



sequoia needles

May 1986

Vol. 34, No. 9

Bulletin of the

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.

SAS' GENERAL MEETING

Skip Schwartz, Executive Director of Audubon Canyon Ranch, will be our featured speaker. His appearance coincides with the height of the herons' nesting activities at the Ranch and will provide a fitting preamble for any trip you are planning to the Ranch and for our hosting duties in June.

Skip will bring us up-to-date on the activities at the Ranch and will supplement his talk with slides of the Ranch and the heronry.

At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social Mixer at 7:30 PM. General Meeting begins at 8:00.

NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM

Doctor Todd Keeler Wolf of the Earth Watch Scientific Organization will be our featured speaker. His topic will be the birds of Trinidad and Tobago with emphasis on how they have been affected by man.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Remember that June is our Annual General Meeting with the election of officers for the forthcoming year. Ed McElhany has replaced Win Dye as the chair of the Nominating Committee due to an error on the part of the Board. A proposed by-law change allowing a member of the Board to serve on the nominating Committee was not properly announced in the *NEEDLES* beforehand and therefore Win was ineligible to serve. However, serve she has and Ed will have very little left to do in order to complete the slate of officers. We thank Win for her considerable efforts and Ed for volunteering to step in during this minor crisis. The Committee has almost completed its deliberations and its choices will be published in next month's *NEEDLES* prior to the election.

POTLUCK TIME!

Next month also brings us to our year-end Potluck Dinner so dust off your favorite "sharing" or "show-off" recipes.

National Audubon has sponsored some bird or birding videotapes. If you have one of these or have even viewed one, Linda Kypta would appreciate your calling her at 591-9053.

HABITAT DESTRUCTION

CLIFF RICHER

Until recently, whenever I thought of habitat destruction, I thought in terms of the grand scale. I thought of the draining, leveling and manicuring of the Central Valley; the filling and paving of the Bay; or the draw-down of Mono Lake. These take place over such a period of time or are so sweeping in size that I usually consider them in terms of statistics. The scale and the process are de-humanizing and de-naturalizing.

I work in the financial district of the City and nearly every day for six years I passed by or through the parking lot of the US Postal Service's Rincon Annex - a particularly dreary and depressing lot - even as parking lots go.

And yet, on a rainy morning in January of 1981, I found myself stopping to listen. Coming through the roar of the diesel trucks was the clear, clean whistle of a white-crowned sparrow. I soon found him, perched on top of a light standard, braving the elements and the exhaust fumes to announce springtime's renewal.

"Interesting," I thought and assumed that he would soon move on to a more appropriate habitat.

But he was there in the evening perched on the chain link fence, and the next morning - at eye level - atop the privet hedge on one side of the lot, ignoring the passers-by, defending his territory against unseen and unheard invaders and professing his unrequited love.

And so it went on all that spring through May and even into June before the seasonal changes caused him to become silent. In the fall he sang again briefly and was gone. I never expected to see or hear him again but was grateful for his having brightened my first full spring and summer in the City.

To my surprise and delight he was back the following spring, and the next. He became my harbinger and I knew - regardless of what the calendar told me - that Spring was here when I heard him. I never saw anyone else stop to look or pause to listen and in my mind he became my white-crowned sparrow. Last year, I felt like a godfather when I saw two very young sparrows along the hedge.

On March 8, the Postal Service closed the Rincon Annex. Two weeks later, I stopped short, unsure, but knowing something was wrong. Then I realized that I could not hear his song. There were bulldozers in the parking lot and in one corner, a workman was pulling up the last traces of the hedge.

At that moment, regardless of statistics, of EIR's or EIS's, I learned the true meaning of habitat destruction.

I wish my little friend well, for I know he survived. He was too old, too street-wise, too much of a survivor to have been caught under the blade and tracks of the dozer. Wherever he is I hope there is someone who will listen for and appreciate his presence and be better for it.

CALENDAR

May 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

MAY 1 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Bank of America THURSDAY Bank Building, 400 El Camino Real, Burlingame. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

MAY 3 THE JASPER RIDGE FIELD TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED due SATURDAY to unexpected problems in making the necessary arrangements. We are re-scheduling this for the fall when we will not have to rely on the availability of "non-SAS" docents and Stanford will assumedly have their telephone system under control. Apologies to all of you who called for advance reservations.

MAY 8 SAS GENERAL MEETING. SPRING AT AUDUBON CANYON THURSDAY RANCH with ACR Executive Director Skip Schwartz. In a suitable preliminary to Sequoia's hosting duties at the Ranch, Skip Schwartz, with the help of slides will show us the round of activities and features that make ACR one of the showcase outdoor attractions of the Bay Area and have made it famous nationally. 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.

/=====\
/===== 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. /=====\
\=====

MAY 17 ALUM ROCK PARK - The Nelsons will lead this excursion SATURDAY to this popular - but largely under-birded - area. Because this park gets such an influx of visitors on a sunny weekend we will meet at 8:30 A.M. in the parking lot road along Penitencia Creek. This is the parking lot near the Junior Museum (Youth Science Institute) in Alum Rock Park. To get there drive south on US 101. About 2.5 miles past the junction with Hwy. 17 take the Santa Clara Ave/Alum Rock Ave. and cross over US 101 going east on Alum Rock Ave. This leads northeast about 4.5 miles to the park entrance where you will take a left and continue to the parking lot at the end of the paved road. There may be an entrance fee. Sturdy shoes are recommended since some walking on level ground will be involved. Lunch is optional as the trip will continue for a short time after lunch if there is sufficient interest.

LEADERS FRAN AND ROY NELSON 593-7941

MAY 22 DEATH VALLEY FIELD TRIP - Reservations are now THURSDAY closed but anyone wishing to make their own lodging TO and travel arrangements is welcome to "tag-along" on all or part of our itinerary. Call the MAY 27 leader for details, itinerary and/or checklist. TUESDAY

LEADER CLIFF RICHER 355-4058

(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

JEANNE PRICE

This month is the height of the breeding season for the great blue herons and great egrets at the Bolinas Preserve. The Ranch is open weekends and holidays to the public from 10 AM to 4 PM until mid-July. It is closed Monday and school programs are conducted Tuesday through Friday. Should you wish to visit on a weekday please call ahead.

School programs are in full swing at both Bolinas and Bouverie Preserves. Because the future of conservation depends upon today's education these programs are the heart of ACR. The following excerpt from the Bouverie Audubon Preserve publication, *In a Nutshell*, illustrates the enthusiasm and dedication of ACR docents. "Talk about getting your feet wet in a big way! You may remember Friday, March 7 as the day of the long-term big-time downpour."

"We conferred early in the morning to determine if all were feeling like ducks. We were, and fortunately so, because the teacher and class really wanted to come."

"It was an absolutely incredible day for newts and kids in plastic garbage bags. Ever seen a newt eating an earthworm? It's amazing. It was a fine day."

Is this kind of effort appreciated? Here are a few responses from teachers about the recent fall program at Bolinas from the docent newsletter, *The Heron*.

"Most of my students are latch-key children the year round. They cherish the visit to the Ranch. For many it is their first trip outside the inner city."

"Fall or spring, always our best field trip"

"The docents were not only well informed but related exceptionally well to the children."

A recent feature article in Marin County's *Independent Journal*, called ACR "one of the great nature preserves of the West Coast". Perhaps we should add one of the best environmental education centers too.

Recently docent Debbie Ablin arranged a special April weekend outing in Volunteer Canyon for families associated with Family House. This is a residential facility in San Francisco, serving those whose children are under treatment for cancer at the University of California hospital.

The Family House storyteller as well as a theatre teacher assisted Debbie with a video production staged by the group.

(Continued on Page Three)

SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY SERIES

Survival and the Family Farm

June 7, 1985
9 A.M. at Duarte's Restaurant
and the Phipps' Ranch
Pescadero

Host and Lecturer; Tom Phipps

This is a repeat of one of our most popular programs. Tom Phipps will outline the novel approaches he and other coastal ranchers have taken to remain in business. Following the short lecture and a question and answer session, participants will tour the farm and have an opportunity to visit the Phipps' farm stand, exotic vegetable and herb gardens, berry patches, petting zoo and artichoke fields. Lunch at Duarte's will follow, prepared entirely with produce from the farm.

Fee: \$12.00 (Includes lunch)

Advance reservations are required.

Reservation requests will be honored in the order in which checks are received.

Class Coordinator: SHARON HOM 365-3369

BIRDING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Jean Richmond's long-awaited book on birding sites from Tule Lake to Yosemite to Mount Pinos (and 69 others) is now available at the Audubon Office. Call the office (593-7368) to order your copy. Next month's *Needles* will contain a review of the work.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

(Continued from Page Two)

Nature education hikes and crafts rounded out the events.

Two butterfly counts are on the calendar for June. On Saturday, June 28, butterflies will be captured, identified, tallied and released in the 11th annual count in Marin County and on Sunday, June 29, the same process will take place for the 7th Sonoma County count. These are part of the international count conducted each year within two weeks of July 4 under the auspices of the Xerces Society.

For a refresher or an introduction join Ray Peterson, educator/naturalist at the Bolinas Preserve on Get to Know the Critters Night, Wednesday, June 25. Call 383-1644 or write the Bolinas Preserve for details.

CALENDAR

(Continued From Page Two)

June 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					

JUNE 7 SNHS SEMINAR AND FIELD TRIP --- SURVIVAL AND THE SATURDAY FAMILY FARM. Reservations and Fee Required. With Tom Phipps at the Phipps Ranch. See article on this page for details.

COORDINATOR

SHARON HOM

365-3369

JUNE 5 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Bank of America THURSDAY Bank Building, 400 El Camino Real, Burlingame. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

JUNE 12 SAS GENERAL MEETING, ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS THURSDAY AND POTLUCK. See next month's *NEEDLES* for details as to times, nominations and potluck distribution.

JUNE 14 YUBA PASS - "THE CALL OF THE HIGH SIERRA" - This SATURDAY trip affords a chance to see birds rarely seen on JUNE 15 any of our other field trips. The trip features SUNDAY easy trail walking through lovely mountain and Sierra Valley habitats. We have made arrangements to use the facilities of the Sierra Campus of San Francisco State University for the weekend. These include large two person tents with bunks and mattresses, hot-water showers and lavatory facilities, hot breakfasts and dinners and make-your-own box lunches. Bring your own sleeping bags and bedding. Cost is \$29.00 per person, for two nights (Friday and Saturday) and five meals or \$19.00 for meals only. Meals are ample and have sufficient variety to satisfy any taste or non-medical dietary requirement. Birding will begin immediately after breakfast on the Campus. At 9:00 we will proceed to Wild Plum Campground just out of Sierra City and bird the mountain areas for dipper, black-backed woodpecker, evening grosbeak, summer warblers, flycatchers, etc. On Sunday we'll pack up immediately after breakfast and go on to the Summit Campground. From there we will caravan to Sierra Valley to see the birds of the Eastern Slope and Modoc Plateau. The Campus is on Highway 49 approximately 2 miles east of Sierra City and 6 miles west of Yuba Pass summit. It is marked with a small sign. For those wishing to make other arrangements, motels are available in Sierra City. Reservations are advisable since there may be several other birding groups in the area at the same time. Some of the motels are:

HARRINGTON'S SIERRA PINES	(916) 862-1151
SIERRA CHALET	(916) 862-1110
BUTTES MOTEL	(916) 862-1170
SIERRA BUTTES INN	(916) 862-1122

Please call the coordinator or the Audubon Office (593-7368) to make your reservations for the trip. Reservations can be made up to June 1. After that date we may not be able to arrange accommodations or meals at the Sierra Campus. Please let us know if you need transportation or can take riders. Car-poolers will be requested to assist in defraying the drivers' expenses. Detailed directions will be provided for all drivers who need them. Nights and mornings can be cool and the afternoons quite warm so bring appropriate clothing. Walking will be generally along level trails and will be minimal, but stout shoes or boots are recommended.

Those of you who are members of or are interested in the Nature Sounds Society will have an opportunity to "double up" your enjoyment, since the Society will also be using the Sierra Campus for their field trip headquarters on this weekend.

COORDINATOR

CLIFF RICHER

355-4058

KESTERSON UPDATE

Things are heating up in the Central Valley town of Hanford, which is almost 100% dependent on the trade of those growers who belong to the Westlands Water District. As of February 28 the Bureau of Reclamation determined that the growers were not complying with the terms of the April 1985 agreement and that the irrigation water drainage exceeded the allowable amount by more than 5.5 million cubic feet. As a result the Bureau directed the Westlands Water District to begin plugging the drains. This was initiated on March 10 and by March 15, some storekeepers and farm employees were picketing the Westlands office in Hanford.

Meanwhile, action continues on other fronts. The study area has been expanded to include the entire San Joaquin Valley's drainage problems and its possible applications to other irrigated areas of the West.

Reverse osmosis de-salting of the drain water seems impractical since the latest technical study would indicate a purification cost approximately 1000 times greater than the original cost of the irrigation water. The latest technique under study is treatment and de-salting through use of high rate algal ponds. (*Lots of little green Kesterons? - Ed.*)

The U.S. Geological Survey and the State Water Resources Control Board continued to monitor wells and rivers throughout the state and collect samples of all types of runoff.

The Fish and Wildlife Service secured additional water supplies for the Grassland Refuges and for the Kern NWR in an effort to attract waterfowl away from Kesterson. The hazing program has met with limited success. Migratory waterfowl have been kept off the Refuge but wintering shorebirds and resident species have accepted the scarecrows, flashing lights and air cannons as part of their environment. And the number of raptors has actually increased!

Studies commissioned by the Service showed that bird embryo abnormalities continued, hatching mortality was high and that no avocet or stilt young survived to the flight stage; salmon egg incubation and hatching were unaffected by water taken from Kesterson but the fry developed slowly and with liver and kidney damage.

In addition the resources of the State and Federal Departments of Agriculture and the State Department of Fish and Game are being applied to other phases of the problem.

While it is likely that definitive answers will not be forthcoming for several years the Kesterson problem is no longer being swept under the rug. The massive effort underway is costing thousands of hours and millions of dollars. This is both gratifying and terrifying, especially when you think of the thousands of irrigation and drainage projects in the West and recall that the first underground wastewater did not enter the Kesterson Reservoir until 1981! This problem is less than five years old!

The draft Environmental Impact Statement is due this month and will propose five alternatives to solve the problem. We will outline those proposals when they are revealed.

If you wish more information contact:

Susan Hoffman
Program Manager
US Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, Ca. 95825-1898
Telephone (916) 978-5046

and ask to be put on the mailing list.

FIELD TRIP REPORT (February 15 and 16)

PETER J. METROPULOS

Saturday, February 15 - MOSS LANDING. An informal field trip planned for the afternoon before the pelagic trip was held despite driving rainstorms, high surf, gale-force winds, closed roads and flood warnings. Ten observers assembled at Jetty Road to brave the storm, dwindling to four by the day's blustery (and merciful) end. The drake harlequin duck at the onset of the trip lifted our spirits and three blue-winged teal at the Moonglow Dairy were encouraging, as was a merlin streaking across the wind-swept fields. Further inland along Elkhorn Slough we spotted an osprey and two different leucistic (partial albino) Brewer's blackbirds.

Sunday, February 16 - MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP. Despite the threat of rain and stomach-wrenching swells our vessel headed out into the storm-ravaged bay. Few other boats were evident even though this was the opening weekend of salmon fishing season. After hearing of the 56 birders whose boat trip was cancelled the previous day we were all happy just to get on board. Occasional showers and a rather rough sea were a fair price for the decent display of seabirds and mammals that were observed on the trip. Pelagic birds of interest included an oblique black-footed albatross, 47 black-vented shearwaters, 18 sooty shearwaters, 6 pomarine jaegers, 50 red phalaropes, 400 rhinoceros auklets - many in full breeding plumage - 40 Cassin's auklets, 6 ancient murrelets and 10 red-necked grebes. Marine mammals included impressive close-up views of Dall porpoise and the normally rare common dolphin, as well as the usual sea lions and 30 or more sea otters.

(The weather was so unpromising on the Sunday trip that the regular professional leaders failed to show up - assuming the trip would be cancelled. Debbie Shearwater pressed Peter into service and the two of them became the impromptu substitute leaders. Peter acquitted himself so well that he is now a regular tour leader for Shearwater Journeys -- Ed.)

ETHICS & ENVIRONMENT

CPM is offering ETHICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT, a lecture series exploring values and ethics as they relate to ecological concerns. Speakers from throughout California will examine the roots of environmental attitudes and how values are cultivated.

Harold Gilliam of the "San Francisco Chronicle" is moderating the series. Programs are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM. A wine and cheese reception follows each lecture. All sessions are free of charge. No sessions in July and August.

IF YOU FIND A BABY BIRD..

WILDLIFE RESCUE

If you find a baby bird, the best thing to do is try to put it back with its parents. If the baby is blind, naked and helpless, putting it in the nest it came from is ideal. If it's old enough to have feathers, is hopping around, but too young to fly, it's probably at an age where the parents follow it around to feed it. If you see the parent bird around and here are no predators stalking, the best plan is to leave them alone and let nature take its course.

But if you can't find the nest, or if you've watched from a distance for 30 minutes or so and the parents haven't appeared then the next best thing is to bring them to Wildlife Rescue. If the baby is naked, then warmth is extremely important. If you can't get to Wildlife Rescue immediately, the following steps will get the bird warmed up:

Line a berry basket or small box with Kleenex and set it on a heating pad set on low with one layer of towel between box and pad. Place the baby bird in the basket and lay a Kleenex over the top. Warmth is more critical than food at this point. Don't try to give any liquids as they can cause choking.

Warmth is also important for the older babies but the situation is not usually life threatening. Put them in a tissue box with top and air holes. If they sit down all fluffed up, set the box on a low setting heating pad with a towel between the heating pad and the box.

As soon as you can, bring the bird into the Wildlife Rescue for identification and then we can all decide who will raise it. Identification of the baby determines its diet, frequency of feeding, housing needs, etc. If you want to raise the bird, then you will need some training to get familiar with all the steps involved.

Ultimately the best parents are their natural ones so don't be too hasty in removing a baby bird from its area unless it's in immediate danger or you can determine that it really is abandoned.

OILSPILL UPDATE

LINDA KYPTA

Of the approximately 2500 birds rescued, more than 1000 were brought to and treated at the Peninsula Humane Society's Wildlife Rescue. More than 7200 hours went into saving their lives but only half lived long enough to be released.

The cost for this effort may be as high as \$60,000 but the main question is how much did it cost the licensed owner of the offending barge?

The fine in such cases is \$10,000 plus the cost of cleanup of the beaches if the ship intentionally pumped the oil. But how do you prove this? If this bothers you and you think restitution should be made to Wildlife Rescue, please write to:

Department of Fish and Game
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

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).

XX
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	4.50
XX	
Send checks to:	Sequoia Audubon Society
Allow 14-18 days	720 El Camino Real #403
for delivery	Belmont, Ca. 94002

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

ALSO AVAILABLE AT MEETINGS AND SOME FIELD TRIPS



**San Francisco
Peninsula
Birdwatching**

BIRDATHON 1986

The 1986 Birdathon began at 3:30 a.m. at the intersection of Highways 1 and 92 when Linda Kypta, Peter Metropoulos, Cliff Richer and Barry Sauppe met and packed their gear into Rick Johnson's van.

Linda took the first stint as chauffeur and for the first time in five of these outings failed to spot a barn owl on the way down to Pescadero Marsh. At the marsh, the taped calls were answered somewhat reluctantly by one and then several Virginia rails. A song sparrow, a coot and a mallard all protested over their sleep being disturbed and a great horned owl sounded faintly from the hillside behind. Then, to everyone's surprise, a sora responded almost instantly to its taped call. An excellent start!

The screech owls and pygmy owls responded quickly at Butano State Park. There was no response from the saw-whet owls but this was expected at this time of year when they are on their nests.

Now well ahead of schedule and with a steady drizzle coming out of the fog cover, the birders decided to wait for the dawn chorus in hopes of picking up a late-staying hermit - or even a varied - thrush. Swainson's thrushes opened the morning sing-along and were soon joined by a chestnut-backed chickadee, plain titmice, white-crowned sparrows and at last - the hermit thrush.

A singing grasshopper sparrow along Cloverdale gave us another elusive species and Barry began to talk of possibly 200 species for the day.

An olive-sided flycatcher gave us his "quick three beers" call at Gazos Creek but the wood pewees were strangely silent. Acorn, downy and hairy woodpeckers and a northern flicker completed our expected list of coastal woodpeckers.

It was still not quite 7:00 a.m. and our species count was close to 100 as we were greeted at Pigeon Point by a flying black oystercatcher. As if to make his point, he waited until we had all gotten out of the van and then flew back again, calling loudly. The light drizzle was still with us, but visibility was satisfactory and we quickly identified all three loons and all three cormorants as well as the expected murres and marbled murrelets. When the drizzle became rain, we retired to the van and outdrove the weather down the coast to Ano Nuevo picking up two or three species along the way but missing the hoped for (but not expected) bank swallows and black swifts.

On the return, Peter found a bonus - a beached black-legged kittiwake at the Gazos Creek mouth.

At Pigeon Point the visibility had improved and we were now able to see much farther out to sea. A fulmar, sooty shearwaters, kittiwakes, pomarine and parasitic jaegers and brants all flew by, most of them heading north, but a few returning south. And then, five pink-footed shearwaters gave Barry the chance to point out the differences in their flight patterns and their distinctive markings visible even from a mile or more away. Phalaropes also winged by, but too small, too far and too fast to hazard an identification.

The group was jubilant. They were now well ahead of plan and of last year's pace. A two hundred species day was now clearly possible.

This was a short-lived advantage as we now encountered a series of disappointments. The snow and Ross' geese and the golden plover were gone from the fields above Pigeon Point and we were unable to locate the rock sandpiper at Pebble Beach. The green-backed heron and blue-winged teal which had been at the Marsh the week before were nowhere in evidence and the usually reliable American bitterns refused to cooperate. Offsetting this to some extent were the overflight by three whimbrels and the bank swallows flitting about the base of the observation hill.

On the way to Foster City we picked up tri-colored blackbirds and a spotted sandpiper. The knots were at the shell bar but the long-billed curlews were not. At Redwood Shores we found the horned larks and a small bonanza at a nearby pond with canvasbacks, an American wigeon, a common goldeneye, avocets, dunlins, both species of dowitcher and a family of Canada Geese with the goslings in line between the two adults. Peter was especially exuberant at the latter. "The first nesting record for the county," he exclaimed.

At Mountain View Forebay and Charleston Slough we came back down to earth as the "for sure" burrowing owls failed to show. We were unable to find any holdover pelicans or unusual gulls and still no bitterns or blue-winged teals. The Palo Alto Flood Control Basin also disappointed us as the resident redheads stayed hidden among the reeds.

A quick stop at Ravenswood Slough near the Dumbarton Bridge gave us a ruddy turnstone but no Wilson's phalaropes.

When we crossed the bridge our scorecard showed a few more than 150 species. If we were to hit 200 we would need every one of the Mines Road specialties and a few more to boot.

By the time we stopped at Livermore to refuel we had added two more species to the count. Linda had been behind the wheel for more than 10 hours at this point so Cliff Richer now took over. Five days before he had led a field trip to this area and he used this experience to hit only the high spots during the few remaining daylight hours.

Our first two stops produced new birds but failed to turn up the prairie falcon or the hooded orioles that had been present in previous trips. "Hummingbird Hill" produced the expected rufous hummers but no calliope. The phainopepla were cooperative (and continued to be from this point on) and we added a few more of the expected inland chaparral species.

Things began to look better when the turkeys and the rufous-crowned sparrows showed up as scheduled and lazuli buntings were heard. A stop at the old Branding Iron Cafe location failed to produce the expected western tanager but yielded Say's phoebe, a black phoebe, an ash-throated flycatcher and a non-vocalizing western wood-pewee, the only one to be seen or heard during the entire day.

We were missing too many birds and we knew that we had little chance for the magic 200. But last year's record of 184 species was still within reach and the group now resolved to exceed that mark. Two more stops produced a rock wren and a

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BIRDATHON 1986

(Continued from Page Six)

wood duck but no Lawrence's goldfinch - that most reliable of the Mines Road specialties.

The rest stop at the Junction Cafe produced nothing but two dogs who seemed to have an inbred antipathy towards birders or binoculars or people from San Mateo County (or maybe all three).

A side trip into the San Antonio Valley produced the expected Lewis' woodpeckers and three more wood ducks but no other new species and one last stop before entering Del Puerto Canyon failed to turn up the Lawrence's goldfinch.

With only a little more than an hour of daylight left we went careening down the Canyon to our next stop 20 miles away in Stanislaus County. Our running tally showed us to have 182 species - two short of last year's birdathon total. We had three "stakeout" birds left plus one "highly probable". Our luck needed to change for us to break the record.

And change it did! We were scarcely out of the van when Linda pointed out the Costa's hummingbird, perched right where we had left it the previous Sunday. Two minutes later Peter called "Canyon wren!", correctly identifying Barry's tape recorder fifty yards away. But then Barry cried out "That wasn't the tape!" and the bird popped up less than six feet from us belligerently singing to ward off this invasion of his territory.

One more stop was left before sundown and our running total was exactly the same as last year. We had one "stakeout" left, one probability and one remote possibility. Ten miles more on the winding canyon road with the shadows lengthening and we reached the "owl rocks". Linda did it again, finding a barn-owl sitting exactly where she had seen him five days earlier. And high overhead, twinkling in and out of the remaining sunlight above the canyon walls were white-throated swifts - a bird we had previously given up on.

Anti-climatically, the return journey along Corral Hollow Road yielded neither poorwills nor nighthawks.

Barry felt we needed one more bird to be sure we hadn't miscounted and had a last minute inspiration. He felt that he might be able to coax a song from one of the birds at his feeder in Montara.

At 10:30 p.m., a brief playing of it's taped song produced a reply from Barry's white-throated sparrow and brought the 1986 Birdathon to an end.

(The next day, the list was entered into SAS's computer and the final official printout showed that the birders had indeed miscounted. The new record was not 187 - but 189.)

4/25/86 BIRDATHON RESULTS

BIRD	LOCATION	BIRD	LOCATION
LOON, RED-THROATED	PIGEON POINT	PIGEON, BAND-TAILED	SOUTH COAST
LOON, ARCTIC	PIGEON POINT	DOVE, MOURNING	PESCADERO MARSH
LOON, COMMON	PIGEON POINT	BARN-OWL, COMMON	MINES ROAD
GREBE, PIE-BILLED	PESCADERO MARSH	SCREECH-OWL, WESTERN	BUTANO STATE PARK
GREBE, HORNED	PESCADERO MARSH	OWL, GREAT HORNED	BUTANO STATE PARK
GREBE, EARED	PESCADERO MARSH	PYGMY-OWL, NORTHERN	GAZOS CREEK
GREBE, WESTERN	PIGEON POINT	SWIFT, WHITE-THROATED	MINES ROAD
GREBE, CLARK'S	PESCADERO MARSH	HUMMINGBIRD, ANNA'S	PESCADERO MARSH
FULMAR, NORTHERN	PIGEON POINT	HUMMINGBIRD, COSTA'S	MINES ROAD
SHEARWATER, PINK-FOOTED	PIGEON POINT	HUMMINGBIRD, RUFOUS	MINES ROAD
SHEARWATER, SOOTY	PIGEON POINT	HUMMINGBIRD, ALLEN'S	GAZOS CREEK
PELICAN, BROWN	PIGEON POINT	KINGFISHER, BELTED	PESCADERO MARSH
CORMORANT, DOUBLE-CRESTED	PIGEON POINT	WOODPECKER, LEWIS'	S ANTONIO VAL
CORMORANT, BRANDT'S	PIGEON POINT	WOODPECKER, ACORN	GAZOS CREEK
CORMORANT, PELAGIC	PIGEON POINT	WOODPECKER, NUTTALL'S	GAZOS CREEK
HERON, GREAT BLUE	PESCADERO MARSH	WOODPECKER, DOWNY	GAZOS CREEK
EGRET, GREAT	PESCADERO MARSH	WOODPECKER, HAIRY	GAZOS CREEK
EGRET, SNOWY	PESCADERO MARSH	FLICKER, NORTHERN	PESCADERO MARSH
NIGHT-HERON, BLACK-CROWNED	MOUNTAIN VIEW	FLYCATCHER, OLIVE-SIDED	GAZOS CREEK
BRANT	PIGEON POINT	WOOD-PEWEE, WESTERN	MINES ROAD
GOOSE, CANADA	REDWOOD SHORES	FLYCATCHER, WESTERN	BUTANO STATE PARK
DUCK, WOOD	MINES ROAD	PHOEBE, BLACK	MINES ROAD
TEAL, GREEN-WINGED	PESCADERO MARSH	PHOEBE, SAY'S	MINES ROAD
MALLARD	PESCADERO MARSH	FLYCATCHER, ASH-THROATED	MINES ROAD
WIGEON, AMERICAN	REDWOOD SHORES	KINGBIRD, WESTERN	MINES ROAD
PINTAIL, NORTHERN	REDWOOD SHORES	LARK, HORNED	REDWOOD SHORES
TEAL, CINNAMON	PESCADERO MARSH	SWALLOW, TREE	PESCADERO MARSH
SHOVELER, NORTHERN	PESCADERO MARSH	SWALLOW, VIOLET-GREEN	PESCADERO MARSH
GADWALL	PESCADERO MARSH	SWALLOW, N. ROUGH-WINGED	PESCADERO MARSH
CANVASBACK	REDWOOD SHORES	SWALLOW, BANK	PESCADERO MARSH
DUCK, RING-NECKED	PESCADERO MARSH	SWALLOW, CLIFF	PESCADERO MARSH
SCAUP, GREATER	PESCADERO MARSH	SWALLOW, BARN	PESCADERO MARSH
SCAUP, LESSER	FOSTER CITY	JAY, STELLER'S	GAZOS CREEK
SCOTER, BLACK	PIGEON POINT	JAY, SCRUB	BUTANO STATE PARK
SCOTER, WHITE-WINGED	PIGEON POINT	MAGPIE, YELLOW-BILLED	NILES CANYON
SCOTER, SURF	PIGEON POINT	CROW, AMERICAN	MOUNTAIN VIEW
GOLDENEYE, COMMON	REDWOOD SHORES	RAVEN, COMMON	GAZOS CREEK
BUFFLEHEAD	PESCADERO MARSH	CHICKADEE, CHESTNUT-BACKED	GAZOS CREEK
MERGANSER, RED-BREASTED	PIGEON POINT	TITMOUSE, PLAIN	MINES ROAD
DUCK, RUDDY	PESCADERO MARSH	BUSHTIT	GAZOS CREEK
VULTURE, TURKEY	SOUTH COAST	NUTHATCH, WHITE-BREASTED	MINES ROAD
KITE, BLACK-SHOULDERED	PESCADERO MARSH	NUTHATCH, PYGMY	GAZOS CREEK
HARRIER, NORTHERN	PESCADERO MARSH	CREEPER, BROWN	GAZOS CREEK
HAWK, SHARP-SHINNED	MINES ROAD	WREN, ROCK	MINES ROAD
HAWK, RED-TAILED	PESCADERO MARSH	WREN, CANYON	MINES ROAD
EAGLE, GOLDEN	MINES ROAD	WREN, BENTICK'S	MINES ROAD
KESTREL, AMERICAN	PESCADERO MARSH	WREN, HOUSE	MINES ROAD
PHEASANT, RING-NECKED	PALO ALTO	WREN, WINTER	BUTANO STATE PARK
TURKEY, WILD	MINES ROAD	WREN, MARSH	PESCADERO MARSH
QUAIL, CALIFORNIA	GAZOS CREEK	KINGLET, RUBY-CROWNED	GAZOS CREEK
RAIL, VIRGINIA	PESCADERO MARSH	BLUEBIRD, WESTERN	MINES ROAD
SORA	PESCADERO MARSH	THRUSH, SWAINSON'S	BUTANO STATE PARK
MOORHEN, COMMON	MOUNTAIN VIEW	THRUSH, HERMIT	BUTANO STATE PARK
COOT, AMERICAN	PESCADERO MARSH	ROBIN, AMERICAN	GAZOS CREEK
POLOER, BLACK-BELLIED	MOUNTAIN VIEW	WRENTIT	BUTANO STATE PARK
POLOER, SEMI-PALMATED	PESCADERO MARSH	MOCKINGBIRD, NORTHERN	HALF MOON BAY
KILLDEER	PESCADERO MARSH	THRASHER, CALIFORNIA	MINES ROAD
OYSTERCATCHER, BLACK	PIGEON POINT	PHAINOPEPLA	MINES ROAD
STILT, BLACK-NECKED	PESCADERO MARSH	SHRIKE, LOGGERHEAD	MINES ROAD
AVOCET, AMERICAN	REDWOOD SHORES	STARLING, EUROPEAN	CLOVERDALE ROAD
YELLOWLEGS, GREATER	PESCADERO MARSH	VIREO, HUTTON'S	GAZOS CREEK
WILLET	PIGEON POINT	VIREO, WARBLING	GAZOS CREEK
TATTLER, WANDERING	PIGEON POINT	WARBLER, ORANGE-CROWNED	GAZOS CREEK
SANDPIPER, SPOTTED	PESCADERO MARSH	WARBLER, YELLOW	MINES ROAD
WHIMBREL	PESCADERO MARSH	WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED	MINES ROAD
GOWIT, MARBLED	PESCADERO MARSH	WARBLER, TOWNSEND'S	MINES ROAD
TURNSTONE, RUDDY	MINES ROAD	WARBLER, MAGILLIVRAY'S	GAZOS CREEK
TURNSTONE, BLACK	PIGEON POINT	YELLOWTHROAT, COMMON	PESCADERO MARSH
SURFBIRD	PIGEON POINT	WARBLER, WILSON'S	GAZOS CREEK
KNOT, RED	REDWOOD SHORES	GROSBEAK, BLACK-HEADED	MINES ROAD
SANDERLING	PESCADERO MARSH	BUNTING, LAZULI	MINES ROAD
SANDPIPER, WESTERN	PESCADERO MARSH	TOWHEE, RUFOUS-SIDED	MINES ROAD
SANDPIPER, LEAST	PESCADERO MARSH	TOWHEE, BROWN	BUTANO STATE PARK
DUNLIN	PESCADERO MARSH	SPARROW, RUFOUS-CROWNED	MINES ROAD
DOWITCHER, SHORT-BILLED	REDWOOD SHORES	SPARROW, CHIPPING	MINES ROAD
DOWITCHER, LONG-BILLED	REDWOOD SHORES	SPARROW, LARK	MINES ROAD
PHALAROPE, RED-NECKED	PESCADERO MARSH	SPARROW, SAVANNAH	SOUTH COAST
JAEGER, POMARINE	PIGEON POINT	SPARROW, GRASSHOPPER	CLOVERDALE ROAD
JAEGER, PARASITIC	PIGEON POINT	SPARROW, SONG	PESCADERO MARSH
GULL, BONAPARTE'S	PIGEON POINT	SPARROW, GOLDEN-CROWNED	MINES ROAD
GULL, RING-BILLED	MOUNTAIN VIEW	SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED	GAZOS CREEK
GULL, CALIFORNIA	PIGEON POINT	SPARROW, WHITE THROATED	MONTARA
GULL, HERRING	PIGEON POINT	JUNCO, DARK-EYED	GAZOS CREEK
GULL, WESTERN	PIGEON POINT	BLACKBIRD, RED WINGED	PESCADERO MARSH
GULL, GLAUCOUS-WINGED	PIGEON POINT	BLACKBIRD, TRI-COLORED	SOUTH SHORE
KITTAWAKE, BLACK-LEGGED	GAZOS CREEK	MEADOWLARK, WESTERN	MINES ROAD
TERN, CASPIAN	PIGEON POINT	BLACKBIRD, BREWER'S	SOUTH COAST
TERN, COMMON	PIGEON POINT	COMBIRD, BROWN-HEADED	MINES ROAD
TERN, FORSTER'S	PESCADERO MARSH	ORIOLE, NORTHERN	MINES ROAD
MURRE, COMMON	PIGEON POINT	FINCH, PURPLE	GAZOS CREEK
GUILLEMET, PIGEON	PIGEON POINT	FINCH, HOUSE	GAZOS CREEK
MURRELET, MARBLED	PIGEON POINT	SISKIN, PINE	GAZOS CREEK
AUKLET, RHINOCEROS	PIGEON POINT	GOLDFINCH, LESSER	MINES ROAD
DOVE, ROCK	SOUTH COAST	GOLDFINCH, AMERICAN	SOUTH COAST
		SPARROW, HOUSE	PIGEON POINT

OBSERVERS: Linda Kvota, Peter Metropoulos, Cliff Richer and Barry Sauppe
 WEATHER: Variable - beginning in fog and drizzle and ending with clear weather - temperatures moderate - winds light to moderate with some gusting.
 TIME IN FIELD: 3:30 A.M. to 9:30 P.M. -- 16 hours
 DISTANCE COVERED: 275 miles by car, less than one mile by foot; in 5 counties
 NUMBER OF SPECIES IDENTIFIED: 189

DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER

CLIFF RICHER

In ancient days kings and tyrants who received bad news or late news, were known to vent their rage by dispatching the messenger...permanently.

In the past few months a number of you have complained about not getting your *Needles* on time and we have informed you that our printer, Cron's, and our folding and mailing volunteers have done their job and gotten it to the Post Office on time, so the fault obviously has to lie with the Postal Service.

My apologies. We'll try to avoid its happening again and please don't blame the postman.

Well, this month at least, don't kill the messenger. Your Editor takes full responsibility for the tardiness. By way of explanation, I can only plead that the IRS required my exercising my skills in other areas (at least until April 15), that an arthritic shoulder started acting up and prevented me from typing with my left hand for a week and that month-end commitments for two field trips and a Birdathon proved to be more demanding than anticipated.

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