



# The Sequoia

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 27, No. 6

February, 1978

## MEETINGS:

BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 2, THURSDAY, 7:30 PM at the Northern California Savings & Loan office, 1430 Chapin Avenue in Burlingame. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, FEBRUARY 9, THURSDAY, 7:30 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. Social period 7:30 to 8:00. Program commences at 8:00.

Our program will feature a slide talk by Ted Chandik on "Shorebirds." Ted is a naturalist and ornithologist for the city of Palo Alto and is a prominent Northern California birder. He is a frequent leader for Nature Expeditions International having lead trips to Baja California, East Africa and the West Coast of Mexico. His program will coordinate with our February 18 field trip to Foster City and Princeton which he will lead and which will concentrate on shorebirds.

Charles Newman, returning from a three-week trip to Mexico, should have some new material for the Allen/Newman Bird-of-the-Month program.

## FIELD TRIPS:

SAVE GAS. MAKE BIRDING PALS BY CAR-POOLING. Call Pearl Morgenstern, 341-2510 and tell her where a rider or two can meet you. Split the cost of fifteen cents a mile equitably.

FEBRUARY 4 and 5 SATURDAY and SUNDAY Los Banos Area

Leaders Georgia and Jerry Perkins. Phone: 583-7815 after 4:00 PM.

See details in January SEQUOIA

FEBRUARY 18 SATURDAY FOSTER CITY & PRINCETON

Meet at 8:00 AM at the fishing pier in northeast Foster City. Drive east on Hillsdale Blvd. past Hillbarn Theater. As the road bends toward the south it becomes Beach Park Road and close by is the stub remnant of the old San Mateo--Hayward Bridge which is now a fishing pier. This area will be our classroom for the morning session on shorebirds.

At 1:00 PM we will move to Princeton harbor, about four miles north of Half Moon Bay on Highway 1. Meet at the entrance to the parking lot by the main pier. Shorebirds of the ocean beaches will be observed and studied.

Our leader will be Ted Chandik and this field trip will be an exten-

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sion of the program of our February 9 meeting.

For additional information, phone John Silliman, 593-5323

MARCH 4 SATURDAY POINT REYES & BEAR VALLEY SOUTH

See March SEQUOIA for details.

#### CONSERVATION NEWS:

A critical time was reached in mid-January in the progress of HR 39, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Strongly supported by NAS and other conservation organization, the bill, as presently written, would protect 102 million acres of Alaska's most magnificent wild lands. The bill was scheduled for mark up in the Alaska Lands Subcommittee on January 16, and from there it would go to the full Interior Committee and then to the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and finally to the full Merchant Marine Committee. San Mateo County Representative, Paul N. McCloskey, Jr., on the latter two committees, is a key figure, as yet uncommitted. His leadership and Republican support will be needed for this Democratically-dominated bill. Those in his district who have not yet written him urging his support of HR 39 should do so now. Representative Leo Ryan is one of the sponsors of the bill and needs many letters from his constituents indicating their support.

Another federal bill needing Audubon input is HR 10255 (a revision of HR 8606) the Nongame Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1978. The bill now includes provision for comprehensive statewide plans for nongame fish and wildlife conservation and increased funding to \$120 million in matching federal grants. The states' portions may be partly in the form of "in-kind contributions" such as personal services rendered by volunteers. It is an excellent bill which NAS Washington Representative, Dr. Michael Zagata, helped to develop. Hearings were scheduled by the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation, and the Chairman, Representative Robert L. Leggett, Congressman from Solano County and sponsor of the bill, has asked all Audubon chapters for support and input from their members. In particular he asks for members' views on type of federal funding which, as the bill is now written, would come from Congressional appropriations. NAS and several other organizations would prefer funding to come from an excise tax on certain outdoor recreational equipment and on birdseed (similar to funding of game wildlife protection by hunters and fishers) since this is considered a more stable source. There is some question, however, whether this type of funding could pass the Senate Appropriations Committee, whose chairman is firmly opposed to further excise taxes.

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On the State level, SB 346, permitting construction of the controversial Peripheral Canal was to be considered in January by a two-house conference committee. As written, the bill would not adequately protect water quality standards in the Bay and Delta, which in turn would adversely affect the fish and the wildlife of the surrounding marshes. Save San Francisco Bay Association was asking for letters to the Bay Area Senators (including Senator Gregorio) requesting that they oppose SB 346 in its present form and that it be amended to provide specific water quality standards which would be guaranteed prior to commencement of any work on the Canal.

SB 932, noted last month, which provides funding for a study of Riparian Forests, should be heard about the end of January before the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee and then, if approved, by the

Finance Committee, of which Senator Gregorio is a member.

The Assembly bill amending the Forest Practice Act, AB 1236, which was passed by the Assembly last year, was also to come before the Senate Natural Resources Committee, time unknown as of mid-January. This bill, opposed by lumber interests, would fill loopholes in an otherwise good Act which now encourage violation by logging operations resulting in erosion, stream siltation, and damage to wildlife habitat and fish spawning areas. Letters to Senator Gregorio in support are needed.

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The recent quarterly meeting of the Bay Area Council (comprising all the chapters surrounding San Francisco Bay) was held January 7 at Ohlone College, Fremont, in a beautiful and appropriate setting including a blue-winged teal swimming about in the lake behind the meeting building. A most interesting movie of the Hayward Shoreline Park was presented, and it gave an ideal goal for SAS to aim for in development of San Mateo County's bayfront. Warren Nute of Marin Audubon, a sanitary engineer who grew up in Los Altos, presented another excellent type of project in the use of treated waste water from a sewage treatment plant to create a freshwater marsh. Napa-Solano Chapter reported an unfortunate incident occurring during an Audubon field trip to Benicia Marsh which resulted in the accidental killing of a black rail. All field trip participants should take note from this that over-enthusiastic bird watching can too easily become bird harassment. Robert Personius of the Southbay Wildlife Refuge reported that it is "well on its way", and that other refuges in the area, notably, San Pablo, Elliot Slough and Elkhorn Slough are gradually acquiring the land needed. Phil Schaeffer of the Whittell Center reported that a Bay Area conference on dredging and dredge spoils will be held there February 25 from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

#### BIRDING FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW:

The wind is high this morning and there are squalls with lighter rain in between. Great flocks of gulls are milling and those high in the sky and a great distance away look like swarms of gnats. Some nearer to me look as if they are suspended on kite strings as they are buffeted by the wind. They seem to be headed generally westward and still not really going anywhere and I wonder. I wonder if they are just frolicking up there in this wild weather? Some of them occasionally leave their flock and fly resolutely into the wind, then wheel about and glide back on stiff wings. Are they taking a breather? Or, are they engaging in sport?

On another windy day recently I had watched a gull fly hard into the wind, then turn around and set his wings for a long glide back with the wind. It took him swiftly beyond my range of vision and it appeared to me that the whole maneuver was for the sheer joy of it! Our joy rides all need mechanical aids. How restricted we are!

Yesterday and today there are waves on our birdbaths and the water is blowing out on them! At least we are far enough north to have escaped the hurricane winds south of us. The birds are slow to assemble this morning with the weather as it is.

Quite a number of House Finches are here for sunflower seeds and most of them are staying on the ground using the reed fence to shield them from the strong winds. On one of the fence posts which supports the reed, there is a blob. My binoculars reveal it to be a female House Finch who is flattened out for stability while she eats her seed. Twice she flies down for reenforcements and back to her post. Why she likes that spot in this

wind is beyond me. Is she the Garbo of the House Finch world? The birds are constantly having to alter their positions for we have peculiar wind-eddies in our back yard which will lift up the tail of a bird and would set it on its face unless it readjusts its position very quickly. Changing direction is no guarantee it won't happen again in this capricious wind!

Lesser Goldfinches have forsaken the birch catkins for the rosemary--much more stable in the wind! Assorted finches and sparrows are having a dizzying ride even in the pyracantha. Tiny Hummers are blown from the feeder as they hover. When a gust subsides, undaunted, they reposition only to be blown away again.

Mid-afternoon, I am out feeding the birds. Before I can finish, the rain begins pelting down! I had replenished the baths and so now I am setting all the seed dishes under the deck for a little protection. Before I can get back up to the kitchen the birds are busily appeasing their appetites. Soon there are baths going on! In this deluge there are some Golden-crowned, a White-crowned and a Fox Sparrow along with some House Finches all bathing! I could almost think they would be wet enough but obviously getting wet is quite different from taking a bath!

And during the interludes between these storms, the Anna Hummingbirds are courting and the House Sparrows are gathering grass, small birch branches and feathers to add to their nests, the Scrub Jay is feeding his mate and Spring seems not too far away!

**AUDUBON CANYON RANCH:** 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.

Work is proceeding on the Display Hall alterations and additions. The display area has been enlarged, color photographs will be renewed where necessary and the Research Associates exhibit of Indian materials will be added, suitably displayed in new exhibit cases.

The Ranch will open for public visits on Saturday, March 4. Sequoia Audubon will be asked to provide hosts from Memorial Day through July 4. In the 1977 public visit season the Ranch had nearly 20,000 visitors including people from forty-five states and seventeen foreign countries.

#### JANUARY GENERAL MEETING:

The slides of the Downy Woodpecker, our Bird-of-the-Month, nest building, were taken in Dr. Norman Fox's yard. Unfortunately, the prospective parents were evicted from their future home by rival woodpeckers before they had a chance to start a family.

The speaker of the evening was Peter Churgel who was employed for three years as an Environmental Specialist with the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline. Mr. Churgel's large clear slides and interesting explanation traced the building of the pipeline from Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of the Brooks Range to the Port of Valdez.

Monumental problems were encountered not the least of these being coping with the permafrost and the extremes in weather. The oil line is complete

now. Usage began this winter and by next spring it will have undergone its first big test: what effect weather conditions have had upon it. In addition, there is also real concern for vandalism since the 800-plus mile pipeline is very visible and very vulnerable. A large section of the population strongly opposed it.

Mr. Churgel said the oil companies complied with environmental protection regulations. They had to since a close check was being kept upon them by the government at all stages of construction. Built-in sensors will signal a shut-off of oil flow if a leak occurs. However, as much as 20,000 barrels could leak before shut-off. It is some consolation to know that thick crude oil congeals quickly in cold climates and is therefore more easily cleaned up. At intervals the pipeline has been either buried or raised to allow for animal crossings, hopefully including the caribou. Measures were also taken to protect fish and their habitats and forage grasses were planted over construction sites.

Mr. Churgel advised us that mineral development is certain to follow the pipeline experience. Alaska will be developed. If development is slow, Alaska probably will not suffer. But there are powerful pressures from greed.

-- C.G.

#### HERBS AT AUDUBON CANYON RANCH:

Join us for a stimulating weekend workshop exploring the world of herbal knowledge. Learn to collect, prepare and use garden plants for food, spices, teas and medicine. We will make extractions, decoctions, salves, tinctures and dyes. We'll stay at Volunteer Canyon where you will use the new hand-built dormitory with its solar heated water, wind generated electricity and water conserving toilets. Course taught by herbalist Selena Heron and A.C.R. biologist John Kipping. The \$20 course fee includes tuition, dormitory fee and materials. Proceeds benefit the Audubon Canyon Ranch education program. Class size limited to 25. Please call 383-1644 to preregister and we'll send you details.

Saturday--Sunday, 25-26 February.

#### VALENTINE POEM:

I gave a hundred valentines,  
A hundred, did I say?  
I gave a thousand valentines  
One cold and wintry day,  
I didn't put my name on them  
Or any other words,  
Because my valentines were seeds  
For February birds.

-- Anonymous. From THE ALBATROS  
Bulletin of Santa  
Cruz Bird Club.

#### CSM COMMUNITY SERVICE COURSE -- PESCADERO MARSH

Probably many Sequoia members recently recently received the 54-page catalog of Community service programs to be offered this spring by Canada College, Skyline College and College of San Mateo. On page 45 there appears a description of a course entitled, "The Ecology of Pescadero Marsh,

An Endangered Coastal Wetland." This course will be taught by Bruce Elliott and will consist of a lecture on Friday, April 21 from 7 to 10 PM at CSM and field trip on Saturday, April 22. Fee \$18. Additional information may be obtained by phoning CSM at 574-6444.

JANUARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

The board of directors of Sequoia Audubon held their regular monthly meeting on January 5.

A contribution of \$200 to the San Mateo Garden Center was approved.

A contribution to Audubon Canyon Ranch in memory of Mrs. Frank Allen was approved.

President Prime appointed Mike Wyle to attend the seminar and field trip on owls at Point Reyes.

President Prime appointed a committee to study the needs of Pescadero Marsh. Members will include Paul Lechich and Charles Newman.

The Crystal Springs Christmas Count reported 191 species on the December 26 count. This compares with 182 for 1976.

SUNDAY SEMINARS FOR ADVANCED BIRDERS:

February sees the continuation of the special field identification classes being conducted by Jon Winter at Audubon's Whittell Education Center in Tiburon on Sundays from 10 AM to 12:30 PM.

February 5 -- Orioles-Thrushes-Juncos-Blackbirds-Empidonax and Myiarchus Flycatchers

February 12 -- Swans-Female Ducks-Accipiter and Buteo Hawks-Falcons-Winter Loons-Grebes-Terns

Registration for these programs, \$6.50 per person for each seminar, can be made by mail or at the Center. Please make check payable to National Audubon Society (376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, CA 94920).

CONFERENCE -- DREDGING IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY: OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The National Audubon Society's Whittell Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road in Tiburon, will be the site of a special conference on dredging operations and dredge spoils disposal methods in San Francisco Bay.

Co-sponsored by the Center and the Society's Western Regional Office, this conference will present a full range of discussion on this important and controversial subject by speakers from the California Department of Fish & Game, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. The day-long conference will be moderated by Dr. Richard Martyr, Western Representative of the National Audubon Society.

While there is no charge for attending, the conference participants are asked to register in advance due to limited space. Please call the Whittell Audubon Center at 388-2524 (Wednesdays through Sundays) to register.

ANNE M. HALL:

Anne Hall, long time Sequoia member, passed away on January 8. She was active in Sequoia affairs and served as chairman of the social arrange-

ments committee. Her many Sequoia friends will miss her and extend their condolences to her family.

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SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY - OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN 1977-78

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|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------|
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| Bartlett, Grace       |          | 913 Palm Ave, San Mateo 94401                |
| Bergeron, Al          | 349-2960 | 251 Killdeer Ct, Foster City 94404           |
| Crotchett, Victor     | 343-5226 | 1104 Balboa Ave, Burlingame 94010            |
| Danielson, Maryann    | 342-6919 | 848 Edgehill Dr, Burlingame 94010            |
| Davies, Byron         | 334-2851 | 606 Cambridge St, San Francisco 94134        |
| Fletcher, Louise      | 591-6804 | 1504 El Verano Way, Belmont 94002            |
| Fox, Norman & Eila    | 343-1406 | 51 W. Bellevue, San Mateo 94402              |
| Friday, Robert        | 365-1194 | 80 Amber Ct, San Carlos 94070                |
| Gales, Carmen         | 349-6927 | 2828 Edison St, #15, San Mateo 94403         |
| Gurevitz, Liv         | 347-0912 | 1400 Southdown Rd, Hillsborough 94010        |
| Herrington, Dorothy   | 343-5324 | 110 W. Third Ave, San Mateo 94402            |
| Horn, Nancy           | 342-9902 | 607 Ninth Ave, San Mateo 94402               |
| Jones, Jean           | 344-9339 | 1417 Sanchez Ave, Burlingame 94010           |
| Lucas, Hal & Barbara  | 344-3796 | 130 Newton Dr, Burlingame, 94010             |
| McElhany, Amy & Ed    | 343-3219 | 1009 Laguna Ave, Burlingame 94010            |
| Metropulos, Peter     | 591-9898 | 336 Chesterton Ave, Belmont 94002            |
| Montgomery, A. E.     | 344-4249 | 2270 Summit Dr, Hillsborough 94010           |
| Morgenstern, Pearl    | 341-2510 | 1740 Wolfe Dr, San Mateo 94402               |
| Nelson, Fran & LeRoy  | 593-7941 | 1035 Lassen Dr, Belmont 94002                |
| Newman, Charles       | 697-5601 | 25 Corte Alegre, Millbrae 94030              |
| Prime, John           | 573-5889 | 848 W. Hillsdale Blvd, San Mateo 94403       |
| Rathlesberger, Howard | 364-7629 | 230 Ridgeway Rd, Woodside 94062              |
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| Silliman, John        | 593-5323 | 264 Arundel Rd, San Carlos 94070             |
| Smith, Ruth           | 322-5279 | 1231 Hoover St, Menlo Park 94025             |
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National Audubon Society, George Whittell Education Center & Richardson Bay  
Wildlife Sanctuary  
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, CA 94920  
Phone: 388-2524

Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 843-2211

Wildlife Rescue: 969-WILD (24-hour answering service)



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