

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society San Mateo County Volume 41, No. 4 December, 1992 - January 1993

# **December's Program**



Susan Wadman of the Wildlife Care Center of the Peninsula Humane Society will present an illustrated program on the Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

activities of the Care Center.



Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. December is Potluck month, with the Potluck beginning at 6:30 PM and the meeting following immediately thereafter.

## **Potluck Time!**

This month also brings us to our annual December Dinner so dust off your favorite show-off recipes. Please remember to bring your own utensils and plates and a paper bag in which to take them home. Those people whose last names begin with the letters A-F should bring a DESSERT; those whose names begin with the letters G-L, a CASSEROLE or other hot dishes and M-Z should provide the SALADS..

Bring enough to serve **FIVE** times the number in your party.

# January's Program

A Wyoming Adventure - The Audubon Camp of the West. George Metropulos, our 1992 Campership scholar, a naturalist and an elementary school teacher at the Union School in Redwood City will present a program on Audubon's environmental education camp, located in Wyoming's Grand Teton Mountains. Socialization and refreshments are at 7:30 with the meeting and program beginning at 8:00.



### From The President

I hope next October you'll take a weekend drive to the Sierras and enjoy the aspens. That's what I did on my birthday weekend. The colors were breathtaking and I was lucky enough to see and hear several Townsend's solitaires! Their song is a mixture of thrush and house finch - quite haunting as the sun is setting.

By now the Avocet Festival is behind us, and ahead is the **Christmas Bird Count.** We need your help, not just in the field, but behind the scenes, helping with the compilation dinners on December 19 and 26. Call the office (345-3724) or use the form on page 6 to volunteer.

Our thanks go out to **Mary Bresler**, our birdseed sales chairwoman; **Sue James**, our office coordinator and **Al Demartini**, volunteer extraordinary for all the work that produced a most successful fall Bird Seed Sale, a major source of income for Sequoia Audubon. But, the fall sale had not even been completed before Mary was planning for the Winter Bird Seed Sale. You'll find the order form for the winter sale on page 5.

Our volunteer form has produced some new volunteers. Thank you **Fred Mason, Roberta Jungnick, Debbie Marcal, Rita and Bill Stoehl.** We need you and will be calling on you. Please, won't you join them? We can use volunteer help for one-time jobs or ongoing projects. Pick up a form at our meeting - or call the office. It's a great way to meet new people.

December is potluck month. I hope you'll be able to come on Thursday, December 10 and enjoy meeting, eating and the program. You'll find the details elsewhere on this page.

My very best wishes go out to all of you for a happy holiday season!

"Everything about a hummingbird is a superlative" -- Tom Colaza, American naturalist.

--- Anne

Remember, there will be no NEEDLES in January.

The next issue will be in February.

### Winter Birdseed Sale

The Sequoia Winter Birdseed Sale is scheduled for February 1993. Please see the order form on Page 5 for further information. The deadline for orders is **Tuesday, February 16.** 

This is an important fund raiser for our chapter and we appreciate your continued support. If you need birdseed **before February**, we stock the most popular varieties at the office. To order, call 345-3724.

Sequoia Audubon Society

### The S A S Calendar

#### December

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

GOLDEN GATE PARK - CHAIN OF LAKES. Join us for this mid-week field trip. Enjoy an easy morning's walk with good birding. Blue-winged teal, wood ducks, Eurasian wigeons, red crossbills and a number of rare warblers have been seen near these lakes in recent years and almost anything might be found in the area. To get there take Sunset Blvd. north from Lake Merced (or any other convenient juncture) and follow it right into the park. Once in the park, take a left on South Drive and your second right on East Drive. We will meet in the parking lot on the right just before Middle Lake and across from the Equestrian Center at 9:00 AM. The trip should break up at noon.

LEADERS

NICK COIRO (349-1834)

LINDA KYPTA

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3 SAS BOARD MEETING

7:30 PM at the SAS office. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WEL-COME.** Please call ahead to be sure there will be enough room.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 FIELD TRIPS TO PRINCETON HARBOR

The only sheltered harbor 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. Oldsquaws, glaucous gulls and the rock sandpiper are regular winter visitors and the area almost always has one or two surprises. We'll also investigate some of the local areas that have produced some winter surprises in recent years. This is the second of two field trips to this rich area. To get there take Hwy. 92 to Hwy. 1 and follow Hwy. 1 north to Capistrano Road. Take Capistrano Road to the Princeton Inn and turn right, continuing until you come to Vassar Street. We'll assemble at 9:00 AM at the end of Vasser Street where it meets the beach.

**LEADER** 

DAN KELLER

365-2032

(591-9053)

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 SAS GENERAL MEETING

**RESCUE REHABILITATION AND RELEASE** by Susan Wadman of the Wildlife Care Center of the Peninsula Humane Society. This is **Potluck Night** so be sure to bring your favorite dish. See Page One for details. The meeting will be at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside with the Potluck beginning at 6:30 PM, and the General Meeting immediately thereafter.

# SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 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,

(Continued on Page Three)

## **News From Your Ranch**

### **Dan Murphy**

SEASON'S GREETINGS: This column seems to focus a lot on the celebration of seasons. We celebrated the seasons of the calendar, the seasons of migration, nesting, wildflowers and weather. But we celebrate the holiday season too, and all of us who are associated with Audubon Canyon Ranch wish you and yours a very happy holiday season, and a prosperous and successful new year. If you are in West Marin on a weekday afternoon, stop by the Ranch and pick up one of those very special holiday gifts. The Ranch store will be open from 1 until 4 PM Tuesday through Friday.

HERONRY CELEBRATION: Helen Pratt has been celebrating heronry successes at ACR for 26 years now. This year, with the help of Tom Queer, she reported nine great blue heron nests, all of which were successful. Nineteen young herons were fledged from the colony at the Ranch. Great egrets experienced an excellent success rate for the 97 reported nests with about 170 young fledged. Three of the four snowy egret nests were successful. Owl predation was minimal, last year's golden eagle didn't return, the collars kept raccoons out of the trees, El Nino seems to have had no impact. No wonder we have reason to celebrate. thanks so much to Helen and Tom for their efforts in monitoring our heronry.

#### **CELEBRATE WITH US: Bouverie Audubon Preserve:**

Saturdays, January 9, February 13, March 13 and 27 from 9:30 to 1:30. Celebrate with a walk through the lovely Bouverie Audubon Preserve led by one of our BAP docents. Reservations are taken at the beginning of the month preceding the walk. Register early by calling (707) 938-4554.

#### **CELEBRATE WITH US: Bolinas Lagoon Preserve:**

Ranch Guide Training: Saturdays, February 6 through March 13. You can't celebrate more than this. You'll be in on the ground floor for next year's celebration of the entire public season at ACR by joining our ranch guide class of '93. You will need more information about this celebration so please call us.

Coastal Prairie Restoration Day: Saturday, January 16 at Cypress Grove. Celebrate the restoration of our native grasslands by lending a hand with our winter planting program. It's free and you might get wet, but you'll have reason to celebrate your contribution to our natural heritage for years to come.

The Experts Talk Ticks: Friday, evening, February 26 at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. For five bucks you will be celebrating **not** getting Lyme disease with the information you will pick up in this special symposium.

# The S A S Calendar

(Continued from Page Two)

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

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15 HAYWARD SHORELINE FIELD TRIP

A midweek field trip to an area 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:

AL DE MARTINI

# SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19 THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT

This count is consistently one of the "top" counts in the nation in numbers of species identified. Use the form on Page Six to sign up or call the Compiler.

COMPILER

DAN KELLER

365-2032

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26 THE ANO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT

This count is also in the "top ten" of national counts and is chronically under-counted because we have too few people out in the field. Your help is needed on both counts. Use the form on Page Six to sign up or call the Compiler.

**COMPILER** 

DAN KELLER

365-2032

#### **January**

# WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6 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

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 7 SAS BOARD MEETING

7:30 PM at the SAS of-

fice. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Please call ahead to be sure there will be enough room.



#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 14 SAS GENERAL MEETING

#### AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST - A WYOMING AD-

**VENTURE** with George Metropulos. See Page One for details. The meeting will be at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Socialization and refreshments at 7:30 with the meeting beginning at 8:00.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16 SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

THE CARRIZO PLAINS TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED

# SUNDAY, JANUARY 24 PACIFICA - THE SHARP PARK SHORELINE

This area can be extremely productive in the winter as it encompasses a harbor with scoters, loons and mergansers, a beach, a fresh-water marsh and isolated groves of trees, all of which have been known to yield surprises. We will meet at 9:00 AM at the Anchor Monument just south of the fishing pier on Sharp Park Beach. The trip should break up at noon. Heavy rain cancels the trip.

**LEADER** 

JUDI SPITLER

355-9362

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 30 GRIZZLY ISLAND WILDLIFE AREA FIELD TRIP

This state wildlife area on the shores of Suisun Bay is noted for its variety and number of waterfowl and wintering passerine species. This trip should last until mid-afternoon so bring lunch and liquids. To get there, follow Highway 80 across the Bay and Carquinez Bridges to Fairfield, take the Texas Street exit and follow Texas St. through Fairfield to Grizzly Island Road on the right. Take Grizzly I. Rd. to the wildlife area headquarters where we will meet in the parking lot at 9:00 AM.

LEADER

TO BE ANNOUNCED

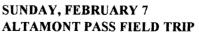
### **February**

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4 SAS BOARD MEETING

7:30 PM at the SAS office. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Please call ahead to be sure there

will be enough room.



See the February Needles for details.

**LEADERS** 

NICK COIRO AND LINDA KYPTA

(Continued on Page Four)

The only useless species is the one that is extinct. - G. Jon Rusch



### The S A S Calendar

(Continued from Page Three)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11
SAS GENERAL MEETING - AUDUBON LEGISLATIVE
ACTION with John McCaul. See the February Needles for details.

SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND MONDAY - FEBRUARY 13, 14 & 15 - PRESIDENTS' DAY WEEKEND IN NORTH-EASTERN CALIFORNIA. Klamath Lake, Tule Lake and Alturas Wildlife Refuges and Lava Beds National Monument plus (weather permitting) Surprise Valley and Ash Creek Wildlife Area. Eagles, swans, waterfowl, high desert birds, and (maybe) Bohemian waxwings and northern shrikes. Participants must call the leader for reservations.

**LEADER** 

CLIFF RICHER

355-4058

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 BEGINNERS' TRIP TO THE PALO ALTO BAYLANDS.

This trip will concentrate on identifying basic marshland birds including the Palo Alto specialties - American bitterns and clapper rails but may involve a search for some of the exotic visitors that find their way to this tiny refuge every winter. This will follow our beginners trip format of a relatively short field trip followed by a discussion session of what we saw - or any other topic of interest to the participants. We will meet at 9 AM at the parking lot nearest the visitor center.

LEADER:

FRANCIS TOLDI

344-1919

## John Bourneman To Retire

Western Regional Representative John Bourneman will retire in February 1993 after 32 years of service with Audubon.

Most of us remember John as the head of Audubon's Condor Recovery Team in Ventura. The team was disbanded when the US Fish and Wildlife Service made the decision to capture all remaining wild birds and turn the program over to the San Diego and Los Angeles zoos. Birders will remember John for his excellent article on birding the Mt. Pinos area in the old (pre-1985) Lane *A Birder's Guide to Southern California*.

Since then John has worked out of Sacramento on a variety of special projects.

We have always found John to be outgoing, gracious, informative and humorous. We will miss his stabilizing presence.

#### 

"I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery...To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which has never been seen before and which shall never be seen again."

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

### **Birdathon Donors**

Stephen Aldrich Tony Alexander Frank & Jean Allen Dr. Barrett D. Anderson Rick Baird Carol Belew Mrs. Benjamin Benkman Susan Bernhard Susan Bianucci Earl & Vera Boyson Elva & Mary Bresler Lee Brown Sue Carder Wallace & Patricia Carlson Margaret Caulkins Mrs. Park Chamberlain Mike & Lynn Cropper Barbara Daubert Genevieve Dovle Patricia Donchin Jean Durick Louise Fletcher Leslie Flint George & Ruth Frecker Bill & Louise Freedman Juanita Ghalamkar Jim Grant Dr Dale Hands Bruce & Phoebe Harlow Sherley Higuera Elsa Hooper Bill & Betty Horn Richard Izmirian Ann B. Jeffries Rick Johnson Mark & Pat Jones Damian Kaczorowski Iria Koski Robert & Helen Kratter Richard Kuehn Stan & Carrol Larsen Wendy Lee Jeanne Loring Hal & Barbara Lucas Jo Macartney Michael Macchiaverna Fred & Karen Mcelhany Janet & Malcolm Mcwhorter Genevieve Miller Anne Moser Frances & Lerov Nelson Charles Newman Ernest & Eileen Norback Michael O'brien John & Nena Padlev Cliff Richer Joseph Rick Howard Rosen Paul Ruby Jean & Ted Rusmore Isobel Sanford Grace Sain Werner Schumann Dean Schuler Betty & Al Seubert Robert Shaw Carl Smith Judy Spitler Ruth Stonehouse Gary Strachan Maria Straatmann Rita Thomen Francis Toldi Tom & Marian Vanden Bosch Linda Votteri **Douglas White** Bob & May Blossom Wilkinson Joan Zuckerman

Please accept our apologies for being so late in acknowledging your help -- and our heartfelt thanks for contributing to the continuing efforts of Sequoia Audubon.

# Costa Rica Trip

The Kern River Research Center is sponsoring a birding and natural history trip to conduct an EAst-West transit of Costa Rica from March 6 to March 20. A similar trip in 1991 was able to see and identify 300 species. The trip which will cover all habitats of the country will be limited to 10 participants and will proceed at a leisurely pace, spending 3-4 days at each location before moving on.

All proceeds from the trip will go to futher the Kern River Center's research on endangered and threatened species. The trip fee of \$2500 iincludes meals, lodging and ground transportation. Air transport to Costa Rica is not included.

For more information call or write Muriel Halterman, Stephen Layman or Pamela Williams at the Kern River Research Center (619) 378-3345, PO Boz 990, Weldon, CA 93283.

"The color of truth is gray."

---Andre Gide

# WINTER 1993 SAS BIRDSEED SALE --- ORDER FORM

### ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16TH!!

Please check prefer	red pickup location:						
( )San Bruno	By arrangement		( )Belmont	2/25, 2	/26, 6 - 8 pm		
( )Burlingame	2/25, 6 - 8 pm, 2/27, 9 am - 1	1 pm	( )Half Moon Bay	2/25, 2/	26, 6 - 8 pm,		
( )Pacifica	By arrangement			2/27, 10	am - noon		
( )San Mateo	2/25, 2/26, 9 am - noon, By a	arrgt.	( )Atherton	2/23, 2/2	26, 6 - 8 pm		
				# BAGS	\$COST\$		
AUDUBON WIL		50 lb. @	\$19.00/bag				
red & white mille	et plus black oil sunflower	20 lb. @	\$10.00/bag				
RED/WHITE MI	ILLET MIX	50 lb. @	\$18.00/bag				
	l "western wild")	20 lb. @	\$ 9.00/bag				
				-			
BLACK OIL SU	NFLOWER	50 lb. @	\$25.00/bag				
		25 lb. @	\$14.00/bag _				
WHITE PROSO	MILLET	50 lb.@	\$17.50/bag				
Will Ellioso		25 lb.@	C10.00/L				
			_	<del>.</del>			
THISTLE		25 lb.@	\$48.00/bag				
		5 lb. @	\$12.00/bag				
Name				TOTAL	***************************************		
Name Address			Work Phone (optional)				
	City			Zip			
( ) I am interested in	n other types of seed/supplies  O AVAILABLE FROM	-	( ) Might be willin	ng to help in futur	e seed sales  GIFTS!!		
A COOK			Items Sold at SA Office or Meetin				
			Jinoc or meetin	90 1010	· <b>u</b>		
BIRDER'S HAN	DBOOK - Ehrlich, Dobkin and	l Wheye	17.50	20.00	)		
BIRDING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BAY - SCVAS		- SCVAS	10.75	13.00			
BIRDING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - Jean Richmond		10.50	13.00	)			
ENJOYING HUMMINGBIRDS MORE - Various		3.50		4.50			
MONO LAKE GUIDEBOOK - David Gaines			6.00	8.50	_		
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE		20.00	22.50				
SPECIES IN DANGER IN OUR BACKYARD-Jamison		5.00	6.00				
PACIFIC COAST CHECKLISTS -Pads of 25		•	3.00	3.50	IA III		
SAN MATEO COUNTY CHECKLISTS			.50	.75			
ECO-SAFE STRING BAGS "I'd Rather Be Birding" BUMPER STICKER		ED	4.00	5.00	193		
	JBON SOCIETY PATCH	EK	1.50	2.00	ara		
SEQUUIA AUDI	DON SOCIETT PATCH		2.50	2.75	· 1		

# **Cowbirds & Clearcutting**

A study conducted at Illinois' Shawnee National Forest by Dr. Scott Robinson has brought forth some startling results. Deep woods thrushes and warblers had long been thought to be relatively immune to brood parasitism from the open space loving cowbird.

But now it seems that clearcuts open up a considerable area of surrounding forest to the brown-headed cowbird. The Shawnee, which has been considerably fragmented, is nevertheless the largest forest in Illinois and hosts a fairly sizeable population of wood thrushes, hooded, Kentucky, cerulean, and worm-eating warblers, scarlet and summer tanagers and Acadian flycatchers. All have been heavily impacted.

The wood thrushes were most affected. In 1991, 89 wood thrush nests were found containing a total of 413 eggs. The thrush eggs, however, were outnumbered 115-198 by cowbird eggs. With these ratios it is highly unlikely that any wood thrush fledglings survived more than a few days before being pushed out of the nest or starbying to death.

# Ferruginous Hawk In Danger

The Utah Audubon Society, along with Hawk Watch International and the Ferruginous Hawk Project, has petitioned the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to list the "Froojie" as endangered or threatened. These organizations claim that the current population of the endangered buteo is less than 10,000, fewer than the number of bald eagles in the lower 48 states.

Its decline is generally attributed to disruption of the bird's nesting areas by recreational off-road vehicles and mineral exploration. If the ferruginous hawk is disturbed during the nesting season, it will abandon its eggs and - unlike most raptors - will not re-nest during that season. Shooting of the adult birds is also considered a problem throughout much of its range and has contributed to its decline.

#### 

Black vultures have taken to nesting on city buildings in South America, in some cases forcing workers to close their windows or turn off the air conditioning. As many professional ornithologists have commented, the aroma arising from a vulture's nest can be "remarkable". (At least! ...The Editor)

#### JOIN THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS BIRD COUNT 12/19/92

Once again, Dan Keller will compile both counts and with two years' 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, and maybe even some owling. 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 WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$10 SO WE CAN ASSIGN THE AREAS.

Sequoia Audubon Christmas Counts, 30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202 San Mateo, CA 94403

PLEASE, WE NEED YOUR REPLY BY DEC. 5

AÑO NUEVO BIRD COUNT 12/26/92

I will participate in the		
CRYSTAL SPRING	GS CBC on 12	/19/92
AÑO NUEVO CBO	C on 12/26/92	
I am an experienced birder as an area leader. For Crystal Springs, I we		
First Choice:	, and the second	
Second Choice:		
Third Choice: For Año Nuevo, I wou		F17.
First Choice:		
Second Choice:		****
Third Choice:		
I will count any area assigned.		No
I will monitor and report my fee	der on 12/19	12/26
I will be at the compilation on 12	2/19	12/26
Name(s)		
Address		
City	Zip Code	Telephone Nun

# **Field Trip Reports**

**Point Reyes - September 13.** Four birders joined me on my annual Point Reyes trip. Once again I was cursed with that rarest of Point Reyes phenomena, extraordinarily sunny weather. (Birding is best on typical Point Reyes days - cold and foggy.)

After a short discussion with the rest of the birders we decided to depart from the usual trip itinerary to the warbler traps and try Abbott's Lagoon, where a bar-tailed godwit had been reported.

On the walk to the lagoon we had an opportunity to observe a number of Savannah sparrows and note the variations in yellow on the faces and streaking on the breasts. We saw some red-necked phalaropes at a distance and later were able to get good close-up looks at these perky little migrants.

Godwits - indeed all shorebirds - were notable by their scarcity and were concentrated in three or four groupings around the lagoon. We checked them all carefully and were able to determine that all of the larger birds were marbled godwits (with the exception of two white pelicans). We were, however, able to get good looks at two Baird's sandpipers. One of the terns sharing the nearest sandbar with the godwits attracted my attention because of its noticeably short legs and long wings as well as its overall "scruffy" appearance. Closer examination showed that it had a diffuse carpal bar and its wings had a slightly grayer cast than those of the Forster's terns

Although we failed in our quest for the bar-tailed godwit, we were all willing to settle for an arctic tern as our "good bird" of the day and we retired to Drake's Beach for lunch and a close fly-over by two barn owls.

— Cliff Richer

Hawk Watch - September 27. Two birders joined me for the trip to the Marin Headlands to view the hawk migration. When we arrived there were already a dozen or so observers scattered over the hilltop. Within the hour another 100 or more joined the



crowd - including the official hawk observers from the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. The first birds observed were a flock of cedar waxwings, followed closely by a flock of migrating Vaux's swifts. The neighboring trees provided us with orange-crowned, yellow-rumped and Townsend's warblers and ruby-

crowned kinglets while we were waiting for our first hawks of the day. The Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks soon made their appearance on schedule and we soon were able to distinguish one from the other with ease (in most cases). Other hawks were scarce - even red-tails, but shortly before lunch a small, dull-colored buteo flew around the hill below us - a broadwinged hawk! At about one p.m. we retired to the picnic tables at Rodeo Lagoon for lunch, ending the trip. — Cliff Richer

Mountainview Forebay - Beginners' Trip - October 10. Five birdwatchers - three beginners, two intermediate - showed up for the first of this fall's beginners' trips. It was a clear and windless day, quickly becoming quite hot. Although shorebird numbers were low, we had a good variety of birds, with a total of 41 species in two hours.

We took as much time as everyone in the group needed to study a number of species. We had good side-by-side comparisons of least and western sandpipers, ring-billed and California gulls, moorhens and coots. We studied the plumage variations on white-crowned sparrows and, while looking at a greater yellowlegs, discussed the difference from a lesser yellowlegs. And we had a largely inconclusive study of some silent basic (winter) plumaged dowitchers.

Livening up the proceedings were two Eurasian wigeons and a number of white pelicans.

Duck species were in surprisingly large numbers, with 10 species represented. Throughout the morning we discussed such topics as bird migration, vagrancy, birding optics and general approach to identification of difficult groups of species (specifically shorebirds and gulls).

Beginner's trips provide a good forum to birders new to the pastime, and for intermediate birders wanting practice on the fundamentals. We will observe and discuss species as long as anyone in the group needs, and no questions are considered stupid. We also take the time during and after the trip to discuss general topics relating to birds, ranging from what we observed that day, to bird behavior, to conservation.

--- Francis Toldi

# **Everything's A Trade-Off**

The windmills at Altamont Pass are environmentally correct by our current standards. They provide energy from a constantly renewing resource and they don't pollute air or water.



On the other hand there are those who would argue that they are an affront to the eye - a form of visual pollution - and that they occupy many times the amount of open space than would be occupied by conventional energy generation.

Now comes a study that is most troubling. The California Energy Commission has estimated that 27 golden eagles can be expected to die each year indmills. Even more dicturbing are their actual ob-

due to the windmills. Even more disturbing are their actual observations of 11 of 77 American kestrels (14%), 36 of 124 redtails (29%) and 11 of 25 (44%) golden eagles that were killed. These are not estimates, nor are they totals. These are birds that were actually spotted and tracked until they succumbed to the whirling blades or guy wires of the windmills.

# **GIFTS AND BEQUESTS**

Sequoia Audubon Society welcomes gifts in general or on behalf of, or in memory of relatives or friends. Such gifts may be designated for education or for the advancement of the objectives of Sequoia Audubon Society at the discretion of the Board of Directors. All gifts are tax-deductible. Please send your gift in the form of a check to the Sequoia Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in Sequoia Needles and personally on behalf of Sequoia Audubon Society.

#### Janet Duerr, Steve Schafer and Cliff Richer in memory of Dorothy Herrington Marie A. Bailey in memory of Mary Rothbard Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Stone, Jr.

SEQUOIA NEEDLES IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY EXCEPT JANUARY, JULY AND AUGUST. MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED IN SEQUOIA NEEDLES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL IS THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOLLOWING MONTH. THESE MAY BE ORIGINAL ARTICLES, ORIGINAL ARTWORK OR CARTOONS, OR UNCOPYRIGHTED MATERIAL FROM OTHER SOURCES. ITEMS DEALING WITH CURRENT CONSERVATION ISSUES MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE PRIOR TO PUBLICATION. INFORMATION FOR ALL OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS — INCLUDING EXCHANGE BULLETINS — SHOULD BE MAILED TO: 30 WEST 39TH AVE., SUITE 202, SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA 94403-4561

SUBSCRIPTION TO NEEDLES SEPARATELY IS \$10.00 PER YEAR.

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