



sequoia needles

SAS GENERAL MEETING

February's program is an excellent companion piece to last month's.

Our speaker will be Sally Graves of the California Marine Mammal Center located near Rodeo Lagoon in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

With the help of slides Sally will show us how the Marine Mammal Center rescues, rehabilitates and releases harbor seals, sea lions and young elephant seals.

The Center's patients suffer from a variety of natural and man-made ills - starvation, disease, shark attacks, oiling, gill netting - even bullet wounds - each of which requires special treatment and handling.

This should be an evening of interest to anyone who has been amused or fascinated by the actions of these creatures and is a fine tie-in to our January 26 field trip.

The meeting will be at the usual time and place on Thursday, February 14 at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside, west of the Alameda in San Mateo.

The social mixer begins at 7:30, with the meeting at 8:00 P.M.

WORLD OF AUDUBON

The premiere program of the "World of Audubon" television series was a great success with an audience of nearly six million viewers.

The second program will be aired on March 21 with stories on the Cuyahoga River, acid rain, the loggerhead turtle, puffins and Robert Redford's Institute for Resource Management, an interview with Walter Cronkite and a profile on Rachel Carson.

The program will be aired on SuperStation WTBS at the following dates and times:

Thursday, March 21 at 5:05 P.M.
Sunday, March 24 at 3:05 P.M.
Saturday, March 30 at 1:05 P.M.
Monday, April 1 at 9:05 P.M.

WTBS is seen on most area cable systems.

FROM THE EDITOR

APOLOGIES are due to our new Hospitality Chairpeople. Both the regular meeting and Audubon Canyon Hospitality Chairs were filled in November but in the rush of the holidays, the Potluck and the Christmas Counts, the news never reached the pages of the NEEDLES.

Our new meeting Hospitality Chairwoman is Gladys Booher, who is one of our quiet behind-the-scenes volunteers, one of those invaluable people who will stuff envelopes, fold newsletters, bake cookies or do whatever else has to be done to make an organization work.

The Petersens - Pete and Donna - have agreed to take charge of the Audubon Canyon Ranch hosting duties for the second year in succession despite their feeling that this is not a duty but "a privilege which should be shared by as many of our members as possible." We are confident that Pete and Donna, two of our most active members, will repeat the outstanding job they did in 1984.

THANK YOU, GLADYS, PETE AND DONNA. Let's all show our appreciation by doing our share to make their jobs as easy as possible.

THE KESTERSON REFUGE, two years after the problem was discovered, has become a major media event with front page stories in the Chronicle and the Examiner, almost daily follow-ups, national wire service coverage and local and national television coverage. All of this attention perhaps explains the sudden revitalization of action by the State and Federal agencies and the Governor's emphasis on toxic waste cleanup in his State of the State message. It seems to be more than coincidence that this sudden surge of interest has come to the fore at about the same time that television interviewers and cameramen from "Sixty Minutes" arrived in the Central Valley. Let us hope that this action and outpouring of good intentions will continue after the cameras have stopped turning.

With all of this high-powered (and very welcome) competition, your NEEDLES will temporarily retire from its coverage of this topic. But we do urge all of our members to stay informed on this problem which combines nearly all of the major conservation issues in California. Toxic waste disposal, water use, land utilization, habitat preservation, agricultural chemicals and even the future of agriculture in the Central Valley are all closely related to the the San Luis Drain calamity.

ALMOST THE LAST WORD on the Wild Goose Chase -- A few of the pledge commitments still remain unhonored - all from non-members - and a few unsolicited pledges are still trickling in. Irene Quirolo, who was the first to send in a donation, is, to date, also the last person to send in an unsolicited donation. Hadley Osborn also surprised us by supplementing his original pledge and thereby becoming our largest individual supporter. Our thanks go out to them and to all of you who were so generous in your support of this fund-raising venture.

CALENDAR

FEB. 5 FOSTER CITY AREAS FIELD TRIP. Wintering ducks and
TUESDAY shorebirds will be our main interests along the
bays and lagoons of Foster City as we look for
the fieldmarks that separate Barrow's from Common Goldeneye
and greater and lesser scaup. Meet in the parking lot at
the Recreation Center on Shell Blvd. at 9:00 A.M. rain or
shine. The trip should end at noon.

LEADER	NICK COIRO	349-1834
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FEB. 7 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 P.M. at the Sears Savings
THURSDAY Bank Building, 1820 S. Grant St., San Mateo. ALL
MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

FEB.9-10 LOS BANOS REFUGES AND PANOCH VALLEY FIELD TRIP.
SATURDAY One of our highlight field trips of the year
SUNDAY covering two diverse areas and exposing us to a
variety of rare and unusual birds. The four
refuges north of Los Banos are noted for white-faced ibis,
sandhill cranes, a large variety of waterfowl and shore-
birds, raptors and owls. Twenty miles south of Los Banos,
Little Panoche Road winds its way through the Diablo Range
into Panoche Valley where wintering flocks of mountain
plover, vesper sparrows, mountain bluebirds, long billed
curlews, and perched raptors vie with the resident roadrun-
ners, phainopeplas and chukars for the birders' attention.
Saturday we plan on meeting in the parking lot of the
Islander Motel at 9:00 A.M. before proceeding to the
refuges. Sunday we will meet at the parking lot above Little
Panoche Detention Reservoir at 8:30 A.M.. The trips will go
on rain or shine. We have found the Islander ((209) 826-
3045) to be clean, economical and friendly in the past.
Reservations are recommended at this time of year. Addi-
tional details will be found in next month's NEEDLES and
information packets should be available at the General
Meeting or at the office.

LOS BANOS LEADER	JOHN SILLIMAN	585-3232
PANOCH VALLEY LEADER	GIL WEST	359-0820
TRIP COORDINATOR	CLIFF RICHER	355-4058

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/=====\
/=====/      WELCOME!      \=====\\
! FIELD TRIPS AND THE GENERAL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL !
! MEMBERS AND TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. BEGINNERS ARE WELCOME !
! ON ALL OF OUR FIELD TRIPS. SOME TRIPS ARE DESIGNATED AS !
! BEGINNERS' TRIPS BECAUSE THEY ARE RELATIVELY NEARBY AND !
! MAY BE ENJOYED WITHOUT SPECIAL EQUIPMENT, CLOTHING OR !
\=====\\      PRIOR EXPERIENCE. /=====\\
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FEB. 14 SAS GENERAL MEETING. THE CALIFORNIA MARINE MAMMAL
THURSDAY CENTER with Sally Graves. An opportunity to see
(through slides) and hear of the activities of
Northern California's most famous wildlife rescue center.
At the San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside, west of the
Alameda in San Mateo. Social mixer begins at 7:30 P.M.

FEB. 19 CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING ---- Time and place
TUESDAY to be determined - Call the chairman, Rick Johnson
for details (349-4546). 3rd tuesday of each month.

FEB. 20 POMFONIO ROAD FIELD TRIP. Some good birds turned WEDNESDAY up on the Crystal Springs Christmas Bird Count on this road -- Say's phoebe, red-breasted sapsucker, barn owl and rough-legged hawk among them. We'll bird Stage Road and Pomponio into Pescadero. Meet at 8:30 A.M. in the parking lot on the northeast side where Highway 92 crosses Crystal Springs Reservoir. Be prepared for cool weather and bring a lunch.

LEADERS	JEAN AND FRANK ALLEN	344-9339
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(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM
AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

In addition to maintaining wildlife sanctuaries and education centers Audubon Canyon Ranch works to support programs in the public domain.

At the Bolinas Preserve, the Ranch is a member of the Bolinas Lagoon Technical Advisory Committee - established by the Marin Board of Supervisors - monitoring the health of this aqueous preserve. In 1984, the Board, together with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the Pt. Reyes-Farallon National Marine Sanctuary, cosponsored a symposium on the Lagoon which attracted great attendance and much interest.

The docents of the Volunteer Councils continue to provide free quality nature education programs to the children of the North Bay, San Francisco and East Bay, including many from the inner city areas. Grants for free busing are also provided, as required.

At Volunteer Canyon, visitors from the San Francisco Center for the Handicapped are supplied nature walks focusing on sounds, smells, farm activities and nature films. A year long program of exchange training has been offered to the California Conservation Corps leaders (9 sessions-20 people in each) emphasizing the conservation aspects of their organization's name with training in nature awareness, techniques for handling disturbed areas, etc.

At Bouwerie Audubon Preserve, in addition to the docent school programs, groups of house-bound senior citizens from rest homes are given nature walks with interpretive guides and groups of blind nature lovers are led through the preserve with particular attention to smells and sounds. Community days are also being held to allow the general public to see our beautiful new preserve.

Ray Peterson is planning a spring work-day at the ranch with lunch to be provided. advance sign-up is required. To enroll, call Edris at 383-1644.

---A.C.R. Press Release

MORE WILD GOOSE
CHASE SUPPORTERS

The First Annual San Mateo County Wild Goose Chase continued to receive donations during late December and early January. Our thanks go out to all of our supporters:

Linda Bolds	Fran & Roy Nelson*
Dan Centoni	Irene Quirolo**
Alanna Lee	Ruth Zimmer
Hadley Osborn**	

*SAS Members
+Additional contributions

THE LISTERS

The October 1984 issue of "Birding", from the American Birding Association, featured articles written by two of the most famous (fanatic?) listers and an interview with a third. This is not a coincidence since the ABA is for those who are primarily interested in bird identification and listing.

Kenn Kaufman, a well-known tour leader from the Southwest, has an excellent article entitled "Terminology and Bird Topography" devoting four pages to the names and descriptions of the feather tracts and soft parts of birds. Kenn is often credited with having popularized the "Big Year" craze. Then in his early twenties, Kenn set out with limited funds and a sleeping bag to hitchhike around the country in an effort to break the then existing record for most birds seen in a single year in the U.S. He succeeded so well that he was featured in "Time" and "Life" magazines and many fellow listers regard his achievement as the most remarkable of all the listing records.

In 1979 a self-described average birder, Jim Vardaman, set himself the goal of seeing 700 birds in the U.S. in one year. Self-employed, he was free to come and go without fear of losing his job and unlike Kaufman, had the funds available to pursue rarities and vagrants. Even so, Vardaman fell one short of his magic number but still broke Kaufman's record. (Since then, "lumping" has reduced his total to 696.)

He followed this up by writing Call Collect and Ask for Birdman, an amusing chronicle of his year's efforts. He was criticized by some since he readily admitted that without expert help he would not have been able to find or identify the than a fraction of the birds that he listed.

There was a touch of sour grapes to the 1982 change in the ABA's rules requiring that in any future listings the birder be able to identify the bird on his own. Undaunted, Vardaman set out on a World Bird Marathon with the objective of finding 1000 species in 10 days. Beginning in Australia on October 7, 1982, he proceeded on to Kenya, Germany and Peru achieving a total of 1041 in the 10 days. He took advantage of the difference in time zones and actually used 253 hours to reach this number. Critics pointed out that his total for 240 hours was only 996!).

His article in "Birding" dealt with his latest quest - seeing 50% of the total species of birds in the world in a single year. (There are approximately 9000) It is a chronicle of 10 days in Peru during which he set the new Big Year record of 2756 before family illness and business reverses forced Vardaman to abandon his efforts.

The third article is an interview with Benton Basham, a Tennessee anesthesiologist and well known "heavy duty" birder, who set out to break Vardaman's record with the slogan of "703 in '83". Like Vardaman, Basham had both the time and the funds to pursue his goal and had the additional advantage of personal knowledge of most of the important areas and was acquainted with most of the birders who actively pursue rarities.

The interview deals with some of the high points of his effort, some of the travel involved and some of the birders who assisted him in setting the new record of 711.

These articles reveal the extent to which some people will go in the pursuit of what is usually seen as an inexpensive and relaxing hobby.

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching is Sequoia Audubon Society's new guide to birdwatching sites from San Francisco to southern San Mateo County. Over 30 different spots are described and accompanied by maps, directions and helpful notes about each spot. A helpful species index directs you to habitats for the birds you want to see. Order one for yourself and several as gifts!

Only \$8.95 (\$8.00 each for 3 or more-Expires 2/28)

Use this form to order your copy today!

Send checks to: Sequoia Audubon Society
720 El Camino Real, Suite 403
Belmont, California 94002

Allow 14 to 18 days for delivery



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Sequoia Audubon Society

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THE WISH LIST

Thanks go to Dottie Hoefler of Los Altos for the generous donation of bookshelves to our new office and to those members who helped to deliver them.

Our continuing thanks to Tatone Products Corporation and Rick Baird for the use of their Compaq computer in preparation of the newsletter.

However we are still in need of:

Metal File Cabinets
Bulletin Board
Two (or more) portable CB radios
(For use in coordinating car-caravan field trips)
A business level desk-top computer
(Ideally an IBM compatible, transportable, dual disk drive machine with 128K or more memory and a letter quality or dot-matrix printer would be most suitable for our needs.)

If you can help us out with any of these items or know of anyone who would be willing to make a tax-deductible contribution to SAS please call the office at 593-7368.

THE BEAR FACTS

During hibernation, bears do not urinate. The bear's system combines the poisonous urea with alkaloids in the body fat to produce an amino acid - a protein which the bear's body reuses.

SFBBO TOURS - 1985

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory has completed its schedule of tours for 1985. These tours are designed for the economy minded birder; camping and car-pooling keep expenses to a minimum. Any income from these tours goes into the SFBBO general fund to pay for ongoing research.

TEXAS	Apr.20-May 5	500.00
DEATH VALLEY	May 24-May 27	70.00
KERN RIVER	Jun.22-Jun.24	90.00
YOSEMITE	Jul.12-Jul.15	90.00
ARIZONA	Aug. 3-Aug.11	240.00
CONDOR TRIP	Aug.23-Aug.25	70.00

Participation is limited and a deposit of 25% is required to reserve a spot on one of the tours. Call Don Starks at (408) 371-9720 for more information or write to him at 2076 Foxworthy Ave., San Jose 95124 to reserve a spot on one of the tours. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number and the name of the tour on your check or in your correspondence.

NEW RECORD FOR CRYSTAL SPRINGS COUNT

This year's Crystal Springs Christmas Count broke through the magic 200 barrier for a new record of 207 species. Barry Sauppe, our compiler, was assisted by 66 other observers who blanketed the 15 mile count circle, marking off a total of 112,914 individual birds and 207 species.

Some of the more unusual birds seen for the first time on this count were a yellow warbler at Foster City Lagoon, a black-throated gray warbler at Frontierland Park in Pacifica, a western tanager at Coyote Point and a northern (Baltimore!) oriole in downtown Millbrae.

Credit for the high species count belongs primarily to Barry Sauppe who has probably birded San Mateo County more intensively than any other 10 birders combined and who - in the two weeks preceding the count - had "staked out" more than 200 species. When December 22 dawned bright and clear, a record-breaking count was virtually assured.

In addition to the area counters a number of "heavy-duty" birders - including Barry - were given special assignments instead of, or in addition to, their regular count duties. Some of these began their birding day at 12:01 A.M. listening for owls, rails and other nocturnal species. Others were given unusual or difficult assignments. Rich Stallcup, for example, is reported to have scoped the airport for burrowing owls while standing on the roof of his car. These "free-lancers" made the difference between a good count and an extraordinary one.

A week later, the Ano Nuevo count also brought good weather and 42 birders were able to count 31,038 separated birds and identify 183 species. A common poorwill on Cloverdale Road a bank swallow at Pescadero Marsh and a great-tailed grackle in the town of Pescadero were first-time birds for this count and a house wren and a Wilson's warbler each made a second appearance.

In addition to our Bay Area birders we were assisted by participants from Inverness, Davis, Sacramento, Tucson, Arizona and Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Our thanks to all of the participants in two excellent counts.

Our appreciation also goes to the soup makers whose contributions warmed the hearts and bodies of those hardy souls who dragged themselves into the Garden Center after a full day of birding. A very special thanks to:

Mary Bresler	Tamra & Clarie Hollenbe
Louise & Alex Fletcher	Dorothy & Elgin Juri
Emily Freeman	Muriel & Howard Lochner
Mary Lou Geer	Carla Moreno
	Ruth Simonson

(See Page 7 for complete Christmas Count results.)

--- Frank Allen & Cliff Richer

HELP! HELP WANTED!

Anne Scanlan-Rohrer needs a volunteer to take over Publicity duties for the month of May while she and Scot are on vacation in Washington, D.C. and Germany.

Publicity is important in this month since it precedes our Second Annual Awards Dinner in June.

Specific instructions and materials will be given to the volunteer.

Call Anne in the evening at 571-7972 or leave a message at the SAS office (593-7368).

--- Anne Scanlan-Rohrer

6TH EAGLE CONFERENCE

February 15-17, 1985 marks the sixth annual Bald Eagle Conference to be held at the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, Oregon. This event is a joint effort of the Klamath Basin Audubon Society (KBAS) National Audubon (NAS), the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The purpose of the conference is to inform the general public about the nature of eagles and other raptors and it is scheduled to coincide with the peak concentration of wintering bald eagles in the Klamath Basin, the largest population of wintering bald eagles in the lower 48 states.

The conference will feature a free film festival and art show; field trips to watch the eagle "fly-out"; speakers from NAS, the ODFW, the USFWS, Oregon State University (OSU), the Arizona Forest Service, Humboldt University, Dupont, and PG & E.; a banquet; workshops on photography, wildlife rehabilitation, raptor identification, and bird identification in general; cross-country snowshoe and ski tours; and a photography contest.

Conference cost varies from \$10 to \$22 depending on the degree of participation. Contact Katie Ardt, 4647 Miller Island Rd., Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603 for more information or to register.

To enter the photo contest or get more information on it, contact Sarah & Owen Duvall, 1015 Loma Linda Dr., Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

At the December Board of Directors meeting the Environmental Alternatives for development of Sweeney Ridge were considered and the Conservation Committee's recommendation in favor of minimizing the intrusion of new development, thereby recognizing the importance of the natural values of Sweeney Ridge and attempting to enhance them with basic improvements to the existing setting.

In January, the Conservation Committee has been examining the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Foster City Marina to be located between Belmont Slough and Beach Park Boulevard along the eastern boundary of the city. The project would occupy about 30 acres of salt marsh, tidal flats and submerged land in San Francisco Bay.

SAS members and friends are always welcome to attend Conservation Committee meetings on the third Tuesday evening of each month.

----- Mary Bresler

CALENDAR

(Continued from Page Two)

FEB.24 SUNDAY REDWOOD SHORES AND RADIO ROAD. These points of land between Foster City and Bair Island appear desolate and dusty in the summer, but can be teeming with birdlife in the winter when the rains turn the former salt and oxidation ponds into shallow pools ideal for many shorebirds and dabbling ducks. The area also has grassy areas (unfortunately slated for future development), sloughs and oxidation ponds where horned larks, tri-colored blackbirds, diving ducks and larger shorebirds can also be found. To get there take Hwy.101 to either the Marine World Parkway or Redwood Shores Parkway exits. Follow either of those two roads to the end and then follow Shell Parkway until it intersects with Radio Road, leading out into the open areas. We will meet at the intersection of Shell and Radio at 9:00 A.M. Although there will be very little walking, some of the areas may be muddy so boots are recommended. Trip should break up at noon.

LEADER

LINDA KYPTA

591-9053

MARCH 3 SUNDAY PRINCETON HARBOR. The only sheltered harbor between Santa Cruz and San Francisco, Princeton Harbor is winter home to a good variety of bay ducks, loons, cormorants and other divers as well as gulls and shorebirds. An oldsquaw, a glaucous gull and a rock sandpiper were seen here on a single day in December and the area almost always has one or two surprises. Snowy plovers and brant can be expected at this time of year and some of the shorebirds and loons should be changing into their breeding plumages. To get there take Hwy. 92 to Hwy. 1 and follow Hwy. 1 north to Capistrano Rd. Using the radar antennae on Pillar Point Hill as a guide follow the streets of Princeton to the base of the hill and park at the intersection of West Point Avenue (the road to the radar station) and an extremely poor dirt road leading to the harbor. The meeting time will be 8:30 so that we can avoid some of the dirt bike and RV activity on the beach. This will be a short walk with some areas of broken footing, so boots are recommended. The trip should break up at noon.

LEADER

TO BE ANNOUNCED

MAR. 7 THURSDAY SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 P.M. at the Sears Saving Bank Building, 1820 S. Grant St., San Mateo. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

1985 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with the bylaws of the Sequoia Audubon Society, the Board of Directors has appointed the following members as the 1985 Nominating Committee:

Frank Allen	344-9339
Nancy Richer	355-4058
Donna Petersen	344-5582

Candidates are being sought to fill the following offices:

President	Vice-President	Secretary
Treasurer - Accounting experience helpful		
Two directors - for three year terms		

These officers and directors are responsible for the activities and policies of your Society. We need your cooperation in recommending candidates who will direct your Society in the way you want it to develop. If you are interested in running for office or if you wish to recommend a member whom you believe to be well qualified for a specific office, please write to SAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE, PO Box 1131, Burlingame, CA 94011, or telephone one or more of the committee members.

----- Frank Allen

LOOK-A-LIKES -- DOWITCHERS

Dowitchers in basic (winter) plumage are the most difficult of the shorebirds to tell apart. In fact, most birders believe that the only way to be sure of your identification is to hear them call.

However, not even voice is 100% reliable. The short-billed dowitcher's "mellow tu-tu-tu" and the long-billed dowitcher's "sharp, high-pitched keek" are not always as distinct as the field guides would lead you to believe nor are they the only calls given by the birds. In fact, my personal experience is that the dowitchers are normally among the least vocal of the shorebirds.

Each of the species has some fieldmarks which are helpful. The problem is that these fieldmarks are based on average measurements or observations of banded birds and there is considerable overlap between the two species. Nevertheless in any flock of birds there are always a few individuals who can be positively identified. Many of the "industrial-strength" birders can identify 60-70% of the individual birds. In good light and at close range, my personal best is one out of six with an average of about 10%.

These are the characteristics that I generally use to identify the birds.

LOCATION: You can be certain with better than 99% accuracy that any dowitcher east of the Coastal Range and north of the Tehachapis is a long-billed. South of the Tehachapis the overwhelming majority of inland birds are long-billed but I have seen short-billed birds in breeding plumage at Edwards AFB in the Mohave Desert and at the Salton Sea.

TIMING: Flocks of dowitchers seen in June and early July will almost certainly be short-billed. Individual birds may be non-migrants who summered over because of illness. These individuals may retain their winter plumage over the summer and look bedraggled and worn.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER: In spring and late summer when flocks are arriving or assembling in preparation for migration, all of the birds in a flock should be of the same species. Therefore, if you can identify one, you have identified all. To make it easier, there will usually be a few birds that are in breeding plumage. But don't forget that in places like Pescadero Marsh, you can have several flocks feeding together and in the winter these mixed feeding groups break up into mixed flocks. This can work to your advantage since it is easier to identify those with the most extreme fieldmarks when you have both species in the flock.

BILL LENGTH: In almost any winter flock, there will be a few birds whose bill length identifies them. For me this works best on long-billed dowitchers. With short-bills you have to get them in perfect profile to be sure of your identification.

TAIL FEATHERS: This is a generally reliable field mark. Unfortunately the tail is usually covered by the wingtips unless the bird is preening or in flight. When the dowitchers are taking off or flying by I consider myself lucky to identify more

than one before the flight is gone. The long-billed's tail is consistently dark, with broad black bands separated by narrow white or reddish bands. The short-billed is more variable and some will have wide brown bands separated by narrow white bars giving them an apparently dark tail. All light-tailed birds however can be assumed to be short-billed. Just be sure you're looking at the tail and not the lower back or rump, which are white in both species.

LEG LENGTH: The long-billed dowitcher is also the long-legged dowitcher but unless you have an uncanny eye for relative proportions, this will not be of much help. I only once found it to be of use in identifying one long-billed dowitcher out of a sleeping flock on a level beach.

BREAST SPOTTING: Both species have light streaking on the upper breast. In the short-billed this becomes spots on the lower breast. The lower breast of the long-billed is clear. This is a tendency rather than an absolute and birds of both species may have faint markings. As with the other fieldmarks given here, rely only on the extremes. I have found this to be the most reliable of any of the winter identification aids but it requires good light and is of little use when they are feeding with their heads down.

There are a number of fieldmarks cited by other birders or mentioned in the literature but which I have not found to be of any help. Since this may represent a deficiency on my part rather than a failure of the field mark I will mention them here.

WING LENGTH: Bird banding statistics show the long-billed to have shorter wings than the short-billed. I don't know of anyone who has found this to be of any value in the field.

UNDERTAIL COVERTS: The long-billed has brown bars or bold V's while the short-billed has small V's or spots.

CROWN: The top of the head from the bill to the nape is solid gray in the long-billed and two-toned, darker in the middle, lighter on the sides in the short-billed.

BILL CURVATURE: Only the long-billed dowitcher ever shows any curvature in the bill. I have found this to be true, but since the only curvature I have observed has been on birds with extraordinarily long bills, it would appear to be a superfluous characteristic.

If you decide to try these out, I would appreciate your letting me know which of these works for you. I should confess, however, that my usual birding method is to positively identify one of each species as early as possible in the birding day and then pointedly ignore all dowitchers for the rest of the day. And when I feel really lazy, I try to pretend that dowitchers don't exist at all. However, if you are one of those people who feel they have to identify every bird, or enjoy gull identification, marathon running or self-flagellation, you will love the challenge of identifying every dowitcher you see. Good luck!

--- Cliff Rich

1985 CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

BIRD SPECIES	Crystal Springs	Ano Nuevo
Red-throated loon	283	78
Arctic loon	1686	378
Common loon	58	20
Pied-billed grebe	131	23
Horned grebe	87	7
Red-necked grebe	4	4
Eared grebe	67	8
Western grebe	476	784
Northern fulmar	34	53
Black-vented shearwater	87	11
Sooty shearwater	1	-
American white pelican	1	-
Brown pelican	4	2
Double-crested cormorant	674	19
Brandt's cormorant	334	177
Pelagic cormorant	147	89
American bittern	1	2
Great blue heron	27	13
Great egret	60	4
Snowy egret	152	12
Cattle egret	32	2
Green-backed heron	1	-
Black-crowned night heron	48	4
Tundra swan	3	-
Brant	1	-
Canada goose	456	2
Wood duck	-	36
Green-winged teal	39	46
Mallard	493	54
Northern pintail	3121	65
Blue-winged teal	-	1
Cinnamon teal	3	23
Northern shoveler	235	37
Gadwall	63	22
Eurasian wigeon	1	-
American wigeon	1235	25
Canvasback	2633	33
Redhead	5	-
Ring-necked duck	72	22
Greater scaup	1178	11
Lesser scaup	8669	23
Scaup (sp)	4824	-
Harlequin duck	-	2
Oldsquaw	1	-
Black scoter	14	13
Surf scoter	2889	91
White-winged scoter	197	38
Common goldeneye	654	4
Barrow's goldeneye	10	-
Bufflehead	566	25
Hooded merganser	51	-
Common merganser	3	-
Red-breasted merganser	29	17
Ruddy duck	2474	129
Turkey vulture	39	21
Osprey	-	1
Black-shouldered kite	79	30
Bald eagle	1	-
Northern harrier	39	23
Sharp-shinned hawk	17	22
Cooper's hawk	8	6
Red-shouldered hawk	10	4
Red-tailed hawk	88	64
Ferruginous hawk	-	2
Rough-legged hawk	3	3
American kestrel	89	69
Merlin	2	3
Peregrine falcon	2	-
Ring-necked pheasant	1	-
California quail	239	271
Clapper rail	11	-
Virginia rail	10	31
Sora	2	2
Common moorhen	1	1
American coot	2015	247

BIRD SPECIES	Crystal Springs	Ano Nuevo
Black-bellied plover	363	64
Lesser golden plover	2	5
Snowy plover	30	15
Semipalmated plover	29	2
Killdeer	743	353
Amer blk oystercatcher	4	17
Black-necked stilt	451	-
American avocet	628	-
Greater yellowlegs	38	12
Lesser yellowlegs	1	-
Willet	2565	61
Wandering tattler	2	11
Spotted sandpiper	13	-
Whimbrel	9	9
Long-billed curlew	188	2
Marbled godwit	1377	44
Ruddy turnstone	21	2
Black turnstone	40	67
Surfbird	9	31
Red knot	87	-
Sanderling	325	185
Western sandpiper	2859	1
Least sandpiper	2376	33
Dunlin	4774	1
Peep (sp)	2828	-
Short-billed dowitcher	42	-
Long-billed dowitcher	320	18
Dowitcher (sp)	96	-
Common snipe	87	23
Red phalarope	1	-
Pomarine jaeger	4	2
Parasitic jaeger	2	2
Jaeger (sp)	2	4
Bonaparte's gull	11	7
Heermann's gull	26	261
Mew gull	954	407
Ring-billed gull	1840	18
California gull	2961	187
Herring gull	375	63
Thayer's gull	15	4
Western gull	1419	1396
Glaucous-winged gull	1848	664
Glaucous gull	1	-
Black-legged kittiwake	5	6
Gull (sp)	3267	4075
Forster's tern	72	1
Common murre	6768	494
Pigeon guillemot	3	-
Marbled murrelet	8	14
Ancient murrelet	11	6
Cassin's auklet	19	4
Rhinoceros auklet	58	26
Rock dove	746	125
Band-tailed pigeon	286	326
Mourning dove	874	51
Common barn-owl	6	6
Western screech owl	4	2
Great horned owl	11	10
Northern pygmy owl	4	3
Burrowing owl	6	1
Long-eared owl	1	-
Short-eared owl	3	1
Northern saw-whet owl	4	2
Common poorwill	-	1
White-throated swift	5	80
Belted kingfisher	13	17
Acorn woodpecker	56	131
Red-breasted sapsucker	5	6
Nuttall's woodpecker	3	1
Downy woodpecker	28	15
Hairy woodpecker	30	34
Northern flicker	114	79
Pileated woodpecker	-	3
Black phoebe	111	93
Sav's phoebe	31	19

BIRD SPECIES	Crystal Springs	Ano Nuevo
Horned lark	79	-
Tree swallow	2	150
Violet-green swallow	-	250
Bank swallow	-	1
Stellar's jay	201	485
Scrub jay	321	142
American crow	5	4
Common raven	7	12
Chestnut-backd chickadee	770	296
Plain titmouse	58	-
Bushtit	1052	293
Red-breasted nuthatch	49	7
White-breasted nuthatch	16	1
Pygmy nuthatch	111	18
Brown creeper	46	54
Bewick's wren	87	84
House wren	1	1
Winter wren	63	54
Marsh wren	13	29
American dipper	-	3
Golden-crowned kinglet	129	98
Ruby-crowned kinglet	351	256
Western bluebird	24	31
Hermit thrush	59	52
American robin	6061	1668
Varied thrush	203	452
Wrentit	186	139
Northern mockingbird	61	1
California thrasher	25	4
Water pipit	241	48
Cedar waxwing	1245	67
Loggerhead shrike	24	15
European starling	5496	1420
Hutton's vireo	52	39
Orange-crowned warbler	9	2
Nashville warbler	2	0
Ylw-rmpd (Aud) warbler	521	284
Ylw-rmpd (Myrt) warbler	59	92
Yellow-rumped warbler	45	42
Townsend's warbler	108	124
Palm warbler	2	-
Black-thrted gray warbler	1	-
Black and white warbler	1	-
Common yellowthroat	32	32
Wilson's warbler	-	1
Western tanager	1	-
Rufous-sided towhee	76	29
Brown towhee	276	97
Lark sparrow	1	1
Savannah sparrow	185	77
Fox sparrow	184	65
Song sparrow	238	171
Lincoln's sparrow	58	24
White-throated sparrow	1	1
Golden-crowned sparrow	1361	583
White-crowned sparrow	1261	666
Dark-eyed junco	771	579
Lapland longspur	1	-
Redwinged blackbird	779	625
Tricolored blackbird	722	428
Western meadowlark	567	453
Brewer's blackbird	2708	1544
Brown-headed cowbird	25	11
Nrthrn (Baltimore) oriole	1	1
Great-tailed grackle	-	-
Blackbird (sp)	1100	1200
Anna's hummingbird	335	35
Selasphorus (sp)	1	-
Purple finch	114	56
House finch	2004	1032
Red crossbill	980	655
Pine siskin	1668	3027
Lesser goldfinch	107	24
American goldfinch	54	13
Evening grosbeak	2	20
House sparrow	902	58

NUMBER OF OBSERVERS

67 42

NUMBER OF SPECIES

207 183

TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRDS

112,914 31,038

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT CONFERENCE

On Saturday, Feb. 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., the National Audubon Society and the Bay Area Audubon Council are sponsoring a conference on the California Environmental Quality Act at the Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary at 376 Greenwood Beach Rd. in Tiburon. CEQA is the major legislation protecting wildlife habitat and open space. The Conference is intended

for members who are active in conservation issues and will cover legislative origins, compliance requirements, EIR's, and the planning process. The list of speakers, attorneys Mike Remy and Dan Curtin; Jerry Meral of the Planning and Conservation League; Ann Moore, Planning Director, City of San Rafael; developer, Don Collin; and George Ellman, a former city councilman from Tiburon.

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