



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the

November, 1989

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.

Vol. 38, #3

FROM THE PRESIDENT

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

GAIL SMITHSON

Jon Winter, an expert on North American Owls, will present November's program. His topic will be Owls: Vocalizations, Biology, Identification, and Techniques for Localization.

Jon has studied owls for over twenty years. He first became interested in owls during college days when he found and hand-raised an abandoned Flammulated Owl chick. Since then, he has studied owls and other wildlife for the Park Service, Forest Service, and other agencies. He will use his expertise on owls to give a program including slides and recordings. This program is a distillation of a longer one presented at a meeting of the American Birding Association. In particular, he will give us clues on finding and identifying some of the tricky owl species (e.g., Screech Owls) by sight and especially by sound.

NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM

Don Schmoldt will present the program at our December potluck. Don is the former coordinator of the Sutter Buttes naturalist program and continues to be active as a naturalist and guide. He will give a program on the Sutter Buttes, that mysterious set of hills rising in the middle of the upper Central Valley, and the nearby National Wildlife Refuges.

THE CHASE IS ON!

After skipping a year, the Annual Wild Goose Chase is on again!

The Wild Goose Chase is Sequoia's number one fundraiser for the year. A team of SAS's most enthusiastic birders will be led by Superbirder Barry Sauppe from seashore to Bayshore, covering the best of San Mateo County's hotspots, trying to identify as many species as possible.

We are asking you to support the effort with a pledge of just a few pennies for each species they identify.

You'll find a pledge form you can use on Page Five.

It's 4:00 in the morning and the birders are out in the woods playing their tape recordings of owl calls hoping to get an answer. Hopefully a great-horned owl, a screech owl, and maybe even a saw-whet owl will answer the recordings, the birds can be checked off on the list and the birders will go on to the next habitat continuing into the daylight driving from one area to the next in search of more bird species to add to the list. They day will not end until all possibilities of bird sightings have been exhausted, as well as the birders. They will have done well if they get over 150 species in one day. What could possibly motivate these birders to spend up to 17 hours in one day birding? They could just be driven by the sport, as some people are to do "big days" so they can then brag to their friends, or compete with their own records from other big days. They could also have an additional reason in mind. It could be that it is the Annual Wild Goose Chase for SAS. Each bird species spotted that day will net more money in the fund raiser for SAS.

The Wild Goose Chase will take place on a weekday in the second part of November this year. The participants will be led once again by Barry Sauppe and will include Linda Kypta and Nick Coiro. They are among the more experienced and proficient birders in our group. At our next general meeting and elsewhere in this newsletter, we will be asking our members and their friends for pledges. Unlike the spring bird-a-thon where half the money raised goes directly to the National Audubon Society, all the funds raised in the Wild Goose Chase benefit SAS enabling us to further build up the organization to be more effective in our cause. Please take a moment to send your pledge in, or come to our November general meeting and make your pledge.

MONO LAKE SAVED! IS IT REALLY OVER?

Early last month, just before the legislative recess began, Governor Deukmejian signed the Environmental Water Fund Bill (AB 444) into law. This bill, sponsored by Phil Isenberg of Sacramento, guarantees the maintenance of Mono Lake at an environmentally acceptable level, provides funds to secure alternative water supplies for the city of Los Angeles (or conserve existing supplies), provides the means to fund levee repairs in the Delta and empowers the Department of Water Resources to expend funds to benefit rivers, bays, estuaries and marshes throughout California.

Funding for this bill would come from a debt owed to the state by the State Water Project contractors representing 31 agricultural and urban water consumers.

Letters to the governor were instrumental in persuading him to sign this legislation, which was opposed by his Finance Department.

You can make a difference!

CALENDAR

November 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		

NOV. 2 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Kypta residence.
THURSDAY ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME but should call the office ahead of time to confirm the meeting site and to be sure there is room.

NOV. 4 FIELD TRIP TO THE PALO ALTO BAYLANDS. The Baylands SATURDAY is one of the few remaining and best preserved of the once numerous bay salt marshes and is the home of the endangered black rail and California clapper rail. It is also the winter home of many species of waterfowl, prime feeding grounds for five species of heron and a stopover for migrating birds. Many rare birds have been reported from this area during the fall and winter months and our previous trips have found a number of them. We will meet at the farther end of the duck pond at 9:00 AM. To get there take Hwy 101 south to the Embarcadero exit. Follow the Embarcadero east to its end and take a left. The duck pond is a short way up on the left opposite the Yacht Club buildings.

LEADER STEVE SCHAFER 689-0788

NOV. 9 SAS GENERAL MEETING. JON WINTER ON OWLS. At the THURSDAY 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.

NOV. 11-12 THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGES. Clouds of SATURDAY geese and enormous rafts of ducks are typical of & SUNDAY the sights that greet the birder at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges or at the state's Gray Lodge refuge nearby. These are primarily car-caravan tours since walkers tend to disturb the wildlife. We will meet at 7:00 AM in the parking lot of the Blue Gum Motel on Saturday morning and again at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. The motel is just off I-5 3 miles beyond Willows. Take the next off-ramp after the motel's sign and turn right onto Blue Gum Road. At the end of the road turn left and the motel is approximately 1/4 mile on the left. There are other motels in Willows and along I-5 and camping at the state park in Colusa. Motel reservations are advised at this time of year. The Blue Gum Motel's phone number is (916) 934-5401. Trip reservations are not required but you are requested to call the office (593-7368) or the leader so that we may know how many to expect at each rendezvous point.

LEADER CLIFF RICHER 355-4058

NOV. 18 PRINCETON HARBOR. The only sheltered harbor SATURDAY between Santa Cruz and San Francisco, Princeton Harbor is winter home to a good variety of bay ducks, loons, cormorants and other divers as well as gulls and shorebirds. In the past few years it's also been home to clay-colored sparrows, palm and prairie warblers and other unusual visitors. Our leader has a well deserved reputation for finding and identifying vagrants and we'll be visiting other coastsides areas as well as Princeton Harbor. We'll meet at the parking lot behind the Princeton Inn at 9:00 AM. To get there take Hwy. 92 to Hwy. 1 and follow Hwy. 1 north to Capistrano Road and turn left at the lights. Follow Capistrano Road until you come to the Princeton Inn on the left. The trip should break up at noon.

LEADER DAN KELLER

(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

DAN MURPHY

THE ANNUAL APPEAL: Audubon Canyon Ranch's annual appeal letter should reach you by mid-November. This is our yearly effort to raise operating funds for the Ranch's education, research and preservation programs. Your generous support is essential to the continued operation of this marvelous sanctuary. If you don't hear from us you need only send your tax-deductible check to us at: Audubon Canyon Ranch, 4900 Highway One, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.

WELCOME TO NEW OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS; ACR proudly announces the election of officers who will serve for the coming year, and those directors and advisors who begin two year terms. All are unpaid volunteers who generously give their time to attend bi-monthly board meetings. Officers sit on the Executive Committee, which meets on alternate months. All board members and advisors serve on one or more of ACR's various committees, and many volunteer at the Ranch as docents and in other capacities. Our officers remain the same as last year. New directors are Katie Beacock, Susie Coleman and Ivan Obolensky. New to the Advisory Board are Jane Ferguson and David Duncan who move over from the Board of Directors. Pat Dillaway and Laurette Lau join the Advisory Board as well.

BOOKSTORE OPEN FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING: The ACR bookstore is open for your shopping convenience Tuesday through Friday from 1:30 until 4:00 PM. It will be open from 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, December 9 as well. Freshly stocked with your favorite merchandise, it's the place to shop for the holidays.

MARTY GRIFFIN RECEIVES STATE AWARD: Dr. Martin Griffin, one of ACR's founders, was awarded the Gold Medal for Superior Accomplishment from the State for his work in eliminating the hepatitis B virus among residents and staff at the state development centers. Through his meritorious work in heading the Hepatitis B and AIDS Task Force during the past six years, the number of hepatitis cases fell from 22 in 1982 to none in 1988 and 1989. Congratulations, Marty!

WINTER THOUGHTS

But nature never leaves us to despair. Just as the tide of outdoor life seems at its lowest ebb, in the late, dark mornings of December, the Anna's hummingbird begins its courtship, and in coastal California the song sparrow bursts forth with its nuptial song. Nature seems ever to be looking forward. Even as the dying year approaches its end, there are bird voices to remind us that we have passed the winter solstice and that already the days are lengthening toward spring. --- Robert Miller, Director, Ca. Academy of Science, from *Pacific Discoveries*, September 1951

JOIN THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Yes folks, its that time of year again. We are planning our annual Christmas bird counts and we are counting on you to get out and help us count the birds in our areas. Mark your calendars:

Crystal Springs Bird Count - - December 16, 1989
Ano Nuevo Bird Count - - December 30, 1989

We have a new compiler this year, Dan Keller. Dan has enthusiastically joined us as a field trip leader this year and he knows the birds in San Mateo County well. Peter Metropulos and Ron Thorn will also be helping with scouting before the count. In order to see the most birds we need lots of help. Even if you are a beginning birder or just like to get out in the open air we can use your help on a team to keep records in the field and count birds. Christmas counts mean dawn-to-dusk birding, plus owling for some. Even if you can only devote a few hours at a feeder or in a local park, we need your help. We need people who will walk city residential areas, school grounds, golf courses, parks and cemeteries within both count circles and report the population of each species they find. The Christmas count is important because it gives us a good idea of trends in the populations of the birds in our area and can alert us to changes. The count results are reported in American Birds and also with Cornell Laboratory.

If you are unable to participate in the field, could you help out at home counting backyard birds or at the Garden Center preparing the hot meal for the hungry counters on December 16 and/or 30?

Crystal Springs C.B.C.

Ano Nuevo C.B.C.

Please tear out or copy this form and send it in to the Audubon office so that we can assign the areas.

*Sequoia Audubon Christmas Counts
720 El Camino Real, Suite 403
Belmont, CA 94002*

I will participate in the:

Crystal Springs C.B.C. I would like counting in this area:

First Choice: _____

Second Choice: _____

Third Choice: _____

For Ano Nuevo C.B.C., I would like counting in this area:

First Choice: _____

Second Choice: _____

Third Choice: _____

I will count any area assigned. Yes _____ No _____

I will monitor and report my feeder on 12/16 _____ 12/30 _____

I will help behind the scenes on 12/16 _____ 12/30 _____

I will be at the compilation on 12/16 _____ 12/30 _____

Names(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Please let us have your reply by **December 6, 1989**. To avoid errors please remit your **\$4.00** with the form. (The \$4.00 is for American Birds to report our count and each participants name in American Birds.)

CHRISTMAS COUNT AREAS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS COUNT DECEMBER 16, 1989

- AREA 1: PRINCETON HARBOR
- AREA 2: HALF MOON BAY
- AREA 3: HIGGINS-PURISMA ROAD
- AREA 4: PILARCITOS CREEK
- AREA 5: EL GRANADA
- AREA 6: SAN PEDRO VALLEY
- AREA 7: PILARCITOS LAKE
- AREA 8: SAN ANDREAS LAKE
(SKYLINE/I-880 CORRIDOR)
- AREA 9: CRYSTAL SPRINGS RESERVOIR
- AREA 10: SOUTH CRYSTAL SPRINGS RES.
- AREA 11: FILOLI
- AREA 12: SKYLINE BLVD. (S. OF 92)
- AREA 13: HUDDART PARK
- AREA 14: BELMONT, SAN CARLOS
- AREA 15: SAN MATEO, HILLSBOROUGH
- AREA 16: BURLINGAME, HILLSBOROUGH
- AREA 17: MILLBRAE
- AREA 18: BAY SHORELINE
(AIRPORT TO FOSTER CITY)
- AREA 19: FOSTER CITY

ANO NUEVO COUNT DECEMBER 30, 1989

- AREA 1: LA HONDA-SAN MCDONALD PARK
- AREA 2: PESCADERO MARSH
- AREA 3: POMPONIO
- AREA 4: LOMA MAR-MEMORIAL PARK
- AREA 5: PORTOLA STATE PARK
- AREA 6: BIG BASIN STATE PARK
- AREA 7: BUTANO STATE PARK
- AREA 8: CLOVERDALE ROAD
- AREA 9: BEAN HOLLOW
- AREA 10: PIGEON POINT
- AREA 11: GAZOS CREEK
- AREA 12: ANO NUEVO POINT
- AREA 13: WHITEHOUSE

GOOD NEWS. BAD NEWS

Pintail duck populations have plummeted to an all-time low of about 2.6 million from a 1956 high of more than 10 million. The combination of a sustained drought and filling of the prairie potholes is taking its toll.

Wood storks enjoyed one of their best reproductive years in 1988. All 755 nests in Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary fledged young - a total of 1900 young birds.

The Gray Lake Project, an attempt to create a second breeding population of the endangered whooping crane, has been put on hold. The well-publicized project consisted of taking whooping crane eggs from Canada's Buffalo Woods National Park and planting them in sandhill crane nests at Idaho's Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Of 288 transplanted eggs, 210 hatched and 85 survived to fledge. But today only 13 whooping cranes remain in the Grays Lake flock and there has been no attempt at breeding.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service have not gone so far as to call the project a failure, but they will not be transplanting any eggs in 1990. Instead the eggs will be sent to the captive breeding stock in Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland.

Bald eagles and ospreys continued their comeback in national forests. Bald eagle fledglings were up 3% and ospreys up 17%.

Commercial jetliners and birds are colliding with increasing frequency, mostly on landings and takeoffs according to the International Civil Aviation Organization. None of the recent collisions have ended in death or injury to humans, but they have resulted in a number of aborted takeoffs.

The Kirtland's warbler population is continuing its upward trend. Because the population is sensitive to disturbance, the only count taken is of male warblers singing on territory. This year the count was 212, up from 207 last year and 167 in 1987.

Most of the Central and South American governments - under pressure from the World Bank or taking advantage of private lenders' debt-forgiveness plans - have withdrawn official support for destruction of their rain forests. But population pressures and the illusory promise of a better life still motivate the burning of thousands of acres of rain forest each month. Regulations forbidding "slash-and-burn" farming are either non-existent or unenforced.

Moral pressure from the United States smacks of hypocrisy so long as we export raw logs to Japan and subsidize the destruction of the Tongass rain forest.

CALENDAR

(Continued from Page Two)

NOV. 22 HAYWARD BAYSHORE - A MIDWEEK FIELD TRIP to an area WEDNESDAY that has been relatively unexplored by SAS birders will begin at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of the interpretive center just across the San Mateo Bridge. To get there take Hwy. 92 across the bridge to the first exit. After exiting, take a left and look for the signs to the interpretive center.

LEADER

NICK COIRO

349-1834

December 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						

DEC. 7 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Kypta residence. THURSDAY ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME but should call the office ahead of time to confirm the meeting site and to be sure there is room.

DEC. 9 SAN PEDRO VALLEY COUNTY PARK FIELD TRIP. This SATURDAY park provides a variety of wooded, riparian and grasslands habitat for many wintering species of birds. The trip will entail some walking along easy trails. It begins at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of the park. To get there take Highway 1 to Pacifica and, turn inland at Linda Mar Boulevard. Follow Linda Mar to its end and then follow the signs to the park. The trip should break up at noon.

LEADER

SCOTT SMITHSON

DEC. 12 FOSTER CITY AREAS FIELD TRIP. Wintering ducks and TUESDAY shorebirds will be our main interests along the bays and lagoons of Foster City as we look for the fieldmarks that separate Barrow's from Common Goldeneye and greater from lesser scaup. Learn how to identify the red knot (who is really gray) and pick the knot out of the flocks of dowitchers, plovers, willets and dunlins. Meet in the parking lot at the Recreation Center on Shell Blvd. at 9:00 A.M. rain or shine. The trip should end at noon.

LEADER

NICK COIRO

349-1834

DEC. 14 GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK. At the San Mateo THURSDAY Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. See next month's NEEDLES for further details.

Dec. 16 Saturday CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT

Dec. 30 Saturday AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT

SPECIES IN TROUBLE

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, which assembles and analyzes the data from all of the Christmas Bird Counts for the last 25 years, has found a serious long-term decline in numbers of snowy plovers, seaside sparrows, vermilion flycatchers, Henslow's sparrows, loggerhead shrikes, spotted owls and Harris' hawks. Loss of habitat is being blamed for most of the decline. Cornell has recommended that these species be given special attention by the federal government and consideration for listing as threatened or endangered.

In addition they recommended that some species which rarely occur on Christmas counts be designated for special monitoring programs. The black rail, least bittern and Bachman's sparrow were identified as needing special study because of their reclusive nature and the resultant lack of information on their numbers and distribution.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

ATHERTON

Mr. Jerome O. Baumgartner, Kathy Bohnett, Marguerite M. Digiogio, J. R. Janz, Mary E. Jones, Joseph D. Keegan, H. Lynch, Ms. Marion E. McCurdy, Betty Hillar, Mr. & Mrs. J. Schemedding, Maria Szabo, Lorna Wadsworth,

BELMONT

Maureen Busha, Moreen Cain, Mr. Gino Cattatrin, Judith M. Causey, Ms. Jacqueline Daley, Mrs. Charles D. Daubert, Ms. Laura Jensen, Catherine Mansoor, Mr. Norm Marschner, Michael and Margaret McAuliffe, Unk Minx, U. Murphy, Mr. & Mrs. Meyvin Oviatt, Andrea B. Owad, Mr. Jon Shulenberger, Berry T. Stevens, Mrs. Clara Sumpf, Julie Toth, Kennita Watson.

BRISBANE

Ms. Sharon Grebanier, Claudia R. Koehler, Mr. Joseph J. Riedell, Quenby M. Smith

BURLINGAME

David Aberto, Mr. J. Ashe, Patricia L. Barajas, Mr. Andrew Berdahl, Dr. Robert D. Brownell, Janet E. Deprosse, David Elbel, Angela & Junip Greg Gatt, Mrs. D. F. Graham, Mr. Edwin Green, Kerry Griffin, Mrs. G. J. L. Heureux, Elaine Kleinsorg, Mr. Andrew Kratter, Lori Mann, Mr. Douglas H. Miller, Ann F. Mori, M. Mover, Norma Parr, Sharon Prager, Joanne Van Horn, Mark Vandro, Karla L. Whitacre, Anne Wilder, Mrs. Betty Mentzer

COLMA

Erik Beavers, Mrs. George, Glen G. Smith

DALY CITY

Manny Azvcena, Raymond Brooks, Jr., Gary Cabano, Dolores A. Freeman, Mr. Frank Frucci, Tim Goshen, Shirley Mrs. Elaine Homfeld, Melinda A. Jones, Mrs. Judith M. Knight, Ms. Fernando M. Leger, Vede Lynn Lewis, Martha Lay, Lillian T. Warren, Victor McDonald, Fern Fern A. Meyer, Miriam Morales, Palayra Morell, Jack L. Penix, DDS, Margaret Reynolds, Margaret D. Richards, Margaret Roemer, Bernard Schmidt, Mr. & Mrs. Boris Tarnovsky, Luis H. Tataje, Mr. & Mrs. Shyun Yasumoto

EL GRANADA

Jim Alexander, C. Dove, George Gerhard, WILLIAM GRAMI, Ms. Katherine Lacosse, Ms. Maggie Rivers, Tara V. Sarkisian, Patrick Sullivan, E. Waters

FELTON

Mr. Richard R. Bauer

FOSTER CITY

Gabriel G. Carbo, Roy Danehy, Joan R. Glorit, MS GINGER HOPP, Pearl L. Kaplan, Harry J. Kenneddy, Mr. James F. Knotek, Martha A. Ohlson, Patricia Pauch, Diane B. Pulver, Judith Saluti, Mrs. Ruth Schwarz, Brian K. Scott, Wing Soohoo, Jeffrey W. Stine, Jerry Vorpahl, Hugh H. Walker

HALF MOON BAY

Michelle Baydo, Kate Beigle, Mrs. John P. Bunker, Mr. & Mrs. Stephen M. Burch, George Desalernos, DDS, Jay Diesh, Ms. Gloria Duffield, Mr. Gregg Foster, George Jackson, Dr. & Mrs. Daniel R. Mack, M. Markegard Trn. Stable, Tom Palmer Maura Oikto, Dee Norman, Mrs. Cherie Page, John C. Schwonke, Burt Shnitzler, Nancy Turner, Craig Vandervoort, Stephen Walsh

HILLSBOROUGH

Ms. Trudy Bacci, Mini Chen, Bettye Hudson, Dr. & Mrs. Donald B. Jaffe, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Kish, D. Nichols, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Powers

KERRVILLE

Kenneth L. Carlson

KING CITY

Maurice Nordstrom

LA HONDA

Ann Brown, Dr. & Mrs. K. Alan Heiner, Karen Sullivan

MENLO PARK

Sylvia S. Biddick, Mildred Bradke, Lawrence Bressler, George Bressen Jr. c/o Etak, Inc., Mr. & Mrs. E. Carpenter, Joseph H. Chadwick, Devin Coats, Paul Lucie Comita, Ms. Susan Crawford, Cynthia A. Danis, Ruth and Jack Eagan, Donna K. Eriksson, David Fenner, Linda Fenner, Florrie Forest, Ms. Angeline P. Gebhard, Mr. John Giebel, Elizabeth Gregg, Jordan Gruber, Joel Harry, Mr. Michael Hutton-Tyler Beattie, Dominique Irvine, Stephen & Susan Jasik, Pam O. Jones, Lori Kaplan, Ruth Kennedy, Ms. Kate Kimelman, Resa King, Mr. Benjamin Law, David Lesikar, K. L. Logan, Tim Marcotte, Gigi Mark, Charles Martin, Pierre Martineau, Jim & Peggy McLennahan, Mrs. Constance V. Mills, Mr. Robert Most, Jo and Herman Mueller, Margot Nelson, Ms. Judy Nishimoto, Maurice Norstrom, Karina O'Connor, Derek C. Oppen, John Oram, Gayle Peterson, Gayle Peterson, Sonia Ranker, Mr. James Ravn, Coletta E. Reimbold, Esther Reite, N. R. Rosander, Ms. Susan R. Snow, Ms. Lori E. Sorg, Alex Sorger, Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Stooke, James C. Tandus, MD, Mr. Ray A. Trent, Phyllis Van De Mark, Roger M. Wagner MD, P. Warren, Nathalie Westbrook, R. Wiggins, Lynn Wilson

MILLBRAB

Toby Dunn, Angelo Gori, Ms. Miriam E. Mares, Mr. Ross W. Meyer, Jack W. Miller, E. H. Stroupe, Mimi Vishott

MONTARA

Patricia Esperance, Ms. Cynthia Laurin

(More on Page Six)

COX'S SANDPIPER???

John Cox, the Australian ornithologist, must be either the most honest man in the world - or the most perverse.

In 1977 he sent two specimens of an unknown sandpiper to New York for comparison with the only known specimen of Cooper's sandpiper, a bird seen only once in 1833.

To his surprise, the two Australian specimens were declared a new species and were given the name Cox's sandpiper!

Despite being flattered and honored at this unexpected compliment, Cox retained his doubts and asked for the specimen of Cooper's sandpiper so he could personally examine and compare it with his own specimens. Because the Cooper's was unique, his request was denied.

In 1987, the world's birdwatching elite flocked to Cape Cod to observe, list, document and photograph the world's rarest shorebird - a juvenal Cox's sandpiper.

Meanwhile, back in Salisbury East, South Australia John Cox persevered, and in 1988 he finally succeeded in getting 15 color slides of the Cooper's sandpiper specimen.

After careful re-examination of his two specimens and comparing them to the Cooper's slides, Cox came to two possible conclusions. First, he felt that the two birds could represent the same species at different stages of molt. However the more likely hypothesis, in his view, was that all specimens represented hybrids - probably between the curlew, pectoral and sharp-tailed sandpipers. In the first case, the Cox's sandpiper would disappear from the taxonomy in favor of Cooper's. In the second instance, both species would be invalidated. In either case, John Cox would be destroying the thing for which any birder would give his right arm, with binoculars still attached - ornithological immortality.

Diogenes should have gone to Australia!

NORTH AM. WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN KICKS OFF

The dedication of the 20,000 acre Lake Thompson Watershed Restoration project in South Dakota marked the official inauguration of the international North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWM) to restore habitat in Canada, the United States and Mexico. NAWM is a joint project of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited and various state governments and agencies. It is important to us because the Pacific Flyway - especially the Central Valley - is one of the major areas slated for habitat restoration and preservation.

THE FIFTH ANNUAL SAN
MATEO COUNTY WILD GOOSE
CHASE - NOVEMBER 16, 1989

Barry Sauppe will lead a team of crack(?) Sequoia Audubon Society birders on a WILD GOOSE CHASE through all the prime birding sites of San Mateo County (with forays to Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties) trying to identify as many distinct species as possible.

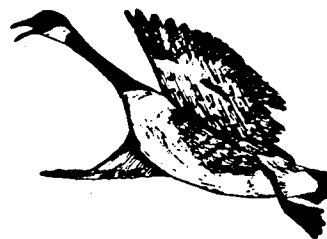
The objective of this WILD GOOSE CHASE is to raise funds for our public service activities for the next year.

You can help out by pledging a nominal amount (from 5 cents on up) for each species identified by the team.

You can show your commitment to SAS and your confidence in the team's goal of 150+ species by "pre-paying" your pledge for 150 (or 100) species.

Make all checks payable to Sequoia Audubon Society and mail to:
720 El Camino Real #403
Belmont, CA 94002

ALL HONORED PLEDGES ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.



YES, I will support SAS's WILD GOOSE CHASE with a pledge of _____ per species.

YES, I will prepay my pledge based on an estimate of at least 100 distinct species being identified.

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

 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--Ehlrich, 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**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

MOSS BEACH

Donald R. Barmore, Debra A. Bartolotti, Ms. Janet Conklin, Mr. Randall R. Dardenelle, Christopher Robinson, F. Webb, Gary Wessels

PACIFICA

J. P. G. Andreini, W. A. Baeff, S. Baron, Ms. Marjorie M. Barr, Lorin L. Bishop, Mr. John T. Brink, Ms. Ruth Cessna, R. W. Copeland, Ms. Genevieve Doyle, Ronald Fischer, Tim B. Forbes, Tomio Furusawa, K. Gegenfurtner, Ms. Georgia Grant, Ms. Lois Harter, Barbara J. Kelly, Marlene Kennedy, Mr. Lawrence J. Kopic, Lyn B. Kessler, Kelley La Musca, Irene Lloyd, Ted Luehs, Frank Maesen, Sandy McDade, Mrs. V. Nicholson, Sharon L. Nitond, Carolyn C. Pankow, Dorothy Querido, Louis Roth, Louis Roth, Lenore Rush, Rich Schaal, Randall S. Sike, Stanley Varner, Mr. John A. Villar

PALO ALTO

Mary Kathryn Wood

PESCADERO

California Department of Parks and Recreation, R. Maslin

PORTOLA VALLEY

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BIG BEACH CLEANUP

On September 23, 39 SAS members, friends and concerned citizens showed up at Pescadero Beach for the annual beach clean-up day.

Armed with gloves and plastic bags, the group swept across the beach and spread to the roadside and into the marsh where they gathered more than 60 bags of trash weighing an estimated 600 pounds.

The turnout was more than three times as large as for any previous year. Greater advance publicity and a more active participation by the State Department of Parks and Recreation both played a part in the larger turn-out.

Surprisingly little of the debris was directly attributable to beach users. It would seem that most of those who enjoy Pescadero Beach are willing to cart out their trash.

For the second year in a row, there was evidence that recycling works. Two years ago beverage bottles and cans accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total trash. Last year they accounted for a little less than half. This year the bags of recyclable materials were both fewer and smaller than the bags of general trash, making up about a third of the total bulk.

DESERT ATROCITY

CLIFF RICHER

The California State Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM-CA) recently spent a substantial portion of its slick newsletter enthusiastically detailing the staging, running and outcome of a 24 hour all-terrain vehicle race held in the desert near El Centro.

Used properly these little three and four wheel balloon-tired vehicles have legitimate uses, but tearing across the desert at speeds of fifty or sixty miles an hour is not one of them.

I have little objection to those drivers who use these vehicles to enjoy the solitude and beauty of the desert. I do object to those who use the desert to revel in the noise, speed, dirt and destruction created by the vehicles themselves.

For the BLM, the official guardian of the desert, to sponsor and sanction the destruction of a ten mile section of the land under its stewardship for the enjoyment of a handful of fanatics and for commercial exploitation by a few foreign manufacturers is nothing less than an atrocity.

Preservation of fish and wildlife should be weighted equally with preservation of agriculture in trying to solve drainage problems. ---National Academy of Sciences Research Council

BIRDING IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

PETER METROPULOS

JUNE - AUGUST 1989

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD: An individual of this tropical pelagic species was spotted from Pigeon Point, August 10-13 (JRB,GJS). There are but a handful of records for Northern California and all others have been far offshore.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: At least a dozen pairs nested on metal towers at the San Mateo Bay Bridge near Foster City this summer (PJM). The only other nesting record for our county was in 1940 at Devil's Slide. It is encouraging to see colonial waterbirds using man-made sites.

WOOD DUCK: No nesting was observed at Searsville Lake but eleven birds were there on June 3 (JBH).

HARLEQUIN DUCK: A drake was at Año Nuevo Point, where they occur regularly on June 10 (PK) and a hen was at the same location on July 24 (GJS).

OSPREY: One at Searsville Lake on June 3 was our first-ever summering record. Another at Pescadero Marsh on August 20 (RST) was a fall migrant.

GOLDEN EAGLE: An adult was soaring over Woodside on July 14 (DK). There's been no proof of local nesting since the '30s.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: The first fall arrival was streaking past El Granada on August 30 (BS).

PEREGRINE: Our first summer records since the 1940s may involve birds released in our area in a reintroduction program. Summer birds were reported from Pescadero Marsh and Año Nuevo (GJS).

LESSER GOLDEN-PLOVER: An individual of the fulva race was at Pescadero Marsh on August 23 (RST).

SNOWY PLOVER: Two at Pescadero Marsh on August 23 (RST) were the only ones reported. This little bird is in big trouble.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: As usual, small numbers were reported from Pescadero Marsh (RST) and Foster City (NC).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER: Probably regular in tiny numbers each migration a loner was at Bean Hollow Lagoon on Aug. 20 (RST).

WANDERING TATTLER: Rare inside the Bay, one was at San Mateo Bayshore on August 12 (NC).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT: The "bird of the season", our first-ever county record lingered at Pescadero Marsh for several days, from August 23 (RST, et. al.)

SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER: Rare but regular each fall, one was at Pescadero Marsh on August 6 (RST).

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: Another of the uncommon-but-regular migrants. Small numbers (1-5) were noted at Pescadero Marsh (RST) and Belmont Slough (NC). Two at Año Nuevo Point on July 23 (GJS) were early migrants.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER: Three at Año Nuevo Point on July 29 (GJS) were also early fall migrants. Autumn begins early in the shorebird world.

POMARINE JAeger: An adult at Pigeon Point on Aug. 6 (RST) was the first of the "winged pirates" to arrive from the North.

BLACK SKIMMER: A pair photographed among the Caspian tern colony on Bair Island near Redwood City on July 29 (PW/SFBBO) was our first county record.

WESTERN KINGBIRD: One at Portola Valley on June 26 (PJM) was in an area where nesting has been suspected. However there are no confirmed breeding records for San Mateo county.

PURPLE MARTIN: A pair of adults with two juvenals returned to a Burlingame yard on August 18 (F&JA) for the third consecutive year. Where these birds nest is a mystery.

HOUSE WREN: One at Moss Beach on August 30 (DK) was a coastal migrant.

CEDAR WAXWING: A first arrival at El Granada on Aug. 27 (BS).

PHAINOPEPLA: A pair with a young bird at Jasper Ridge near Stanford during July (JBH) constituted only our second breeding record.

RED CROSSBILL: A pair with two young at El Granada on June 21 (BS) indicate local nesting.

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH: Two nests were located at Searsville Lake this season (JBH). This species is local, erratic and very uncommon in our county.

OBSERVERS:

Frank and Jean Allen (F&JA), J.R. Blair (JRB), Nick Coiro (NC), Jane Becker-Haven (JBH), Paul Keel (PK), Dan Keller (DK), Peter J. Metropulos (PJM), Janet Mountjoy (JM), SF Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO), Barry Sauppe (BS), Daniel Schmoltdt (DS), Gary J. Strachan (GJS), Ron S. Thorn (RST), Peg Woodin (PW).

MORE... ON TAXONOMIC CHANGES

As we warned you in the May *NEEDLES* it's beginning to look more and more like our field guides are going to undergo some drastic changes.

Although parts of their proposed classification system are controversial, there is little doubt that the DNA research done by Sibley, Ahlquist and Monroe (and some less extensive parallel research by Madsen, McHugh and DeKloet) is going to lead to a major reorganization of avian taxonomy.

The Seventh Edition of the AOU Checklist could end up putting your field guide in this order.

Chacalaca		
Grouse and other chicken-like birds		
Quail	Whistling ducks	
Ruddy duck	Swans	Other ducks and geese
Woodpeckers	Troglons	Kingfishers
Cuckoos	Roadrunner	Parrots
Swifts	Hummingbirds	Barn owls
Other owls		Nighthawks
Poorwills and other nightjars		
Pigeons	Cranes	Limpkin
	Rails and coots	
Shorebirds (Snipes, sandpipers, jacanas, oystercatchers, stilts and plovers)		
	Skuas, Skimmer,	Gulls and Terns
Alcids	Hawks	Grebes
Tropicbirds	Boobies	Anhinga
	Cormorants	
Herons, flamingo and ibises		
Pelicans	Stork	Condor
Frigatebird		Loons
Storm-petrels, shearwaters, storm-petrels and albatrosses		
Flycatchers	Shrikes	Vireos
Crows and jays	Phainopepla	Waxwings
Dipper	Thrushes	Starling
Mockingbird and thrashers		Nuthatches
Creepers		Wrens
Gnatcatchers and verdin		Tits
Bushtit	Swallows	Kinglets
Bulbuls		Wrenit
Pipits and wagtails		
Finches (some of them)		
Buntings and sparrows		
Warblers		Tanagers
Grosbeaks and cardinals		
Blackbirds		

Wow! But don't take the scissors and glue to your field guide yet. Any change this radical is going to be argued for years before it's adopted - at least in this form or anything even remotely resembling it.

Besides the taxonomic changes, the AOU is going to include the Hawaiian Islands in its next checklist. So look for oos, elepaio, kamao, omao, puaiohi, olomao, poo-uli and other double and triple-vowel birds in some of the coming field guides.

Experiment and theory often show remarkable agreement when performed in the same laboratory.

--Daniel Bershader

AUDUBON LOSES TV SPONSORS OVER ANCIENT FOREST ISSUE

On September 24, the World of Audubon television special "Rage Over Trees" was aired on TBS without professional sponsorship. The program documented the public debate over protection of the Northwest's remaining ancient forests on public lands.

Every sponsor told Turner Broadcasting officials that they decided to pull the TV ads as a result of threats or intimidation by the timber industry.

The most recent action followed cancellation of underwriting of the whole series by Stroh Brewery. Although Stroh was undergoing financial problems, the timber industry also launched a letter writing campaign and threatened a boycott.

"This is the last gasp in a desperate effort to stop the American people from seeing a major film about the public debate over protection of the remaining ancient forests on public land," said National Audubon Society President, Peter Berle. "We firmly believe the public will be furious over

this attempt at censorship, which runs counter to every principle of free speech embodied in the First Amendment." Timber industry representatives have labeled Audubon as extremists when, in fact, they really are taking extreme actions and Audubon represents the mainstream viewpoint on this issue.

Firms that cancelled their commercial air time include Ford, ITT Rayonier, Dean Witter Reynolds (Discover card), Hartford Insurance, Michelin Tires, Exxon, Strohs, New York Life and Citicorp.

Turner broadcasting needs to know about the large constituency that values their willingness to support the Audubon cause. It is important that Turner officials have documentation to help regain commercial sponsorship of the series and keep it on the air. Audubon members are encouraged to send letters to Ted Turner, Turner Broadcasting, 1 CNN Center, Atlanta, GA 30348-5366 showing support and asking for continuing sponsorship of the Audubon television specials.

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