

sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 42, No. 4
December, 1993 and January 1994



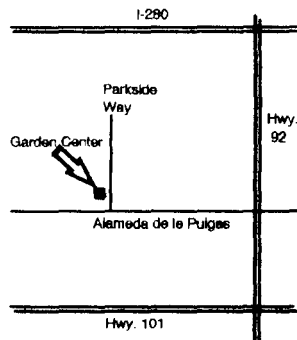
December's Program The Birds of Southern Florida

Jim Lomax who delighted

us last year with his presentation of the "Birds of Arizona with a Touch of Texas" returns with a completely new program on the **Birds of Southern Florida**.

Jim's distinctive and succinct delivery enables him to show us an amazing number of bird slides in a short time. Another program not to be

missed. This month's meeting is Thursday, December 9. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. **Don't forget this is potluck night so we start earlier at 6:30.**



January's Program Students, Steelhead and School Transformation



presented by Stephen Maskel, Science Teacher at Pescadero High School. Steve will give us a multi-

media demonstration of the Pescadero Creek Curriculum project which involved all the students and faculty at Pescadero High in field research, legal and historical documentation and preparation of communications media and mathematical tables.

February will feature a presentation on the research done on the Marbled Murrelet in the Santa Cruz Mts..

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 through F** should bring a **CASSEROLE**, or other hot dish, those whose names begin with the letters **G through L**, a **SALAD** and **M through Z** should provide the **DESSERTS**. Bring enough to feed five times the number in your party.



From The President

Anne Moser

My best wishes to you for a joyful and peaceful holiday season! May 1994 be rewarding and enriching to you all.

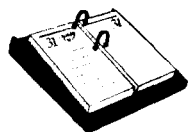
The entire fall issue of the quarterly journal of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory is titled "On Behalf of Songbirds". It has several excellent articles and I encourage you to call PRBO (868-1221) for a copy. This issue describes several programs underway to help save our songbirds. PRBO has been kind enough to allow us to give you a sample in the following excerpts.

"Partners in Flight is a cooperative initiative involving public agencies and non-governmental organizations throughout North America and Latin America." It was started in 1990 "in response to widespread population declines detected among neotropical migratory songbirds." The four main objectives of California's Partners in Flight are: "identify population trends and causes of population declines and range contractions. Identify important habitats, and protect and manage them for the benefit of neotropical migratory birds through collaborative efforts at the state, federal and private level. Develop and implement management strategies to eliminate the causes of population declines and range contractions. Develop and implement informational, educational and training programs for the general public and especially for targeted groups."

Birds in the Balance is the new National Audubon program that will coordinate Audubon's involvement in and support of Partners in Flight nationwide.

"Specifically, Audubon's Birds in the Balance program in California will work within Partners in Flight to develop and implement strategic plans to conserve, restore and enhance significant riparian habitats. Cooperative projects with Partners in Flight public land managing agencies will include demonstration pilot projects for protecting and enhancing riparian habitat. Birds in the Balance is building a network of volunteer research and restoration teams that can assist in cooperative riparian research, restoration and monitoring projects with Partners in Flight associates. With private landowners and their organizations the program is working to identify and develop strategies for protection of riparian habitat and also sponsoring or co-sponsoring workshops and field tours, focused on riparian habitat enhancement techniques for private landowners. Finally Birds in the Balance will offer presentations throughout California to educate target audiences about Partners in Flight, conservation tools, cooperative efforts and broad-based citizen activism."

Thank you, Cliff. Cliff is retiring as the editor of the NEEDLES. This is his last issue. Our newsletter is well respected thanks to Cliff's time and energy. The members of Sequoia Audubon owe Cliff an enormous debt of gratitude for his 11 years of work on our behalf. Thank you, Cliff, from all of us.



The S A S Calendar

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2 - SAS

BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the SAS office. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.** Call ahead to be sure there will be room.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 - 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. Not only does the harbor usually have one or two surprises, but the nearby willows, cypresses and grasslands have proven to be first-rate warbler traps. Clay-colored sparrows, palm and prairie warblers are only a few of the species that have wintered here the last few years. To get there take Hwy. 92 to Hwy. 1 and follow Hwy. 1 north to Capistrano Rd. and turn left at the lights. Take your first left and proceed straight ahead into the upper parking lot where we will meet at 9:00 A.M. This will be a walking trip along the beach and rocks with some areas of broken footing, so boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. The trip should break up at noon.

LEADER DAN KELLER 726-3306

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7 - PRINCETON HARBOR.

Essentially the same meeting place and times as the trip above.

LEADER NICK COIRO 349-1834

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9 - SAS GENERAL MEETING BIRDS OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA with Jim Lomax.

Jim will present a program featuring one of the major birding areas of the United States. 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 18 - THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT - SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE DETAILS.

COMPILER DAN KELLER 726-3306

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2 - THE AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT - SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE DETAILS.

COMPILER DAN KELLER 726-3306

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4 - FOSTER CITY AREAS 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

(Continued on Page Three)



News From Your Ranch

Dan Murphy

SEASON'S GREETINGS! It's the holiday season again and we at ACR wish you, our friends and supporters a very happy holiday season. If you happen to be in west Marin on a weekday afternoon, stop at the Ranch and pick up one of those very special holiday gifts. The Ranch store is open from 1 until 4 PM Tuesday through Friday.

Do include ACR among your resolutions for 1994. Plan to visit the Ranch this spring or plan a walk at the Bouverie Preserve. Count shorebirds or waterfowl on Tomales Bay or monitor harbor seal disturbances with us. Become a Ranch Volunteer at any of our preserves. Join us for '94.

HERONRY SUCCESSES: Helen Pratt and friends once again monitored our heronry and others in Marin County. We had seven great blue heron nests - all successful, producing an average of 2.14 young per nest - and 104 great egret nests producing an average of 1.41 young per nest. Ranch Guide Ray Paula observed ravens taking two week old chicks from an unattended nest on July 4. Such predation has not been previously documented and it may help explain why nest production fell from last year. Snowy egret nests, although very difficult to locate, seem to be on the increase this year. Eleven were found this year but no estimate could be made on nesting success. Sadly, the Stafford Lake heronry failed this year, presumably because of golden eagle predation and disturbance. Our thanks go out again this year to Helen in her 27th year of heronry observations.

CELEBRATE WITH US by registering for one of the following programs. Call 868-9244 for more info or for reservations.

- ♦ **BOUVERIE PRESERVE GUIDED NATURE WALKS:** Saturdays; Dec. 11, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13 & 27 from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Celebrate a docent-led walk through the lovely Bouverie Audubon Preserve. Reservations are taken at the beginning of the month preceding the walk. Call 707-938-4554 for reservations.
- ♦ **COASTAL PRAIRIE RESTORATION DAY** at Cypress Grove Preserve. It's time to help replant native bunch grasses at Tomales Bay. Its **FREE** but do register. Saturday, January 15.
- ♦ **SPRING WORK DAY** at Bolinas Lagoon. Join our staff and friends as we spruce up for spring and the public season. **FREE** and lunch besides! What a deal. Saturday, March 5.

Call and Register Now!



Call it arrogance, chutzpah, hubris or obscenity, but the Japanese fishing industry hit a new record of sorts when it served whale meat, obtained under its "scientific research" whaling quota, at a banquet for the International Whaling Commission.



The S A S Calendar

(Continued from Page Two)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6 - SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the SAS office. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.** Call ahead to be sure there will be room.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13 - SAS GENERAL MEETING STUDENTS, STEELHEAD AND SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION: A MATCH MADE IN PESCADERO CREEK by Stephen Maskel of Pescadero High School. Steve will show us the multi-sided effects of a student research program. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Socialization and refreshments at 7:30 PM. Meeting begins at 8:00.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15 - FOSTER CITY AREAS FIELD TRIP. See the details for the Tuesday Field Trip. 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

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22 - BEGINNER'S TRIP - 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

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 AND 30 - LOS BANOS REFUGES AND PANOCHE VALLEY FIELD TRIP. This trip covers two distinctly diverse areas and exposes us to a variety of rare and unusual birds. The four refuges north of Los Banos are noted for white-faced ibis, sandhill cranes, a large variety of waterfowl and shore birds, raptors and owls. Twenty miles south of Los Banos, Little Panoche Road winds its way through the Diablo Range into Panoche Valley where wintering flocks of mountain plovers, vesper sparrows, mountain bluebirds, long billed curlews, and perched raptors vie with the resident roadrunners, phainopeplas and chukars for the birders' attention. Saturday we plan on meeting in the parking lot of the Los Banos Wildlife Area on Henry Miller Road north of the town of Los Banos at 9:00 A.M. Sunday we will meet at the parking lot above Little Panoche Detention Reservoir at 8:30 AM. The trips will go on rain or shine. Motel reservations are recommended at this time of year. We have found the Bonanza Motel to be clean, economical and friendly in the past.
LEADER CLIFF RICHER 738-9176

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29 - AUDUBON SAIL with the Francisco Bay Oceanic Crew Group. **FREE!** All Audubon members are invited to spend the day sailing and birding on the Bay. Reserve by mail. Send your name, address and phone number to the San Sequoia Audubon Society

Francisco Bay Oceanic Crew Group, Station B, PO Box 2386, San Francisco 94125 before January 1.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 - SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the SAS office. **ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.** Call ahead to be sure there will be room.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5 - ALTAMONT PASS FIELD TRIP - Nick Coiro

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10 - SAS GENERAL MEETING - THE MARBLED MURRELET IN THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS: An Endangered Species at the Edge of Its Range - Steven and Stephanie Singer and David Suddjian

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12 - FITZGERALD MARINE RESERVE TIDEPOOLS FIELD TRIP.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15 - REDWOOD SHORES FIELD TRIP - Nick Coiro

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19 - GRIZZLY ISLAND FIELD TRIP

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26 - BIRDING FOSTER CITY BY BICYCLE - Nick Coiro

Proposed Change In Bylaws Makeup of the Nominating Committee

The Board of Directors of the Sequoia Audubon Society recommends a change in the Bylaws of the Society as regards the individuals qualified to serve on the Nominating Committee. The current Bylaws state in Article VIII(1) that the Nominating Committee shall consist of three members in good standing *who are not officers or members of the Board.*

The Board has found that the Nominating Committee benefits from the voting presence of at least one officer or director. The Board therefore recommends that Bylaw Article VIII(1) be changed to read in its entirety as follows (amended portion in bold italic print):

1. Prior to March 1st, the Board of Directors shall designate a Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) members in good standing, *of whom at least two (2) are not officers or members of the Board.* Notice with names of the members of the Nominating Committee will be given in the Society's publication. Suggestions for nominations of the Officers and Directors may be submitted to the Nominating Committee by any members of the Society.

Pursuant to the Sequoia Audubon Society Bylaws this matter is hereby submitted to the membership for consideration at the January meeting, which shall be constituted as a regular meeting of the Society. Any current members of the Society may vote in favor or against the amendment at that meeting.

(A review of past issues of the NEEDLES would indicate that this by-law change was previously announced, voted on and passed at the June, 1986 meeting. Unfortunately it was not properly recorded in the minutes or reported in the NEEDLES and therefore must be once again submitted for approval. ---The Editor.)

From the Conservation Committee Bob Wilkinson

How would you identify the era with the greatest catastrophic mass extinction in the history of the planet? The end of the dinosaurs? In actuality it is our own era according to writer E. O. Wilson. He maintains that 20% of our bird species have been eliminated in the past 2000 years with another 11% endangered at the present time.

Against this backdrop the battle to weaken or cripple the federal Endangered Species Act seems incongruous; yet a major threat in Congress has strong support. The Tauzin-Fields Bill which would require a cost-benefit analysis prior to listing or to initiating recovery plans (HR 1490) has 82 sponsors.

On the other hand HR2043, introduced by Representative Gary Studds (D-Mass.), would re-authorize the Act with some improvements. This bill identifies the need to protect multiple species within the same ecosystem; sets deadlines for completion of recovery plans; and augments funding.

Senate Bill 921 introduced by Max Baucus and John Chafee has similar provisions. More co-sponsors are needed for these bills:

Take action now! Write to your Senators and Representative and ask them to co-sponsor HR2043 and S921. In your letter you should point to the success stories of the present Endangered Species Act - the continuing recovery of the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and Pacific gray whale and the steady (if slow) territorial expansion of the California sea otter.

Diane Feinstein Barbara Boxer
Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510

Anna Eshoo Tom Lantos
Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Birding Classes

Two classes for birders will be offered by Sequoia Adult School at Little House, 800 Middle Avenue in Menlo Park. There will be 8 slide lectures for each class. Four optional field trips are available for an additional fee.

BIRDING BASICS -- for beginning and less skilled intermediate birders. Wintering waterfowl and raptors. Wednesdays, 7:30-9:30 PM, beginning January 12.

FOLLOWING BIRDS THROUGH THE WINTER--for intermediate and advanced birders. Identification of and survival strategies used by wintering birds. Mondays, 7:30-9:30 PM, beginning January 10. Fee is \$30 per course. Registration at the first class.

Bird Festival at Coyote Point

Birds of the Bay Area will receive special attention during Coyote Point Museum's Bird Festival on Saturday, December 4.

The program embraces guided walks, speakers, live birds, slide shows, information booths and crafts for children. It begins at 10 AM and ends at 4 PM. Speakers are scheduled for each hour on the hour and include:

- Allen Fish, Director of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory
- Dan Evans, Director of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory
- The San Francisco Zoomobile
- Juanita Heinemann, hummingbird rehabilitation expert
- Katherine Rambo, wildlife photographer

Walks through the Raptor Aviary and the aviary in the Wildlife Habitats are part of the program. The Habitats now include more than 20 species of native birds. The program is free with Museum admission of \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and \$1 for children 6-17. Children under age 6 are admitted free.

HELP WANTED

Volunteers are needed to help main our booth at the Coyote Point Museum's Bird Festival. Call Anne Moser (324-1718) if you can help.

We also need all the Christmas Counters we can get. See Page 6 for details.

ERRATA: Last month's *NEEDLES* contained a number of errors as regards the Christmas Count dates and fees. These have been corrected in this month's issue. Our apologies.

...The Editor

Oaks of California Fund-Raiser

The St. Patrick's Preservation Committee (SPCC) is sponsoring an illustrated talk on conserving oaks and oak landscapes in California. Bruce Pavlik, author of *Oaks of California* will be the speaker. The talk will be followed by a book signing.

The event is a benefit for the SPCC whose mission is to preserve the historic oak landscape at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park.

The event will be held on Friday, December 3 at 7:30 PM at the Palo Alto Unitarian Church, 505 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$15. For reservations or information call Judith at 424-8110 or the SPCC at 369-7512.

The Danes have a unique environmental problem. Because of its limited land area, Denmark has few cemeteries and those are filled beyond capacity. So, cremation is the normal way for disposal of human remains. Unfortunately this adds 500 pounds of mercury per year to Denmark's air pollution - from tooth fillings.

WINTER 1994 SAS BIRDSEED SALE - - - ORDER FORM

ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD!!!

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

Please check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be February 10th - 13th with details to be advised later.

☐ San Bruno ☐ Burlingame ☐ Belmont ☐ Half Moon Bay
☐ Pacifica ☐ San Mateo ☐ Atherton

				# BAGS	\$-COST-\$
AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX	50 lb @	\$20.00	/bag		=
red & white millet plus black oil sunflower	20 lb @	\$10.00	/bag		=
RED/WHITE MILLET MIX	50 lb @	\$19.00	/bag		=
	20 lb @	\$ 9.50	/bag		=
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....	50 lb @	\$26.50	/bag		=
	25 lb @	\$15.00	/bag		=
WHITE PROSO MILLET	50 lb @	\$18.50	/bag		=
	25 lb @	\$10.50	/bag		=
THISTLE	25 lb @	\$49.00	/bag		=
	5 lb @	\$12.50	/bag		=
SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....	25 lb @	\$26.50	/bag		=

Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible)

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

CHECK # _____

TOTAL _____

Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope to receive your order confirmation and directions to your pickup location.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Mail your check and order to
SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
San Mateo, CA 94403

ITEMS FOR SALE OR RENT

BIRDER'S HANDBOOK - Ehrlich, Dobkin and Wheye
BIRDING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BAY - SCVAS
BIRDING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - Jean Richmond
ENJOYING HUMMINGBIRDS MORE - Various
MONO LAKE GUIDEBOOK - David Gaines
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE
SPECIES IN DANGER IN OUR BACKYARD-Jamison PACIFIC
COAST CHECKLISTS -Pads of 25
SAN MATEO COUNTY or FOSTER CITY CHECKLISTS
ECO-SAFE STRING BAGS
"I'd Rather Be Birding" BUMPER STICKER
SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY PATCH
VIDEOS FOR RENT:

- TECHNIQUES OF BIRDING - Arnold Small
- VIDEO GUIDE TO BIRDS OF N.A. - 5 Tapes

Direct Sale

17.50
10.75
10.50
3.50
6.00
22.00
5.00
3.00
.75
1.00
1.50
2.50

\$2.00 per week
\$5 per tape/per wk.

By Mail

20.00
13.00
13.00
4.50
8.50
24.50
6.00
3.50
1.50
2.00
2.00
2.75

Please call to make
arrangements for rental of
video tapes by mail.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE SALES TAX

Please make all checks payable to:

Sequoia Audubon Society

The Christmas Bird Counts

The Christmas Bird Count is one of the most enduring and popular of Audubon activities - or for that matter of *all* outdoor volunteer activities in America. Last year more than 55,000 people participated in the count. And the CBC is for *everyone* from industrial strength birders to novices.

What accounts for the CBC's success? Well, for starters, it's just plain fun - an event of unparalleled camaraderie. For many, it's a first chance to learn the joys and skills of birdwatching. For others, it's high power competitive birding at its best. Moreover, taking part in the Christmas Bird Count contributes to a vital scientific endeavor. Each year the data from more than 1500 counts is published in *American Birds*. The resulting data base is tapped over and over again by scientists and researchers worldwide to uncover important avian trends. There is simply no better source for this information.

SAS is participating with its usual two counts, 12/18 for Crystal Springs and 1/2 for Año Nuevo.

Don't Delay! Sign Up Now! Just send your check for \$10.00 for one count or \$20.00 for both, along with the name of the count and your telephone number. Call the office (345-3724), or Dan Keller (365-2032) or fill in and mail the form on this page to register for either count.

Wildlife Area Habitat Standards

Since 1990 a statewide Wildlife Area Habitat Committee has been working to standardize habitat management methods and criteria for state-managed wildlife areas. The following are some of their current standards:

1. **Permanent wetlands** should account for at least 3% of the total wetlands
2. **Semi-permanent wetlands** should account for at least 3% of total wetlands.
3. **Diverse moist soil vegetation** should include at least three major plant species of high nutritional value. Each species should occupy at least 25% of seasonal wetland.
4. **Special ecological communities** are to preserved with no net loss.
5. **Riparian habitat** is to preserved and expanded by 50% within 10 years.
6. **Cereal grain plantings** should account for at least 10% of the total upland habitat with a minimum plot size of 50 acres for cranes and geese and 5 acres for raptors and pheasants.

Additional criteria were also established for the location and size of "managed" nesting and foraging areas.

JOIN THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS BIRD COUNT

12/18/93

Once again, Dan Keller will compile both counts and with four 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 FOR EACH COUNT 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. 4

Sequoia Audubon Society

AÑO NUEVO BIRD COUNT

1/2/94

I will participate in the...

☐ CRYSTAL SPRINGS CBC on 12/18/93

☐ AÑO NUEVO CBC on 1/2/94

☐ 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 12/18 1/2

I will be at the compilation on 12/18 1/2

Name(s)

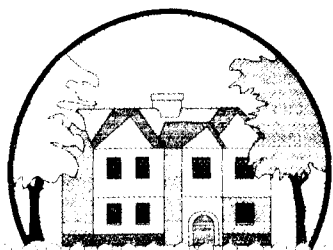
Address

City

Zip Code

Telephone Number

The Backyard Birder



Rick Held Winter Feeding Tips

In any season the "best" bird feeder is the one that helps you achieve your feeding goals. Whatever those goals, our peninsula winter's wind and rain deserve some special consideration. Watching the feeding frenzy of mixed flocks between downpours is great entertainment. In addition, many of our winter residents, white and golden crowned sparrows and dark-eyed juncos for example, are especially attractive and enjoyable to host.

A platform feeder, placed low to the ground to be attractive to ground feeders, requires an open mesh bottom or several holes to allow easy drainage. For the same reason a silo or hopper feeder with a roof should have several small holes in the bottom of the seed compartment to allow exit of moisture entering through the feeding ports. In any case, good drainage will reduce seed loss from moisture and minimize clogging of seed ports by clumps of seed debris. It will also reduce the chance of disease being transmitted from bird to bird at your feeder.

A silo or hopper feeder may be additionally protected from rain with a plastic dome-type baffle, which serves as an umbrella. The baffle also will reduce the attractiveness of the feeder to squirrels and rodents, giving the birds more seed to enjoy and giving you more opportunities for casual backyard birding.

Many people prefer to feed the smaller birds. Nothing can empty a feeder faster than a flock of beautiful but hungry band-tailed pigeons! A covered platform feeder with a small opening, or a silo feeder with no tray, is most effective in reducing the interest of these larger birds,

including rock doves, jays and mourning doves. Specialized feeders such as globes or wire baskets are effective at attracting clinging birds such as titmice, chickadees and smaller woodpeckers. A plastic baffle will protect these smaller feeders from the elements, large birds, squirrels and even house finches to some extent.

Suet cakes can be successful in all seasons but winter is the traditional period to attract woodpeckers, other insect eating birds and many of the seed eating species to this delicacy. Selecting a feeder that has a built-in suet basket can create an all-in-one feeding station. A separate suet basket, protected by a baffle as above, can be placed so it will be most visible to you and convenient to your intended guests.

Although they will feed on black oil sunflower and sunflower chips, pine siskin and goldfinches are frequent winter visitors to niger feeders, where they can be selectively fed. An inexpensive sock or a more elaborate narrow-opening silo feeder, will minimize the poaching of the house finches while providing ample feeding opportunity to the goldfinches and siskin.

This is also a good time to clean out nest boxes so they will be ready for nesting in a couple of months. After cleaning, placing two or three inches of pine wood chips in the box will give you a better chance of success with woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice. The chips will also give you notice of occupancy, as the birds will empty them onto the ground as part of their adoption ritual!



WHO...

Do you ask for expert advice on bird feeding?

- Feeders • Seed • Houses • Books
- Tapes/CDs • Baths • Binoculars • Gifts



Wild Bird Center
926 El Camino Real
San Carlos
(415) 595-0300

Don't use sugar substitutes in your hummingbird feeder. Hummers require the calories. Honey is no good either. It ferments and causes a fungus disease fatal to hummingbirds.

The Chase Is On!

The 11th 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, through all the county's prime birding spots trying to identify as many species as possible. We'll be following up the Christmas Count's efforts and, weather permitting, we have an excellent chance of breaking 1991's record of 169 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 169+ species by "pre-paying" your pledge for 170 (or 100) species.

Make all checks payable to

Sequoia Audubon Society

and mail them to:

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

All honored pledges are tax-deductible



YES. I will support Sequoia Audubon Society and its conservation efforts with a pledge of

_____¢ per species.



YES. I will pre-pay my pledge based on an estimate of at least 100 or 170 species being identified.



My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

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Sally Benson

Fred McElhany

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