



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the
September, 1991

Sequoia Audubon Society

San Mateo County
Vol.40, #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 25) 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.

Next Month's Program

Our new Program Committee, John Bryant and Anne Moser, are still working on lining up this year's programs. In the meantime let the suspense build until next month's *NEEDLES*.

Activist Network Forming

The Conservation Committee is forming an activist network - a group of informed and concerned members who will write or call government administrators and legislators on matters affecting the environment.

Although we will have full details next month, it's not too early to sign up and get in on the ground floor. If you're interested please call Eileen Jennis at 355-0553.

Sequoia Audubon Society

From the President

I wish to express my thanks to the members of SAS for re-electing me to serve as your President for another year.

The past year presented some challenges along the way with the on-going activities of our organization such as enjoyable general meetings, varied field trips, the Christmas Bird Count and thanks to Janet Duerr and her committee, the outstanding number of Audubon Adventure environmental education classes in the San Mateo county schools. Under Rick Johnson's impetus, we also began the multi-year Breeding Bird Atlas Project for San Mateo county. In the spring we gratefully found a new office. Over the spring and summer we updated our office and newsletter equipment.

In fund-raising we did our own "Wild Goose Chase", the National Audubon Birdathon and the Spring Bird Seed Sale. However, these events along with the sale of books, string bags and other items did not meet our financial needs.

As this issue of *NEEDLES* goes to press, John Frank Bryant is leading a committee of our Board members - Fred McElhany, Cliff Richer and myself - in discussing new fund-raising ideas and tactics.

Our goals for the coming year - raising environmental awareness in our members and in the community; enhancing our enjoyment of the environment; and increasing participation in Sequoia activities - will need these new funds. We would appreciate hearing from you with any ideas or suggestions.

One situation does mar the opening of our Audubon year. Peter Cross, who has served so ably as our Office Coordinator, has resigned for reasons of health. Happily he will continue to work with us as a volunteer and will help train our new staff person. We are actively looking for a new person to work 15-20 hours a week in our office and again we would appreciate any ideas, suggestions or applicants from the membership.

See you at the September meeting!

Corrections

In the June issue we announced that National Audubon had abandoned the blue banner as its national symbol.

Unfortunately we were misinformed and that announcement was premature. In response to the outcry from its members President Berle has concede only that the chapters are not required to use the new symbol. However it's use is being expanded by National Audubon. (By now most members should have received the new Audubon merchandising catalog, with many items bearing the blue banner.)

In that same issue we announced that an article by John Silliman and Sara Goodale would appear in this month's *NEEDLES*. Space limitations however have made this impossible without chopping the article up hopelessly. Look forward to it in the October issue.

The SAS Calendar

SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

SAS BOARD MEETING, 7:30 PM at the Kypta Residence. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME - Please contact the Sequoia Office (345-3724) for details.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

COASTAL VAGRANT CRAWL. The first in a series of special "high-intensity" field trips searching for vagrants along the San Mateo Coast. Limited to 5 participants. See the article on page 3 for more details.

LEADER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

SAS GENERAL MEETING. OUR ANNUAL "SHOW AND TELL" NIGHT. Bring up to 25 of your own slides and tell us about them. They can be on any subject that might be of interest to your fellow members from aardvarks to zebras, Antarctica to Berengia or loons to weaver finches. At the San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside at the Alameda. Socializing at 7:30 PM. Meeting and program begins at 8:00.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

POINT REYES FIELD TRIP. A search through the "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. We will meet at the Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters building at 9:00 AM. Those interested in car-pooling should meet in the Tanforan Shopping Center parking lot at the corner nearest the intersection of El Camino and Sneath Lane. Plan to leave the parking lot no later than 7:30 A.M. The trip will take place rain or shine. Bring lunch. The trip normally lasts until 2 PM.

LEADER: Cliff Richer (355-4058)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

6TH ANNUAL RICHARDSON BAY CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH AND AUCTION. A gala champagne brunch and auction will be held in the meadow by the Lyford house overlooking the Bay at 10:30 A.M. Proceeds support the Center and Audubon's education programs. Doug McConnell of WPIX-TV will be the honorary auctioneer and master of ceremonies. Auction items range from art to wine, dinners to expeditions. Salmon will be the featured menu item followed by dessert and wine-tasting. Call 399-2524 for more information or to register.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

COASTAL CLEAN UP DAY - ALONG THE BAYSHORE. This event is tentatively slated for the Foster City area, but call the office (345-3724) or Sue Hillard (best from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, 595-8954) for details and to sign up.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

COASTAL CLEAN-UP Although September 21 is the official Clean-Up Day, we'll be out on the coast on the 26th. We'll provide the bags and the litter is already there. We suggest you bring sturdy shoes, old clothes and work gloves. Reservations not required, but call the office (345-3724) or the coordinator to find out where and when.

COORDINATOR: CLIFF RICHER (355-4058)

News from the Ranch

The public season ended on July 14. Those of us active in ACR want to thank you, our supporters, for another great season. Thanks for visiting us and sharing some of your wonderful experiences. Thanks to all those weekend hosts from our supporting chapters. A very special thank you to the Ranch Guides who helped interpret the pond, the lagoon and the heronry for our thousands of visitors. It's hard to remember how we did it without their help. A very special thanks as well to Edris Cole and Ken Browning who did such a great job in the bookstore and coordinating our weekend activities.

AUTUMN AT ACR With September ACR is geared up for another year of nature walks, seminars and field studies. These programs offer you an opportunity to visit our Bouverie and Cypress Grove Preserves. Reservations are required for all activities so please call us at 868-9244 for Bolinas Lagoon or Cypress Grove Preserves, or (707) 938-4554 for Bouverie Audubon Preserve. You should receive our fall bulletin by early September. It is your guide to all our activities for the coming season.

GUIDED NATURE WALKS AT THE BOUVERIE

AUDUBON PRESERVE Saturdays, September 14, October 19, November 16 and December 14. Here's your chance to enjoy the beauty and wonder of ACR's Bouverie Audubon Preserve near Sonoma. This 400 acre preserve encompasses 5 distinct plant communities and is a marvelous habitat for birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Plan your visit well in advance by making reservations at (707) 938-4554. Reservations may be made at the beginning of the month preceding the trip. FREE.

COAST WEEK SEMINAR AND BEACH CLEANUP

Saturday, September 21. Be part of ACR's celebration of Coast Week. Bird Tomales Bay and our beautiful Cypress Grove Preserve (CGP) in the morning and take the time to discuss issues concerning the environmental health of our coast. Then after lunch (bring your own) join our effort to clean up the Tomales Bay shoreline. John Kelly, CGP resident biologist, will lead this FREE event. Please call 868-9244 for reservations.

NOT JUST A WORK DAY Saturday, September 28. This is your chance to lend a hand at Cypress Grove. Trails need tending, planks are loose on the boardwalk and it's time to prepare native grasses for the next phase of our coastal prairie restoration. Join John Kelly and other members of the ACR family with the annual chores at our preserve on Tomales Bay. FREE. Please call 868-9244 for reservations.

LIVING TRUSTS

Saturdays, 10 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. September 14 at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve, September 28 in San Francisco, November 2 at Bouverie Audubon Preserve or November 16 in Orinda. Join with ACR's team of trust consultants, Carolyn Ferren, Jack Harper and Philip Murphy in a morning seminar designed to help you learn to protect your estate, increase your income, provide for your heirs and perhaps help a cause of your choice. FREE. Please call 868-9244 for reservations.

FIELD STUDIES AT CYPRESS GROVE PRESERVE Our field studies of migrating shorebirds began in August and will continue into September. Later in the season we will no doubt be counting water birds on Tomales Bay. Call John Kelly at 663-8203 for more information.

MARY ANN SADLER Long time docent, ACR Director and past Secretary of our Board of Directors, Mary Ann Sadler, passed away recently after a long illness. Mary Ann's contributions to ACR were after a many and those of us who were fortunate to know her will miss her dry wit, her incisive comments and her friendship.

---Dan Murphy

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE - 1991-1992

DATE	DAY	TRIP	LEADER
07-Sep-91	Saturday	Vagrant Crawl	DAN KELLER
14-Sep-91	Saturday	Point Reyes	CLIFF RICHER
05-Oct-91	Saturday	Vagrant Crawl	DAN KELLER
12-Oct-91	Saturday	Beginners' Trip - Palo Alto Duck Pond	FRANCIS TOLDI
15-Oct-91	Tuesday	Hayward Regional Shoreline	NICK COIRO
20-Oct-91	Sunday	Beginners' Trip - Mountainview Fore Bay	DAN KELLER
03-Nov-91	Sunday	Beginners' Trip - Foster City Shell Bar	CLIFF RICHER
10-Nov-91	Sunday	Princeton Harbor	DAN KELLER
13-Nov-91	Tuesday	Coyote Point	NICK COIRO
16-Nov-91 and	Saturday	The Sacramento Wildlife Heluges	CLIFF RICHER
17-Nov-91 and	Sunday	Gray Lodge	
24-Nov-91	Sunday	The Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds	DAN KELLER and FRANCIS TOLDI
07-Dec-91	Saturday	Foster City	NICK COIRO
11-Dec-91	Wednesday	Foster City	NICK COIRO
????	????	Christmas Count Warmup(s)	DAN KELLER
21-Dec-91	Saturday	Crystal Springs Christmas Count	DAN KELLER
28-Dec-91	Saturday	Ano Nuevo Christmas Count	DAN KELLER
11-Jan-92	Saturday	San Pedro Park	JUDY SPITLER
19-Jan-92	Sunday	Woodridge Road, Thornton	TBA
21-Jan-92	Tuesday	Princeton Harbor	NICK COIRO
26-Jan-92	Sunday	Redwood Shores	NICK COIRO
01-Feb-92 and	Saturday	Los Banos and the Grasslands Heluges	CLIFF RICHER
02-Feb-92 and	Sunday	Panoche Valley	
09-Feb-92	Sunday	Altamont Pass	NICK COIRO and LINDA KYPTA
12-Feb-92	Wednesday	Redwood Shores	NICK COIRO
29-Feb-92	Saturday	Princeton Harbor	DAN KELLER
04-Mar-92	Wednesday	Pescadero Marsh	NICK COIRO
08-Mar-92	Sunday	Biking and Birding the Bayshore	NICK COIRO and LINDA KYPTA
????	????	Pescadero Marsh	TBA
????	????	Ano Nuevo	TBA
11-Apr-92 and	Saturday	The Pinnacles	DAN KELLER
12-Apr-92 and	Sunday		
19-Apr-92	Sunday	Mines Road	CLIFF RICHER
26-Apr-92	Sunday	San Pedro Park	JUDY SPITLER
03-May-92	Sunday	Jasper Ridge	LOUISE FLETCHER
09-May-92 through	Saturday	Southeastern Arizona	DAN KELLER
17-May-92	Sunday	A special extended week field trip requiring some shared expenses.	
06-Jun-92	Saturday	Gazos Creek	TBA
13-Jun-92 and	Saturday	Yuba Pass	CLIFF RICHER
14-Jun-92	Sunday	Sierra Valley	

Additional field trips are being arranged
and will be announced in future months.
This schedule is subject to change. Watch
the Needles for any revisions.

ACTION ALERT!!!

Although all the details aren't available as we go to press, the first indications out of Washington aren't good. The new regulations defining a wetland are far more restrictive. Jim Tripp, executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund, claims we could lose "tens of millions of acres" of wetlands.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the administration was rejecting the idea that "every puddle is a wetland", while the new regulations were soundly praised by the American Farm Bureau and the National Association of Homebuilders.

We'll have more to say on this next month when we have more information. In the meantime watch the newspapers and BE ALERT.

The SAS Calendar

OCTOBER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

SAS BOARD MEETING, 7:30 PM at the Kypta Residence.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME - Please contact the
Sequoia Office (345-3724) for details.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

COASTAL VAGRANT CRAWL. The second in a series of special "high-intensity" field trips searching for vagrants along the San Mateo Coast. Limited to 5 participants. See the article on page 3 for more details.

LEADER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

SAS GENERAL MEETING. PROGRAM TO BE ANNOUNCED. At the San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside at the Alameda. Socializing at 7:30 PM. Meeting and program begins at 8:00.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

BEGINNER'S SPECIAL. THE PALO ALTO BAYLAND DUCK PONDS. The first in a series of special trips designed with the beginning birder in mind. There will be a one to two hour trip looking at the birds on the duck pond and the nearby

lagoons, followed by a short sit-down session to discuss what we saw and what we should be looking for. Discussion topics are up to the participants and can range from fine points of identification (Is it a lesser or greater scaup?) to the environment (Why are there fewer ducks this year?).

LEADER: FRANCIS TOLDI

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20

BEGINNER'S SPECIAL. MOUNTAINVIEW FOREBAY.

The second in our series of special trips for the beginning birder. Once again a one or two hour trip will be followed by a short sit-down discussion on what we saw. We should see most of the birds we saw in the first beginner's trip plus a good selection of those confusing LBBs (Little Brown Birds) otherwise known as shorebirds. Once again, the discussion topics are up to the participants.

LEADER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

Keller to Lead Vagrant Crawls

Christmas Count Compiler Dan Keller will lead a special series of field trips. Their purpose will be to find some of those out-of-season, out-of-place birds that wander up our coast every fall.

These trips are not for the faint of heart. Centered on Half Moon Bay, these trips will require maintaining a fast pace from 7:30 AM to noon. Expect to visit places and habitats you never knew existed, and maybe even do some crawling or wading.

Each trip is limited to a maximum of five birders. Make your reservations directly with Dan (365-2032) who will provide detailed instructions on where to meet.

..set aside some more of the yet remaining native California landscape as 'breathing space'...If we do not, we will leave our children a legacy of concrete treadmills, leading... to other places like those they will be trying to get away from."
--Congressman Clem Miller

Surprises From Sacramento

Is California's new Republican governor a sleeper? As Senator Wilson he made a few gestures toward protection of the environment - his opposition of off-shore drilling, for example - but he was hardly perceived as an environmental ball of fire. On April 22, Wilson proclaimed an astonishing program that has left the environmental community gasping with open-mouthed amazement.

Pete Wilson's agenda grapples with specific proposals that conservationists have been passionately longing for. The broad spectrum of Wilson's 14 points is remarkable. His focus is on the quality of life and habitat for wildlife. The Coastal Commission is to be beefed up so that it has the money and manpower to properly confront the unrelenting drive to develop what remains of California's unspoiled coastline. He faces the ancient forest question boldly, calling for acquisition of the 3000 acre Headwaters forest near Eureka, supports the compromise worked out between the Sierra Club and Sierra Pacific that would reduce clearcutting to a tolerable level and endorsed replacable tree harvesting.

The governor seems to have borrowed the philosophy of the Nature Conservancy: if habitat is to be saved, buy it! He asked for \$125 million to buy parkland. He wants to purchase land that harbors endangered species and seeks to preserve coastal lagoons, inland wetlands and rare riparian habitat. With considerable sophistication his proposal calls for an experimental program to preserve land where species are not yet endangered but of special concern.

He has proposed \$138 million for three state agencies: the Coastal Conservancy, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Tahoe Conservancy.

He has created a California Environmental Protection Agency to take on duties of other government departments. This would be an encouraging change in the case of the Food and Agriculture Department that monitors pesticide use as it struggles up with the growers.

He is seriously promoting the use of alternative fuels to replace gasoline in automobiles.

Money for forests would not be limited to coast redwoods and Douglas firs but would help preserve oaks and pines in less glamorous areas of the state.

Wilson asks the Resource Agency to work up a plan for preservation of wetlands, especially the creation of seasonal marshes from flooded farmland to provide waterfowl habitat.

Well! Quite a rich menu. The sober fact is that it will happen only if the state legislature supports it and the voters approve the \$628 million bond measure in June 1992.

Where's the catch? These certainly aren't campaign promises -- he won the election. Perhaps there is no catch.

On Earth Day Wilson said, "Our natural treasures have shaped the California character. If we lose them, we lose not only part of our heritage and our history but part of ourselves."

We hope John Muir is listening. --- Sandy Wohlgemuth (*Sandy Wohlgemuth is Conservation Chairman for the Los Angeles Audubon Society. This is condensed from a longer article which appeared in the July-August 1991 Western Tanager, the newsletter of the LAAS. It represents the*

opinions of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Los Angeles, Sequoia or the National Audubon Society.)

An Exchange: Debt for Nature

In May of 1989 an historic event took place in Tehama County. Dye Creek Wildlife Preserve was opened - the first nature sanctuary in the United States acquired through a debt-for-nature swap.

The swap gave the people of California 37,000 acres of gently rolling hills, rare blue oaks, peregrine falcons and bald eagles. It was a landmark event not only for what it preserves for future generations, but for the promise it holds for protecting our environment by uniting government, business and non-profit organizations in a common environmental goal.

California is blessed with a wealth of natural resources. But many of those resources are in danger of being lost forever as development encroaches. Will we manage to save the living diversity of unspoiled California for future generations or will we leave them a legacy of development that was blind to the riches of our natural heritage?

We must look to new, fresh approaches to preserve and protect these important resources. The key is to develop creative solutions of meeting important societal goals and to protect assets with our increasingly limited resources.

The Dye Creek swap was proposed by the State Controller's office in settlement of a state lawsuit against the Bank of America. With the help of the Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club the American Farmland Trust and the Defenders of Wildlife, the Controller's office conducted a lengthy search for environmentally precious preserves in California owned by the Bank. The Bank agreed to turn over to the state more than 40,000 acres of precious wildlife preserves worth approximately \$17.2 million.

The Dye Creek property, the largest piece of these ecologically sensitive lands, includes redwood forests, archeological sites, riparian habitats, steelhead and salmon spawning grounds, oak woodlands and grasslands. These lands and the endangered wildlife within them have been preserved and protected for generations of Californians to enjoy. The Nature Conservancy manages Dye Creek and the land is cared for in a way that protects sensitive species which enables Californians to enjoy and learn about them.

The Dye Creek debt-for-nature swap is but one example of a creative solution designed to protect the environment. As a member of the State Lands Commission the Controller helped structure a settlement of a lawsuit with Unocal which resulted in the state receiving five environmentally sensitive parcels of land valued at more than \$20 million.

If we are to secure the environmental blessings of this planet for future generations, we must fashion innovative techniques to halt the destruction of crucial resources and the extinction of priceless species, not only in California, but across this country and around the world.

---State Controller Gray Davis
This is condensed from a longer article which appeared in the July-August 1991 Western Tanager, the newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. It represents the opinions of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Los Angeles, Sequoia and National Audubon Societies.)

Sequoia Audubon Society

BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

AUDUBON PREMIUM MIX White Proso Millet, Red Millet & Sunflower Seeds	20 lb. bag	@	\$9.50	x	bags = \$
	50 lb. bag	@	\$18.00	x	bags = \$
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED	25 lb. bag	@	\$16.00	x	bags = \$
	50 lb. bag	@	\$27.00	x	bags = \$
NIGER THISTLE SEED	5 lb. bag	@	\$11.00	x	bags = \$
	25 lb. bag	@	\$48.00	x	bags = \$
WHITE PROSO MILLET	25 lb. bag	@	\$9.00	x	bags = \$
	50 lb. bag	@	\$13.50	x	bags = \$

Sales tax is already included in these prices

TOTAL PRICE \$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ St _____ Zip _____
 Phone: _____

Mail your order and check to:

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SEED SALE
 30 West 39th Ave., #202
 San Mateo, CA 94403

Your order will be confirmed by mail.

Pickup times and locations (incl. maps and directions) will be provided.

Pickup dates are 10/17 through 10/20:

PICKUP LOCATIONS

San Bruno – Jennis Residence – 3781 Pacific Hgts. Blvd.

San Carlos – Wild Bird Center, 926 El Camino Real

[The Wild Bird Center is offering a 10% discount (except on optics)
 on all purchases made at the time of your seed pick-up]

San Mateo – SAS Office – Call 593-7368 for times

The dates and times of pickups will be on the SAS answering machine tape and in next month's newsletter.

ITEMS FOR SALE OR RENT

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching	\$6.00
Birder's Handbook - Ehrlich, Dobkin and Wheye	\$17.60
Birding at the Bottom of the Bay - SCVAS	\$12.50
Birding Northern California - Jean Richmond	\$12.00
Eco-Safe String Bags	\$5.00
"I'd Rather Be Birding" Bumper Sticker	\$2.00
Mono Lake Guidebook	\$7.50
National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds	\$17.25
Pacific Coast Checklists - Pads of 25	\$3.50
San Mateo County Checklists	\$0.75
Sequoia Audubon Society Patch	\$3.75

Mail order prices include sales tax, handling and shipping.
 Send checks to Sequoia Audubon Society, 30 W. 39th Ave., #202
 San Mateo, CA 94403. Allow 14-18 days for delivery. Most items are
 available at a reduced cost at general meetings and at the office.

VIDEOS FOR RENT

Bird identification videos can be rented from the SAS office or at the
 General Meeting. Mail rental is available. Call the office for prices.

Techniques of Birding - Arnold Small	\$2.00/wk.
Video Guide to Birds of North America (Set of 5)	\$5.00/ea tape/ea wk.



**San Francisco
 Peninsula
 Birdwatching**

Wildlife and the California Drought

Drought is certainly not a new or unusual factor in California's climate or ecosystem. Tree ring studies show fairly regular and reoccurring periods of below normal rainfall. In fact, over the past 100 years, water conditions have been wetter than the calculated 420-year average.

So it is important to understand that California's fish, wildlife and flora evolved with drought as part of the ecology. The biological strategies adopted by species of plants and animals vary considerably, but virtually all species native to California have their own way of coping with drought. Understanding a little about these adaptations helps us to see why the drought has been so devastating.

Salmon, an anadromous fish which spawns in fresh water and whose young migrate to the ocean to mature, require cold water to successfully spawn. Temperatures above 50 degrees Fahrenheit literally cook salmon eggs. Salmon have a tremendous ability to fight their way upstream. Even under the lowest of flow conditions, they can get to higher elevation headwaters where springs discharge cold, clean water. But every major salmon spawning stream in central California has been dammed to supply cities and farms with water. These same dams maintain streamflow during times of drought, but low storage levels, due to the summertime use of the water, and the storage of the summer's heat in the remaining water can result in temperatures too high for salmon reproduction.

Unlike salmon, striped bass are not native to California and they appear to be losing their battle with the drought. Stripers depend on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for spawning and the rearing of young fish. During the two-year drought of 1976 and 1977, biologists noted an unusual and unexpected mortality of striped bass eggs and larval fish. In 1988, 1989 and 1990, the index has continued to decline. An all time low for striped bass reproduction success took place in 1990. Tremendous numbers of young bass are lost to the huge water project pumps in the Delta. During periods of low river flow, the draw of the pumps relative to the water's outflow into San Francisco Bay increases. More young fish are drawn into the pumps.

But losses to the pumps alone do not explain the substantial mortalities measured by California Department of Fish and Game biologists. Pollution impacts tend to increase during low outflow because there is simply not enough water to provide sufficient dilution.

Game fish may be among the most visible wildlife species to suffer from the drought, but they are not alone. At Carrizo Plain in San Luis Obispo County, giant kangaroo rats, San Joaquin antelope squirrels and tule elk share the same habitats. All are suffering from a drought-induced lack of adequate water and food supplies. Artificial watering holes and supplemental feeding may be necessary.

In general, rare plant colonies all over the state have been put in jeopardy. This is occurring not because these hardy California natives are not capable of holding their own during a drought, but because other plants - many of them species introduced into California by humans - are faring better and crowding out the rare, native species. DFG biologists, with the help of California Conservation Corps crews, will be out "weeding the garden" this year - literally hand-removing unwanted invaders.

Ducks, geese, swans, cranes and other marsh-dependent birds breed and raise their young in the vast wetlands of Canada, Alaska and the Yukon. They migrate in stages down the west coast of the US on a schedule apparently timed to follow late summer and early fall rains.

It is in this late summer-early fall period when native marsh plants such as swamp-timothy, smart weed and alkali bulrush finish producing seed that food supplies are abundant. The waterfowl thrive on the rich abundance of the marshes. They stay all winter and return to the breeding grounds the following spring well prepared to deal with the rigors of raising a brood of young birds.

Drought breaks up this age-old cycle. Spring runoff which normally floods the marshes is captured by reservoirs. It is this spring flooding that stimulates the germination of the seeds of native marsh plants. Weeds, which produce relatively poor food for waterfowl, crowd into the dry marsh ponds. When the fall migration occurs, millions of birds must crowd into smaller marshes with less food. Reduced nutrition and overcrowding can cause the rapid spread of diseases such as cholera and waterfowl botulism. Tens of thousands of waterfowl can die during disease outbreaks. Birds in poor physical condition return to their breeding grounds unable to successfully reproduce.

Waterfowl managers have learned to maximize the food production on waterfowl refuges and wildlife management areas. Farming or native marsh plants has become as complex as any modern agricultural operation. Throughout the current drought, wildlife managers have been improving their skills at irrigation and growing more with less water. Additional water sources have been developed to augment surface water supplies. Drain water from farms, reclaimed waste water and groundwater from new wells have helped keep the marshes productive and the waterfowl healthy.

And 1991 will be another difficult year for waterfowl managers. Supplemental water purchases and even more intense management of food production are part of the drought response. Patchwork flooding this fall and stepped up monitoring for disease outbreaks should keep losses to a minimum. If problems do occur the DFG, with the help of the California Conservation Corps, will work to contain and control "hot spots" where outbreaks are taking place.

Even with the return of normal rainfall, the dams will not go away, the pumps in the Delta will not shut down and spring runoff will not be allowed to flood the historical valley marshlands. California has more than 30 million people who will continue to compete with fish and wildlife for water and space. The human population will continue to grow. The drought of the 1980s and 1990s may well be the "normal" water situation for fish and wildlife in the 21st century. Fish and wildlife biologists and all who cherish California's rich natural heritage will need to build on the lessons of the drought as they manage for the future.

---Dick Daniel

(Dick Daniel is the California Department of Fish and Game's drought coordinator. This article first appeared in a much longer form in Outdoor California, the bi-monthly magazine of the DFG. It was condensed and reproduced with their permission. Anyone wanting a sample copy of Outdoor California is invited to write or phone them at P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or call them at (916) 445-7613

Where Are They Going?

All Sequoia Audubon members should be aware of recent changes at National Audubon. These events raise questions suitable for vigorous debate among members.

As many members are well aware, there has been considerable discontent over the years concerning National Audubon's gradual but steady repositioning of itself as a "general" environmental advocacy group, rather than as a "bird-oriented" group. While National has so far retained a strong commitment to bird-related conservation issues, it has long since cast off its responsibility as an organization serving bird enthusiasts' needs and interests. Undoubtedly, a significant portion of the dramatic increase in the success of the American Birding Association is due to discontented Audubon members who feel that their interests are not entirely served by National's repositioning.

Unquestionably, an environmental organization focusing on birds must be involved in the fight against the proliferation of toxic substances, threats to habitat and similar "indirect" subjects, but National seems to want to go yet further.

Other differences in opinion between local members and the National have occurred in the past. Many can recall the opposition of Golden Gate and many other local Audubon chapters to National's sponsorship and endorsement of the Condor Recovery Program. Local Audubon chapters for years have been grappling with National over the allocation of dues. (*Our share of your National dues just covers the cost of producing the NEEDLES. All other expenses have to be covered by past and present contributions. ---Ed.*)

The most recent developments include the blue banneriasco and the abrupt firing of Les Line as editor of *Audubon* magazine. Despite near universal outcry over the unilateral switch to the blue banner over the historical egret, President Berle has been adamant on his support for the new symbol.

Notwithstanding National's polite wording about Mr. Line's "stepping aside", and his imminent receipt of the Hal Borland Award, Mr. Line was fired. According to various articles in the local and national press, Les Line was too "old guard" conservation/resource oriented, not to mention too independent. The article that triggered the firing was the article on Africa in the September 1990 issue in which the writer - an avowed hunter - placed the majority of the blame for the decline of wildlife on the increase in local human population. While that article was one of the poorer *Audubon* articles in recent memory, it was hardly a firing offense to print it. According to Glen Martin of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, National Audubon executives generally objected to Mr. Line's willingness to explore the connection (or lack thereof) between birders and hunters, and other controversial subjects enthusiastically addressed by Mr. Line.

Despite Peter Berle's denials he is apparently more interested in the magazine being a house organ, communicating the views and priorities of National's executives. Presumably, we will see even fewer bird-oriented articles, reflecting the subject preference of the "new Audubon." The President's first choice for editor was Malcolm Abrams, A former editor of the *Star* (familiar to all of us who admit to sneaking a peek at the latest Hollywood intrigues while standing in line at the supermarket). Fortunately this ill-advised decision has been reversed. The new editor will be the highly respected Michael W. Robbins.

American Birds seems to have survived its "updating", with all departments apparently intact (although one wonders why they couldn't continue to include an old-fashioned index in the final issue of a volume). The continuation of this fine journal is probably due to the continuing editorial presence of Susan Drennan and National's scientific staff, who may have been able to accommodate National's demand for a "flashier" format, while still preserving the overall content. Perhaps under strong leadership *Audubon* may also survive.

Still members have to wonder what will be next. Should we sit quietly by while the organization, as we know it, gradually but steadily deteriorates? We need to ask ourselves what purpose is being served by being affiliated with National. Tradition alone is an insufficient bond: there must be a substantial benefit to local Audubon chapters. If anything, tradition points as much **away** from affiliation with Audubon as in favor of it. The organization is, after all, an affiliation of separately chartered local organizations.

What other strong bird-oriented conservation organizations are there out there? The American Birding Association has nicely carved out the "bird enthusiasts" niche, and properly kept its emphasis on birding as a sport, hobby, pastime or whatever. The International Council on Bird Preservation is an excellent organization, but with its international scope cannot be expected to adequately deal with our more regional problems. Any number of specialized groups (like Point Reyes Bird Observatory and RARE) do an excellent job on their particular agenda, but should not be looked to as a general national bird advocacy group. The ornithological clubs certainly consider conservation issues, but their focus is quite correctly on the serious science of ornithology.

It seems to me that the most effective bird-related conservation organizations are the local Audubon societies. The goal of the membership, therefore should be to strengthen the local societies, and do whatever is appropriate to allow them to fulfill their charge. Among the questions that members of conscience should be debating are the following:

1. What benefit does a local Audubon organization get from National?
2. Would it be strategically and financially feasible to sever from National and operate independently?
3. Does National control the Audubon name and logo, precluding their use by an independent group?
4. Is there a possibility of change at National or will the drift away from birds continue further?

National Audubon seems to maintain its primary devotion to birds only reluctantly. Perhaps it would be best to let it fulfill its desire to be a general environmental group. Then members could decide individually whether National - as compared to the multitude of other general environmental groups - merits further support. For its part, National would then be free to wave its blue banner and run its birdless magazine pages without incurring the wrath of its alienated and distraught members. They could even change the name - after all, why name a general conservation organization after a bird watcher with a hard to spell name?

— Francis Toldi

(Mr. Toldi joined *Audubon* because of both its conservation and bird-oriented activities. The opinions expressed in this column are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sequoia Audubon Society.)

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