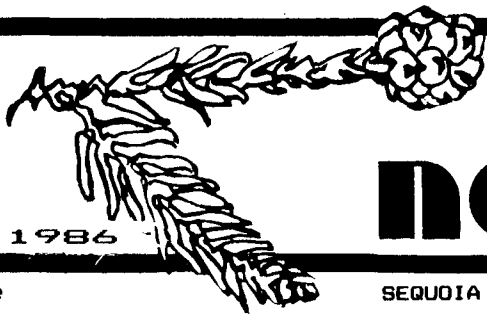




sequoia needles

January 1986

Vol. 34, No. 5

Bulletin of the

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.

SAS GENERAL MEETING

SAS member Steve Schafer will present a program on his bird banding experiences on the East Coast. His description of the program follows:

BIRD BANDING

STEVE SCHAFER

I will begin my talk with a basic introduction to the art of bird banding. This will include a discussion of why anybody would want to band birds in the first place and a description of the fundamentals of trapping and banding. This should include demonstrations of some of the netting and banding equipment.

The slide show portion of the talk will be broken into two somewhat ill-defined parts. The first part will dwell primarily on the techniques of banding (netting & trapping, applying the bands, taking measurements, etc.) with an emphasis on the acquisition of useful scientific data.

The second part will be a description of the specific banding project with which I was involved -- The Featherbed Lane Old Fields Succession Project. Featherbed Lane is located just north of Hopewell, New Jersey, on the slopes of the first range of the Appalachian foothills. The study area consists of a number of abandoned agricultural fields, whose "ages" (defined as the number of years they have remained fallow) vary from ten years to forty years. As the age of the fields vary, so does the vegetation. And, of course, as the vegetation varies, so does the population of birdlife. The main purpose was to document these changes in the avian population and to determine how they were related to the changes in habitat. Although the analysis of the data from the project has not yet been completed, I will present some of the preliminary findings, along with an account of how a fortuitous circumstance led to the discovery of an important relationship between certain types of slime molds and several species of birds.

ALLENS HONORED AT DEC. MEETING

Frank and Jean Allen were honored in a surprise ceremony at the December meeting. Excerpts from President John Silliman's presentation follow:

"Frank and Jean Allen have sustained this chapter with their undying devotion and endless energy over the past umpteen years..even though they are invisible to the average person. They have been responsible for collating, folding, labeling and mailing the *NEEDLES*. Jean has handled membership duties for years. Frank has been the coordinator of the annual Christmas Bird Counts. Jean has been the smiling face at the hospitality table as long as I can remember. Frank has arranged to have the auditorium set up for our monthly meetings. Together and individually they have chaired or served on innumerable committees and together they have helped our chapter grow to its present size."

"Today marks the end of an era. The Allens are going on an extended vacation soon and we will need to find 8 or 10 people to replace them."

"But they can never be replaced in our hearts. As a symbol of our gratitude and our love the Board has voted this special award - a signed, limited edition Robert Bateman print - *Trumpeter Swans*."

* * * * *

There is very little that can be added to this except to note that the suggestion to recognize the Allens' long years of service came from several sources, that our office coordinator Donna Kirsacko was the driving force behind the idea, that the heated debate at the Board meeting only concerned *how* to best honor them, that the vote was unanimous and that Ruth Simonson and Emily Freeman made the actual selection of the award.

* * * * *

The Allens, who were taken completely by surprise, were overwhelmed and - obviously - had no prepared response. But many of those present were pleased to hear Jean comment that they were "not retiring, just stepping aside in recognition of new talent".

* * * * *

A standing ovation provided a fitting end to the impromptu ceremony.

* * * * *

Coincidentally, or perhaps inspired by the Allens' award, this issue of the *NEEDLES* has become a thanks-giving (not the holiday, but the act) edition - an excellent start for the New Year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!!

PAGE ONE

CALENDAR

January 1986						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JAN. 2 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Bank of America
THURSDAY Bank Building. 400 El Camino Real. Burlingame.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

JAN. 4 THE AND NUEVO COUNT. Covering some of the most
SATURDAY scenic and "birdy" areas in the County, this count
circle only requires more birders to equal or
surpass the Crystal Springs Count in variety of species.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS COORDINATOR FRANK ALLEN 344-9339
CHRISTMAS COUNTS COMPILER BARRY SAUPPE

JAN. 7 SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY SERIES SEMINAR - RAPTORS
TUESDAY OF THE BAY AREA with Maryanne Danielson. With
slides and illustrated handouts, well-known
Sequoia naturalist and instructor, Maryanne Danielson will
concentrate on identifying those hawks that winter in
Central California. Advance registration is required. Fee
for both the seminar and field trip is \$10. Make checks out
to Sequoia Audubon Society and specify it is for the Raptor
Seminar and Field Trip.

/=====\
/===== 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 CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT OR !
! PRIOR EXPERIENCE. =====\
/=====

JAN. 9 SAS GENERAL MEETING. BIRD BANDING featuring
THURSDAY SAS's own Steve Schafer who will discuss the why
and how of bird banding. Actual equipment used
in banding will be on hand for examination and demonstration
and slides will illustrate the actual operation. At the San
Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social
Mixer at 7:30 PM. General Meeting begins at 8:00. See the
article on Page One for further details.

JAN 11 SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY SERIES FIELD TRIP - THE
SATURDAY RAPTORS OF VASCO ROAD. This little known and
uninhabited road near Livermore provides a winter
home for wintering hawks. The oak woodland and grassland
habitat provides an excellent feeding ground for the birds
and a fine viewing area for birders. Meeting place to be
announced at the Tuesday seminar. Advance registration is
required. Fee for both the seminar and field trip is \$10.
Make checks out to Sequoia Audubon Society and specify it is
for the Raptor Seminar and Field Trip.

JAN. 18 FOSTER CITY AREAS FIELD TRIP. Wintering ducks and
SATURDAY shorebirds will be our main interests along the
bays and lagoons of Foster City as we look for
the Barrow's and Common goldeneyes, greater and lesser
scaup, and hooded and red-breasted mergansers. 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

(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

JEANNE PRICE

The Audubon Canyon Ranch Board has adopted a long range planning report to guide its activities and expenditures over the next three to five years.

It has approved a budget of \$329,857 for the year of October 1985 to September 1986, up \$50,000 from the previous year. More significantly, it has pledged itself to raising contributions this year to an all time high of \$160,000.

This larger budget will provide for one full time education naturalist at Volunteer Canyon to assist Ray Peterson at the Bolinas Preserve. This position will be funded by a San Francisco Foundation grant of approximately \$30,200 in 1986. This grant will also finance, among other things, studies on the removal of exotic plants and on feral pig eradication.

Beyond 1986, if these activities are to continued they may have to be financed out of the General Fund according to Board Member Rick Baird.

The additional money to be raised through contributions will be expended for increased operating costs including utilities, community relations, maintenance, insurance, education, salaries and research on the Olema Marsh.

These figures do not include the capital improvements at the Bouverie Preserve which are funded by contributions specifically designated for that property.

BIRDING CLASSES

Sequoia Adult School and our own Maryann Danielson are offering two classes for birders during the winter quarter.

ALL THAT YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BIRDS AND WERE AFRAID TO ASK focuses on our wintering land birds. Information will cover bird behavior and habitat preference as well as identification. For beginning and intermediate birders. Nine Wednesday evening lectures and five Saturday field trips. Starts January 8 at 7:30 PM at the San Carlos Senior Citizens' Center.

BIRDS THROUGH THE SEASONS is for intermediate and advanced birders. Lecture material will focus on identification of the more difficult bird groups and lesser known bird assemblages. Field trips will highlight our wintering birds. Nine Monday evening lectures and five Saturday field trips (and Friday if class is oversized). Starts January 6 in the Teachers' Lounge at the Menlo Atherton High School.

The class fee is \$40.00 for each class series. Registration at the first class. The instructor is Maryann Danielson. Call Sequoia Adult School (369-6809) for additional information.

SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY SERIES

There are still a number of spaces open for Raptors of the Bay Area on January 7 (Illustrated Lecture) and January 11 (Field Trip) in which Maryann Danielson, the well-known Bay Area naturalist and educator will teach us about the hawks and eagles found in the Bay Area. The fee is \$10. The class will be at the Sears Savings Bank in the Carlmont Shopping Center (Alameda de las Pulgas at Ralston) in Belmont from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. Call the Audubon office (593-7368) for more details or to reserve your spot. Details on the field trip will be given at the meeting.

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Birders should keep track of those strange and exotic birds that they come across occasionally. Ringed turtle doves and spotted doves are established and "listable" in the LA area and it is only a matter of time before peafowl are put into the same category in many areas of California. Closer to home, in San Mateo, Randy Stroot has sighted a flock of thick-billed parrots that seem to be thriving. He would be interested in hearing from anyone else who has any information on these birds. He can be reached at telephone number 341-1502.  
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CEQA GUIDE PUBLISHED

The Planning&Conservation League Foundation has published a pamphlet designed to provide a clear and concise explanation of the key requirements of California's centerpiece environmental protection law. The new 16 page "Citizen's Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)" explains the law's most important provisions including requirements for preparing environmental impact reports and reducing environmental damage caused by projects.

"The 'Citizens's Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act' gives a plain English description of how citizens can use the law to protect the environment. It is a must for private citizens, lawyers and governmental workers who are involved with projects that could harm the environment", commented PCL Foundation attorney Corey Brown.

The guide was prepared by environmental attorneys who have substantial working experience working with CEQA. It describes the process that public agencies must follow in reviewing projects, includes a useful glossary of terms and provides a list of key court cases.

Copies are available from the PCL Foundation, 909 12th St., Suite 203, Sacramento, Ca. 95814 for \$2.00 per copy.

CALENDAR

(Continued from Page Two)

February 1986

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

FEB. 2 FIELD TRIP - "GREAT SEWAGE PONDS OF CALIFORNIA."
SUNDAY Your leader once thought he might one day write a book with that title, documenting some of the best birding spots in the state. Well, he hasn't written the book yet, but he's willing to lead our field trip while doing his research at the STOCKTON AND LODI SEWAGE PONDS. The Stockton ponds are famous for their wintering little and black-headed gulls and the Lodi ponds for their shorebirds. Supplementing this will be a caravan through the side roads of the Delta searching for feeding swans, geese and sandhill cranes and whatever other opportunities present themselves.

LEADER CLIFF RICHER 355-4058

FEB. 6 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Bank of America
THURSDAY Bank Building, 400 El Camino Real, Burlingame.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

FEB.8-9 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 shorebirds, 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 plovers, vesper sparrows, mountain bluebirds, long billed curlews, and perched raptors vie with the resident roadrunners, phainopeplas and chukars for the birders' attention. Saturday we plan on meeting in the parking lot of the Los Banos Wildlife Area on Henry Miller Road at 9:00 A.M. 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. Reservations are recommended at this time of year and negotiations are underway for reduced rates at a quality motel. Additional 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

FEB. 13 SAS GENERAL MEETING. Details to be announced in
THURSDAY next month's *NEEDLES*. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social Mixer at 7:30 PM, General Meeting begins at 8:00.

FEB. 15 MOSS LANDING AND ELKHORN SLOUGH. An informal
SATURDAY afternoon field trip leading up to Sunday's pelagic trip. Meet at 12 noon at the intersection of Highway One and Jetty Landing in Moss Beach. Itinerary and emphasis will depend upon current conditions.

LEADER PETER METROPULOS

FEB.16 PELAGIC TRIP FROM MONTEREY. At press time there
SUNDAY were still a limited number of spaces available for this tour. However, interested birders should contact the tour operator directly. Write to D.L. Shearwater, Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 7440, Santa Cruz, Ca. 95061. Enclose your check for \$35, a note of explanation specifying the trip of February 16 and identifying yourself as a member of Sequoia Audubon, and a self-addressed stamped return envelope for confirmation of your reservation.

SAS COORDINATOR LINDA KYPTA 591-9053

THE THANK YOU PAGE

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

DONNA KIRSACKO

Thanks to Josephine Blue, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Buchner, Marge Destabler, Win Dye and Rebecca Mandich for their sponsorship of classrooms in the Audubon Adventures Program.

Mrs. Blue, an Audubon Life Member, sponsored two classrooms.

We now have seven classrooms sponsored in five schools: Foster City Elementary, Franklin School, Windmill Springs, Parkside School and Adams Elementary. All the teachers have reported nothing but rave reviews for the materials; One teacher said his students couldn't wait for the next issue to arrive!

Sponsors, thank you again!

AUDUBON MAGAZINE

DONNA KIRSACKO

In the November *NEEDLES*, Mrs. Balch of Hillsborough should have been thanked for her donations of *Audubon* magazines to the SAS library.

A thank you to Oleta Dickinson for her contribution of *Audubon* magazines from the archives of her late husband, Dr. Neil Dickinson.

ONCE AGAIN, THE ALLENS

CLIFF RICHER

Because of his involvement with the Wild Goose Chase, your editor was very late in getting the *NEEDLES* to the printer and once again it was only due to yeoman work by the Allens (and particularly Jean) that the news-letter got to you at all.

Your editor thanks them once again. Just because we thanked them formally for the infinity of tasks they have performed in the past I do not wish to let this opportunity pass to express my appreciation to the Allens whose dedication, gentle nagging, wise counsel and occasional proofreading have been essential to producing the *NEEDLES*.

VOLUNTEERS

LINDA KYPTA

In his presentation to the Allens, President John Silliman made a special request for volunteers to fill the many jobs left vacant by Frank and Jean.

Two came up to me after the meeting. Carol Larson will help collate, fold and mail the newsletter and Ione Blampied, a new member, will help with Hospitality at the meetings.

I want to thank them both very much and look forward to working with them in the future.

More volunteers are needed. Please call me (591-9053) or any other officer or board member if you have any spare time during the week or can help at the meetings.

WILD GOOSE CHASE CONTRIBUTORS

CLIFF RICHER

Frank and Jean Allen	Mark and Pat Jones
Rick Baird	Elgin Juri
Barbara Benkman	Dorothy Katz
Eleanor Blaich	Candice Kemmler*
Josephine Blue	Helen Kratter
Earl and Vera Boyson	Linda Kypta
Mary Bresler	Kenneth and Andrea Lajoie
Lee Brown	John Layne*
Carl Burger	Ethel Ludovic
Edna Mae Burt	Bill Mason*
Regina Butler*	Keltie Mc Closkey*
Patricia Carlson	Ed McElhany
Gino Cecchetto	Nancy Mendoza*
Robin Christian*	Richard Metcalf*
Virginia Clifford	Elizabeth Miller
Leah Cohen	Vic and Marie Morgan
Lou Colzani*	Eileen Murillo-Glazier
Mike Colzani*	Roy and Fran Nelson
Ruth A. Crotchett	Michael and Hulda O'Brien
Helen Davies	Hadley Osborn
Richard Devoe	Tom Palmer
Oleta Dickinson	Pete and Donna Petersen
Jean Durick	Claire Phipps
Win and Tom Dye	Larry and Fran Frager
Jules Eichorn	Pat & John Prime
David and Linda Fenner	Irene Quirolo
John Finch*	Laurel Rezeau
Louise Fletcher	Cliff Richer
John Galindo*	Anne and Scot Rohrer
Mary Lou Geer	Harriet Rounbonis*
Kam Ghalamkar	Grace Sain
Joan and Mark Gilford	Scott Satterfield*
Fred and Catherine Grafton	Jay Schrader*
Ernie Gray*	Paul Schwendener*
Greg Gunn*	Carol Scott
Walter Hauter	Alphonse Seubert
Hazel Hiler	Robert Shaw
Karen Ho	John Silliman
Dean Hobb	Carl Smith
Bill and Betty Horn	Dr. and Mrs. George Stewart
Richard Izmirian	Susan Tanksley*
Ann Jeffries	Linda Wagner
Rick Johnson	Doug Winnett*

*Indicates Non-members

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO 12/15

1782.62

FIELD TRIP LEADERS

CLIFF RICHER

While we are giving thanks, let us not forget our field trip leaders. They exemplify the very essence of volunteerism. They give us their time, their skill and their knowledge and are sometimes rewarded when someone in their group sees a new bird or when a young person returns their enthusiasm. Rarely, they are sorely disappointed when only one or two people show up. But even then, these remarkable people bounce back and do an even better job on their next trip.

Thank you all!

SAVE THE EAGLES

DONNA KIRSACKO

Eleanor Blaich is a constant contributor of postage stamps to the Save-the-Eagles Program.

FARALLON ISLANDS - 1885

CHARLES KEELER

After our half hour of impatient waiting the eggers appeared on the cliff above us, and lowering a skiff which hung suspended from a sling, rowed out to take us ashore. Once safely landed, we climbed up the long ladder stairway to the level bluff and the lighthouse settlement.

Time was precious. The eggers started early on their morning's round, so we trudged along after them as briskly as we could.

It may be well to explain the vocation of egging as carried on at the Farallones. The egg of the California murre was found to have possibilities, as a marketable commodity, of being converted into omelets and sundry other dishes in the San Francisco restaurants. The shell is so tough that the eggs may be tossed about almost as freely as so many cobblestones, thus making the cargo an especially easy one to handle. A party of Greek fishermen made a practice of camping upon the Farallones during the egging season and gathering enough eggs to keep one of their largest craft constantly employed transporting them to town. Upon establishing themselves on the island they would first go about the accessible area occupied

by the birds and destroy every egg which could be found. A day or two later they would repeat their visits, gathering a large supply of fresh eggs. These visits were continued every second or third day of the season, until the resources of the birds were exhausted. The eggers wore rope shoes to make their footing secure upon the dangerous rock ledges, and the fronts of their shirts were converted into great pockets in which to carry the plunder. Ropes, to which the men could cling as they advanced, were secured to the rocks in the more perilous places.

The gulls are inveterate plunderers. As the eggers go about the rocks, starting all the birds from their nests, the gulls follow closely in their train, breaking every cormorant's egg which they chance upon and devouring its contents. They even manage to crack the tough shell of the murre's eggs if any happen to escape the vigilance of the eggers.

(From *Bird Notes Afield* by Charles Keeler, published 1899 by Paul Elder and Company, San Francisco and New York.)

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching is Sequoia Audubon Society's guide to birding sites in San Francisco and San Mateo County. More than 30 different spots are described and accompanied by maps, directions and helpful notes about each spot. A species index directs you to habitats for the birds you want to see. Order one for yourself and several as gifts! Use this form to order your copy today. Only \$10.78 (Taxes, shipping and handling included).

~~~~~  
Also available by mail - including postage and tax

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| National Geographic Field Guides | \$16.00        |
| Birding at the Bottom of the Bay | 8.25           |
| Mono Lake Guidebooks             | 7.60           |
| Birds of the Sacramento Area     | Available Soon |

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Send checks to: Sequoia Audubon Society
720 El Camino Real #403
Belmont, Ca. 94002

Allow 14-18 days
for delivery

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

ALSO AVAILABLE AT MEETINGS AND SOME FIELD TRIPS



**San Francisco
Peninsula
Birdwatching**

SUNBEAM EXPLORING

Sunbeam Ecology Explorations and Maryann Danielson are sponsoring two winter field trips:

SANTA BARBARA AND ENVIRONS: January 24-26, 1986: Santa Barbara's milder climate provides a wintering area for birds uncommon in the Bay Area. In the recent past this has included royal terns, orchard orioles and Grace's warbler. The \$70. fee includes two nights' lodging and a pre-trip slide lecture.

TULE AND KLAMATH LAKES - BALD EAGLES AND SWANS - RAPTORS AND WATERFOWL: February 14-17, 1986: A trip to view and study wintering waterfowl and birds of prey. One of the trip's highlights is the viewing of large numbers of bald eagles leaving and returning to their roost from their foraging areas on the Klamath Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The \$95 fee includes three nights lodging and a pre-trip slide lecture.

Maryann Danielson leads both trips. Call her at 342-6919 for reservations and information. Registration is limited.

BAEER FAIR

The BAY AREA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESOURCE FAIR (BAEER FAIR) will hold its ninth annual exhibit at the Marin Civic Center from 10 to 5 on Saturday, January 25. General admission is \$4.50 and includes entry to all workshops. For more information, call 948-2665 or write PO Box 391, Cupertino, Ca. 95015

TEXAS CHECKLISTS

Birders who may be heading for Texas this spring should be aware that they may obtain two very fine checklists at nominal cost.

The Upper Texas Coast Checklist is published by the Houston Ornithology Group. This has long been considered one of the best area checklists in the country and can be obtained from Peter Vennema, 2120 Tangle, Houston, Tx. 77005. The cost is 5 cents each. Include a self-addressed, stamped, return envelope.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has recently published the "Traveler's Checklist of Texas Birds" put together by ornithologists Kelly Bryan, Tony Gallucci and David Riskind. The 9"x5" booklet is in the 1983 AOU taxonomic sequence and contains the common and latin names of all Texas birds, including even reliable but unconfirmed sightings. 12 columns for recording sightings, ample room for notes and a list of relevant reference books. It is available FREE from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin TX 78744. Ask for Series Number 32.

RICHER RAMBLINGS

The latest scourge of the wilderness would seem to be feral pigs in Marin County. Last month and again this month Jeanne Price has mentioned them in the "News from Audubon Canyon Ranch" and they are reportedly muddying the streams and tearing up the hillsides near Mt. Tamalpais.

The county supervisors - perhaps remembering the furor over the Angel Island deer or the Channel Islands goats have elected to go slow and have appropriated funds to study the problem. (To those of you inexperienced in the ways of politics, a study is a device intended to make a politician look good but not actually requiring any effort or commitment.) The results of this study are a foregone conclusion. If feral pigs are posing a problem in such heavily used areas as Audubon Canyon Ranch and the trails of Mt. Tam, the population must be large, growing and devastating in its impact on native plants and wildlife. A major eradication effort would seem to be in order.

Personally, I will be watching this situation with some interest to see what actions are taken by the various animals' rights groups. I have a feeling that there may be a protest from some of the radical fringe, but that we will get very little organized resistance from this sector. For you see pigs don't have big brown eyes like harp seals and deer, nor historic tradition like mustangs and burros, nor noble posturing nor heroic literary history (Three Billy Goats Gruff).

They suffer from a bad press. While they have their place in literature (the three little pigs and good old Porky Pig) they are usually depicted as stupid and wimpy, or dirty, or evil, or comical or any combination of these. Incapable of generating the pathos of an orphaned Bambi, the romanticism of the desert prospector's faithful companion or the noble image of the wild horse, the feral pig conjures up a picture of a razor-backed, razor-tusked, red-eyed hulk that eats its own young.

This is, under the right circumstances, a true picture. It is one that may inspire fear, loathing, awe or even respect. But on a poster it won't inspire sympathy and it won't bring in contributions.

And that, alas, is the name of the game.

* * * * *

Another creature suffering from a bad press is the scorpion. There has hardly been a desert movie in which the hero or heroine has not been in dire fear of their life from one of these (obviously) malevolent monsters intent upon taking the life of every human in sight.

This is only the stuff of which drama is made and affords a means by which the strong, silent hero can conveniently get the virtuous and lovely damsel in his arms. (To mention two other standard but hardly more accurate movie stereotypes).

In truth, the scorpion never sees the light of day voluntarily, preferring to stay under a rock until the sun goes down. It avoids humans whenever possible and certainly has no interest in humans as food. It feeds on insects and spiders and occasionally uses its stinger in defense against rodents. Although there are two Arizona species that could be dangerous to a small child, to the average person the scorpion's sting is no worse than that of a bee or wasp and the standard defense is far more effective. Always brush them away. Don't swat!

In the event that you're wondering what prompted this, all of you scorpiphiles will be delighted to know that the scorpion was designated as "Critter of the Month" for November by the California State Office of the Bureau of Land Management. Up until now I bet you thought that being Garlic Queen of the Gilroy Festival was an obscure honor.

HAZARDOUS WASTE DUMPING

JIM WOODWORTH

The Bureau of Land Management manages 12.5 million acres of land in the California desert, much of it isolated and remote from human habitation, making it ideal for illegal dumping of hazardous wastes.

Illustrating the growth of this problem is a BLM Report stating that only five illegal dumpings were discovered in 1983; but 29 were found in 1984 and 30 have occurred already in 1985.

Not all reported cases are illegal midnight dumpings, however. There are cases, brought to the attention of authorities, where abandoned mine sites have been used for storage dumps of chemicals. Some of the drums when discovered are found to have been used for target practice by riflemen and hunters.

Sometimes a non-dangerous situation has become highly dangerous as riflemen have blasted away at drums, causing the chemical contents to spill out and mix on the ground and in one case, catch on fire.

Hazardous waste cleanups on public lands in California have cost the taxpayers from as little as a few hundred dollars on up to as much as \$24,000.

BLM's California State Director Ed Hasteley has pledged that "BLM will make every effort necessary to keep the public lands clear of all hazardous wastes. Those who think it is advantageous to dump their wastes on public land will face the cleanup costs as well as possible prosecution."

"We must protect the millions of Californians who use our lands for recreational purposes. They should not have to contend with the illegal dumping of hazardous wastes. We ask the public to cooperate by refraining from such dumpings and, if they discover such a dump site, to notify their nearest BLM office."

(Excerpted from a much longer article in "Newsbeat", the monthly newsletter of the State Office of the BLM.)

WHALE WATCH TRIPS

The Oceanic Society has announced its winter whale watch schedule. The Blue and Gold Fleet's 87-foot M/V Gold Rush will leave the Pier 39 west marina promptly at 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM every Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday for the vicinity of Pt. Reyes.

The vessel is especially designed for whale-watching and three Oceanic Society naturalists will be in attendance to help explain the history of the gray whale.

The price is \$25.00 per person with reduced rates for children, seniors and members of the Oceanic Society. call 474-3385 If you need additional information or want to make a reservation.

REHAB CONFERENCE

LINDA KYPTA

A WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CONFERENCE will be held at the Amfac Hotel in Burlingame from January 31 through February 2, 1986.

"Basics to State of the Art" is the theme which will cover topics ranging from basic bird care to diagnosis of mammalian diseases to the newest advancements in reptile medicine. The purpose is to provide both professionals and volunteers with tools to use in every aspect of wildlife rehabilitation work.

A fee of \$40 for IWRC members and \$50 for non-members is required for registration.

For more information, contact Sandi Stadler at Wildlife Rescue (340-8430).

NATURE SOUND SOCIETY

The Nature Sound Society will hold a discussion of Nature Sound recording on Sunday, January 12 at the Richardson Bay Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary. The discussion will be preceded by the Society's General Meeting at 11:30 A.M.

On the panel of experienced field recordists will be Bernie Krause, Jim Labrecht, Dave Mears and our own **Charles Newman**.

For years Charles has preceded our monthly programs with his "Bird of the Month" vignette, featuring his photos and field recordings.

The Audubon Sanctuary is located at 376 Greenwood Cove Road. Take the Tiburon Blvd. exit off of Hwy 101 and travel west for about a mile then turn right on Greenwood Cove Road and drive approximately half a mile to the Sanctuary. Nature Sound Society meetings are open to all, amateurs or professionals, interested in Natural sounds. For further information contact Paul Matzner at the Oakland Museum Natural Sciences Department. (273-3884).

ANOTHER THANK YOU!

We ran out of room to thank everyone on page four. However this is a most appropriate place in which to express our thanks to Charles Newman who has volunteered to take over the set-up and take-down at our General Meetings.

In a typically quiet and unobtrusive way, Charles did not make any show of volunteering. He simply came to Frank Allen after the meeting and asked to be shown what had to be done.

Thank you Charles.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

Sequoia Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general or on behalf of, or in memory of relatives or friends. Such gifts may be designated for education, for Pescadero Marsh development or for any other specific purpose. All other gifts will be used for the advancement of the objectives of the Sequoia Audubon Society at the discretion of the Board of Directors. All gifts are tax-deductible. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Sequoia Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in Sequoia Needles and personally on behalf of Sequoia Audubon Society.

IN MEMORY OF

F. Clinton DeLap

From
Vivien and Marvin Dutton

for
Audubon Canyon Ranch

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