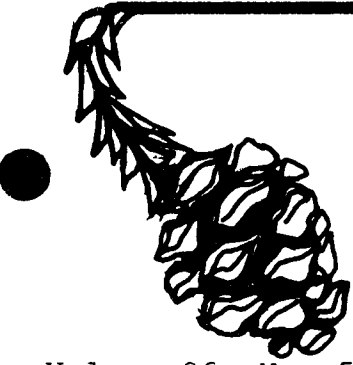




The SEQUOIA

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 26, No. 5

January, 1977

MEETINGS:

BOARD MEETING. JANUARY 6, THURSDAY, 7:30 PM at the Northern California Savings and Loan Building Conference Room, 1430 Chapin Avenue in Burlingame. Board members and committee members should attend. Other members are welcome.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING. JANUARY 13, THURSDAY, 8:00 PM 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. Lyman Fancher, a young man from Hayward about whom an article appeared in the Sunday paper of December 5 concerning his work on harbor seals and who is currently finishing his Master's degree thesis on that subject, will give us a slide presentation on "The Natural History of Harbor Seals in the South Bay."

FIELD TRIPS:

JANUARY 8, SATURDAY FOSTER CITY

Meet at the new Wildlife Refuge on Belmont Slough at 8:30 AM. To get there go south on Foster City Blvd. to Beach Park Blvd., turn right (West) and drive $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the wildlife refuge. There'll be a sign on your left. Arrangements will be made for parking. The route of the trip will then be north along the shore ending near the Werder Pier at the foot of East Hillsdale Blvd. (San Mateo Bridge). Bring a lunch, of course. For an extra treat get a half hour earlier start and stop at McDonald's on Foster City Blvd. and Triton (the latter only on recent maps). Your leaders will show you one or possibly two Burrowing Owls who successfully raised six offspring this past season.

Leaders: Ron White 574-8974
Al Bergeron 3492960

JANUARY 16, SUNDAY AÑO NUEVO ELEPHANT SEAL EXPEDITION

A reservation has been made for a guided tour of Año Nuevo State Reserve to observe the hauled-out, unsuccessful elephant seal males. The Reserve is closed to the public except for guided tours during the breeding season.

Meet at the parking lot at 9:15 AM. The tour begins $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile out on the trail at a staging area at 9:45. Be prepared for about a 3-mile hike. We will be able to have lunch back at the parking lot.

You'll be able to get within 20 feet of the seals so if you are a photography enthusiast you'll have ample opportunity for close-ups.

Call Howard Rathlesberger for details: 697-6611.

(Continued)

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JANUARY 22, SATURDAY

FILOLI AND LOWER WATERSHED

Meet at the Water Temple parking lot on Canada Road at 8:30 AM. Bring a lunch. Max will keep you birding all day if you like. Hopefully, you will get to see the Canada Geese close up.

Leader: Max Krueger 593-2501 (Home)
326-0324 (Office)

CONSERVATION NEWS:

1977 started some 25 days early for the State Legislature which convened on December 6, 1976. At publication time only one bill of interest to conservationists had been introduced--SB 4, requiring a 5¢ deposit on all beer and soft drink bottles and a minimum of a 2¢ deposit on cans after January 1, 1978, which was introduced by Senator Omer Rains of Ventura.

Congress was still in recess, but preparations were being made well ahead of time for its opening. The Alaska Coalition, comprising most important environmental groups including NAS, is busy establishing a nation-wide campaign to get both Congressional and public support for a bill introduced by Senator Jackson and Rep. Morris Udall in the last Congress. The bill would give permanent protection to the outstanding Alaskan wilderness areas through the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This act authorized creation from national interest lands of new national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and wild and scenic rivers, but it set a deadline for such legislation of December 18, 1978. Altogether 22 areas in this our last frontier are proposed for inclusion as either national parks and monuments, or National preserves or wildlife reserves. Further information on the program can be obtained from The Alaska Coalition, 620 C Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003.

After some years of procrastination the Interior Department has finally announced a ban on the use of lead shot for hunting wild fowl on parts of the Atlantic Flyway. Lead shot will be allowed for another year in guns smaller than 12 gauge. These restrictions will be extended to the Mississippi Flyway in the 1977 season and to the Central and Pacific Flyways in 1978. Poisoning of ducks and other bottom feeders by ingestion of spent shot has been recognized since early in the 1950's and is estimated to kill some 2 million birds annually and to weaken many more. The excuse for such prolongation of amelioration of this long standing problem is the excessive concentration of spent shot on the Atlantic Coast, where it is estimated to be greater than one pellet per square foot.

Even this token gesture is being bitterly opposed by the National Rifle Association. The National Wildlife Federation as well as most hunters have joined NAS and other conservation organizations in agreeing on the necessity of banning lead shot. Manufacturers have had more than ample time to prepare for the change, and shotgun damage from steel shot has proved to be minor. Cost of steel shot now is about 50% more than lead, but the difference is almost entirely due to low volume of production and should level off as usage of steel shot increases. SAS members who have any unconverted hunters and/or Rifle Association members as friends can do a little missionary work in this regard.

Locally, the County Board of Supervisors has approved Plan A for Sugar Loaf Mountain, allowing limited development with retention of the knob in open space. This plan was supported by the contiguous cities of Belmont and San Mateo and also by SAS.

The Supervisors also appointed the Redwood City firm of Leighton Associates to draft an Environmental Impact Report for the Filoli Estate. Supervisor Jean Fassler asked that the appointment be delayed until the Board could further study a suggestion by the State Fish and Game Department for joint funding of the area as a wildlife refuge, but she was outvoted 4 to 1. Both I and Al Schmidt for the Sierra Club attended the Board meeting and supported Mrs. Fassler's request.

The County Parks and Recreation Commission held a preliminary hearing on December 3 on three concept plans for development of Wunderlich Park, whose differences consist almost entirely in the number of hiking and riding trails developed. The minimal development plan even deletes a few present trails.

PG&E has held 3 informational hearings on 4 possible sites for a gas turbine power plant which would burn 2½ million barrels of fuel oil a year and would require a cooling tower using 4 million gallons of water a day! Sites considered are in north San Jose, on Oyster Point in South San Francisco, Visitacion Point in Brisbane, or enlargement of the present Potrero plant in San Francisco, which is said to be the plan favored by PG&E. Though use of reclaimed waste water for cooling is a possibility, it poses problems and use of fresh water brings up the problem of the increasing scarcity that faces the state with the liklihood of a second drought year in 1977.

Bayside San Mateo County, with its water supply from San Francisco's Sierra sources, has had no actual shortage such as our coastside has experienced. A drive on Highway 280 shows the Lakes at an extremely low level and little snow in the Sierra to promise any replacement. Too few people seem to realize that a shortage exists and every day one can see evidence of water being wasted as hosing leaves from sidewalks continues and runoff from car washing and over-watering of lawns and gardens runs into the gutters.

Let us all hope for a happily wet New Year, but in the meantime let every SAS member endeavor not to waste a drop of our precious water.

-- Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

BIRDING FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW -- By Fran Nelson

Roy and I have just had a quick bite to eat after train-time and we are turning into our driveway. It is mid-October, about 6:30 PM. A bird shoots from across the street onto the lawn next door to us. There is something very different about this bird which causes me to break all records in opening the garage door, getting upstairs to get my binoculars and out onto the front porch! Whew! the bird is still there!

I can't believe my eyes! This is like no other bird I have ever seen! A very much messed up blackbird of some sort! Perhaps albinistic? That face! Black with a light buffy eye-patch and attached eyeline going toward the front make it look like it's wearing goggles or an eye-mask. Albinism? This is getting me no place and certainly the rich rusty-brown crown and breast are of no help. But now I can get a good look at the wings. Some of the feathers are black with gleaming white edges! Here is my answer! A Lark Bunting! A Great Plains bird but occasionally one does find his way to the Pacific Coast.

This is a moulting male. When his moult is complete he won't be nearly so distinctive looking as he is in breeding plumage. He'll be brown and tan and streaky and the main clues to his identity will be his wing markings and his large conical bill. But now, making it easy for me, he still has some breeding-plumaged wing feathers left.

Roy is on his way up the stairs. I call the exciting news to him and he hastens to get his binoculars. We check out several details including the very large conical bill which is slate-blue. Since this is a new species for both of us, a check against a field guide is in order. This bird is most cooperative. He even gives us time to watch him through the scope!

The light eye-patch is the beginning of his moult into winter plumage and his eyes look very dark set in that light patch. His back and tail are black and his tail shows light tips when it comes up out of the grass in which he is foraging. It's a very scraggly tail showing the effects of the moult.

We'd like a picture of this most unusual bird but the light meter says "no"!

Two automobiles pass at the same time in front of the lawn where he is followed by a very noisy motorcycle. We are sure he will leave but he stays. A moment later, a boy weaving in and out of driveways on his bicycle makes it to the driveway near the bunting and this very quiet little operation sends him to the backside of the sycamore tree in our yard. I am wondering what our best chance of seeing him some more is when he flies off almost swallow-like toward the eucalyptus trees behind the houses across the street from us. There is a grassy area there which, although not extensive, is just right for a Lark Bunting.

This isn't birding through my kitchen window but any window will do--or any non-window--so long as there's a bird to watch!

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH is a 1000-acre wildlife sanctuary and education center located on Bolinas Lagoon three miles north of Stinson Beach on State Highway 1. It is open to the public on weekends and holidays from March 1 through July 4 each year. Special visits may be arranged by phoning the Ranch, 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

While the raptors, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed and Marsh Hawks and an occasional White-tailed Kite fly over the Ranch in search of prey, and some mammals, the spotted skunk, bobcat and a lone mountain lion harass unwary livestock, the Monarch Butterflies have been on the wing arriving at their wintering grounds. Great clusters of these fragile beauties are now in hibernation at Audubon Monarch Grove, Bolinas, and at the Elizabeth Terwilliger Grove at Muir Beach until winter's end.

Late in January the Board of Directors of National Audubon Society will hold its annual meeting in San Francisco and on an all-day field trip to Marin County, January 21, they plan to visit the Ranch.

Audubon Canyon Ranch is most grateful to the following who have become sponsors of the Ranch as their contributions to it reached a total of \$800. This was the cost of an acre in 1962.

Hannah W. Rowell, Priscilla Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred E. Heller, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund W. Nash and Phyllis Carroll.

The Ranch is also grateful to: Mrs. F. P. Farquhar, Mr. & Mrs. John R. Moore and Mrs. Russell Keil for their contributions in memory of Mrs. Harry B. Allen

and to: The Eden Garden Club for its contribution in memory of Albert Earl Christensen, to Mrs. J. C. Youngberg for hers in memory of Dr. Leo Stanley.

The Ranch extends greetings to all for a full and happy 1977.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

Serendipity was the name of the game at Palo Alto Yacht Harbor on November 20. The 24 brave souls that attended the outing in spite of the 53 degree temperature and solid overcast were rewarded with the sighting of a European Widgeon, and later, more than 40 Clapper Rails. The high tide of the month forced the rails into easy viewing. A Virginia Rail was even seen from the North edge of the Interpretive Center. Part of the group stood fascinated while a Clapper pummeled a mouse into a mass soft enough to swallow whole.

In addition to the birds described above the following were also observed: Western Grebe, Horned Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Snow Goose, Mallard, Pintail, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Shoveler, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, White-tailed Kite, Marsh Hawk, Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron (many), Coot, Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Dowitcher, Western Sandpiper, Western Gull, California Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Loggerhead Shrike, House Sparrow and Brewer's Blackbird.

-- John Silliman, Leader

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING:

Some 70 people attended our delicious Christmas potluck dinner on December 9. As always, it was a friendly, festive occasion and the food was delectable.

At the meeting which followed, two special awards were made. A moulted tail feather from a Harris' Hawk which was rehabilitated by Cliff and Max was beautifully mounted and presented to Jean Jones in appreciation of all of her contributions to our Chapter, especially during the period when we met at Roosevelt School.

The other award, a moulted flight feather from Sequoia, our rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk, was presented to Tom and Carol Cudmore who own the Village Fish and Chippery in the Carlmont shopping center. When the Cudmore's became aware of the plight of the dolphins trapped in the tuna fishing nets they decided not to serve tuna in their seafood restaurant until the needless slaughter of the dolphins was stopped and they posted a notice of their intent in the restaurant.

Roy Nelson showed some slides taken on recent field trips of unusual birds. We hope it is possible to continue this feature. It makes the trips even more enjoyable.

Diana Olsen and Cathy Osugi, staff members of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, presented a dramatic film which emphasized the need for a refuge in the South Bay. Some of the most impressive scenes from the film, aside from that omnipresent bulldozer, were those of the salt marshes. The beautiful Avocet sat apprehensively on her nest. Would the nest be the next target of that awesome machine? The Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse nibbled quietly on the marsh plant. Would the plant be ploughed under by the monster? So much of it is already gone the mouse is becoming extinct, replaced by the brown

rats, one of man's worst enemies, who thrive and multiply on the rubbish used for Bay fill.

It is the intent of the Refuge management to preserve the biological systems while allowing for optimum visitor use. As a starting point they have assigned four classifications of proposed use: Restricted use of areas which must be maintained without disturbance; Conducted use by conducted tours only; Controlled use in areas where the effects of visitors on the sensitive habitat will be monitored and access regulated; and Open use of areas having the lowest biological sensitivity and subject to the lowest restrictions (about 25% of the Refuge). These classifications will probably change as wildlife patterns shift, understanding of the natural environment increases and habitat sensitivities change.

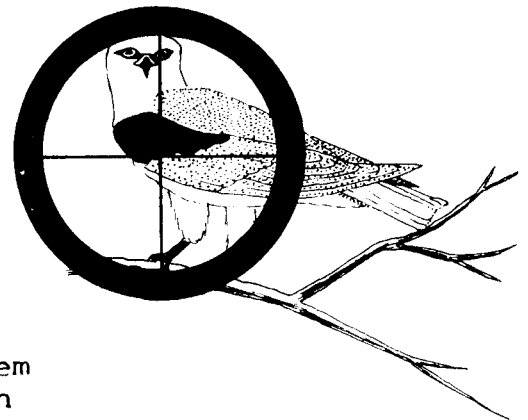
Miss Osugi, a Wildlife Biologist, spoke of the comprehensive plans for the Refuge and expressed confidence that all of the necessary land will be acquired within the almost-expired time limitations.

PESCADERO MARSH RANGER REPORT:

The most unusual event in November for the marsh was sightings two days in a row by school groups of a bobcat below the observation platform. Birds to be readily seen now include the following: Red Phalarope, Ruddy Duck, Canvasback, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Shoveler, Meadowlark, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Coot, House Finch, Marbled Godwit, Horned Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Western Grebe, Bonaparte Gull, California Gull, Heermann's Gull, Herring Gull, Marsh Hawk, Black-crowned Night Heron, Killdeer, White-tailed Kite, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Willet, Long-billed Marsh Wren and Greater Yellowlegs.

I have spent a large portion of my time lately in adding low profile signs for visitor control and a fence to stop foot traffic in the fragile dunes along Highway One. I have also installed two concrete benches at the observation platform which make extended viewing physically more pleasing.

One bird I never tire of viewing as of late is the White-Tailed Kite which can be more readily seen at Año Nuevo State Reserve where as many as 20 can be seen perched in a willow tree. This bird was once misunderstood and persecuted but is now fully protected and its numbers are increasing favorably. A good article on the White-tailed Kite can be found in the November issue of Natural History. Their white color so easy to pick out against dark foliage and their gregarious roosting habits had made them easy targets for hunters in the past of which the enclosed sketch is a grim reminder.



-- John Hart - California Department of
Parks and Recreation.

J. ED. McCLELLAN:

We are happy to learn that Jed is making progress in recovering from a heart attack suffered earlier this month.

In his many years of membership Jed has worked in so many different areas of interest for Sequoia Audubon that no one knows all of his vast and valuable contributions in time, talent and money.

All of us, however, enjoyed his Plant-of-the-Month program which he conducted for years until last June.

All of Jed's many Sequoia friends wish him a speedy recovery.

PELAGIC TRIP -- GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY:

A pelagic trip leaving from Monterey is scheduled for February 13. We hope to see black-footed albatross, northern fulmar, sooty shearwater, slender-billed shearwater, fork-tailed petrel, black-legged kittiwake, ancient murrelet, and others. The boat will depart at 8 a.m. and return about 3 p.m. The fare is \$13.00 per person.

For reservations please send a check made payable to:

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2718 Telegraph Avenue, #206
Berkeley, CA 94705

Details of the trip will be sent with an acknowledgement.

DECEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

The board of directors of Sequoia Audubon held their regular meeting on December 2.

There is a possibility that Sequoia will be given some submerged bay tidelands just east of the freeway at the north end of San Mateo County. Charles Newman will report more completely at a later date.

The board reviewed the 1977 contribution budget and determined to provide financial support for Audubon Canyon Ranch, Environmental Quality Coordinating Council, Marine Ecological Institute, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Raptor Rehabilitation Program, San Mateo Garden Center and the Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. It was also decided to again provide a scholarship to Audubon Camp of the West.

It was reported that some work at the Port of Redwood City would involve diking at Bair Island. No position was taken by the board pending receipt of more detailed information.

RAPTOR REHABILITATION PROGRAM:

Currently, Cliff Lindquist and Max Krueger have but one boarder, a young Harris' Hawk. The Harris' Hawk frequents the prairie regions, the chaparral and the mesquite lands of Texas and Arizona and southward through Mexico. It is not migratory in the usual sense but probably withdraws to Mexico during the winter. As of now the young boarder has no name. If someone would like to suggest a name for him send it along to the editors who will be glad to submit the names to the board of directors. The board will consider all entries and will award a suitable prize to the winner!

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION CONFIDENTIAL PHONE:

State Parks and Rec Director Herb Rhodes has announced a CONFIDENTIAL PHONE-IN SYSTEM to allow Californians easy access to the director's office to tell him what they like or don't like about the way our state parks are operated, etc. Callers may remain anonymous, if they wish. Rhodes has installed the confidential phone with recording equipment in his office, and only he will hear the recorded comments. The confidential phone number is 916/332-6927.

from Sierra Club LOMA PRIETAN

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

January

- 2 - Sunday - Año Nuevo Christmas Count
- 6 - Thursday - Board Meeting
- 8 - Saturday - Foster City Field Trip
- 13 - Thursday - Regular Membership Meeting
- 16 - Sunday - Año Nuevo Field Trip
- 22 - Saturday - Filoli Estate Field Trip

February

- 3 - Thursday - Board Meeting
- 5 - Saturday - Golden Gate Park and/or Lake Merced Field Trip
- 10 - Thursday - Regular Membership Meeting
- 13 - Sunday - Golden Gate Audubon Pelagic Trip
- 19 - Saturday - Grizzly Island (one day) OR Los Banos or Gray Lodge (overnight).

THE SEQUOIA January, 1977
Sequoia Audubon Society
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