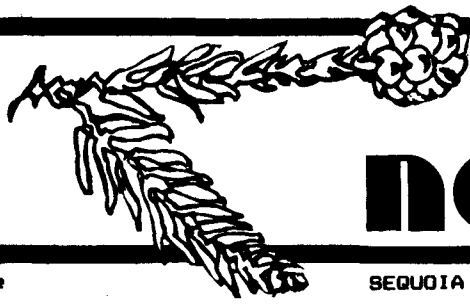


Week
for



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the
September, 1988

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.
Vol. 37, #1

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

"SHOW AND TELL" NIGHT has become a tradition for our first meeting of the new Audubon year. It has also become one of our most popular programs. Our members bring their own slides and narrate their summer adventures.

Everyone is welcome to bring their slides (up to a maximum of 20) and share their experiences with the rest of the membership.

Just make sure that your slides are in the order you want them and properly oriented. It can be very embarrassing when that one very special slide that you were so proud of is the one that makes everyone tilt their head and start whispering "what is it?".

Meetings are held at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside on the second Thursday of every month. The Social Mixer begins at 7:30 P.M. with the General Meeting and Program at 8:00. The public is invited.

Our new Program Chair, Janet Duerr, just agreed to her new appointment on August 14, so we have no firm program set for October. Watch next month's *NEEDLES* for details.

DAVE AUGUSTINE

OUR NEWEST DIRECTOR

Dave Augustine was unanimously elected by the Sequoia Audubon Society Board of Directors to fill the Director's position left vacant by the death of Elgin Juri.

Dave is a State Parks Ranger at Pescadero Marsh and is well known to many of our members for his work there. He and fellow ranger Dave Horvitz have been active in presenting educational programs throughout the County's schools and also made a presentation at one of our general meetings last year.

While no one can replace Elgin, Dave brings a unique sense of humor and a professional insight to the Board. He also lends credibility to our status as a conservation organization. After all, who ever heard of an environmental organization without at least one beard?

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLIFF RICHER

SAD BEGINNINGS

It's traditional for the President to start off each year with a message welcoming you all back. Unfortunately we have to begin this year on a sad note.

This June we lost two of our more noted SAS members.

ELGIN JURI has been one of our most active and influential members for the last six years. He had led field trips, chaired our mid-week field trips, been extremely active in the conservation committee, served on our audit and finance committees and on the Board of Directors. As a Director, he was one of our most respected and listened to members. A fiscal conservative and an environmental activist, he often took the role of devil's advocate in order to make sure that the rest of us had done our homework and were presenting a valid proposal. After serving one three-year term, Elgin decided that personal and medical considerations would prevent him from devoting his full attention to SAS and declined to run for re-election. During this time, his attendance at meetings and field trips was more limited than in the past, and yet I always sought him out, sometimes for advice, but more often just because I enjoyed his company. This year, feeling that the more serious of his problems were behind him, he once agreed to serve as a Director and was elected unanimously. Nine days later, while recuperating from surgery, he died. As President I had been looking forward to working with him once again, but I had not realized how much until after he was gone. Elgin was a friend, a wise counselor and a quiet leader but his greatest tribute and his eulogy was given by those who knew him and mourned his passing.

"Elgin was a gentleman."

"He was a wonderful person"

"Our friend Elgin Juri, a diligent and faithful member"

"Elgin always thought ahead to the future and sought to enhance our natural world".

I miss him.

OLETA DICKINSON was one of our oldest members in term of service to SAS. Personally I knew her only as a voice on the telephone, once advising me on the *NEEDLES*, another time contributing to our Birdathon, so even when she could no longer participate physically in our activities she remained involved. We have been told that she was one of Sequoia Audubon's founding members by one correspondent. Another, unable to confirm this, did note that she was heavily involved in the early days of the organization. While Mr. Dickinson served in several official capacities, including President, Oleta was remembered as one of those quiet movers who do all of those necessary jobs behind the scenes - the jobs that rarely get credit, but are essential to the operation of any organization. She died on June 12.

With Oleta, Sequoia Audubon has lost some of its history, and much of its heart and soul.

CALENDAR

September 1988

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	

SEPT. 1 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 P M at the Audubon Office THURSDAY in Belmont. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

SEPT. 3-5 BIG MORONGO VALLEY AND SALTON SEA FIELD TRIP. The SATURDAY exact itinerary was not fixed as of press time but SUNDAY the trip is tentatively set to cover Big Morongo MONDAY Preserve, the north end of the Salton Sea and possibly one or more of the Desert Preserves of the Nature Conservancy. Please call ahead of time to determine if there is still room and for travel details.

LEADERS STEVE SCHAFER AND JANET DUERR 689-0788

SEPT. 8 SAS GENERAL MEETING. Our annual "SHOW AND TELL" THURSDAY NIGHT in which our members share their 20 (more or less) vacation slides. In the past these have featured scenery and wildlife from around the world from Añejo Nuevo to Australia. 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.

SEPT. 17 NATIONWIDE COASTWEEKS CELEBRATION - See entry for OCT. 10 October 1 in this calendar. Also watch your local papers for other events.

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.

SEP. 25 POINT REYES FIELD TRIP. A search through the SUNDAY "warbler traps" of Point Reyes can yield almost anything at this time of year. We'll be looking for inland and eastern vagrants but can expect migrants and some early arriving winter residents as well. Walking will be minimal but sturdy shoes are recommended. Clothing should be layered since the weather on Pt. Reyes is extremely changeable. Fall is normally the most pleasant time of year on Point Reyes but remember that it has the coolest average summer temperature in the continental US. We will meet at the new Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters building at 9:00 AM. The trip will take place rain or shine. Bring lunch. The trip normally lasts until 2 PM.

LEADER; CLIFF RICHER 355-4058

OCT. 1 COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY. Volunteers will spend about SATURDAY 2 - 2 1/2 hours cleaning up the beach and camping areas north of Pigeon Point Lighthouse. For those who wish to stay, there will be a short sea-bird watching session. After lunch, there will be a quick birding survey and clean-up trip up Gazos Creek, along Cloverdale Road and back to Pescadero Marsh. We suggest you wear light work gloves for the clean-up activities. Plastic bags for trash will be provided. We will meet just north of the lighthouse gate at 9:00 A.M., rain or shine.

BEACH CAPTAIN CLIFF RICHER 355-4058

OCT. 6 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 P M at a meeting place to THURSDAY be determined. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME, but those wishing to attend should contact the Sequoia Office (993-7368) for the exact location.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

JEANNE PRICE

Audubon Canyon Ranch lands are for the preservation of wildlife habitat as well as education. As such each preserve is continually monitored for changes or unusual sightings. This past spring and summer the following observations were made.

At Cypress Grove an influx of hundreds of tri-colored blackbirds was reported in the marsh. This bird is a first for Cypress Grove and just why there should be so many during the nesting season is unknown, but under observation.

Bruce de Terra, the Bouverie Preserve Fellow, reported sighting a mountain beaver. If this find can be confirmed it would be a record for Sonoma County.

Classes scheduled for this fall include some old favorites as well as new offerings.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24; FALL MIGRATION CELEBRATION AT CYPRESS GROVE: John Kelly will lead a group discussion and field trip on the adaptation of migrating birds to new areas and some hot tips on bird watching.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9; FAMILY NATURE CLASS: Experiencing nature together for families will be taught by Bruce and Susan de Terra at Volunteer Canyon, Bolinas Preserve. It is for children four to six and their parents and explores ways for big people to open the natural world to small people.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15; COYOTE'S PEOPLE: This class explores the history of the early native Californians at Bouverie Preserve. This class by Foley Benson includes a visit to the cave behind the waterfall.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29 & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30; THE ANNUAL FAMILY HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION AT BOLINAS PRESERVE. John Kipping and Ray Peterson will conduct crafts, including mask-making, holiday baking and the traditional jack-o-lantern float on Bolinas Lagoon.

To sign up for any of these events or for more information, including fees, call the Ranch office at (415)868-9244.)

This is Jeanne's last column. Next month's column will be authored by Dan Murphy. Dan is best known to most SAS members as one of the contributors to our birding site guide, San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching. He is a former president of Golden Gate Audubon Society and the originator of the San Francisco Bird Blitz and the San Francisco Christmas Count. We will miss Jeanne, especially her promptness and conscientiousness. The arrival of her monthly column was usually greeted by the Editor's cry of "Oh no, it's that time again." --Ed.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Yosemite in July

JANET DUERR

Seven members of Sequoia Audubon joined Steve Schafer on July 29-31 for a weekend of birding in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We explored the eastern Sierra slope near Mono Lake, as well as within Yosemite National Park. We experienced some brief rain and hail storms on Saturday, but the evenings were clear and cool for enjoyable camping. The group saw 99 species of birds, including a family of Blue Grouse, Mountain Quail, Northern Pygmy Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker, 4 species of Empidonax, 7 species of warblers, and numerous Pine Grosbeaks, as well as the spectacular Sierra scenery. The birders' "most wanted bird" (according to a poll conducted by the American Birding Association), the rare Great Gray Owl, eluded discovery this time. But, we'll find it next year (we hope)!

(For those who have missed them in the past, the Field Trip Reports are back as a regular feature in the *NEEDLES*. -Ed.)

LION HUNT OFF AGAIN

Even before last June's *NEEDLES* reached you, the California Department of Fish and Game had given in to public outrage and cancelled its suit against the opponents of the scheduled mountain lion hunting season.

Shortly thereafter, they were again called into court to justify the hunt and once again were told to go home and do their homework. **There will be no mountain lion hunt this year.**

In announcing their preliminary schedule for 1989 however it was once again noted that they have listed a Fall mountain lion hunting season. Let's hope that it is as successful as it was in the last two seasons.

The ineptitude of the DFG in preparing supporting documentation for these hunts almost leads one to believe that they are operating from supreme arrogance at the top and/or deliberate sabotage from the Department's professionals. In either case, keep up the good work!

NWR FEES EXPANDED

The US Fish and Wildlife Service expects to double the number of National Wildlife Refuges at which entrance fees will be charged next year. A maximum of \$3.00 per person or \$7.50 per vehicle will be charged. No announcement has been made of which refuges will be subject to the program.

The fees will be used for acquisition of additional wetlands (70%) and for maintenance of the participating refuge. No fee will be charged to holders of Federal Duck Stamps or to holders of the Golden series of passes and passports.

BIRDING CLASSES-THE PENINSULA

Maryann Danielson, noted tour leader, lecturer and teacher will once again present classes for persons interested in learning more about birds and in improving their identification skills. The classes are offered through the facilities of the Sequoia Adult School.

FOLLOWING THE BIRDS THROUGH THE SEASONS

A lecture and field trip series for intermediate and advanced birders. The fall quarter of the year-long class will highlight the migration cycle and ecology of some of the major bird groups we see during the year. Identification of these birds as well as other birds of the Fall season will be covered. Ten slide lectures and five Saturday field trips are involved for a fee of \$45. Classes will be held at Little House, in Menlo Park, 7:30-9:30 P. M. starting Monday, September 12.

BIRDING BASICS

A lecture and field trip series for beginning and intermediate birders. The fall quarter of this year long course will concentrate on basic avian biology and waterbird identification and natural history. Local birds will be featured. Ten slide lectures and five Sunday field trips are involved for a fee of \$40. classes will be held at the San Carlos Senior Center, 7:30 to 9:30 P. M., starting on Wednesday, September 14.

Registration will take place at the first class session. For additional information call Maryann at (415) 369-6809.

BIRDING CLASSES -SAN FRANCISCO

Evening birding classes will be offered through the San Francisco Community College. Eight week classes run from Sept 1, 6 and 7 through October 20, 25 & 26. Seven week classes run from October 27, November 1 & 2 through December 13, 14 and 15.

Fees are \$40 per seven-week class and \$45 per eight-week class. Advance registration is highly recommended. For information call the Community Services Office at 776-8247.

All classes will be held in Room 222, Marina Middle School, Bay and Fillmore Streets in San Francisco. Free parking is available in the school lot off Bay Street.

Each class stresses identification, status and habits of North American birds in a 2 1/2 hour slide lecture. The text for all classes is the Nat'l Geographic *Field Guide to Birds of North America*. The instructor is Joe Morlan, co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and the voice of the Northern California Rare Bird Alert. All classes begin at 7 PM and end at 9:30.

Ornithology I is an introduction to the concepts of modern ornithology, and stresses avian systematics, evolution, behavior and population ecology illustrated by examples from common birds of California. It meets every Tuesday starting September 6.

Ornithology II is an in-depth study of identification and status of waterbirds including diving ducks, rails and shorebirds. It meets Wednesdays starting September 7.

Ornithology III will cover landbirds including owls, swifts, hummingbirds, woodpeckers and flycatchers. It meets Thursdays starting September 1.

Optional field trips may be arranged for weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them.

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome to some of our newest members! And a hope that all of you will become more deeply involved in our activities. Come and visit us at our general meetings or board meetings or call the Committee Chairman of your choice to find out how to get involved.

BELMONT
Mr. Paul O. Williams
BURLINGAME
Miss Aline Bier Mr. James B. Caroline
Ms. Denise Dirickson
POSTER CITY
Lawrence L. Levinson
HILLSBOROUGH
Lorraine Ring
LA HONDA
Ms Lori A. Adam
MENLO PARK
Margaret E. Gere Mr. Peter D. Karp
Mr. Kevin O'Brien
PACIFICA
Michael Meador
PORTOLA VALLEY
Melanie A. Sloane
REDWOOD CITY
Noel Benkman Mrs. H. Dalmau John Noel Schiano
SAN BRUNO
Ms. Michelle Matel
SAN CARLOS
Twyla E. Kabatchnick Grace Kautz
SAN MATEO
M. F. Finn Shawneen Finnegan Irene E. Lehan
Paul Lehman
WOODSIDE
Mr. Floyd L. Casey Janet T. Hanson

Didn't find your name listed? If not, it's probably just a normal slowness in paper-processing. But let us know anyway so we can say hello and be sure you're not listed in Massachusetts (Belmont, Hillsborough, Woodside) or other strange and exotic place.

DON'T BUY IVORY!

LINDA KYPTA

The African Wildlife Foundation has asked Americans to voluntarily refrain from buying ivory products. In the past ten years poaching has resulted in an estimated 50% reduction in the African elephant population. About 800 tons of raw ivory are carved each year into about \$500 million worth of jewelry, dice, piano keys and other products. The American boycott will dramatize the need for protecting the remaining elephant population.

Some African nations have regulated "culls" of their elephant populations and the ivory from the legally culled tusks represent about 20% of the market and a significant source of income for these countries. A boycott should not affect this "controlled" source but will trigger action to control the 80% obtained from poachers.

+++++
Sometimes he carried field glasses with him, the better to examine the skies and the tops of tall trees.

"The people who saw me gazing up into a tall tree," he afterward said, "no doubt thought me insane."

To which his wife added; "Yes, and as I was always with him, they thought I was the nurse who had him in charge."

It was during his administration as President that national bird reservations became realities, and when he retired there were more than fifty scattered through our country and its possessions. ---Bates M. Stovall, "Theodore Roosevelt", *Frontier Magazine*, February 1955

BENEFITS OF BEING AN ACTIVE MEMBER

GAIL SMITHSON

My experience with being active Sequoia Audubon has been very satisfying. Being active as a Board member, Conservation Committee member, Education Committee member and now as Vice President gives me a real sense of accomplishment and personal growth along with a feeling of contributing to the Audubon Cause. Along with this satisfaction are other benefits of being an active Audubon member. The most important is the friendships I have developed. I have found Sequoia Audubon people to be very warm, easy, caring, friendly and accepting. I always look forward to enjoying their company. This really makes for fun meetings. For me an essential part of the friendships are nurtured by field trips. These trips bring the group together with the common interest in birding and in the time spent together in recreational activities, a camaraderie is established. During meetings there is always time to discuss the latest birding news.

The current leaders of SAS are a close, but not a closed group. We need new active members. We have many plans on how to improve the Education Program, conservation strategies, fund-raising activities, etc., and we need your help and ideas. If you would like to feel more of a part of SAS, make new friends and gain a sense of accomplishment welcome you with open arms. Your involvement could be as simple as helping to fold and address the newsletter one day a month, baking goodies for a general meeting, writing a letter to your political representatives; or as large as heading the fundraising committee, leading a field trip, arranging programs for the general meeting, being a Board member or and officer. However much time you may have to spend with SAS there is a task for you to feel satisfaction with, and to get to know and enjoy other members of the Society. There is always something to learn and share.

Why don't you contact a committee chairperson (listed on Page Eight of this newsletter) for the aspect of SAS that most interests you, or contact the SAS office and leave your name and phone number so we can contact you? We look forward to getting to know you and accomplishing more for our Society and the Audubon Cause.

LISTENING TO NATURE

AN OUTDOOR WORKSHOP WITH JOSEPH CORNELL

The Fellowship of Inner Communion of Palo Alto will be sponsoring an outdoor workshop on October 29 at Huddert Park.

The cost of the workshop is \$30. For more details contact Shoshan McDevitt at 323-3363.

THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK

(A Review)
Cliff Richer

To begin with, *The Birder's Handbook* is not a new field guide. It is a book that is unique in birding literature. It is in fact two books. One is a compact encyclopedia giving you - on a species by species basis - using both diagrams and text, most of the information that is omitted from field guides. It describes what a bird's nest looks like, where it is located, who builds it, how many eggs are normally found in it and who incubates those eggs. It gives you the same kind of information on the bird's food and forage habits, mating displays, growth habits and times, conservation notes, and much more. All of this on the left hand pages arranged in the same taxonomic order as the National Geographic Field Guide. On the right hand pages are a series of essays by the authors. These factual essays cover topics ranging from Acid Rain to Zoo Breeding and virtually everything between. While the symbols appear to be occasionally "cutesie" and over-simplified, the text is complete unto itself and the essays are worth the price of the book alone. It is also the most thoroughly indexed, cross-indexed and bibliographed non-scholastic book I've ever seen. It is a marvelous source for the armchair ornithologist, the serious researcher and birders of all levels. It is thoroughly recommended for every naturalist's bookshelf or traveling kit. It is available at meetings for \$16.00 (tax included) or by mail for \$17.00 (tax and shipping included.)

SWORDS TO PLOUGHSHARES

In a complicated deal marking the final settlement of a 13-year old lawsuit between the State of California and the Bank of America, one of the state's largest commercial hunting reservations became a state preserve.

The Dye Creek Ranch, which advertised guided wild pig, deer and antelope hunts on its 37,000 acres became the property of the Bank of America in a foreclosure proceeding and was the central piece of real estate turned over to the state as the final settlement of a suit involving the handling of inactive accounts.

Previous attempts to use property in the settlement of the suit had been stymied by bureaucracies in various state agencies. The 1988 settlement however was made possible by the intervention of the Nature Conservancy, which not only worked out the details of the transfer, but agreed to manage the properties under a 25 year lease from the state. All three of the parties expressed satisfaction with the settlement, in itself a unique outcome to a law suit.

Also involved in the settlement were the Pelican Ranch in Santa Cruz County with 4000 acres adjacent to the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park and two smaller riparian parcels in Sonoma and Tehama counties. The last parcel is known to offer nesting habitat to the endangered yellow-billed cuckoo.

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY PATCHES ---- \$4.00 BY MAIL
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! Only \$6.00!

(Taxes, shipping and handling included).

Also available by mail - including postage and tax
The Birder's Handbook-Ehrlich, Dobkin & Wheye 17.00
National Geographic Field Guides-New Edition 16.00
Birding Northern California - Jean Richmond 12.00
Mono Lake Guidebooks 7.60
Pacific Coast Checklist-in pads of 25 2.50

BIRDING VIDEOTAPES AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL

TECHNIQUES OF BIRDING by Arnold Small - \$2/wk.

VIDEO GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA - \$5/wk.

Send checks to: Sequoia Audubon Society

Allow 14-18 days for delivery 720 El Camino Real #403
Belmont, Ca. 94002



**San Francisco
Peninsula
Birdwatching**

NAME

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ALSO AVAILABLE AT MEETINGS AND SOME FIELD TRIPS

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

GAIL SMITHSON

The Conservation Committee is concerned with the illegal filling of wetlands on small parcels of land. It has recently come to light that owners of wetland properties fronting the Bay are illegally filling the wetlands. One example is a 3.2 acre strip of bumpy land along the 1700 block of East Bayshore Road in Redwood City. The developer, Ricardo Ramirez, bought the property, heaped tons of dirt several feet high on top of it and now wants to build an office, warehouse and storage yard for recreational vehicles there. Because the city, through a series of blunders, allowed him to continue filling his property illegally, the developer now contends that there is no wetland to preserve.

At least 1000 acres of wetlands have vanished through illegal fillings in recent years and owners of small properties are mainly responsible. About 7000 acres of the Bay's remaining wetlands are threatened by 40 planned development projects.

The Corps of Engineers declared the filling activities of Ramirez's property illegal, ordering a halt to them and threatening to make the developer remove the fill unless he applies for and obtains a permit. On September 18, 1986, in a letter from the Community Development Director, Ramirez was ordered to stop the filling as being illegal and a public nuisance, and to remove the dirt within eight days. However, nothing happened to Ramirez after he failed to remove the fill as ordered. Unless he applies for an "after the fact" permit, the Corps may prohibit Ramirez from building structures on the property and require him to remove the fill. If he does apply, the Corps may grant necessary permits if Ramirez provides a minimum of 3.2 acres of wetlands elsewhere.

Three days after the Community Development's letter was sent, the City Engineer allowed Ramirez to install a pump station to drain runoff water collected at the filled site. The raised land had contributed to the flooding of nearby trailer courts during heavy storms. The City Council did not know about the actions of the Community Development Director or the Corps of Engineers. Recently, one-third of an acre of this land was re-zoned from tidelands to industrial-restricted to allow a 4000, square foot office and warehouse complex. The commission voted to let Ramirez build a recreational vehicle storage yard on the remaining property without completing an environmental impact report. Such a report is necessary because storage yards are not permitted in tideland, and because the parcel is about two acres smaller than the minimum size required in permitted areas. All city actions in this matter amounted to compounding past errors and rewarding Mr. Ramirez for illegally filling his land.

The obvious problems with this situation is lack of enforcement by the Corps of Engineers of their orders to halt filling, a lack of communication between the Redwood City departments, and apparent negligence of law by the Redwood City Council. This type of activity should not be allowed to go on. This sets an example for other developers that they can get away with filling wetlands illegally, with little extra cost, and a large gain in capital, as filled wetlands are worth much more to developers than in their natural state.

At this time the Corps of Engineers has requested that Mr. Ramirez either voluntarily restore the site or apply for an after-the-fact permit for retention of the fill. Mr. Ramirez's attorney has requested copies of aerial photography the Corps used in their wetland determination of the site. Mr. Ramirez and his attorney have until September 1 to make a decision. SAS has sent letters to both the Corps of Engineers and the Redwood City Council expressing our concern over this matter.

In July the Conservation Committee received a letter from San Mateo County Supervisor Anna Eshoo. We wrote concerning the possibility of a new Giant's stadium in San Mateo County and its potential environmental impacts. Ms. Eshoo assured us that there is absolutely no possibility of a Giants stadium being located in the San Francisco Watershed. She also assured us that the Regional Giants Task Force includes a Sierra Club representative who is included in all discussions.

We wrote letters to Senators and Congressmen asking them to support HR 3588, introduced by Tom Lantos (representative from Northern San Mateo County), requiring a formal National Park Service study to consider creating a Smith Wild River National Park. If this study shows the Smith as a superior candidate, it would be our first Wild River National Park. National Park status would protect the unique resources found in the Smith River watershed, including the last undammed river system in California, and old growth forest.

We wrote to our state senators urging their support of AB 3873, Assembly member Jim Costa's Natural History Bill. The bill authorizes an innovative program within California Fish and Game to develop new interpretive and educational programs for key ecological reserves around the state. They were also asked to support a proposal from Golden Gate Audubon Society. GGAS has asked for a grant of \$268,062 from the Environmental License Plate Fund to pay for writing and publishing a book on the status, distribution, abundance, historical trends and threats to all species of birds in Northern California. It would update the much-acclaimed "Distribution of the Birds of California" by Grinnel and Miller and update and expand upon the "Birds of Northern California", the annotated checklist by McCaskie, DeBenedictus, Erickson and Morlan. The tentative title for the new book is "Status and Distribution of Northern California's Avifauna."

We also wrote to our Assemblyman urging them to support the creation of the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SB 2581). This authority would cover areas outside of the existing Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District.

The Bay Area Audubon Council has decided it is time to update our BAAC Wetland Policy Statement. Aside from a more concise wording of most statements, the main change is one calling for two acres of mitigation for every acre of wetland destroyed. We reviewed these statements and gave our input.

In July, we also reviewed the conservation issues of the past year in which we had an impact:

We responded to an EIR concerning the habitat protection plan for Cascade Ranch (a new addition to Año Nuevo State Reserve). Our comments on management were constructive and accepted.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN)

CONSERVATION REPORT

(Continued from Page Six)

We also had an influence on the old Burlingame dump project on the east side of Hwy. 101 by getting some safeguards into the work plan to rebuild the dam that contains runoff from the dump.

We had a positive effect in the city of San Mateo through letter-writing on Sugarloaf preservation, the Shoreline Park plan and the general plan revisions.

Another highlight was our successful involvement with Friends of Foster City whose goal was to prevent a marina from going in at the mouth of Belmont Slough.

We also obtained consideration of \$1 million in funding for land acquisition adjacent to Pescadero Marsh as part of the CALPAW initiative. In addition we have done some trail clearing work and beach clean-up work around the Marsh.

We helped the Native Plant Society with the ongoing Edgewood Park battles.

We are satisfied that we do have a positive impact on environmental issues and are looking forward to being more active and productive this coming year.

But in order to have more of an impact on conservation issues we need more active member participation. If you really care about conservation and the health and future of our environment, and can get enthusiastic about it, we would welcome your involvement with our Conservation Committee. You could then share in our glow of a worthy effort, and satisfaction that we have tried to make a difference.

SPOTTED OWL IN COURT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has declined to list the spotted owl as a threatened or endangered species, citing steps already taken by the US Forest Service to protect the birds and a lack of sound biological information to support the listing.

The Natural Resources Defense Council, the North Coast Environmental Center of Arcata, the Oregon Resources Defense Council, the Redwood Region Audubon Society, the Seattle Audubon Society, the National Audubon Society, the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society are the plaintiffs in the suit filed by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

In a partial victory for the plaintiffs (and the spotted owl), the Forest Service announced on August 15 that it was withdrawing most old growth forest from future logging plans.

BIRDING HOTSPOT #5

SURPRISE VALLEY

CLIFF RICHER

Tucked into the furthest northeastern corner of California, between the Warner Mountains and the Oregon and Nevada borders, Surprise Valley is aptly named. Ringed by mountains, the valley is lush grassland well watered by numerous creeks, freshwater springs, farmers' wells and natural hot springs and is an outstanding contrast to the surrounding sage and sand deserts. On the western slope of the valley, the red cedars and Douglas firs of the Warner Mountains give way to oaks and willows before turning to grasslands. Surprise Valley Road, running the length of the valley, generally follows this demarcation between trees and grass and most of the few inhabitants of the area live in this area.

The eastern edge of the valley is dominated by three playas - seasonal desert lakes - which contain a few feet of water during the winter and dry out to become alkali flats by mid-summer. A few permanent ponds and marshes and a few of the many hot springs in this area provide nesting, roosting and forage areas for many species of birds including an estimated 70 pairs of sandhill cranes, who usually feed in family groups rather than flocks and who are stained almost uniformly dark brown from their messy eating habits.

The Warner Mountains to the east is the only known resident area in California for three-toed woodpeckers and one of the few areas where gray jays are considered "reliable". While searching for these you may look for their less elusive relatives, the white-headed, pileated and black-backed woodpeckers and the Clark's nutcracker. Williamson's and red-breasted sapsuckers are year-round residents and a rare red-naped sapsucker pair occasionally find their way here to nest in the summer. Lewis's woodpeckers and pinyon jays - notoriously erratic in behavior and population can be found lower on the slopes, pinon jays in eruption years and Lewis's woodpeckers almost always in good numbers year around. All three accipiters are regularly seen. In the winter, goshawks sometimes descend to the more open areas. Golden eagles and prairie falcons are common year round residents as is at least one pair of bald eagles. Swainson's hawks are common in the summer. The blue grouse booms in the mountains and the sage grouse is common in the more arid areas - but both are more likely to find you than the reverse.

Snowy plovers nest on the playas; snipes, curlews, willets, rails, and three species of blackbirds in the marshes. Huge flocks of gulls follow the farmers' plows and mowers - mostly California's, many ring-billeds, a few herring gulls but look closely - Franklin's gulls are not uncommon.

There are many motels in Alturas just outside the valley, an inexpensive and quite satisfactory motel in Cedarville, center of the valley, many campgrounds - most relatively primitive - and some very helpful and understanding sheriff's deputies and hospitable locals (one officer suggested camping on the local church's lawn since it had a water supply, an outside privy and his uncle was the preacher).

What is most surprising in Surprise Valley is that summer is supposed to be the "dull" birding season. I certainly intend to return, and this time I'll try to avoid punching a hole in my gas tank -- but that's another story.

The ivory-bill, whooping crane and condor may all be senile species, suited to other ages, other climates and too old to change. It is also true that, had we not altered the nature of the land, their withdrawal from the earth would have been a slow one, lived out gracefully over centuries to come. And so we must assume responsibility, even for these.

--- Peter Matthiessen, *Wildlife in America*, 1959

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