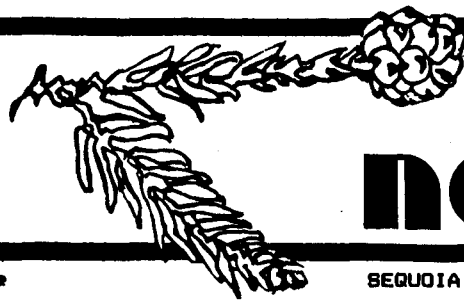




sequoia needles

Bulletin of the

October, 1989

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.

Vol. 38, #2

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

Allen Fish, coordinator of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, will give our October program. He will present a slide program on "The Mysteries and Ecology of Golden Gate Raptor Migration."

Mr. Fish, a San Mateo County native, has a deep interest in raptors, and has been involved in raptor rehabilitation, banding, research, and conservation. His job as raptor coordinator has allowed him to be involved with raptors and also to encourage the public to become aware of our raptors. He will discuss some ecological aspects of hawk migrations. In particular, he will tell us about migration in the San Francisco Bay Area, as noted by the numerous volunteer 'hawk watchers' who work with the observatory at the Marin headlands and elsewhere in the Bay Area.

Come and hear about and see pictures of these magnificent birds, currently migrating through our area. Hear why and how to get involved in observing raptors and raptor behavior in the Bay Area.

NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM

Jon Winter, one of the state's best known experts on owls in general and the spotted owl in particular, will present November's program.

The details of the program have not been fixed as of press time, so watch next month's *NEEDLES* for more information.

NEW TREASURER NAMED

Because of the press of his regular business, Dale Hands has found it necessary to resign his position as SAS treasurer.

Fred Mc Elhany volunteered to accept the position after being approached by President Smithson and was unanimously elected by the Board of Directors at its September meeting.

Thank you Dale, for your participation. Thank you, Fred, for coming to the rescue and filling this most vital position on our board.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

GAIL SMITHSON

Fund raising has been on the back burner for SAS since I became involved in the organization. This year I would like to see it moved to the front burner and really see it boil. We especially need more emphasis on fund raising this year because we recently donated \$2,000 from our principal to the lawsuit against Leslie Salt regarding the definition of some wetlands in Newark and whether Crops of Engineers has jurisdiction over the parcel. This is an important lawsuit as if lost it would set a precedent regarding wetlands definition which would be in the developers favor. Many areas that are now considered wetlands could be reclassified due to technicalities of past land use, and would be lost to wildlife. Less than 10% of the San Francisco Bay's wetlands remain and the migrating shorebird and resident shorebird populations are reaching critical levels and cannot take much more loss of habitat or their species will be in danger of going extinct. We are also keeping a close watch on new plans for development on Bair Island and the Redwood peninsula in Redwood City. A Canadian developer has recently purchased the land and, most likely, will plan development of the wetlands and seasonal wetlands. We would like to be prepared to take legal action if necessary to be sure there will be no loss of wetlands in this area.

BIRD SEED

Our first fundraiser of the year is the fall bird seed sale. I hope that all of you backyard birders realize the quality of the seed available in the sale and how you could benefit your chapter by buying seed from SAS. Remember, the deadline for ordering is 10/9 (see order form elsewhere in the newsletter). If this sale goes well we plan to have another bird seed sale in spring. We hope to reinstate the spring bird-a-thon which benefits National Audubon as well as our local chapter.

MEMBERSHIP

Other plans for fund raising include recruiting new members to join Sequoia Audubon through our office directly as we get \$15.00 for each new member and only \$5.50 for each renewing member or each member joining through National Audubon. This Christmas please consider giving gift memberships by subscribing through the SAS office and also encourage your friends to subscribe through our office. Please use the special form you will find on Page Eight.

As we all know, money and action is what it takes to really make a difference in the environmental and political arena. By supporting the local chapter fund raisers, you support local conservation efforts in areas close to home. With more funds available we might be able to offer more popular programs at our general meetings and more expert field trip leaders. Colleen Horner has volunteered to be on the fund raising committee along with me. We could use some extra help, especially from people experienced in fund raising. If you would like to see a more active group, we need your help in the fund raising/membership committee. Please give me a call if you can help.

CALENDAR

October 1989

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				

SEP 30 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK. The principal goal of this trip is to find a Great Gray Owl. We will plan to arrive at the Crane Flat campground Friday evening and camp there Friday and Saturday nights. Although we will be spending most of our time looking for you-know-what, we will also keep an eye out for some of the other high Sierra specialties, including Northern Goshawk, Blue Grouse, White-headed and Black-backed Woodpeckers, Williamson's Sapsucker, Pine Grosbeak, and Rosy Finch, as well as several species of migrating hummingbirds and warblers. Camping space may be limited, so if you are interested in joining us, please call the leader as soon as possible to let him know.

LEADER STEVE SCHAFER 689-0788

OCT 5 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM. Place to be announced.
THURSDAY ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. Please contact the Sequoia Office (593-7368) for details.

OCT 7 SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN FIELD TRIP. Last year the fall SATURDAY trip to San Bruno Mountain was held at the end of October, which turned out to be a bit late for migrating birds. This year's trip is scheduled three weeks earlier. As before, the topic will be birds in the morning and plants and other wildlife in the afternoon. So bring your lunch and take in both parts of the trip. We will meet at the San Bruno Mountain Park ranger station at 9:00 AM. To reach the ranger station: from northbound US 101, take the Bayshore Boulevard-Brisbane exit and go north on Bayshore about 1.5 miles to Guadalupe Canyon Parkway. Turn left on Guadalupe Canyon Parkway and follow the road about 2 miles to the ranger station.

OCT 7 BAY AREA AUDUBON COUNCIL (BAAC) MEETING at the SATURDAY California Teachers' Association Building, 4751 Central Way, Cordelia, California.

OCT 8 NORTH COAST VAGRANT HUNT. This trip begins at the SUNDAY parking lot of the Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, goes on to Princeton Harbor and then explores the woods, weeds and waters of Pilarcitos Creek looking for vagrants and fall migrants. Perhaps we'll turn up another rustic bunting or its 1989 equivalent. Meet at the parking lot of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve at 9:00 AM.

LEADER DAN KELLER

OCT 12 SAS GENERAL MEETING. MYSTERIES AND ECOLOGY OF THE THURSDAY GOLDEN GATE RAPTOR OBSERVATORY with Allen Fish. At the San Mateo Garden Center, the Alameda at Parkside. Social Mixer at 7:30 PM, General Meeting at 8:00.

OCT 15 NORTH MONTEREY COUNTY FIELD TRIP. This trip will SUNDAY cover some of Monterey County's best fall birding hotspots. We will be hunting for vagrants and other interesting birds at such places as Zmudowski State Beach, the Moss Landing and Salinas River Wildlife Areas, the Salinas Sewage Ponds and, of course, picturesque Moon Glow Dairy. The exact itinerary will be flexible in case an exceptionally rare bird turns up at one or more of these locations. We will meet at 8:30 AM at the intersection of Highway 1 and Jetty Road in Moss Landing. Bring warm clothing and pack a lunch if you are interested in birding in the afternoon. Contact the leader for more information.

LEADER STEVE SCHAFER 689-0788

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

DAN MURPHY

SUCCESS AT THE HERONRY: Once again Helen Pratt reports the heronry at Audubon Canyon Ranch experienced a successful nesting season. 16 pairs of great blue herons nested, 14 of them successfully. Great egrets numbered 102 pairs with probably a few additional nests which couldn't be viewed from the ranch yard or the overlook. For the second consecutive year, snowy egrets attempted to nest. However all four nests failed.

As you recall, this was the year of the eagle. The young golden eagle was present at the Canyon from April 4 to 7. It was responsible for the loss of young birds from at least 3 heron nests and probably took young from 3 others. The great egrets were just beginning to nest when the eagle arrived, so some may have abandoned the canyon, thus accounting for the loss of 11 pairs from last year. The loss of the snowy egret nests was attributed to predation by great horned owls. Remains of 4 adult snowies were found in the heronry.

On the bright side, for only the second time in ACR history, a heron nest had an incredible five young. One bird disappeared after about 7 weeks but the other four seem to have successfully fledged. The only other time five young hatched, the entire brood was lost.

Thanks so much to Helen Pratt and Tom Queer for their tireless efforts in monitoring the heronry.

FALL BULLETIN: Once again the ACR Fall Bulletin has been mailed to friends whose generosity makes our programs available to the public.

This season Tomales Bay and ACR's research efforts are featured. If you didn't receive it please call ACR.

FALL CALENDAR: Bouverie Guided Nature Walks - Saturdays; October 21, November 11, December 9, January 20, February 17, March 10 & 24. - Join a member of the Bouverie Docent Council for a half-day guided walk through the lovely Bouverie Audubon Preserve. Reservations are required. Call (707) 938-9244.

Fall Migration at Cypress Grove Preserve on Saturday, October 7.

The fifth annual Downhill Hike at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. \$10 fee. Sunday, October 8.

Native American Lifestyles - Bouverie Preserve. \$20 fee. Saturday, Oct. 14.

Bats, Toads and Autumn Tricks at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. \$75 Fee for families of 4. Saturday and Sunday, October 28-29.

Monarchs! at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. \$20 fee. Sunday, November 5.
(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

DAN MURPHY

(Continued from Page Two)

Work Days

Join us in mending fences, clearing trails and re-establishing our native flora on one of our work days. We'll provide lunch.

Not Just A Workday at Cypress Grove Preserve on Saturday, November 4.

Free Lunch at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on Saturday, November 11.

Spring Work Day at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve on Sunday, March 4.

For further information, see your ACR Bulletin of call ACR at 868-9244. Reservations are required for participation in all seminars and work days.

RANCH GUIDE TRAINING: Join the ranks of our ranch guides at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve in 1990. Here is your chance to become a more active member of the ACR family. Help interpret the wonders of the heronry, the marshes or the lagoon for our weekend visitors. If you wish to join us please call ACR at 868-9244.

CALIF. WILDERNESS CONFERENCE

The Wilderness Act celebrates its 25th anniversary this fall and is being commemorated by the 1989 California Wilderness Conference.

Like the 1985 Wilderness Conference this year's gathering will be held in Visalia at the Visalia Convention Center. Expanded to four days, the conference will be held from October 19 to October 22. Registration fee is \$15.

Confirmed participants include Senator Alan Cranston, Representatives Mel Levine and Barbara Boxer, Assemblyman Bob Campbell and environmental notables David Bolling, David Brower, Dave Foreman, Michael Frome, Martin Litton, Randall O'Toole, Galen Rowell, Doug Scott, Lee Stetson and many others.

The program includes speeches, music, workshops and art shows.

Sponsors include Back Country Horsemen of California, Friends of the River, Genny Smith Books of Mammoth Lake, Tulare County Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, the Yosemite Association and a number of chapters and field offices of the Sierra Club.

For information please write Jeanette Colbert, Conference Coordinator, 2665 Portage Bay East, Suite 5, Davis, CA 95616 or call her at (916) 758-0380.

1989-1990 FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

1989

Nov. 4	Saturday	PALO ALTO BAYLANDS	Steve Schafer
Nov. 11-12	Saturday-Sunday	SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES AND GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA	Cliff Richer
Nov. 15	Wednesday	HAYWARD SHORELINE	Nick Coiro
Nov. 18	Saturday	PRINCETON HARBOR	Dan Keller
Dec. 9	Saturday	SAN PEDRO COUNTY PARK	Scott Smithson
Dec. 12	Tuesday	FOSTER CITY	Nick Coiro
Dec. 16	Saturday	CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT	
Dec. 30	Saturday	AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT	

1990

Jan. 6	Saturday	FOSTER CITY	Nick Coiro
Jan. 13	Saturday	GOLDEN GATE PARK/LAKE MERCED	Dan Keller Linda Kypta
Jan. 17	Wednesday	MOUNTAIN VIEW	Nick Coiro
Jan. 20-21	Saturday-Sunday	LOS BANOS/THE GRASSLANDS REFUGES PANOCHE VALLEY	Cliff Richer Gil West
Jan. 27	Saturday	PESCADERO MARSH	Dave Augustine
Feb. 11	Sunday	ALTAMONT PASS	Linda Kypta/Nick Coiro
Feb. 14	Wednesday	COYOTE POINT	Nick Coiro
Feb. 24	Saturday	STOCKTON AND LODI	Gil West
Feb. 28	Wed'day	FOSTER CITY BY BICYCLE	Kypta/Coiro
Mar. 6	Tuesday	PRINCETON HARBOR	Nick Coiro
Mar. 11	Sunday	MOUNTAIN VIEW	Linda Kypta
Mar. 24	Saturday	WOODSIDE HUMMINGBIRDS	Dan Keller
Apr. 7-8	Saturday - Sunday	LAKE CROWLEY SAGE GROUSE HUNT	Janet Duerr
Apr. 14-15	Saturday - Sunday	PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT	Dan Keller
Apr. 18	Wednesday	EDGEWOOD PARK	Nick Coiro
Apr. 22	Sunday	MINES ROAD	Cliff Richer
Apr. 29	Sunday	JASPER RIDGE	Louise Fletcher
May 2	Wednesday	FILOLI	Jean Allen
May 5	Saturday	SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN	Al Seubert
May 6	Sunday	MOUNT DIABLO WILDFLOWERS AND BIRDS	Janet Duerr Alma Raymond
May 19	Saturday	SAN PEDRO COUNTY PARK	Scott Smithson
May 26-28	Saturday through Monday	TIOGA PASS AND MONO LAKE	Cliff Richer Memorial Day Weekend
June 2	Saturday	GAZOS CREEK	Peter Metropulos
June 16-17	Saturday Sunday	YUBA PASS AND SIERRA VALLEY	Gil West
Aug. 25	Saturday	SALINAS RIVER MOUTH	Janet Duerr

Trip dates are subject to change and additional trips will be added during the year so check every month's CALENDAR to be certain.

We're not abandoning the cleanup, but we need the winter to reorganize....

Exxon spokesperson

We tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing...a wonderful method for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization.

Petronius Arbiter (210 B.C.)

DEATH OF A CONCEPT

CLIFF RICHER

On August 25 the rift between the Año Nuevo Interpretive Association and the State Department of Parks and Recreation became final as the contract between the two was officially terminated.

This action was taken by the ANIA after two and a half years of what they describe as "guerrilla warfare" by employees of DPR. Robert Eckhardt, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ANIA, described the decision as "heart-wrenching" as a "once supportive relationship turned difficult, destructive and eventually impossible"

In its resolution to end the contract the Association specifically referred to breach of contract, breaches of memoranda of understanding, harassment, improper influence, failure to negotiate in good faith, providing false or misleading information, disregard for public safety, censorship and making decisions contrary to the public good.

The ANIA was a "class act" to the end. They chose not to sue the state. They did not call for a withdrawal of docents from Año Nuevo and they did not propose a boycott of the elephant seal tours. They showed the love for the resource that was so lacking on the part of the state.

Last year the Pescadero Marsh Interpretive Association withdrew its support from the state's management of Pescadero Marsh for very similar reasons. As a charter member and member of the Board of PMIA, I found the actions of lower level management personnel to be arrogant, self-serving and highly politicized. Questions of proper resource management or utilization were never discussed or made an issue. To the supervising personnel the key word was "control" - not control of the resource but control of people through the unquestioning obedience and subservience of any person who had the temerity to set foot on "their" parkland.

It eventually became clear to the PMIA Board that we were pawns in the much larger game that the DPR was playing with the Año Nuevo Interpretive Association. With considerable sorrow we withdrew to the sidelines. We hoped that the much larger and more prestigious ANIA could bring reason and sanity to a situation that, to us, was a complete reversal of what public lands administration should represent.

Through many months of negotiations and discussions I was constantly asking "Why?". Why should there be such a fanatic and single-minded campaign to destroy all vestige of public participation in the operation of public resources? At first I believed this to be the work of over-zealous subordinates who had misinterpreted the orders of their superiors. However when the Department's Director signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Año Nuevo Interpretive Association, a memorandum which the Department ignored and violated with impunity, it became apparent that the motives, the arrogance and the direction for the destruction of the cooperating associations came from the very top.

"Control" indeed seems to be the issue. But not control of people. Control of funds. At first it seemed preposterous that the state should begrudge the paltry \$200,000 or so that public tours and bookstore purchases brought to ANIA and to the Reserve but when one considers the cooperating association income from the Old Town parks in Sacramento and San Diego, the ghost town of Bodie and 84 other park, reserve and preserve associations the amount becomes significant to DPR's budget.

Today PMIA is alive only on paper. ANIA exists in a much reduced form at the Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Personal ambition and a distorted sense of values have apparently destroyed what was once the state's shining example of public cooperation in management of the public resources. DPR has won. The public has lost.

VICTOR M. CROTCHETT
1904-1989

We were saddened to learn of the death of Victor M. Crotchett of Burlingame who served as Sequoia Audubon's Treasurer from 1974 to 1978. He is survived by his wife Beth. Both of them were active in SAS for many years.

OPTICS DEMONSTRATION

On Saturday October 28 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will host a spotting telescope and binocular show at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso. Major manufacturers will show their instruments and there will be lectures on the selection, care, use and cleaning of optics. The public is invited and admission is free. For more information, please contact SPBBO at (408) 946-6548. If you need directions call (408) 262-5513.

NEWEST NAS SANCTUARY

The Paul L. Wattis Wildlife Sanctuary is National Audubon's newest sanctuary. 500 acres on Butte Creek west of Colusa are now undergoing a dramatic transformation to re-create the riparian and marsh habitat that was once common in the area.

The Paul and Phyllis Wattis, the James Irvine and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundations provided funds for the acquisition of the land and Sacramento builder Chris Steele is donating the cost of the restoration.

BANK SWALLOW NAMED THREATENED SPECIES

Last spring the California Fish and Game Commission added the bank swallow to the list of the state's threatened species.

Never common in California, the smallest of the North American swallows, has undergone a precipitous decline as channelization, bank stabilization and erosion control plans have destroyed its nesting sites. More than half of the remaining nest sites are along the Sacramento River from Chico Landing to Red Bluff - one of the few portions of the river that is without levees or rip-rap.

For years this section of the river has been a source of constant conflict with the Corps of Engineers on one side and conservation and fishing interests on the other. The designation of the bank swallow as threatened together with the creation of the proposed Sacramento River Riparian Habitat Preservation Area should provide the ammunition which is needed to protect this area from being sanitized and sterilized by the Corps.

BIRD SEED SALE

If you have bird feeders around your house, or know someone who does, this is your chance to stock up on high quality bird seed at a reasonable price and support the chapter as well. You, the birds, and SAS benefits from the sale of this birds seed. With the money raised we can do more for the birds in our area. The following mixes are available:

PREMIUM MIX is custom-blended and was formulated by the staff at the Western Regional Audubon Society in Tiburon. This high protein mix contains red millet, white proso millet, and black oil sunflower seeds, with no inexpensive "fillers." Specially blended to attract songbirds, this seed is not available in supermarket or feed stores - only through the local Audubon Societies.

WESTERN WILD BIRD MIX is a classic blend of red millet, white proso millet, sudan grass screenings, and red milo and is priced to compete with supermarket seed, but without waste "filler."

To mix with other seed, or offer alone: **BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED**, high in oil content and nutritive value, this seed appeals to many species. **STRIPED MEDIUM SUNFLOWER SEED**, a slightly less nutritious, but larger seed also attracts many species, and is good for added variety. **THISTLE SEED** is a small seed, rich in oil, that appeals to smaller birds.

THIS IS A PREPAID SALE. Your order, including a check payable to Sequoia Audubon Society must be received by **MONDAY, OCTOBER 9.** SAS will have the ordered bird seed available for pick-up in our office in Belmont, between 9:00 and 12:00 Monday through Friday after October 28.

You can also make special arrangements to pick it up at another time by calling the office (415) 593-7368.

Please use the following form for ordering:

		# Bags	Cost
PREMIUM	20lbs @ \$ 8 per bag	_____	_____
	50lbs @ \$17 per bag	_____	_____
WESTERN WILD	20lbs @ \$ 7 per bag	_____	_____
	50lbs @ \$15 per bag	_____	_____
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER	20lbs @ \$13 per bag	_____	_____
	50lbs @ \$30 per bag	_____	_____
STRIPED SUNFLOWER	20lbs @ \$15 per bag	_____	_____
	50lbs @ \$34 per bag	_____	_____
THISTLE	5 lbs @ \$10 per bag	_____	_____
	20lbs @ \$35 per bag	_____	_____
Subtotal			_____
Add 7% Sales Tax			_____
Total			_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

Please send the order form and your check to Sequoia Audubon Society, 720 El Camino Real, Suite 403, Belmont, CA 94002



ITEMS FOR SALE AND RENTAL



PUBLICATIONS:

Prices by Mail Order

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching	\$ 6.00
National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds	17.25
Birder's Handbook--Ehlirch, Dobkin & Wheye	17.60
Birding Northern California--Jean Richmond	12.00
Mono Lake Guidebooks	7.50
Pacific Coast Checklists-in pads of 25	3.50
"I'd Rather Be Birding" bumper sticker	2.00
Sequoia Audubon Chapter Patch	3.75
San Mateo County Checklist	.75

Send checks to: Sequoia Audubon Society, 720 El Camino Real, #403, Belmont, CA 94002. Allow 14-18 days for delivery. Publications are also available at a reduced cost at the general meetings and at the office.

VIDEOS FOR RENTAL:

We have several bird identification videos that can be rented from the SAS office. They are also available at general meetings.

Techniques of Birding--Arnold Small	\$ 2.00/week
Video Guide to Birds of North America	5.00/week
(We now have the entire set available)	



**San Francisco
Peninsula
Birdwatching**

CHASING

STEVE SCHAFER

Why would an otherwise rational human being suddenly drop what he or she is doing and travel tens, hundreds, even thousands of miles in the hope of catching a glimpse of a single bird? There is, unfortunately, no simple answer to this question. The cosmic forces that control this behavior operate at a level far beyond our current understanding of the physical principles that govern the universe. Thus, to anyone who is not affected by these forces, they are, without a doubt, completely incomprehensible. On the other hand, to those that are susceptible, the question requires no answer; it is a given, a fact of life. In an attempt to bridge this gulf of misunderstanding between the Believers and the Uninitiated, I offer the following:

The urge to chase is brought on by the presence of a certain kind of bird in a certain place. Not just any bird can serve to trigger this response. The bird in question must be a member of a select class of individuals. These birds tend to be less than a year old, and have just embarked on their first migration. Their principal distinction is a profound lack of even the most basic rudiments of navigational skill. In other words, they are lost. Very lost.

The majority of birds that become lost stay that way, their efforts expended for naught. The only witness to their moment of glory might be a squirrel, a cow, or, in the saddest of all situations—a non-birder. Without the presence of a knowledgeable observer, a misplaced bird may as well never have existed. To restate the familiar question about a tree falling in an unoccupied forest: If a wood sandpiper lands at Drake's Beach, and there are no birders around to see it, does it count? The answer, rest assured, is no.

In 1 of every 1000 cases, however, the fabric of space and time becomes sufficiently folded and creased so that both a vagrant bird and an anxious birder arrive simultaneously, or nearly so, at the same location. When such an event occurs, an immense wave of energy propagates at astonishing speed to all ends of the universe, and within seconds, all the birders throughout the world become enlightened.

This is the point at which the chase begins. The chase-force feeds synergistically on itself, so that when a number of chase-susceptible birders are located in the same vicinity, the urge becomes all that much stronger. I have personally experienced this intensification, because my wife, Janet, is also a chaser, and we are often, as might be expected, located in the same vicinity. In nuclear-reactor parlance, one might say that we have reached critical mass. But, as everyone knows, an uncontrolled chain reaction can lead to a meltdown. Fortunately, in our case, there exists a strong controlling force, in the form of money, or more specifically, lack thereof.

The question still remains: Why? The most common explanation offered is that chase-susceptible birders are trying to increase their lifelists. While that is undoubtedly true, it seems that there must really be more to it. As a birder, one reaches a number of milestones during one's career, perhaps the most notable of which are the century marks, i.e., 100, 200, 300, species recorded on one's lifelist.

I recently had the pleasure of recording my 600th species in North America, a Common Black-Hawk. Reaching 600 was admittedly an accomplishment, but the greatest satisfaction came not from the number on the list, but from seeing a bird that I had never seen before. This, for me at least, is the underlying motivation. The possibility of seeing a new bird is the end that justifies the means.

Well, I could go on, but it's 3:00 a.m. and Janet is waiting in the car, threatening to leave without me. There's a report of a juvenal Temminck's Stint in Humboldt County, and we need to leave right away to get there by dawn...

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

GAZOS CREEK - Saturday, May 20

Peter Metropoulos, one of our premier birders, led about 17 members and guests birding along Gazos Creek, south of Half Moon Bay. This creek runs from coastal redwoods down to the Pacific Ocean. The group started at the mouth of the creek and, by lunch time, had walked about 1-1/2 miles upstream. Highlights included a pair of wood ducks, a pair of black-shouldered kites, and several Vaux's swifts. The group had close looks at many nesting species, including Swainson's thrush, Wilson's warbler, and hairy woodpecker, as well as help from their leader at identifying some of the varied songs of the breeding birds. Wildflowers were also plentiful, and were admired in between bird sightings.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, MOUNTAINS & DESERTS
Saturday, May 27 -- Monday, May 29

Two intrepid birders joined leader Janet Duerr and her husband on an odyssey around some of the birding hotspots of southern California. The trip started at the Kern River Preserve, a lush river oasis, saved and managed by the Nature Conservancy (good work, Nature Conservancy!). The trip went on to visit several desert oases, including Butterbrecht Canyon, the town of Mojave, and Morongo Valley (another Nature Conservancy gem). The 'wanted' bird of the trip, the gray vireo, proved elusive, but the group saw several interesting species including vermilion flycatcher, brown-crested flycatcher, yellow-breasted chat, summer tanager, a male indigo bunting, and a Scott's oriole. Flycatchers of at least 12 species abounded at the oases, as well as numerous Lawrence's goldfinches. The group total for the weekend trip was 97 species.

YUBA PASS - Saturday/Sunday, June 17-18

With most of the "regulars" off chasing trogons in Arizona, Cliff Richer was joined by two other birders for this normally well-attended trip. There was no lack of birds or other birders however as groups from Marin, the East Bay and Cornell University regularly exchanged information on the "target" species. Williamson's sapsucker and black-backed woodpecker were "staked out" in their usual nesting areas and most of the expected species cooperated to the extent that the leader was able to concentrate on expanding the lifelists of the other two participants.

I find that a great part of the information I have was acquired by looking up something and finding something else on the way. Franklin P. Adams

The most savage controversies are those about matters as to which there is no evidence either way. Bertrand Russell

ESKIMO CURLEW NESTING DENIED

The two Canadian wildlife biologists who claimed last year to have found nests of the nearly extinct Eskimo curlew in the Northwest Territories now deny ever having made the claim or even having searched for the nests.

Last year's claims were well documented and never seriously questioned. This leads some to suspect that the denials were made in order to protect the nesting sites from researchers, birders and curiosity-seekers and stop the numerous inquiries rather than from any sense of scientific verisimilitude.

GGAS SPONSORS PELAGIC TRIPS

The Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor a Monterey Bay boat trip on Saturday, Oct. 7 to view seabirds and marine mammals. The trip departs Monterey Harbor at 7:30 AM. Reservations may be made by sending a check for \$25 per person to Golden Gate Audubon, 1250 Addison Street #107B, Berkeley, CA 94702. Make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon and send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Details on where and when to meet will be mailed with confirmation notices. If you need more information call GGAS at 843-2222.

SAN MATEO COAST IS BIOSPHERE PRESERVE

On August 12 the San Mateo Coast along with the San Francisco and Marin coasts were dedicated as the 274th United Nations Biosphere Reserve. The reserve includes more than 1000 square miles of land and sea resources with more than 1200 resident species.

The designation carries no legal status or environmental safeguards but lends moral and ecological credence to the efforts to preserve the coast against oil drilling, dumping and other depredations.

HABITAT? OR NOT?

Stanley A. Temple of the University of Wisconsin has made a number of birding habitat surveys and studies from 1977 to 1988. As a result he has now concluded that many woodland habitats that appear suitable turn out to be species-poor.

Using 50% probability as the criterion for his latest study he concluded that woodlots of 5 acres or less would have only one or two woodland species in residence and woodlots of 240 acres were necessary to support many of the woodland species such as the pileated woodpecker and the American redstart.

So it would seem that fragmented habitat is no habitat at all.

NEW WATER LAWS NEED HELP

A new package of water bills would seem to offer the best chance to save Mono Lake, clean up irrigation wastewater, provide enough water for the Bay and Delta and rebuild the Delta levee system - all without requiring additional taxes.

The Environmental Water Fund Bill (AB 444) sponsored by Phil Isenberg of Sacramento would have the protection of Mono Lake as its highest priority. Funds would be made available to the city of Los Angeles to obtain additional water or conserve existing supplies to replace those used to preserve the lake. The state Department of Water Resources would be able to spend money from this fund to benefit rivers, bays, estuaries and marshes as well as Mono Lake.

The Water Quality Fund Bill (AB 1442) sponsored by William Baker of Danville would provide a fund to help clean up the state's drinking water sources by treating irrigation waste water and making it available for secondary irrigation or for safe release back into the environment. This fund also provides repayment for funds already expended to protect Suisun Marsh, rebuild levees and build state recreational facilities at the water projects reservoirs and canals.

Funding for both bills would come from a debt owed to the state by the State Water Project contractors representing 31 agricultural and urban water consumers in the Bay Area, the Central Valley and in Southern California. Instead of going back into the General Fund, this \$433 million debt repayment would be committed to these two funds.

Isenberg is a Democrat; Baker is Republican; and both have the support of their legislative colleagues. The bi-partisan effort has united many diverse and usually opposing interests in the Legislature and seems assured of passage. The only serious opposition comes from the Executive Branch. The Finance Department opposes the funding methods and has urged him to veto the bills when they come before him.

Without input from the public a veto is a certainty. As a fiscal conservative the governor will be most likely to follow the Finance Department's recommendations unless he is convinced that these bills have a large public following.

Letters to the governor are urgently needed. Explain that these bills provide a realistic long-term solution to the Mono Lake issue and will go a long way towards solving the problem of water degradation along the San Joaquin River waterway as well as providing many other benefits for all of the state's residents. Write to:

THE HONORABLE GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA
STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

You can make a difference!

THOSE PESTY GEESE!

We've recently received reports from another area where wild Canada geese have become an urban pest.

In Reno, flights of 3000 birds a day across the airport glidepath have created a life-threatening problem. A task force has been assembled from many groups, including the Lahontan Audubon Society, to determine how to alleviate the problem without destroying the birds.

They found that the majority of the flights were in the early morning when the geese went from their roosting to their feeding areas and in the evening as they returned.

One of the roosting areas was the ornamental lake at Bally's Grand Hotel. Bally's tried stringing a large grid with 25-30 foot squares above the water. The experiment was a success and is now being extended to other roosting areas.

WILDLIFE UPDATES

The endangered desert tortoise is now faced with potential extinction from an upper respiratory disease which may have been introduced as a result of releasing captive tortoises. Interior Secretary Lujan has extended the endangered species listing to all populations because of this new threat.

Legislation has been introduced into the House of Representatives calling for the re-introduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park. The bill has 36 sponsors. The bill is expected to meet heavy opposition even before committee hearings.

One bill expected to sail through would add 108,000 acres to Everglades National Park. The area to be added includes key habitat for many of Florida's most threatened species. Backed by the entire state congressional delegation it should pass with a minimum of problems.

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HUDSON BAY TRIP

The Mono Lake Committee is sponsoring a cruise to Hudson Bay and Greenland in July of 1990. Beginning in the villages of southern Greenland and ending at Churchill, Manitoba on the shores of Hudson Bay, the tour will explore the natural, historical and archeological sites of the area. An optional two-day tundra buggy tour of the Churchill area is also available.

The all-inclusive tour starts at \$5300 not including airfare or the optional Churchill tour. 10% of the tour fare is a tax-deductible contribution to the Mono Lake Foundation.

For details send a business size self-addressed envelope to:

The Mono Lake Committee,
c/o Mildred Bennett,
2719 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708
or call 426-1260

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