



# The SEQUOIA

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY    SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 25 No. 7

March, 1976

## MEETINGS:

MARCH 4, THURSDAY, 7:30 PM BOARD MEETING at the home of Charles Newman, 25 Corte Alegre in Millbrae. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

MARCH 11, 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.

Frank Allen will present the Bird Call of the Month with slides and taped sound.

Sandy washes in Southern California, Western Arizona and Northern Lower California are made beautiful in March, April and May by masses of Desert Evening Primrose (*Oenothera deltoides*) which bloom in the evening and all night and through the early morning hours. The blossoms are large and white, turning pink with age. So, the Plant of the Month for March is *Oenothera deltoides*, Desert Evening Primrose.

Maryann Danielson, a long time Sequoia member and County Parks and Recreation Department executive, will bring us some of her excellent slides and commentary on the fascinating area of the Gulf of California. Maryann has made several trips to this area. Her trips are real expeditions--not luxury tours touching only the highlights. While she includes slides of the Seri Indian country of Sonora where the Desert Evening Primrose grows, and the desert of Baja California, she also has slides of the dunes and coastal areas, camping trips to the islands of Carmen and Coronado and the canyons of Sierra Giganta. Many of the trips were arranged by a friend who has a home in Loreto and are not available to the average tourist.

## FIELD TRIPS:

March 13, Saturday, 8:30 AM      PALO ALTO BAYLANDS

Meet at the big duck pond at the yacht harbor. To get there take Embarcadero Road east from Bayshore Freeway. We will probably get good closeup views of shorebirds, ducks and gulls, with a possibility of such interesting species as the Clapper Rail, Blue-winged Teal, Short-eared Owl and European Wigeon. Bring scopes and binoculars and expect a moderate amount of walking. Automatically cancelled if it rains.

Leader: Peter Metropulos    591-9898

March 27 Saturday, 9:30 AM    ALUM ROCK PARK

Meet at 9:30 AM in the parking lot in front of the Junior Museum (Youth Science Center) in Alum Rock Park. The park is about 36 miles

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from San Mateo (3rd Avenue & Bayshore). Driving south on U.S. 101, about 2.7 miles after passing under Highway 17 (Interstate 680) turn off for Santa Clara Street which becomes Alum Rock Avenue. It is then about 4½ miles to Alum Rock Park. Bring lunch.

Leader: A. E. Montgomery 344-4249

April 3, Saturday, 9:00 AM SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN

We will meet at 9:00 at Guadalupe Parkway and Radio Road. This can be reached from Old Bayshore Highway by turning west at the top of the hill north of Brisbane.

This is a good opportunity to see the abundant species of San Bruno Mountain wildflowers many of which are unique to this area. Our very knowledgeable member, Enes Millar, will lead the trip. Lunch is optional but suggested for those who plan to stay into the afternoon.

#### FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, January 31 Leader: Ernie Fremont. Guide: National Audubon Ranger, Phil Schaeffer.

A balmy, windless and slightly hazy day, so very typical for this winter. The Sanctuary Vista Point is ideally situated, bringing an interesting mixture of shorebirds into view, to the right, on the Strawberry Point side. In the shallow water to the left, towards Tiburon, Waterfowl in the thousands. Harbor Seals sticking their curious faces out of the water here and there and Phil points out the fact that in only ten years they made a marvelous comeback from near extinction.

Among other interesting things we were told that the Pintails are undergoing an extensive Banding Program in cooperation with Russian Ornithologists in Siberia, a Pintail Summer Resort.

Our bird walk is sprinkled with little surprises: we run into a bride and groom in full mating plumage (veil, tuxedo, etc.). A beautiful Siamese cat keeps interrupting our leader's lecture and two intruders in a small fishing boat are driven off by Audubon Society Naval Forces represented by two of Phil Schaeffer's students in the Sanctuary power boat.

The morning comes to an appropriate end in the Auditorium-Classroom where Ranger Schaeffer describes how to get to other interesting birding spots nearby as well as some other places in the South Bay.

On the way out Phil shows us his cardboard model of a California Condor with the incredible wingspan of ten feet. There are only 50-60 left in Southern California.

There were 28 participants from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM; 38 Species were sighted:

Western Grebe - Double-cr. Cormorant - Great Blue Heron - Common Egret - Snowy Egret - Mallard - Pintail - Canvasback - Lesser Scaup - Common Goldeneye - Bufflehead - Surf Scoter - Ruddy Duck - Turkey Vulture - Red-tailed Hawk - Sparrow Hawk - American Coot - Semipalmated Plover - Killdeer - Black Turnstone - Spotted Sandpiper - Willet - Glaucous-winged Gull - Rock Dove - Anna's Hummingbird - Black Phoebe - Scrub Jay - Common Crow - Common Bushtit - Robin - Hermit Thrush - Audubon's Warbler - Western Meadowlark - American Goldfinch - Brown Towhee - Oregon Junco - Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows.

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Burlingame Bayfront, February 8 Leader: Norman Fox

If you want miracles, have a field trip for shore birds. It rains all day. About 20 people enjoyed it nevertheless. Many were treated to a good look at the Clapper rail. There were endless numbers of other

shore birds in this close-in paradise where the cord grass is growing fast to reconstitute the destroyed marshes.

Eared and Western Grebe - Double-cr. Cormorant - Common and Snowy Egret - Mallard - Pintail - Canvasback - Greater Scaup - Common Goldeneye - Clapper Rail - Semi-palmated and Snowy Plovers - Killdeer - Black-bellied Plover - Lesser Yellowlegs - Least Sandpiper - Dunlin - Long-billed Dowitcher - Western Sandpiper - Marbled Godwit - American Avocet - Western and Ring-billed Gulls - Forster's Tern - Mourning Dove - Western Meadowlark - Redwinged Blackbird - Brewer's Blackbird and Song Sparrow.

#### AUDUBON CANYON RANCH:

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 on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, February 28 through July 4. For special visits phone 383-1644. The Ranch is sponsored by Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies. In 1969 the Ranch was designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a Registered Natural Landmark.

#### NEWS FROM THE RANCH - By Betty Boyd

As January neared its end, the first Great Blue Herons were observed on the perimeter of the rookery and a few days later the early stages of the territoriality and pair formation commenced. While the Great Egrets normally arrive somewhat later, 8 of them were seen among the falling snow flakes on the day of the great snow, flying in as if to look and then leaving.

With the opening of the ranch, docents from the Volunteer Council of Audubon Canyon Ranch will be on hand each Saturday and Sunday to lead a nature walk at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.

Volunteers are needed for a work day Saturday, March 6. This will be under the leadership of John Kipping and Skip Schwartz. The time is 10:00 AM. Bring work clothes, gloves, waterproof shoes or rubber boots, a pick and shovel and a wheelbarrow if possible. Restoration of Parson's Pond in the Garden Club Canyon is the project. Bring your lunch also. Refreshments will be provided. You are needed.

#### HOST DUTY AT THE RANCH

See page 4 of the February SEQUOIA. Sequoia Audubon will provide hosts at the Ranch on Saturdays and Sundays from the Ranch opening on February 28 through April 4. Four hosts are needed from 9:30 AM until 4:30 PM on each day. No prior experience nor birding expertise is required. The duties are light and pleasant. Here is an opportunity to become acquainted with a nationally known wildlife sanctuary and education center. Usually there is ample time to visit the heronry, bookstore and display area. Bring lunch. Coffee provided. Phone 334-2851 and sign up for one or more days of this interesting work.

#### CONSERVATION NEWS:

Since the fate of San Bruno Mountain, for the time being at least, will probably have been settled by the Supervisors by the time this is read, the biggest local issue now left for SAS is the plan for Filoli and the adjacent San Francisco Watershed lands. After a public informational meeting held in San Mateo, February 19, a second hearing for public input is scheduled for March 4 at 7:30 PM tentatively in the San Mateo City Council chambers. It will be safest to check local papers for the place, however. All SAS members are urged to attend. The issues center about preservation of the open space lands of the Watershed, preservation of plant and animal habitat both there and in

Filoli, and most crucially the proposed use of Filoli and Watershed lands for a county golf course, especially when there is the possibility of other less environmentally significant sites for a course nearby. Copies of a partial map of the Filoli-Watershed area can be obtained from the Parks and Recreation Department at the County Government Center in Redwood City.

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In Sacramento the big environmental issue before the Legislature this spring will be the vote on the Coastal Plan bill authored by Senator Beilenson. This must pass the Senate by June 18 or it will be dead for this session. It will probably first go to the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee, and if it survives that then to the Finance Committee. Strong opposition is expected from all the development interests including organized labor. If the bill fails, the coast will go back to local control, and the situation will be the same as before passage of Prop. 20, which SAS members worked so hard to pass.

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Among other bills of environmental significance to be considered by the Legislature is SB 1384, the Bottle Bill. It is similar to the very successful Oregon law and requires mandatory deposits on all soft drink and beer containers sold after January 1, 1977. Assemblyman Vasconcellos of San Jose has authored and the Assembly has passed AB 1725 banning sale of fluorocarbon aerosols after July 1, 1977 in an effort to stop their dangerous pollution of the upper atmosphere. The bill is now being considered in the Senate. Senator Behr has just introduced SB 1482 which would halt construction of the proposed New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River, but would allow a lower flood control dam. This is in essence what was proposed by the 1974 initiative which lost by a small majority, probably due to its confusing wording which led many people to vote the opposite of what they intended.

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Two bills involving the California Environmental Quality Act, the authority for the requirement of Environmental Impact Statements, have been proposed: SB 502 which would seriously weaken the Act, and AB 2679 which essentially parallels the Senate bill.

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In Congress our Senator Cranston has joined more than 40 others in sponsoring S 2832 to clarify the income tax status of legislative activity by tax-exempt organizations such as Audubon. It is identical to the House bill HR 8021 which was discussed in the November, 1975 SEQUOIA. SAS members are urged to write to Senator Cranston thanking him for his sponsorship and to Senator Tunney urging him to join Senator Cranston as a co-sponsor.

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THE AUDUBON LEADER of January 30 mentions a new threat to the wintering range of the endangered whooping cranes. The State of Texas is seeking title to a 19,000 acre tract for recreational development on federal land on Matagorda Island. This is only 5 miles from the Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge and which contains a NAS wildlife sanctuary. Green and Ridley turtles, peregrine falcons, and southern bald eagles are found on the island. The proposed development would be incompatible with the varied wildlife present and would be a new danger for the few remaining whooping cranes. Letters can be sent urging permanent protection of the area to Gov. Dolph Briscoe, State Capitol, Austin, TX 78711 and to Senator Lloyd Bentsen, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20501 who backs the transfer.

-- Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

BIRDING FROM A KITCHEN WINDOW By Fran Nelson

Ice on the bird baths the mornings of January 2 and 3! I heated some water and got rid of the ice before the birds arrived. It wasn't cold enough to freeze the hummer feeders nor the flowers on the camellia sazanquas, so the hummers' natural and unnatural food are both intact.

The days this first week of January have been very much alike--quite a number of birds of various species. Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows arrive before it's light enough to discern which is which in some cases. They are followed closely by the Brown Towhee pair and the Fox Sparrow. Soon the Mourning Doves join them and when there's a little more light, the House Finches and House Sparrows come. The Rufous-sided Towhee, normally among the earliest, hangs back, probably because he has the handicap of having only one leg and feels more comfortable with fewer birds around and better visibility. They eat ravenously for a time and then all disappear into the bushes. After a short time they begin to sneak out daringly, one by one, grab a quick snack and rush back to the hideout. I rather think it's the time when accipiters start looking for breakfast. Various other species come throughout the day but the Yellow-rumped Warblers and the Ruby-crowned Kinglets seem to have taken their business elsewhere.

Anyway, now it is lunch time and I am munching on some cheese and crackers by my kitchen window, of course. A great, huge bird appears on the horizon. I free my hands to pick up my binoculars and confirm it is an Eagle! About that time, the roof of our house obscures my vision so I dash outside. When I locate him, he is circling directly over our house and he is low enough that I can even see his massive yellow toes!! I see a small white patch in each wing lining. I see that the tail is white at the base, dark brown at the end and mottled in between. He turns one eye downward, perhaps to see what I am up to--or, maybe to show me that he also has a little white on his head and his nape. At last I have a positive Bald Eagle to add to our yard list! This one, of course, is an immature. He is headed in the general direction of Crystal Springs Lakes.

So later--back to earth--I go to the back yard to screen some soil for the House Sparrows' dust baths. Lacking a screen, I am using a strainer and the soil that comes through is very fine. I rush back to my window and stand there waiting for all the excitement when they see what I have done for them. But, alas! it is too late in the day even though it was only 4:20 when I finished. Dust-bath time had come and gone and I would have to wait until tomorrow.

Now "tomorrow" is here and there is a foggy backdrop for the back yard. A Mourning Dove is sitting low in the birch tree. It is notable because of the unusual lighting effect on him caused by the sun trying to shine through the fog. He is slightly below eye-level and he is snuggled down on the branch with his belly feathers covering his toes. These feathers, normally contoured to his body, are sticking out and forming a sort of flounce. The flounce is catching the light just right to give it a creamy color in sharp contrast to his belly. He is indeed fancy!

It was a long wait from yesterday afternoon until 8:00 this morning but now a House Sparrow has come for a dust bath. He is revelling in it! The sifted soil enables him to take a much more effective dusting if the amount of flying dust is any indication. The dust bowls are very popular and little altercations over them are frequent. Apparently, my screening job has pleased the Golden and White-crowned Sparrows, too. They are finding little goodies to eat.

One of our resident Mockingbirds is sitting in the part of our

neighbor's pyracantha that peeks over the fence. I can see no berries. Now that the Robins and Cedar Waxwings have polished off all of his berries they are no doubt willing to let him have his bush again--until next year, that is.

A flock of House Finches has just landed in the birch top. Looking at each one has turned up a Pine Siskin. A House Finch looks small until a Pine Siskin sits beside him.

A big, dead sycamore leaf is going through some strange gyrations. I put my binoculars on it and small wonder! A Golden-crowned Sparrow is doing his scratching-hop on it and is finding some sort of edibles. He finally picks it up and shakes it quite violently! Peculiar--but just because I don't know what he is doing doesn't mean he doesn't know.

A flock of 25 to 30 Cedar Waxwings alight in the birch top. Ever hopeful, I look at each individual. Someday I am going to see a Bohemian Waxwing that way--but apparently this is not the day. Anyhow, they couldn't be more beautiful sitting there in the sunlight--even without a Bohemian!

#### WILDLIFE RESCUE TEAM:

"AMELIA OWLHART" by Virginia Collins

This tiny Screech Owl came to Wildlife Rescue, Inc. in April of 1975 as an "injured baby Great Horned Owl". She had been found lying under a tree, eyes closed, cold and with a limp wing. One of our volunteers, a lady with a lot of experience, took her home, warmed her and force-fed her.

Later that evening, the owl had revived enough to permit closer examination. The wing seemed just bruised and possibly sprained, not broken. The breast bone was sharp and it was obvious that she hadn't eaten in a while. Her eyes remained closed and seemed to have a crust between the lids, so they were bathed in warm water, separated and inspected. Incredibly, her eyes and eye-lids were covered with bee stingers! We placed Amelia under a strong light and large magnifying glass and were able to extract over 20 stingers. She was later seen by Dr. Campbell, a veterinary eye surgeon from Los Altos. His prognosis was not good--several stingers had penetrated the corneas of both eyes. There was swelling and bloodclots beneath the eyes. He prescribed 1% Isopto Atropine (3 drops daily) and Maxitrol (4 drops daily) in both eyes.

Good food, tender loving care and two months time brought vision back to both of Amelia's eyes. She was re-acclimatized in an outdoor aviary, and after making 15 kills on her own, was released into her home territory. We can only imagine the pain that Amelia must have suffered from her ordeal; and marvel at her ability to fight the tremendous amount of venom that was injected into her system.

We have on file extensive progress notes on this case and will be very happy to answer any further questions anyone may have. Please feel free to call or write to Wildlife Rescue, Inc., c/o Mrs. Carol Hamilton, President, 4 Navajo Place, Portola Valley, 94025. Phone: 851-1198.

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Would you like to be counted among the people who help animals like "Amelia Owlhart" and the 1,621 other wildlife the Wildlife Rescue Team cared for in 1975? Here are two suggestions for you: (A) BECOME A TRAINED WILDLIFE RESCUE TEAM VOLUNTEER. To be notified of the next three class series (1. Orphaned Birds, 2. Orphan Mammals and 3. Care of Injured Animals) send your name, address and phone number to:

Mrs. Linda Ettinger, 248 San Mateo Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025. OR, for those unable to be a volunteer, but still interested in supporting this kind of program, (B) SEND A DONATION: Your "Dollars" will be used to buy food and medical supplies and to keep the program going. Your total dollars will be well spent as we are a 100% volunteer organization working under State and Federal Wildlife Permits. Please make checks payable to Wildlife Rescue, Inc. and mail to Phyllis A. Pierce, Treasurer, Wildlife Rescue, Inc., 494 Van Buren, Los Altos, CA 94022.

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For help with wildlife emergencies call: Wildlife Rescue Team c/o Palo Alto Animal Shelter, phone 329-2671 (11:00 AM - 6:00 PM). Other than these hours call Palo Alto Communications, phone: 329-2413. Our service area is Redwood City to Sunnyvale. However, we shall be glad to answer questions and refer you to your closest wildlife rescue oriented agency in other areas.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

"Comment from a reader about the 1975 Bird Count article in February bulletin: One hundred and eight-two species of birds is indeed an honorable bird count. But I wince at the "only" in front of the 125 figure for 1955, that shoulder upon which the 182 count stands. In birding particularly, it is wise to remember the nest..."

#### MARINE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE:

##### A DOCENT PROGRAM FOR MARINE ENTHUSIASTS

The Marine Ecological Institute announces the development of a new and challenging docent program to begin in March. Since 1970 the Marine Institute's 85-foot Research Vessel "Inland Seas" has carried over 48,000 students on Discovery Voyages to study the many facets of this fascinating resource, San Francisco Bay. The Institute's docent program is being developed to augment the Discovery Voyage experience. The docents will be another resource to the teacher and will help to prepare the students, sharing what they have learned in their training and more importantly, sharing the excitement and concern they feel about the Bay and its possible uses and misuses.

Among the activities scheduled in the training program are a voyage on the "Inland Seas" with the Institute's instructors and guest speaker Ichthyologist Dr. Robert Hassur of San Jose State University, a visit to Leslie Salt, and a trip to the Army Corps of Engineers Bay-Delta Model. The purpose of the training is not to make experts of the docents but to enhance their enthusiasm with a bit more knowledge.

You can find out more about the Marine Ecological Institute's docent program by calling Dotty Klyce at 364-2760.

#### FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING REPORT -- by Sheila Davies

The February program opened with the familiar and pretty song of the White-crowned Sparrow as the Birdcall-of-the-Month. Frank Allen illustrated this much-loved bird with slides and sound. The White-crown is a winter visitor in much of our area although it is a breeding bird on the coast and as close as San Francisco.

Jed McClellan's Plant-of-the-Month was the Oso Berry (*Osmaronia cerasiformis*). The flowers of the Bear Berry are seen from February through April in San Mateo County. Jed always makes the Plant-of-the-Month informative by showing pictures of the plant in its various stages at other times of the year. In the case of the Bear Berry, we also saw its olive-sized fruit.

The "big feature" of the February program was presented by Bob and Carol Yutzy, "Five Ways to Identify birds." Bob sharpened our identification skills by reminding us of the important features to look for: (1) general appearance, (2) behavior, (3) voice, (4) range and habitat, and (5) elimination of common species method. He illustrated each point with slides of different species. He also breaks down categories; for example, under the general heading of shape we should look at the general build of the bird, the posture, legs, tail, bill, head and wings. We hope many beginning birders attended this meeting because they could learn much from Bob's very practical, step by step system. Intermediate birders were also greatly helped because the system pins down the more difficult identifications such as the difference between the Orange-crowned and the Tennessee Warblers. The pictures in field guides just can't be exactly like the bird you see through your binoculars. In addition to teaching bird identification, Bob is a licensed bird bander and gave us many interesting side-lights on these activities on the Farallones under the auspices of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory.

The program came to a grand finale with the appearance of "Jack the Ripper," a Yellow-headed Caracara being cared for by Max Krueger and Cliff Lindquist under their raptor program. Jack will be returned to the wild when suitable arrangements can be made for his safe release in South America. Your Sequoia chapter is supporting this raptor rehabilitation program by a monthly donation of \$25. However, this does not completely cover all costs and Max and Cliff would be most appreciative of any additional donations from individual members. Here is a chance to see where your money goes; the "boarders" often visit our general meetings and it is very exciting to see these beautiful birds close at hand.

#### RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY AND EDUCATION CENTER:

376 Greenwood Beach Road in Tiburon. Turn off Highway 101 onto Tiburon Blvd. and about a mile later turn right onto Greenwood. Open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Wednesday through Sunday. Admission 50¢ except Audubon members free. Nature walks Sunday at 9:00 AM. Nature programs every Sunday at 3:00 PM. Also an excellent book store, THE BOOK NEST.

The 3:00 PM Sunday programs for the next few weeks:

- March 7 - Life Story of the Hummingbird; a beautifully photographed film about the exquisite hummingbird.
- March 14 - A Day In the Life of a Meadow; an illustrated lecture by Steve McCormick, plant ecologist.
- March 21 - Wildlife Babies; a film to celebrate spring and the new life that it brings.
- March 28 - Courtship and Nesting; a lecture and slide show by Phil Schaeffer, manager of Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.
- April 4 - The Lorax; a special film for children (fun for grownups too) all about Dr. Suess' characters and how they deal with the problems of their environment.

#### SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT BIRD LIST:

Norman Fox has found the San Francisco Airport area to be an interesting and productive spot for birding. Recently the airport



manager sent him a report prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service covering their observations on January 12 and 13 of this year. Following is a list of the birds observed and included in the report:

Red-throated Loon - Horned, Western and Pied-billed Grebes - Double-cr. Cormorant - Great Blue Heron - Snowy Egret - Mallard - Pintail - American Widgeon - Canvasback - Scaup - Goldeneye - Bufflehead - Surf Scoter - Ruddy Duck - American Kestrel - American Coot - Killdeer - American Golden and Black-bellied Plovers - Black Turnstone - Willet - Least Sandpiper - Dunlin - Dowitcher - Western Sandpiper - Marbled Godwit - Sanderling - American Avocet - Herring, Mew and Bonaparte's Gulls - Forster's Tern - Rock Dove - Water Pipit - Starling - Western Meadowlark - Redwinged Blackbird - House Finch.

#### PETEY NIPPER -- QUAIL?

My "yard guest" of January 18-20, 1976, was a unique, endearing, and at times, exasperating little character. Before more time goes by, I shall jot down the details of his visit.

It all started shortly after mid-day on Sunday, January 18, when I escorted a young friend to the front door. As I opened the door, I noticed a beautiful adult male quail on the lawn. This, of course, was not an unusual occurrence, but I motioned for my guest to be quiet, thinking that she (a city gal) might enjoy seeing a quail at close range. As we stepped out onto the porch, I was dumbfounded when the quail made a frenzied dash towards us. Wild thoughts of rabies (now whoever heard of a rabid quail?) ran through my mind. I told my friend to make a dash for her car while I decoyed the quail elsewhere. I lured the little monster to the backyard, avoiding, with difficulty, stepping on him as he frantically hopped onto my feet, nipping my ankles ferociously, and at the same time keeping up a constant chattering and scolding.

As the afternoon advanced, he calmed down somewhat, except for those times when I went inside. When I returned to the patio, he was in a tizzy, and gave me "what for" with very loud scolding, and very forceful nips on the ankle.

In spite of his distress each time I left him, he showed no desire to follow me into the house. Thus I concluded he was an outdoor quail. When night came, I offered him a nice cozy "nest" I had made in a shallow carton, which he spurned. He seemed quite content to hunker down near the patio door. I shuddered when I learned later that there are two roving, predatory cats in the neighborhood, but, somehow, Nipper was not attacked during the two nights he slept in my patio.

Of course, all my gardening activities came to a halt. At first, he was literally on my feet every second, and I was in constant fear that I would step on him. Even when he became more relaxed and would roam a bit in search of food, he would return suddenly and without warning to land on or near my feet.

By Monday morning I knew I had to find his "owners" both for his sake and mine. I called the Humane Society, Audubon Society, and numerous Oakmont residents without success. Then, on Tuesday, at a meeting of the garden club after the president read an announcement for me, two people contacted me with the names of the "owners". They live on the street in back of mine in the next block.

The story of Petey (not Nipper, after all) prior to our meeting is indeed amazing. From a nest containing fourteen eggs in the yard of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson (a fictitious name, to avoid further publicity) twelve young hatched. Mrs. Johnson, picking up the two remaining eggs

to throw them away, heard a faint peeping from one. They kept it warm overnight and next day they took it to their daughter in Novato who had an incubator. Hatching proved to be difficult because one wing and leg of the chick became entangled, but the Johnson's daughter was a good "mid-wife", and the "birth" was successfully accomplished.

Petey Nipper is the idol of his "father", Mr. Johnson. However, like most fathers, Mr. Johnson goes to work every day and "mother" has the responsibility of tending the young. Now that Petey has reached young adulthood, Mrs. Johnson's worries and responsibilities have increased. He does not want to come in at night, and he especially dislikes the warm, cozy box where he used to sleep. (Apparently he never had slept outside before he left home on Saturday afternoon. Goodness knows where he slept Saturday night, but Sunday and Monday nights, both cold and frosty, he seemed entirely content in my patio.) Mrs. Johnson is afraid to let him sleep outside because of the cat problem.

Petey's growing independence has not resulted in any interest in his own kind. He ignores other quail unless they try to get personal. Mrs. Johnson told me that one little female who made amorous advances toward Petey was rewarded by a ferocious peck on the head.

Petey is definitely a people's quail, not a quail's quail. He loves people, especially their feet. He also loves their voices. Actually, I believe he knows that where there are voices there must be feet! With his growing independence he now takes off to "join the crowd" whenever he hears people talking.

I'm sure that Petey's great need for the companionship of people caused him to become "lost" in the first place. The Johnsons had an engagement for late Saturday afternoon and evening. When they tried to call Petey in before they left he did not respond. This apparent desertion must have caused him to leave home and I am sure that I have never before seen such a desperately lonesome little creature as he was when we first met.

All these problems have caused Mrs. Johnson great anxiety. She is afraid to let him stay out at night because of predators; because of his preoccupation with feet, she is afraid he will cause someone to stumble over him, or that he will be injured; also she is aware that there may be a legal problem involved in keeping a wild bird "captive". I told her that Audubon Society had offered to place Petey in a good home in the country, but she is leaving Petey's disposition, or lack of it, to her husband.

One tires of the obvious moral to such a story. We all know that a wild creature should not be tamed, and that to do so usually brings unfortunate consequences. However, in Petey's case, who can moralize? Would it have been better if that egg had never hatched? What do you think?

-- Ruth Hass

(Ruth is a past president of Sequoia Audubon and now lives in Santa Rosa.)

#### POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY -- ARIZONA TRIP:

PRBO will conduct a Southeastern Arizona trip May 31 to June 6 led by Rich Stallcup, Peter Marshall and Art Earle. Travel by auto caravan. Three nights of camping and three in motels. Cost is \$210 per person plus transportation. Participants must be PRBO members. (PRBO memberships are \$5 per year for students, \$7.50 regular, \$10 family. There are other categories.) A \$25 deposit will reserve a space for you. Checks should be payable to "Point Reyes Bird Observatory--Arizona

Course." For more information write to Bob Stewart, 27 Cedar Street, San Anselmo, CA 94960 or phone 457-3744.

#### FERAL BURROS:

The feral burro is a classic example of the natural ecology of our desert lands being disrupted by introduction of a foreign animal and then giving that animal full legal protection. Under full protection the burro is wiping out the desert bighorn sheep and other native wildlife by destruction of the natural flora. When water is limited the burros drink first and patiently dominate the meager supply until their thirst is quenched. It was observed at Sheep Spring, high in the rugged Providence Mountains of the Mojave Desert, that neither bighorn nor deer will come to water while the burro is there.

Mr. Peter Sanchez, Resources Management Specialist for Death Valley National Monument has agreed to lead a field trip on April 24 and 25, 1976 to observe the effects of feral burros in the Death Valley area. Each Audubon Chapter may name 2 delegates. Phone President Davies at 334-2851 if you would like to represent Sequoia.

The itinerary calls for meeting at 9:00 AM on April 24 at the Death Valley Visitor Center. From there the group will travel to Eagle Borax historical area, Stovepipe Wells and will camp for the night at Hunter Mountain. Water is available. At 8:30 AM on April 25 they will leave for Goldbelt Springs and visit Emigrant Canyon--Wildrose area, Harrisburg and Aquerebury Point, and depart for home via the Wildrose--Trona road. There will be birding opportunities in addition to the burro damage observation. Food, transportation, camping are the responsibilities of each participant.

#### OBSERVATIONS -- JANUARY AND FEBRUARY:

Two Red-necked Grebes were at Pigeon Point Jan. 22 and one was at Pebble Beach, Feb. 13. A group of five Black Brant on the Bay near Coyote Point Feb. 4 was unusual. The species occurred regularly inside the Bay previous to 1900 but is now very rare there. A White-fronted Goose, rare along the coast, was at Sharp Park golf course Jan. 20. 400 Green-winged, 250 Cinnamon and 2 Blue-winged teal were in Pescadero Marsh Feb. 6. Three Oldsquaws were in Princeton Harbor Jan. 20-28. Twelve Common Mergansers were on southern Crystal Springs Res. Feb. 12. Three Hooded Mergansers were on the Bay near Coyote Point Feb. 4. Seven Wandering Tattlers were at Princeton Harbor Jan. 28. A Rock Sandpiper was seen by many birders from Jan. 26 to Feb. 13 at Pebble Beach. A Glaucous Gull in Princeton Harbor Jan. 28 is one of the few county records. Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were at Pigeon Point Feb. 13. Three American Golden Plovers were at Pigeon Point Feb. 6. Three hundred Rhinoceros Auklets were seen from Pigeon Point Feb. 13. A pair of Marbled Murrelets was at Pedro Point Feb. 12 and another pair was at Pigeon Point Feb. 13. A Sora was seen in the marsh at Lake Lucerne, near Pescadero, Feb. 6. The Ground Dove, discovered in Half Moon Bay Dec. 11 was still present Feb. 13 having been seen by scores of Bay Area birders. Two Pigmy Owls were heard at Waterdog Lake, Belmont, Jan. 16. A Screech Owl was heard at the Filoli Estate Feb. 3. The first Allen's Hummingbird to arrive this year was at 25th Avenue, San Mateo, Jan. 29. A Palm Warbler, rare in California, was in Half Moon Bay Feb. 13. The Harris' Sparrow discovered Dec. 13 was still in Half Moon Bay Feb. 13. Two Swamp Sparrows were still in Half Moon Bay Feb. 13.

Any sightings of rare or unusual birds should be reported to either Barry Sauppe (349-8470) or Peter Metropulos (591-9898).

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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 and receive their newsletter.

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

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The closing date for the SEQUOIA is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

THE SEQUOIA March, 1976  
Sequoia Audubon Society  
1009 Laguna Avenue  
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