



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the
November, 1991

Sequoia Audubon Society

San Mateo County
Vol.40,#3

This Month's Program

BIRDS OF THE ANTARCTIC AND THE SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS with Maryann Danielson. Maryann Danielson is a well known local birder, teacher, tour leader, naturalist and photographer. She heads up Sunbeam Ecology Tours and teaches birding classes for Sequoia Adult School in Santa Clara and Menlo Park. Penguins are the best known birds of the Antarctic, but prions, skuas, gulls and terns as well as many marine mammals can be found and Maryann will share her photos of these with us. At the San Mateo Garden Center at Parkside off the Alameda. Socializing begins at 7:30 PM, with the meeting at 8:00 and the program immediately thereafter.

Next Month's Program

Chris Benesh, a new member of SAS - but not Audubon - is a professional tour guide with Field Guides. A trained zoologist and a well-known birder, he will share his experiences in **BIRDING FROM POINT SUR TO VENTURA**.

December is also Potluck Month - an opportunity to share some of your favorite dishes with your friends. The Potluck begins at 6:30 PM with the program following immediately thereafter.

Barbara Tiberi Named Office Coordinator

Barbara Tiberi has been named as SAS's office coordinator replacing Peter Cross who will continue his work as a volunteer. SAS considers itself fortunate in having the best of both worlds.

From the President

The fall season is here and SAS field trips, programs and meetings have been scheduled for the enjoyment of our members and friends. We hope you will join in them.

There was a reception for National Audubon Society President Peter A. Berle on Tuesday evening, October 8 at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center. I, along with John Bryant and Cliff Richer, attended the event. It was a rare opportunity to meet him during his brief visit here in the Bay Area and receive his brief summation of NAS priority issues: ancient forest protection, wetlands, energy policy and the Alaskan coastal plain.

President Berle brought a report of his impressions from the NAS Convention in Denver in July. He briefly described the positive action of participants and governments from Costa Rica and other Central and South American nations to protect the natural habitats of their countries. On another subject he said that NAS is facing increased operating expenses - noting an increase of \$500,000 in mailing costs alone. However, he did not see any need for layoffs - as has happened with other conservation organizations. Finally he spoke eloquently of his own involvement on behalf of NAS in the joint US-Russian efforts to protect the Bering Sea and its neighboring land areas.

The new SAS Office Coordinator, Barbara Tiberi, will begin her duties on October 21. The office hours are still subject to change so please call for information or before visiting the office. Our tape is still active 24 hours each day. Our thanks go to Peter Cross for his many hours of dedicated service to Sequoia Audubon. It is gratifying to know that he will continue to be active as a volunteer and consultant.

Thanks to those of you who returned the Chapter Questionnaire included in last month's issue. The Fundraising Committee appreciates your helpful response and we hope to receive still more of these forms.

We had planned to include the 1990 financial statement and the 1991-1992 budget in this month's **NEEDLES**. These are at the heart of our chapter organization and we want your views and ideas in regard to them. Unfortunately, we couldn't get them "camera-ready" in time to make the newsletter deadline. Please accept our apologies while remembering that all of our officers and chairpeople are volunteers who work without tangible reward. All of us have personal and work demands on our time and sometimes - no matter how much we want - we cannot give the time or the effort that a task requires. However, by the time you read this we will have copies of these financial documents available at the office. If you want to review either the year-end statement or the current year's budget, call the office (345-3724) and we'll be happy to mail copies to you.

Part II of **A Costa Rican Odyssey** can be found on Page Seven.

The SAS Calendar

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

BEGINNER'S SPECIAL. FOSTER CITY'S SHELL BAR.

The third in our series of special trips for the beginning birder. The Shell Bar is neither a place for swinging singles or 49er fanatics, but a prime resting place for shorebirds. Once again a one or two hour trip will be followed by a short sit-down discussion on what we saw. We should see many of the birds we saw in the first two beginner's trip with an emphasis on some of the larger shorebirds. Once again, the discussion topics are up to the participants. Meet at ??? ?M in the parking lot of the Beach Park Shopping Center at the intersection of Beach Park and Marlin in Foster City.

LEADER: CLIFF RICHER (355-4058)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7

SAS BOARD MEETING,

7:30 PM at the SAS office. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME - Please contact the Sequoia Office (345-3724) for details.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

COYOTE POINT FIELD TRIP A morning walk through the varied habitats in this small jewel of an area can yield many surprises. We'll meet at 9:00 AM in the lower end of the Museum parking lot, near the picnic tables.

LEADER: NICK COIRO (349-1834)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

SAS GENERAL MEETING. BIRDS OF THE ANTARCTIC AND THE SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS with Maryanne Danielson, well-known local naturalist and birder. At the San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside at the Alameda. Socializing at 7:30 PM. Meeting and program begins at 8:00.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 & 17

THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGES AND GRAY LODGE

The refuges are suffering badly under the drought. The Bureau of Reclamation has given them a less-than-adequate emergency water allotment. Barring a larger water allotment or some good drenching rains this trip may be called off. Call the office (354-3724) or the leader for latest details.

LEADER: CLIFF RICHER (355-4058)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

THE SUNNYVALE SEWAGE PONDS. Over the last two years this has developed into one of the Peninsula's "hot spots" with wintering glaucous gulls, lost Sabine's gulls, and rare shorebirds. Let Dan and Francis introduce you to this "new" discovery. We'll meet at 9:00 AM at the entrance to the ponds. To get there take Hwy. 101 South to Hwy. 237 East. From 237 take Carribean North to Boregas. Take a right on Boregas and you'll be there. Trip should last until noon.

LEADERS: DAN KELLER (365-2032) and
FRANCIS TOLDI

(Continued on Page Three)

News from the Ranch

Dan Murphy

ACR Supports Campaign to Save California Wetlands - A proposed new Federal Delineation Manual, which is used to define wetlands, will allow development of significant remnants of California's once vast wetland habitat. Newly threatened wetlands could include tidelands adjacent to ACR properties. In recognition of the threat to this ever-diminishing habitat the ACR Board voted to add its support to the newly formed Campaign to Save California Wetlands with a donation of \$1000. For more information about this effort to save our wetlands call (510) 452-9261.

Mystery Bird - ACR's August board meeting at Cypress Grove Preserve on Tomales Bay is always a favorite. The setting is beautiful (even board members don't get to see this very beautiful preserve very often) and the company is excellent. But this year there was a special treat -- a mystery bird. An ibis on Livermore Marsh is quite a wonder - especially when it's not a white-faced ibis. It took a few days but John Kelly and a number of other birders finally figured it was a **sacred ibis**! This one was banded and no doubt had escaped from a zoo or private collection. (The sacred ibis occurs in central Africa and in Australia but has never been known to migrate to North America). So what if it wasn't the bird-of-the-year, it was fun anyway.

Volunteer for a Tomales Bay Shorebird Count - ACR's Tomales Bay Shorebird Project continues to look for field observers who can help monitor shorebird populations around the bay. Beginning and experienced birder are invited to participate in upcoming shorebird counts. Call John Kelly (663-8203) at Cypress Grove Preserve for information.

Fall Seminars - Please register in advance for all seminars and workdays by calling 868-9244.

"Living Trusts: Tax and Estate Planning for the Nineties", Saturdays, Nov. 2 at Bouverie Audubon Preserve and Nov. 16 in Orinda. These are the final tax and estate planning seminars for this season. It's not too late to attend one of these very popular workshops and learn how to decrease your taxes on appreciated property, increase your income, protect your estate and perhaps help a worthy cause. Please join us for one of these free seminars.

Fall Workday, Saturday, November 9 - Let's face it, the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve looks the way it does because of the work of numerous volunteers. Why not join with ACR staff and volunteers for a fun day of work at the Ranch? There will be a **FREE LUNCH** for volunteers. This is a free event.

Bouverie Preserve Guided Nature Walks - Saturdays, Nov. 16 and Dec. 14; 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. The only way you can appreciate the beauty of the Bouverie Audubon Preserve in Glen Ellen is on one of our guided nature walks. Join a BAP docent for a free half-day walk at the preserve. Call (707) 938-4554 to reserve your place.

...the credit goes to the man who convinces the world, not to the man to whom the idea first occurs. ---Charles Darwin

Three-Dumpster Cleanup Rewards SAS Initiative

SAS members, Friends of Redwood City, and other volunteers moved an unexpectedly large amount of debris from the Smith Slough area in Redwood City, in Sequoia Audubon's "Coastal Cleanup" project on Saturday, September 21.

The area is owned by Redwood Shores Properties (RSP) and its tidal-slough wetlands are feeding grounds for many birds and home to river otters.

Yvette Hayworth of RSP worked with SAS Conservation Committee's Sue Hillard and others to arrange access and security and to resolve insurance problems. The company has also promised a substantive donation to defray expenses.

Altogether nearly 50 volunteers combed the nearly-three-mile slough perimeter just East of the Whipple/101 interchange for five hours. They also consumed a vegetarian lunch provided by Event Coordinator Hillard, Ali Baldacci, Paula Horning, and Jenny Santa Elena. Five cases of donated soft drinks barely quenched thirsts on a warm clear day. Seven stores (Safeway, Lucky, Longs, and Walgreens) donated the drinks and other supplies. Eric at Acme Sanitation wangled us a portable toilet, and Browning-Ferris brought one large dumpster. Seven young activists from Phillip Brooks School, their teacher Louise Landrath, and some parents, also joined the crew and "worked like little termites."

Participants soon could see they were accomplishing the objective. By 10:30 the initial dumpster was overflowing. By 3:00 a small mountain of additional debris rose next to it. Two more BFI-donated dumpsters and toss-in sessions were later required to clear the site.

As part of a statewide attempt to identify major sources of litter, an analysis of the material gathered was reported to the Coastal Commission and the Marine Conservation Center. Twenty-five pounds of aluminum and 200 pounds of glass were recycled. Among the other debris were many pallets, discarded car seats and a sunken cigarette machine.

A number of passers-by, after asking what was happening, said they would like to participate next year. Members (and others) who missed this year's cleanup can ask to be notified individually about the date and location of next year's, by calling the SAS office.

The SAS Board of Directors passed a resolution formally thanking Sue and her volunteers for the efforts expended. We would also like to extend our thanks to Win de Witt for recruiting the Friends of Redwood City; to Peter and Margaret Cross for helping with the set-up; and to Redwood Shore Properties for their permission and cooperation.

Department of Useless Statistics

Scientists have calculated that the blackpoll warbler has a fuel efficiency equal to 720,000 miles per gallon. However, when you compare weights, this works out to the equivalent of 24 m.p.g. - not terribly impressive. However, in terms of payroll delivered, the blackpoll is about 600 times more efficient than the classic little old lady from Pasadena driving church and four times more efficient than the football player and his three friends driving to Reno in a sub-compact.

The SAS Calendar (Continued from Page Two)

DECEMBER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

SAS BOARD MEETING,

7:30 PM at the SAS office. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME** - Please contact the Sequoia Office (345-3724) for details.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

FOSTER CITY FIELD TRIP

Wintering ducks and 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)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

FOSTER CITY FIELD TRIP

A midweek repetition of the December 7 trip. Details are the same as outlined above.

LEADER: NICK COIRO (349-1834)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

SAS GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL WINTER POTLUCK DINNER. BIRDING FROM POINT SUR T

VENTURA with Chris Benesh, birder, zoologist and professional tour leader. Explore the "unknown coast" of San Luis Obispo County and the better known areas of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties with Chris and share some of your favorite dishes with other members. At the San Mateo Garden Center, Parkside at the Alameda. Potluck at 6:30 PM with the meeting and program following immediately thereafter.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 AND/OR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14.

CHRISTMAS COUNT WARMUPS. A chance to practice your counting, identification and Christmas Count disciplines. Christmas Count Compiler Dan Keller will lead these trips to help you hone your skills to that fine cutting edge leading up to the Christmas Count. Call the leader to make arrangements.
LEADER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT. The Annual Audubon Christmas Count centered approximately on the Hwy. 92 causeway across the Crystal Springs Reservoirs. Entry forms in this and next month's **NEEDLES**.
COMPILER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28

THE AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT. The Annual Audubon Christmas Count centered near the entrance to Butano State Park. Entry forms in this and next month's **NEEDLES**.

COMPILER: DAN KELLER (365-2032)

An Indoor Cat is a Live Bird

Pat Moon

(The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, the National Audubon Society or the Sequoia Audubon Society)

Many of us who are bird lovers are also cat owners, and as cat owners we are constantly concerned about the dangers our pets face when they are outdoors. Cars, poisoned snail baits, dogs, other cats and the possibility of their being stolen all fill us with fear for our beloved felines.

But what about the wildlife we so enjoy watching? Studies have shown the domestic cat is one of the major predators of wildlife in towns and suburbs.

Even though your cat is well-fed and spoiled with his favorite treats he or she will still stalk and pounce on browsing, unsuspecting birds.

In nesting season cats may climb trees and kill young birds or scare them into leaving prematurely. Once on the ground the fledglings are no match for the cat's stealth.

This is instinct, not evil. The cat is just being a cat. But you, the owner, are contributing to wildlife mortality by allowing your cat to roam.

You are adding one more hazard to an already precarious existence. Wild birds have been dealing with pesticides, contaminated water, polluted air, natural predators, loss of habitat and the uncertainty of their food supply. Now they must contend with your inquisitive cat that has the urge to kill without the need to kill. (Feral cats do even more damage because they must hunt to stay alive.)

If you want to be a responsible pet owner and are a concerned environmentalist you should seriously consider making your pet an indoor only animal, or keep him or her on a leash when they are outside - as I do. Not only are you protecting the local wildlife, but you are protecting your pet and giving yourself peace of mind.

An indoor cat is a live cat.
An indoor cat is a live bird.
An indoor cat is a good night's sleep.

Trails Center Resources

The Trails Center in Los Altos has a number of topographic maps of good hiking and camping spots in the Peninsula. Their map of all park and preserve areas between San Francisco and Monterey is on display at the SAS office. This map, and a number of others were done by volunteers. Many of the others were done by the Mid-peninsula Open Space District. Some are for sale. Others are free.

We have a full list of all these maps at the SAS office, or you can inquire directly by calling the Trails Center at 968-7065.

SCVAS Moving to Cupertino

Although the exact date has not been set at this time, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has announced its impending move to the Cupertino Environmental Center at McLellan Ranch Park.

This Time It's Really Dead!

The much reviled and universally despised blue banner is history! The NAS Board of Directors, reeling under adverse publicity, an avalanche of letters and an attack of good taste directed President Peter Berle to abandon the banner and return to the Society's roots.

In a letter to chapter officers and in meetings with members Mr. Berle announced that the existing supply of materials carrying the banner would be used up, but that a new logo was being developed - one featuring the venerable egret.

Mr. Berle has also said that he looks upon the recent torrent of publicity as "an opportunity to educate the public in the interdependence of the environment".

NAS Dedicates New Audubon Sanctuary

The Paul L. Wattis Sanctuary was dedicated last month in Colusa County. With 200 acres of permanent wetlands, 300 acres of seasonal wetlands and 22 nesting and roosting islands, the sanctuary is perfectly situated between the state's Gray Lodge Wildlife Area and the Delevan National Wildlife Refuge.

Support for the sanctuary came from the Paul and Phyllis Wattis Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Chris Steel donated the cost of the restoration work.

The sanctuary is a nesting area for white-faced ibis and a wintering area for snow geese, ducks and sandhill cranes. It will be a new stop on our Sacramento Valley Wildlife Refuges field trip this month.

Asilomar Conference Set for April

Glenn Olson of NAS's Sacramento Office has announced that the Asilomar Conference will be held as usual from April 11-14, 1992. These conferences have been held every other year since 1948.

Audubon TV Under Attack Again

Audubon is under attack for putting out a television special that depicts the results of grazing on public land.

You may recall that NAS lost the sponsorship of Stroh Brewery over its ancient forests program, "Rage Over Trees". Now the show "The New Range Wars" has aroused the ire of the National Cattlemen's Association. They have enlisted the farm lobby and the National Inholders' Association in an all-out campaign to try to persuade General Electric to drop its underwriting of Audubon television. They are urging a boycott of GE products and are deluging the company with mail.

It is urgent that GE hear our side --- from thousands of Americans who care enough about our message to write or call GE in support of Audubon TV. Please send a letter to General Electric - **as a private citizen** - and praise them for their sponsorship. Please request that they continue their support.

Write to: Mr. Jack Welch, Chairman of the Board, General Electric, 3135 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06431; or call (203) 373-2971. The survival of Audubon TV is at stake.

THE CHASE IS ON!

THE 7TH ANNUAL SAN MATEO COUNTY WILD GOOSE CHASE

The Annual Wild Goose Chase is on again!

The Wild Goose Chase is Sequoia's number one fundraiser for the year. Barry Sauppe will lead a team of crack (?) Sequoia Audubon Society Birders – Cliff Richer, Chris Benesh (probable) and Dan Keller (possible) – through all the county's prime birding spots trying to identify as many species as possible. The county is "hot" this year and weather permitting we have an excellent chance of breaking last year's record of 166 species.

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

You can show your commitment to SAS and your confidence in the team's goal of 166+ species by "pre-paying" your pledge for 166 (or 100) species.

Make all checks payable to Sequoia Audubon Society and mail them to:
30 West 39th Avenue, #202
Belmont, CA 94002

PLEDGE FORM

- ☐ YES, I want to pledge cents per species.
- ☐ YES, I want to pledge cents limited to a \$ maximum.
- ☐ YES, I want to pledge \$..... and good luck to the birders!
- ☐ Here is my PRE-PAID pledge.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zip.....

ALL HONORED PLEDGES ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

SIGN UP FOR THE CHRISTMAS COUNT AT THE SAME TIME
See the Christmas Count Sign-up Form on the Reverse Side

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

JOIN THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS BIRD COUNT
DECEMBER 21, 1991

AÑO NUEVO BIRD COUNT
DECEMBER 28, 1991

Once again, Dan Keller will compile both counts and with last year's experience behind him will be shooting for new records, so we need even more help than usual. In order to do our best we need a lot of people. We need all the eyes and ears we can get to find birds, keep records in the field, and count birds. Christmas Counts mean dawn-to-dusk birding, plus owling for some. But 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. We need to perform good counts to evaluate the birds in our 15-mile diameter circles and compare results with other years.

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,
30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
San Mateo, CA 94403

PLEASE LET US KNOW NO LATER THAN
DECEMBER 7.

I will participate in the...

☐ CRYSTAL SPRINGS CBC on 12/21/91

☐ AÑO NUEVO CBC on 12/28/91.

☐ I am an experienced birder and am willing to serve
as an area leader.

For Crystal Springs, I would like counting this area:

First Choice: _____

Second Choice: _____

Third Choice: _____

For Año Nuevo, I would like counting this area:

First Choice: _____

Second Choice: _____

Third Choice: _____

I will count any area assigned. Yes _____ No _____

I will monitor and report my feeder on 12/21 _____ 12/28 _____

I will be at the compilation on 12/21 _____ 12/28 _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip Code Telephone Number _____

WANT TO BE PART OF THE ACTION?

Many important pieces of conservation legislation are passed only because of strong grassroots support. Don't leave it to industry lobbyists: join Sequoia Audubon's new legislative-alert team! All you have to do is agree to write or telephone your Washington or Sacramento legislator when we send you an alert on a legislative matter of great importance.

In a few months, the California Audubon chapters will have their own lobbyist in Sacramento and that person will need our support and encouragement.

If you are willing to join us, give us your name. We will contact you to help us in writing letters, making phone calls or taking other actions to promote the environment.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone No. _____

Please return this form to Bob Wilkinson or Rick Johnson or to the SAS office:

Sequoia Audubon Society
30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
San Mateo, CA 94403
or call: 345-3724

A Costa Rican Odyssey

—John Silliman and Sara Goodale

Continued from Last Month's *Needles*)

Last month, we read how Sara and John had left San Francisco, arrived in Costa Rica, and spent their first week in San Jose, Ranch Naturalista, Tortoguero and Selva Verde. Their second week begins on the road to Monteverde.

It took us two hours to negotiate the 35 kilometer road to Monteverde where we checked into the Montana Hotel for two nights.

The first day was spent at the reserve in the loud forest. One of the first birds to be seen was the usually elusive three-wattled bell-bird whose clanging call wakes up the forest creatures. Other spectacular birds included the resplendent quetzal and the black guan. Later we relaxed at the hotel's Hummingbird Gallery, and identified six species of these feathered jewels.

The trip back down the rough road went somewhat faster than the trip up. We now slowed only slightly when a mot-mot was spotted. However, we did stop for a magpie-jay sitting in a tree by the road. For most of us it was a life bird.

Heading northwest into Guacaste Province, we took up quarters in the La Pacifica motel near Rio Corobici. This was our first chance at a swimming pool and it saw extensive use the next two evenings. From this central point, we explored Lomas Barbudal (Bearded Hills), home of a forest preservation project organized by Utta and Gordon Frankie Berkeley. Our most notable bird seen here was the wire-tailed mannikin.

The second day was spent at Palo Verde where we hoped to observe some wading birds, especially the Jabiru stork. Unfortunately the marsh was totally dry. Nevertheless we did spot two pairs of double-striped thick-knees (a large plover) some distance from the road. Sharp eyes also spotted several scissor-tailed flycatchers in the tops of the bare trees. Near the park headquarters we had a chance to observe the many land iguanas resting in the shade. On earlier trips many of these iguanas had been marked with large numbers painted on their flanks. One wag on the trip had commented that this was done to identify the winners of the weekly Saturday afternoon iguana race. Now with the numbers worn off and washed off by a year's rains they were back to their natural appearance. The day was hot and dry and spirits were low until someone shouted "Jabiru!", pointing to two of the storks soaring high overhead.

That evening we luxuriated around the swimming pool; walked the lovely grounds at La Pacifica photographing keel-billed toucans and capuchin monkeys; and looking in vain for boat-billed herons and three-toed sloths along the river.

Early the next day we headed southeast and then south to Carerra National Park for the last full day with the group. At the park we stopped by the river and spotted several alligators, a roseate spoonbill, and more little blue herons. After a short pause for a refreshing cold drink we took the main trail leading to a boat-billed heron rookery. Walking slowly through the dense tropical stand we found a dozen or so species of birds including the spectacular royal flycatcher and pygmy kingfisher. There were no boat-billeds at the

heronry, but we did find a green-backed heron and a bare-throated tiger-heron.

Later we explored the forest on a different trail and found a female great curassow - a turkey-sized bird of the deep forest - and a great tinamon. Each sighting of these elusive and rare birds was a heart stopping and breathtaking experience.

Near the end of the day we were shepherded back aboard the buses to observe the flyout of scarlet macaws near the river. We were rewarded by the sight of eight or nine leaving the river and flying directly overhead toward the coast - right on schedule.

It was a fitting end to a rigorous and in-depth natural history trip to the tropics. Reluctantly we climbed aboard the bus for the last time and headed back to San Jose from where most of us would be returning north the next day.

We, however, had opted for three extra days in Costa Rica so we went to the Gold Museum on Saturday and did a bit of sight-seeing after the rest of the group went home. Early on Easter Sunday we caught the bus to Jaco Beach north of Quepos to spend two days on the Pacific shore. Checking in at the Jaco Fiesta Hotel was easy as it was nearly empty. From there we caught a bus to Manuel Antonio National Park, seven kilometers from town. This park is right on the sandy beaches of the Pacific and extends slightly inland. Howler and squirrel monkeys cavorted in the canopy while iguanas scurried through the leaves on the forest floor. We discovered a paraque sitting on eggs four feet from a main trail. She was trying desperately to feel invisible...and nearly succeeded.

This close encounter (of the best kind) was a fitting end to our last day of natural history in this wonderful country and gave us one more grand memory to take home with us when we left the next day.

Adopt a Pothole

Prairie potholes are the primary North American breeding grounds for our dabbling duck population. These tiny ponds are mostly on private land,

Farmers have no incentive to protect the miniature marshes so they often drain and plow them under. To the farmer, it is an inconvenience to mechanized farming and a non-productive area on which he pays taxes. Filling it in eliminates the inconvenience and allows him to grow crops to cover the taxes.

To encourage farmers to preserve the habitat, the North American Wildlife Foundation (NAWF) has set up a program through which you can adopt your very own pothole. In return for a contribution, pothole patrons receive a certificate, a picture of their pothole and annual reports on the ducks using it. The landowner is paid for not farming the pothole and also receives a sign announcing the pothole's adoption.

NAWF is an Illinois-based non-profit organization that exists to enhance the knowledge of waterfowl and wetlands. For more information on the NAWF or its pothole adoption program, write to the North American Wildlife Foundation, Adopt a Pothole, 102 Wilmot Road, Suite 410, Deerfield, IL 60015.

ACTION ALERT! GOLF COURSE AT EDGEWOOD PARK! AGAIN!?!

On September 9 the County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved sending out proposals to private developers to design, build and operate a nine hole golf course on Edgewood Park property.

Preliminary plans call for taking 75 acres of the environmentally sensitive park for the course. Edgewood Park is noted for its nutrient-deficient serpentine soil; a condition that encourages the development of wildflowers and is host to a number of endangered species of plants and butterflies.

To protest this action write to:

**San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
401 Marshall Street,
Redwood City, CA 94063**

You may address your letter to the Board collectively or to individual supervisors:

**Tom Nolan, Chairman; Anna Eshoo; Bill Schumacher;
Tom Huening; and Mary Griffin.**

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