



The Sequoia

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 28, No. 5

January, 1979

MEETINGS:

BOARD MEETING, JANUARY 2, TUESDAY, 7:30 PM in the conference room of Northern California Savings & Loan office, 1430 Chapin Avenue in Burlingame. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, JANUARY 11, THURSDAY, 8:00 PM at the San Mateo Garden Center, located on Parkside Way--between 26th and 27th Avenues--just west of Alameda de las Pulgas in San Mateo.

Ms. Sally Judy will present a slide program on the fragile beauty of MONO LAKE, located in eastern central California. This program will deal with the problems of maintaining a sufficient and reasonable level of water in the lake basin. The battle lines are drawn between the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the concerned citizens of the rest of the western United States. At stake are the lives of thousands of California gulls which nest on Negit Island multitudes of Eared grebes and other birds which use the basin for feeding and resting during migration.

Make plans now to attend this program and become informed as to how to involve yourself in the fight to save MONO lake from further exploitation.

Frank Allen and Charles Newman will present their traditional Bird-of-the-Month.

FIELD TRIPS:

JANUARY 13, SATURDAY - LAKE MERCED AND GOLDEN GATE PARK

Meet at the boat house at Harding Park Golf course at 9:00 AM

LEADERS: Barbara and Hal Lucas. 344-3796

JANUARY 16, TUESDAY - TUESDAY BIRDERS TO ANO NUEVO STATE RESERVE

8:30 AM. This will be primarily an opportunity to observe northern elephant seals within the ecology of the dunes community. Wear your warmest windbreakers and boots and bring a lunch. We will do some birding after the seal walk. Ano Nuevo is just inside the San Mateo County line on New Year's Creek Road, 28 miles south of Half Moon Bay. Only 20 people will be permitted on our tour so please call Fran Nelson, 593-7941 if you would like to be included. There will be a parking fee of \$1.50 per auto, so CARPOOL! Tuesday birders will be given preference.

PRESIDENT: Stephen L. Aldrich
74 Nevada Street
Redwood City, CA 94062
Phone: 366-3603

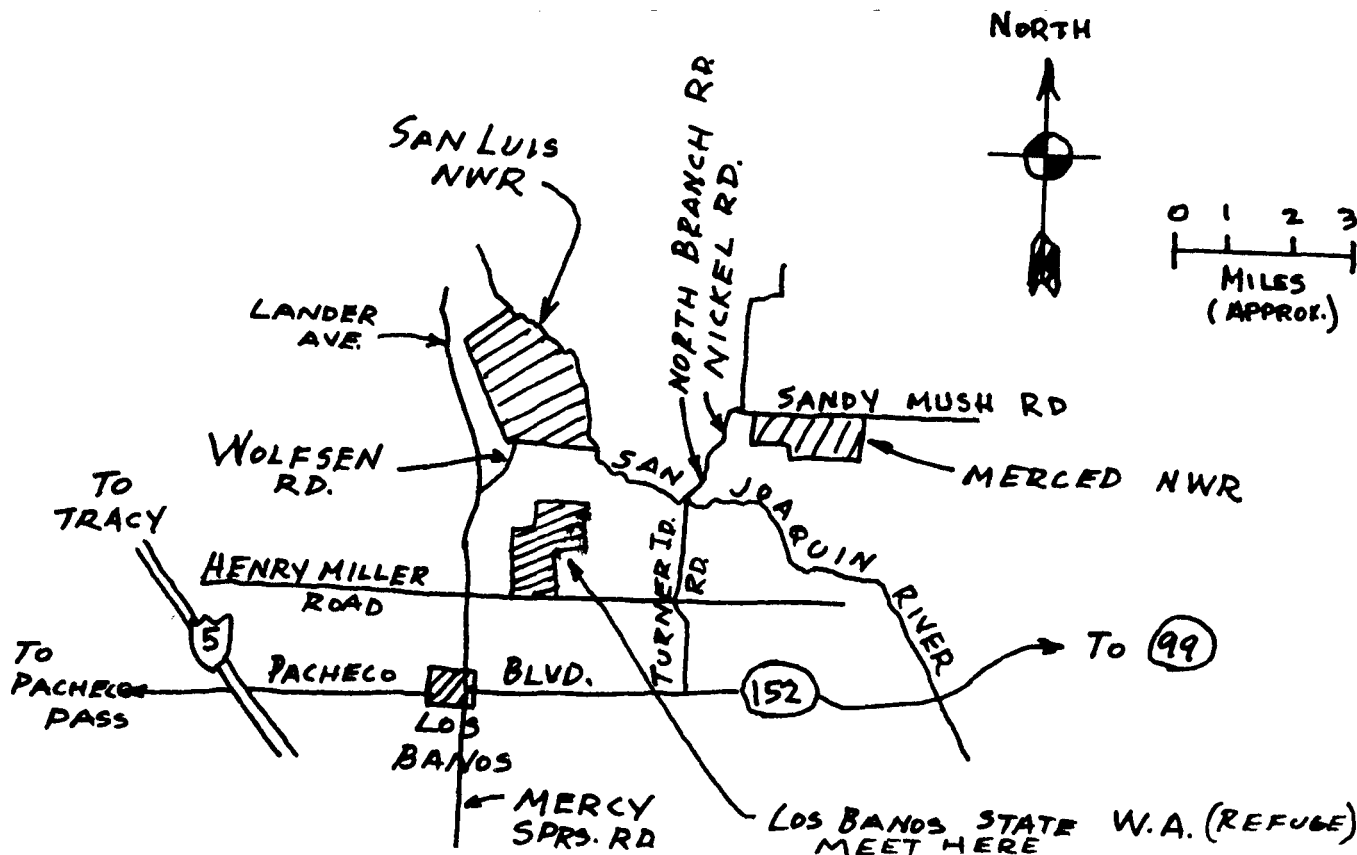
EDITORS: Ed and Amy McElhany
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Burlingame, CA 94010
Phone: 343-3219

FEBRUARY 3 and 4, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - LOS BANOS AREA

On February 3 we will meet in the parking lot at the Los Banos State Refuge, 3 miles north of Los Banos on Henry Miller Road at 9:00 AM.

There are a number of motels at Los Banos. Among them are the Islander, 1021 E. Pacheco Blvd. (209-826-3045), La Casa Motel, 528 Pacheco Blvd. (209-826-0682) and Canal Farm Inn (209-826-5121). It is advisable to make reservations.

Allow approximately 2½ hours driving time (125 miles). For further information call trip leaders, Barbara and Hal Lucas, 344-3796.



MARCH 24 and 25 - SATURDAY and SUNDAY - MONTEREY AREA AND PELAGIC TRIP

Please see December SEQUOIA, Page 4, for details

March 25 boat trip reservations with payment in full must be received by February 1. Send checks payable to SEQUOIA AUDUBON to: JERRY and GEORGIA PERKINS, 24 BAYVIEW COURT, MILLBRAE, CA 94030-the fare is \$15 per person. Include with your check, your name, address and number of reservations requested.

LEADERS: Jerry and Georgia Perkins 583-7815

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

November 14 - Mountain View Sanitary District

A total of 24 participants viewed 24 species at the marsh at the Mountain View Sanitary District. Mr. Warren Nute along with biologist, Francesca Demgen, gave us a complete picture of the ecosystem within the marsh. Highlights of the trip included an immature Golden Eagle disturbing flocks of starlings and blackbirds and was in turn dive-bombed by two red-tailed hawks. Mr. Nute gave us a very interesting tour of the

sewage treatment plant. Bitter cold necessitated early departure of the group.

-- Jerry and Georgia Perkins

November 18 - Coyote Hills

An enthusiastic group of about 20 people enjoyed a brisk yet sunny day at Coyote Hills. Fifty-nine species were produced through careful study of the willows at the park entrance as well as the marsh within. For the second week in a row we were treated to a Golden Eagle, though one of the leaders misidentified the bird as something that I would rather not reveal! Among our species for the day were: Whistling swan, green heron, gadwall, white pelicans, ring-necked pheasant, common gallinule, Virginia rail, downy woodpecker, Say's phoebe, varied thrush, loggerhead shrike, as well as a banded snowy egret.

-- Jerry and Georgia Perkins

December 5 - Tuesday Birders - Crystal Springs Watershed

We were fortunate to get permission to travel in the Watershed for the day, visiting Pilarcitos Lake, Stone Dam Reservoir and Cahill Ridge. It is fine just to know they are there, but it is fun to see them for yourself. It was cold and windy, but twelve Tuesday Birders had no problem finding things to see. When the birds were not too active, the scenery more than justified the trip. But great views of Brown creepers, Townsend warblers and a Hutton vireo dismantling a beetle were also found. A highlight for all of us was an immature bald eagle soaring in the wind at Pilarcitos Lake.

-- Craig Benkman

December 9 - Moss Beach and Pillar Point

A pleasant day was spent along the coast, birding both land and water. At Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Georgia Perkins spotted several gray whales heading south which kept our attention ocean-bound, though we still saw two white-throated swifts twinkling over the cypress in which a red-breasted sapsucker and Townsend warblers were seen foraging. Even though there was construction at Pillar Point, we managed to see a good variety of birds while dodging tractors. They included common and red-throated loons, a "Black" brant, black oystercatcher, snowy plovers, common goldeneyes and red-breasted mergansers. We then stopped at a pasture and several ponds near Miramar where we found a "jack-pot" of snipe, two barn owls, and black and Say's phoebes. That was probably the end of the trip for most, but mine did not end until Fran Nelson stopped by my house later that day and found a merlin perched on my neighbor's TV antenna. Who else would find such a bird practically out of my kitchen window!

-- Craig Benkman

CONSERVATION NEWS:

In spite of the usual December holiday lull, the new 1979-80 Legislature in Sacramento has been busily feeding bills into its hopper. Not many are of environmental significance. As of mid-December those of particular concern to Audubon include reintroduction of Senator Rains' "Bottle Bill," S.B. 4, mandating use of returnable soft drink and beer containers and Senator Ayala's bill authorizing construction of the Peripheral Canal on the Delta, S.B.89, both of which failed in the last session, and Senator Nejedly's S.B. 55 which appropriates \$1.1 million for additions to Mount Diablo State Park, adjacent areas of which have been threatened by development.

In the growing opposition to the Coastal Commission lies a warning that while battles for the environment can be irrevocably lost, they are rarely if ever won permanently. What we won under Proposition 20 is going to need our constant watchfulness to insure continued existence. The Regional Coastal Commissions will go out of existence in 1981. San Mateo County is developing a local coastal program which will take the place of the Regional Commission. It is up to us to be sure this program implements the coastal conservation mandated by Prop. 20 and that it does not just go back to the lack of local coastal protection which originally sparked Prop. 20. So far those of us on the Bayside of the county have had little chance to participate in the planning process. The Sierra Club Peninsula Regional Group under John Wade is starting to get a local coastal task force moving. Those interested can contact him at 364-7326.

There is also present danger that one of the dedicated members of our local Coastal Commission, Mary Henderson, of Redwood City, may be ousted by the new Legislature and a more development-oriented member put in her place. Letters asking that she be retained are needed to Senator James Mills (State Capitol, Sacramento 95814) chairman of the Senate Rules Committee.

Another environmentally important area of the county requiring protection is Sweeney Ridge between Pacifica and San Bruno, the site of Portola's discovery of the Bay and good coastal scrub habitat which harbors three endangered species. Though it is only a half mile from the San Andreas fault and much of it has over a 50% slope, the owner, an Oklahoma land development firm, is proposing 3550 housing units on the 260 acres that are less than 35% slope. These will mainly be in 3-story apartments and condominiums. Congressman Ryan had started a National Park Service feasibility study for acquisition of the Ridge as a National Historical Park, which could take two years to complete. The developer's zoning application to the Pacifica Council has only a year before it is approved or denied. Help is needed, particularly from North County residents, for the group in Pacifica, People United to Save Our Hill, who are pushing the National Park acquisition.

San Carlos residents should be alert to their Council's study of a possible last chance to save the Hassler property. This would be creation of an assessment district covering the area of approximately 580 residences which would most directly benefit from the preservation of this open space. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District already has half of the \$2.2 million price of the land in federal funds if the City can come up with the other half. The District claims 78% support of the plan in a survey of 101 of the homes within the proposed assessment district.

-- Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

ALASKA REPORT:

I am very pleased to report that President Carter has set aside and protected 56 million acres as National Monuments. The areas protected include caribou and Alaska brown bear breeding grounds. Interim Secretary Cecil Andrus and Agriculture Secretary, Bob Berglund, have protected an additional 39 million acres which just about builds us up to the 100 million figure in the Alaska Lands Bill. We must continue to write our Representatives and Senators urging them to support a bill for the lands next year to set up permanent protection. Also write or

send a telegram or mailgram directly to President Carter, commending and supporting his action in saving Alaskan wilderness.

-- Georgia Perkins Alaska Coordinator

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING:

John Olmsted, the latter-day John Muir, known for saving unique ecological sea terraces and the Pygmy Forest on the Mendocino coast, presented his concept of "A Transect of America." His proposed plan would establish the largest American park, a living museum system linking intermittent parks of distinctive and as yet unspoiled landscape species across the U.S.A.

Olmsted's "A Transect of California," a marvel of photography composed of four sets of slides projected simultaneously on a 30-foot screen, portrayed treasures of Northern California nature zones from coastal tidepools to the Pacific Crest in the Sierra, highlighted with close-ups of choice flora and fauna.

Olmsted will take his California Transect Plan to State Director of Resources, Huey Johnson, promoting appropriate legislation. He hopes that California will set an example for the nation. Olmsted solicited the assistance and support of Audubon members to bring this dream to reality before the unique landscape species are lost to development.

Preceding "Transect," Frank Allen's "Bird-of-the-Month" was an entertaining slide sequence complete with sound effects of the colorful white-eyed Acorn Woodpecker and its cache of acorns.

-- M.L.

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 -- from Stan Picher

November was a red-letter month for Audubon Canyon Ranch. Madrone Audubon Society, our neighbor in Sonoma County, voted to become a fourth sponsoring partner of our corporation. At a special meeting on November 20, the Directors of ACR confirmed the arrangement. From now on, Marin, Golden Gate, Sequoia and Madrone Audubon Societies will be equally represented on our Board of Directors by the four Presidents and four members from each society.

This fine development strengthens and broadens the base of Audubon Canyon Ranch and brings a thousand new Audubon members into our basic support group.

Audubon Canyon Ranch welcomes this close association with Madrone Audubon Society. The Ranch is now at the center--instead of on the flank of a true circle of interest and support. Cypress Grove and our properties on Tomales Bay are actually even closer to Sonoma County than to southern Marin.

We welcome President Les Perry and his fellow members to our Board and the membership of Madrone Audubon to the ACR family.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

Two of our most active and hard-working members, Jean Jones and Frank Allen have converted their individual Audubon memberships into a family membership under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Allen. This happy

event occurred November 30. Their address is 1417 Sanchez Avenue, Burlingame 94010 and their phone 344-9339.

PORTRAIT OF A QUAIL: -- by Vie Subbotin

It was mid-August when I first met Elizabeth. Her pick-up slip stated that she had been found by a motorcyclist on "an old dirt road," in Half Moon Bay. We may leave it up to conjecture as to whether the motorcycle was to blame for her being left behind by the rest of her family fleeing from the unfamiliar noise and form. Elizabeth was a very young, perhaps three-day-old, down-covered quail. She was placed in our baby incubator with the nestling songbirds and was soon not only eating live mealworms, game bird chow and bird seed, but picking our baby bird formula of bug butter from the feeding stick each time the songbirds were fed. Elizabeth continued to grow. She began to throw her weight around with the other youngsters, pecking them to keep them in line. After each meal she would clean her bill vigorously on the floor of her lodging, a characteristic to which she adheres even now.

I left for vacation while Elizabeth was barely beginning to feather out. When I returned she had been transferred to a cage and was covered with brownish feathers. At this point I became her guardian and immediately noticed the resemblance between portraits of Queen Elizabeth the First, with her small head and huge ruffled collar and my quail with a similarly small head and ruffed-out collar of speckled feathers; hence, her name, Elizabeth. She resided in my aviary during the warmth of the day and spent her first week reveling in the dust baths which a quail so desperately craves. Her feathering became more glamorous. She stretched her lovely wings, preened, sun-bathed, and flew about in a mock frenzy, pretending to elude some phantom predator. Suddenly one day her little topknot popped out of her head and at the end of a week had formed the comma insignia of our California Quail.

Now Elizabeth is nearing maturity at the age of about three and a half months. Her markings are deftly applied as if a fine Oriental artist had been stroking an assemblage of white scallops on a subtle, warm, gray background running from under her breast and down toward her tail then sweeping up around her sides with elongated stripes of a creamy white. Her wings are delicately edged with a rosy tone and mottled white feathers are seen directly beneath her lower beak and neck.

Her voice is generally soft and cooing. However, several times a day Elizabeth comes forth with a long conversation in which her notes resemble koo-koo-whoo, sounded many times over. Sometimes these calls are directed at her robin friends who have flown out of sight; sometimes they denote an exciting experience or a dangerous cat lurking nearby; sometimes they are made for the sheer joy of singing. One more interesting call completes her vocabulary, a twit-twit-twit running into quite lengthy sentences. Possibly this is a sound used to keep in contact with other birds in a covey.

Elizabeth is friendly and curious as are many creatures if given the opportunity. She will pick at shoe laces, pants legs, curtains, or anything which seems to be waving about. The sound of her wings is somewhat heavy and business-like. This bird does not flutter or float to or from the ground. She lands with a great flourish.

In the Spring my sweet friend will be released. The chosen spot is free of predators and has an abundant food supply as well as many quail. She will have a gentle release with time to adjust to her new surrounding and birds of her own kind. Elizabeth will at last be returned to her place in nature and become a beautiful memory for me to cherish always!

(Vie Subbotin is active in the Peninsula Humane Society In-Home Orphan Bird Program. She and Elizabeth together with Trudy Hartley attended our November board meeting and explained their program.)

WARBLING VIREO REAPPEARANCE:

In the October, 1976 SEQUOIA we reported the recapture by Point Reyes Bird Observatory of a warbling vireo which had been banded by PRBO in June, 1966. In the September 1978 issue of the PRBO bulletin Bruce Sorrie reports that this same bird was recaptured in July, 1978. The bird, now in its thirteenth year, appeared healthy and had begun to store fat for one more migratory trip to Mexico.

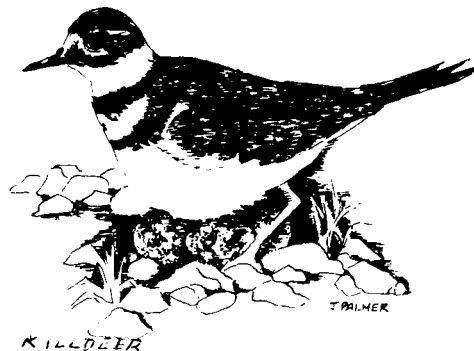
POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY:

Dr. David B. Clark and Dr. Deborah A. Clark have been selected as Co-directors of PRBO. They assume their new duties in September.

The first PRBO Birdathon raised over \$11000 to support PRBO research programs. Suann Hosie and Barry Sauppe, birding in the state of Washington managed to observe 105 species on the October 7 Birdathon date. The highest count was tallied by the team of Laurie Binford, Benjamin Parmeter, John Parmeter and Don Roberson. They observed 156 species in Monterey County.

PRBO has issued their schedule of Natural Excursions for 1979. Included are birding trips to Costa Rica, Guatemala--Tikal, Baja California, Carmel Valley, Humboldt and Trinity Counties, Farallones, Sierra Nevada, Southeast Arizona, Ecuador, Monterey Bay, San Blas, Mexico. Leaders include Bill Clow, Diane Williams, Bob Stewart, Marie Maus, Janine Haller, Rich Stallcup, Peter Warshall, Paul Greenfield and Art Earle. For information write Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Attention Bob Stewart, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.

On Sunday, January 14, at 6:00 PM, television station KRON (Channel 4) in the WILD KINGDOM program will show scenes of the PRBO work on the Farallon Islands.



We are indebted to Janice Palmer for our recent art work of the Killdeer this month and the Spotted Sandpiper in November.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE:

Robert G. Personius, manager of the refuge for the past three years, has announced his retirement effective January 13, 1979.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY:

All Audubon members are invited to attend the National Convention at YMCA of the Rockies near Estes Park, Colorado, June 29 through July 1. Complete details will be available within the next few weeks.

BOOK REVIEW:

Golden Bats and Pink Pigeons by Gerald Durrell
Simon and Schuster 190 pages \$9.95

For Durrell fans this slim volume will continue the interest and pleasure of such earlier Durrell works as his "Overloaded Ark" and "A Zoo in My Luggage." This time Mr. Durrell journeys to Mauritius and nearby islands in search of additions to his Jersey Island Zoo where he maintains a captive breeding program to forestall the extinction of endangered animals, birds and reptiles.

Pink pigeons and golden bats are among those he seeks on this trip. His efforts to capture breeding pairs make a fascinating story interspersed with humor and filled with colorful similes and metaphors. It also has an unmistakable message. We can be thankful that Mr. Durrell's writing style is light, humorous and readable because his work is certainly depressing. Now and then his sensitivity surfaces in serious observations of the depredations of man on the natural environment and the devastating effect on wild things.

This is not the sort of book one will need for his reference library and the price of \$9.95 is steep for a 190-page volume. However, its entertainment value is high so it should appeal to everyone including non-conservationists. Buy a copy and lend it widely in the hope that its message will impress some readers. Another alternative is to borrow a copy - Burlingame Library has it, for example - read it, enjoy it, get its message and then send your \$9.95 to Mr. Durrell's Jersey Wildlife Preservation Fund the details of which appear on the last page. Maybe even Mr. Durrell would like this idea.

DECEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

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

The recommended budget for 1979 was presented by the Finance Committee and approved. It includes financial support for Audubon Workshop of the West scholarships, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Friends of Filoli, Marine Ecological Institute, Peninsula Conservation Center, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, San Mateo Garden Center, Nature Conservancy, Peninsula Humane Society--Bird Program, Warm Springs Legal Fund, Wildlife Rescue. A special contribution was approved to Greenpeace in memory of Representative Leo J. Ryan.

The annual mystery trip was scheduled for the weekend of April 28 and 29.

LEO J. RYAN:

We are shocked and saddened by the tragic death of our representative, Leo J. Ryan, in Guyana on November 18. Mr. Ryan was a dedicated and effective representative and had a long and impressive record of conservation work both in Congress and earlier in the California Assembly. We have lost a good friend and we will surely miss him.

NATURE EXPEDITIONS INTERNATIONAL:

NEI has many expeditions scheduled for 1979 to such places as Central America and Mexico, South America, Europe, Oceania, Asia, Africa, Alaska, Hawaii and Southwest United States. A copy of their brochure may be obtained by writing them at 599 College Avenue, Palo Alto 94306.

1978 SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY 1979

Aldrich, Steve	366-3603	74 Nevada Street Redwood City 94062	President
Allen, Jean & Frank	344-9339	1417 Sanchez Avenue Burlingame, 94010	Membership
Bottini, Andrea	589-2219	704 Barcelona Drive Millbrae 94030	Director
Danielson, Maryann	342-6919	848 Edgehill Drive Burlingame 94010	ACR Director
Davies, Byron	334-2851	606 Cambridge Street San Francisco 94134	" "
Friday, Bob	365-1194	80 Amber Court San Carlos 94070	" "
Gales, Carmen	349-6927	2828 Edison St, #15 San Mateo 94403	Publicity
Hobbs, Dean	341-9850	844 Constitution Dr. Foster City 94404	Treasurer
Keohane, Mary	854-6346	675 Sharon Park Dr. Menlo Park 94025	Hospitality
Lucas, Barbara & Hal	344-3796	130 Newton Drive Burlingame 94010	Field Trips
McElhany, Ed & Amy	342-3219	1009 Laguna Avenue Burlingame 94010	Editors
Metropulos, Peter	591-9898	336 Chesterton Ave. Belmont 94002	Christmas Count
Montgomery, A.E.	344-4249	2270 Summit Drive Hillsborough 94010	Finance Com.
Nelson, Fran & LeRoy	593-7941	1035 Lassen Drive Belmont 94002	Field Trip Com.
Newman, Charles	697-5601	25 Corte Alegre Millbrae 94030	Habitat Acq.
Perkins, Georgia	583-7815	24 Bayview Court Millbrae 94030	Secretary Alaska Coord.
Prime, John	573-5889	848 W. Hillsdale Blvd. San Mateo 94403	Finance
Rockman, Wilma	366-3434	1166 Grand Redwood City 94061	Education
Silliman, John	585-2245	719 Sargent Street San Francisco 94132	V.P. & Program
Smith, Ruth	322-5279	120 Cornell Road Menlo Park 94025	Conservation

George Whittell Education Center & Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, CA 94920 Phone (415) 388-2524

SEQUOIA CALENDAR

January 2 - Board Meeting
 11 - Monthly Meeting at Garden Center
 13 - Field Trip - Lake Merced and Golden Gate Park
 16 - Tuesday Birders - Ano Nuevo

February 2 and 3 - Field Trip - Los Banos
 6 - Board Meeting
 8 - Monthly Meeting at Garden Center

THE SEQUOIA January, 1979
Sequoia Audubon Society
1009 Laguna Avenue
Burlingame, CA 94010

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