published monthly, September through June. Membership in National Audubon Society includes a SEQUOIA subscription for members living within this area (San Mateo County) and membership in Sequoia Audubon Society. Subscription for non-members is \$2.00 per year and must be renewed on your own initiative as no renewal notice is sent. If you move from our area but wish to continue to receive THE SEQUOIA, please notify us and we shall be happy to continue to send it to you. Otherwise we shall assume that when you notify National Audubon Society of your move you will request transfer of your membership to your new chapter for their newsletter.

Application for National Audubon membership may be sent directly to National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Student Membership	\$ 7	Donor Membership	\$ 250
Regular "	\$ 15	Patron "	\$ 500
Family "	\$ 18	Life "	\$1000
Sustaining "	\$ 30	Affiliated Club	\$ 50
Contributing "	\$100	Audubon Magazine	
Supporting "	\$ 50	Subscription Only	\$ 13

The closing date for the SEQUOIA is the 15th of the month.

THE SEQUOIA
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