



sequoia needles

13

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society • San Mateo County • Volume 42, No. 12 • December 1994

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Look for the next issue of the *Needles* in February 1995!

Happy Holidays from the editors!

Letter From The President

By Julia Manderville

As I wrote this message, I was reviewing my calendar for the month of December. I panicked. December is a BIG month for Sequoia Audubon. Two significant events this month are the *Holiday Potluck and Celebration of Bats* — December 8 at 6:30 pm.; and the *Christmas Bird Counts* — December 17 and 31, all day with an evening dinner Dec 17. If you make it to each of these events you are doing well. If you can join us for only one of these *special* December events — please do. If you cannot, the *February Needles* will be full of events and opportunities for service. In February you will receive information on the following major Spring activities:

1. **BIRD-A-THON.** This significant fund raising event for our chapter and National is without a leader this year. If you have administrative skills and/or resources; or if you have an interest in organizing people to count birds, Call Francis Toldi or me. By March our Bird-A-Thon organization should be up and running. If you are willing to help

coordinate this project your time commitment would be an average of 10 hours per month from March through June. This is a one-day event in May.

2. **AUDUBON CANYON RANCH.** In the *March Needles* we will announce an orientation meeting for hosting at ACR. If you are willing to coordinate the volunteer hosts for the Month of May and conduct an orientation meeting (experienced ACR groupies would probably be available to help) once in April, call me or Terri Simpson.

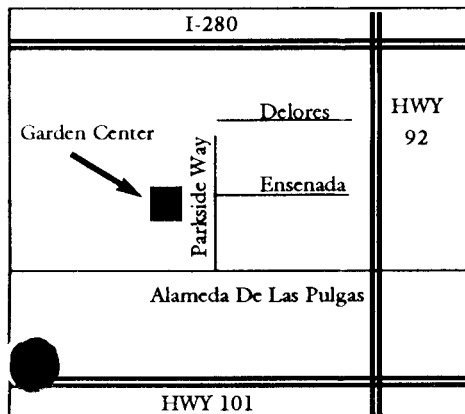
3. **OFFICER AND COMMITTEE CHAIR NOMINATIONS.** The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting in February. The position which will be vacant is Secretary. Please contact a Board Member, or officer if you are interested in serving on the Board or as an officer or committee chair. You need not have experience or birding skills. The "requirements" are enthusiasm and an ability to commit a few hours each month. *Come one, come all!*

I hope to see you at one of our events in December. Try to rest up this winter for an active and productive Spring.

Program for December 8 General Meeting: Wings in the Night: A celebration of Bats

December's program at our holiday pot luck meeting promises to be quite interesting — especially for kids! Patricia Winters, with the help of her live, tame bats, will bring her presentation "Wings in the Night: A Celebration of Bats" to Sequoia Audubon Society. For further program description see the Calendar on page 2.

Important information for December 8 Meeting: Pot Luck begins at 6:30 pm with the program to follow at 7:30. For the Pot Luck Please bring your own plates and utensils and a paper bag to take them home. Members who's last name begin: A - F please bring Dessert, G - I please bring a casserole or other hot dish, M - Z please bring a salad. Please bring enough to serve five times the number in your party. Thank you and enjoy the evening!



GENERAL MEETING

Second Thursday of the Month, 7:30 pm
At the San Mateo Garden Center
on Parkside at the Alameda

BOARD MEETING

First Thursday of the Month, 7:30 pm
At the Sequoia Audubon Office
All members welcome

Winter Birdseed Sale Order Form on Page 7

The winter birdseed sale will be Feb 23 - 26 1995. Orders must be received by Feb 15. We will no longer offer 50 lb bags of seed. The savings were not great and it makes handling much easier!

Calendar of Events

Thursday, December 1

BOARD MEETING At the Sequoia Audubon Office 7:30 pm. All members welcome. Please call ahead to make sure there will be room.

Thursday, December 1

SMITH AND STEINBERGER SLOUGHS With an early morning start in this area of southern Redwood Shores we will hope to see Short-eared and Burrowing Owls, a variety of raptors including the possibility of Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons and our usual winter array of shorebirds and ducks. Meet at 7:15 am in the dirt parking lot east (and slightly north) of the Whipple Exit off Hwy 101. The cyclone fence gate is visible from Hwy 101. It will be an easy walking trip of about 2 miles. Be prepared for mud if there has been recent rain.

Trip leader Al DeMartini 415/345-6988

Saturday, December 3

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT CLASS The field trip will be a mini-CBC so there will be a chance to try your skills in the field. The cost is \$35 for California Academy of Sciences or Audubon members; \$45 for non-members.
Dan Murphy 415-564-0074.

Sunday, December 4

PRINCETON HARBOR The only sheltered harbor between Santa Cruz and San Francisco, 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 in the past few years. Take Hwy 92 to Hwy 1 north to Capistrano Rd and turn left at the lights. Go past the marina, take the next left at Prospect Way/Harvard Ave. Follow Harvard west (a couple of blocks) till it ends at Westpoint and Stanford, where we will meet at 9 am. This will be a walking tour along the beach and rocks with some areas of broken footing, so boots or sturdy shoes are recommended.

Leader Dan Keller 726-3306

Thursday, December 8

GENERAL MEETING & POT LUCK San Mateo Garden Center, Pot Luck at 6:30 with the General Meeting to follow at 7:30 pm. **Wings in the Night: A Celebration of Bats** Speaker: Patricia Winters The vital role that bats play in our ecosystems will be discussed and several live bats will be available to observe close up. Theslide presentation will show the tremendous diversity of the order Chiroptera, and deals with the myths and misconceptions about these beneficial mammals. Patricia Winters is a full-time bat researcher, educator and wildlife rehabilitator with the California Bat Conservation Fund.

Saturday, December 10

CHRISTMAS COUNT WARMUP Time to spruce up those counting and ID skills! If you can make it, call Dan for directions to the hot spot he has chosen.

Leader Dan Keller 415/726-3306

Wednesday, December 14

FOSTER CITY Wintering ducks and shorebirds will be our main interest along the bays and lagoons of Foster City as we look for the field marks that separate Barrows from Common Goldeneye and Greater from Lesser Scaup. Learn how to identify the Red Knot and pick the Knot out of flocks of Dowitchers, Plovers, Willets and Dunlins. Meet in the parking lot at the Recreation Center on Shell Road at 9 am to carpool. The trip should end at noon. Heavy rain cancels.

Leader Nick Coiro 349-1834.

Thursday, December 15

ELEPHANT SEAL WALKS The walks begin at Año Nuevo State Reserve December 15 and continue through March 31. The Northern Elephant Seal breeding season is December through March. The seals arrive in early December and continue arriving through February. Most of the adults have left by mid-March, leaving behind the weaned pups who remain through April. From April to November, seals haul out on the mainland to molt and are available to observe in the Reserve through a permit system. For info. call 415-879-0227. For reservations call MISTIX at 800-444-7275.

Saturday, December 17

CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler Dan Keller 415/726-3306

Saturday, December 31

AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler Dan Keller 415/726-3306

Thursday, January 5, SAS BOARD MEETING 7:30 pm at SAS Office.

Saturday, January 7, 1995

FOSTER CITY See December 14 Foster City trip description.

Leader Nick Coiro 349-1834.

Thursday, January 12, GENERAL MEETING 7:30 pm at San Mateo Garden Center. See page 3 for program details.

Saturday, January 21

BEGINNER'S TRIP-PALO ALTO BAYLANDS This trip will concentrate on identifying basic marsh 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 relative short field trip followed by a discussion session of what we say - or any other topic of interest to the participants. Meet at 9 am in the parking lot nearest the Visitor Center.

Leader Francis Toldi 415/344-1919

Tuesday, January 24

REDWOOD SHORES Despite intensive development this area still affords some marvelous birding opportunities. To get there take Hwy 101 to the Holly Street Exit. Follow Redwood Shores Parkway to the radio broadcasting station at its end. Meet at the side of the road in front of the radio station at 9 am and carpool from there. Rain cancels trip.

Leader Nick Coiro 349-1834

Sunday, January 29

PRINCETON HARBOR See Decem' 4 Princeton Harbor field trip description
Leader Dan Keller 726-3306

January Meeting Sequoia Audubon Society Program

Thursday, January 12, 1995

Birding the Bering Sea – Gambell, St. Lawrence Island and St. Paul, The Pribilofs – By Leslie Flint

For those birdwatchers traveling to Alaska, trips to St. Lawrence Island and the Pribilof Islands, both in the Bering Sea, offer exciting possibilities found nowhere else on the North American Continent.

Leslie Flint, an avid Sequoia Audubon birder, shares not only pictures of birds seen in these two locations on her trip there in 1991, but also tidbits about the anthropology, archaeology, and history of the people who live there.

Gambell, situated on the northwest cape of St. Lawrence Island is a village with 500 Siberian Yupik-speaking Eskimos who subsist hunting whales, walrus and seals. Birding at Gambell is an incredible experience and tantalizes the birder with possibilities of Asiatic birds and a mind-numbing passage of seabirds in the hundreds of thousands.

St. Paul, The Pribilofs, located about 70 miles southwest of Anchorage is inhabited by 600 Aleut Eskimos. It is also home to the world's largest northern fur seal colony. Don't miss this fascinating program.

Field Trip Reports

San Pedro County Park October 1, Judy Spitler

We covered the area by using the Old Trout Farm Trail and returning on the Brooks Overlook Trail. We didn't have a large number of different species but we did have several nice flocks with a lot of birds to sort through. They included good views of Golden-crowned Kinglet, Creeper, Hutton's and Warbling Vireos and Townsend's Warblers.

Point Reyes

September 11, Cliff Richer

Fifteen birders joined this Point Reyes trip. The day was warm and sunny, with a light breeze. No rarities were found, but the birders observed a "feeding frenzied" of pelicans, ducks and a few alcids at the fish docks and were treated to good views of great horned and barn owls at both the fish docks and Drake's Beach.

Camp Chiricahua

By Bert McKee

With financial help from the Sequoia Audubon Society I attended Camp Chiricahua in Arizona this summer. A 10-day long camp for young birders, Camp Chiricahua is located in one of the best birding spots in North America, Southeastern Arizona. During the camp we travelled all over this rich region, visiting such famous hotspots as Ramsey and Madera Canyons and the Patagonia Rest Stop. Although birds were the main focus at the camp, we studied all living things; some non-bird highlights included Ringtail, Coati, Black Bear, Gray Fox and many other mammals.

The mountains in Southeastern Arizona are a northern extension of the habitat in Mexico, so they attract many southern species found nowhere else in the U.S. Some of my favorite "Mexican" species that we saw included Elegant Trogon, a spectacular long-tailed, red and green bird, Gray and Zone-tailed Hawks, Montezuma Quail, Olive and Red-faced Warblers, Green Kingfisher, Vermillion Flycatcher, Rose-throated Becard, Varied Bunting, and Painted Redstart. The hummingbirds were amazing. We saw ten species in one spot and the trip total was thirteen, including the rare White-eared, Violet-crowned and Lucifer Hummingbirds. Owling was also good. We saw Burrowing, Spotted, Elf, Whiskered Screech, Western Screech, Northern Pygmy, Great Horned and Barn Owls.

My favorite bird of the entire trip may have been the Spotted Owl that landed right above the entire group! Although there are a few Spotted Owls in San Mateo County - I've actually heard them here - this was the first I've seen. My total of 60 life birds on the trip was astounding! I am grateful to the Audubon Society for their generous support.



Moving Day

The Workshops section of Audubon Camps and Workshops program, under the direction of Peg Abbott, is moving to a new headquarters and partnership with the Audubon Center of the Northwoods in Minnesota. Peg will work with Mike Link and the staff of Northwoods to continue the exciting workshops that Audubon has offered since 1989.

Over 15 week-long destinations will be featured in 1995, along with International Ecology Tours in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya, Argentina and the Amazon. Our new address:

National Audubon Ecology and
Photography Tours

P.O. Box 530

Sandstone, MN 55072

Phone 612-245-2648

Fax 612-245-5272



Back to the Grass Roots

Planning and Conservation League
Foundation 12th Annual Environ-
mental Legislative Symposium
Saturday and Sunday, January 7 & 8

You are invited to attend this event at Sacramento City College. This year's theme is "Back to the Grass Roots". It provides more than 200 leaders of environmental organizations, state and local officials, attorneys and citizen activists the opportunity to review pending legislation, discuss challenges and victories, and plan strategies for shaping future environmental laws in California. For more information contact Jamie Phillips, PLC • 926 J St, Suite 612 Sacramento, CA 95814 • 916-444-8726 ext. 86



San Francisco Christmas Bird Count

By Dan Murphy

The San Francisco Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Wednesday December 28. Our circle covers the north peninsula from San Bruno to the Golden Gate. Join a team in one of our areas for a full day of birding, help us for a few hours by covering your neighborhood park or square, be a midday birder for a few hours in downtown San Francisco, or watch in your backyard for as little as 30 minutes. As always our boat situation is uncertain, so if you can help with a boat please contact Alan Hopkins at 415-664-0983. Our countdown dinner is at the S F County Fair Building (Hall of Flowers). As of this writing we assume the count fee will be \$5 each and the dinner an additional \$5. Both are subject to change. To register, call Dan Murphy 415-564-0074.

Backyard Birder

By Rick Held3

Nesting Help for Larger Birds

Many of us enjoy helping the smaller songbirds with tree and shrub nesting locations, nest boxes and even nest materials. Larger birds suffer from the same habitat loss as their smaller cousins, and some species respond to the same types of nesting assistance. Given proper habitat and some effort, larger birds can often be attracted to a spot where their nesting activities can be observed and enjoyed by the family.

Woodpeckers

Our woodpeckers are primary cavity nesters, they create a nest cavity by excavating dead wood with their strong beaks. An excellent way to encourage them to nest nearby is to leave "snags," dead limb stubs on live trees, and dead trees for this use. Where these natural sites are not available, some woodpeckers can be enticed to use an artificial nest box. The best local nest box candidates are probably the Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) and the Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*). The cavity size preferences for these species are quite different, so a species-specific nest box is recommended.

American Kestrel

Our smallest and most common falcon, the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), is a secondary cavity dweller - they use cavities created by other birds, such as a Northern Flicker or Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*). The kestrel is a colorful and active bird, and readily takes to an artificial nest box. Kestrels require a good source of small vertebrates, mice and field voles, to feed their brood, so a location near an open field is often most successful. A kestrel pair are often seen hunting in the narrow strip of land between the railroad track and El Camino Real in San Carlos. Hoping to attract them, the Wild Bird Center located a nest box on the Kelly-Moore Paints building (look directly above the yellow Kelly-Moore sign on the highest portion of the southwest elevation). we've had no luck yet, but are still hoping. A kestrel nest box is fairly large - 8 X 8 inch bottom and 15 to 16 inch height with a 3 inch entrance hole. That means that they are heavy, so a solid tree or structure in an accessible location is necessary.

Screech and Barn Owls

Both the Western Screech Owl (*Otus kennicottii*) and the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) will accept nest assistance. The screech owl will nest in a box very nearly the size of the kestrel box described above. They are commonly found in open woodlands and near streams. They accept boxes near residences and pets don't seem to bother them. (One very successful local screech owl box was on a horizontal limb of an oak about ten feet from the ground only fifteen feet from a residence in a yard dominated by a frisky young German shepherd!) Screech owls predate on birds as well as small mammals, so you should be careful to locate the owl nest box some distance from other bird nesting locations in your yard. If you have the option, try to locate the box so can be watched. You may be able to observe the owls using the nest box as a roost during the cold winter nights as well as a spring nesting cavity.

Barn owls will use larger nest boxes (about the size of a small doghouse), and will nest in more open cavities in barns, attics and large buildings. Appreciating their services as mice and rat hunters, many farmers mount barn owl nest boxes on elevated structures around the farm. In our residential areas Barn owls often establish nests in palm trees where they raise their young in the flattened center portion of the tree top. It is not unusual to find them utilizing that same tree as a roost year around.

Waterfowl

If you are fortunate enough to have fresh water in a stream or pond, nest boxes for several waterfowl species are possible. Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*), Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*), Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

are all candidates for nest boxes, although the Wood Duck is probably easiest to attract.

Female Wood Ducks are reported to prefer nesting locations boxes near their own fledgling site. For that reason, sites just won't work. In addition, the box design, its mounting and placement relative to the water are all critical for successful fledgling.

Red Tail Hawk & Great Horned Owl

Both the Red Tail Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) use a shallow nest of sticks high in the crotch of a mature conifer tree. In fact, they are direct competitors for nest sites, as well as for prey. Since suitable sites are not common, both species are likely to use an artificial nest platform. For the adventurous, a platform can be made by placing a cross board between two perpendicular limbs 20 feet or more above the ground. The area selected should be fairly free of small limbs so as to allow free access by these relatively large birds, but does not have to be in the very top of the tree. Filling in the triangular space by securely nailing chicken wire creates a floor. The nest is completed by placing sticks and limbs on the wire to create a stable nest platform.

While you are thinking about it, Holiday Season, think about the larger bird species, too. Can you find a place to erect a large nest box, leave a snag for a woodpecker, or even allow a dying tree to stand for a few years? You can make a real difference in a bird's life!

Rick and Marsha Held are owners of the Wild Bird Center in San Carlos.

In-Flight Meals for the Birds

As the arctic winter descended on Alaska, a Costa's Hummingbird was spotted near her Jewel Lake home by Ruth Thompson and captured by Fish and Wildlife officials, who arranged an emergency airlift to Southern California. Susan Stacy, who runs the Hummingbird Rescue Center in Chula Vista, found a sponsor to pay her way to Anchorage since she would have to feed the bird every 25 minutes on the flight south. She expected to be able to release the bird within two or three weeks.

Excerpted from San Francisco Chronicle Earth Week, 10/24/94



WHO...

Do you ask for expert advice on bird feeding?

Wild Bird Center

926 El Camino Real, San Carlos

415-595-0300



Ask for Rick Held

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

News From Audubon Canyon Ranch

By Dan Murphy

It's the holiday season and we at ACR wish you the best during this very special season. Take a winter hike, join a Christmas Bird Count and make a New Year resolution to take an active part in Audubon Canyon Ranch during 1995.



We are pleased to let you know our new officers and directors took office at the October Board of Directors Meeting. With a board of 40 members that's a considerable accomplishment. Steve Thal is our new president and Katie Beacock is our new first vice president. Thanks so much to outgoing president Bob Hahn for two years of very hard work. The job must be a lot harder than I thought. The very youthful Gary Holloway, ACR president from 1990 to 92, just retired and is planning a frenzy of world travel.

It may not be too late to sign up for the Jan. 7 Bouverie Audubon Preserve guided nature walk. Our February walk is scheduled for the 18th, to be followed by one on March 4. Reservations can be made by calling the preserve at 707 848-4554.

Perhaps your New Year resolution is to become a more active citizen of the natural world. Our coastal prairie restoration day at Cypress Grove Preserve on January 14 us a perfect opportunity. If you really want to jump in with both feet become a Ranch Guide. Training sessions are planned for Saturdays from Feb. 4 through Mar. 11. There is a \$10 fee so these 6 sessions only cost \$1.67 each. Give the Ranch a call at (415) 868-9244.



Sierra Club Devil's Slide Campaign

Interested in hiking Montara Mountain/McNee Ranch State Park? Please allow us to introduce ourselves. We are Jill Forester, Chuck Kozak and Joe Barnwell, the co-chairs of a group of Sierra Club volunteers and coastside residents who are ready to serve as your trail guides on Montara Mountain.

The Sierra Club and the environmental community have been fighting for

decades to keep CalTrans from building a freeway bypass over Montara Mountain, which would bisect McNee Ranch State Park, deeply disfigure the mountain and lead to the urbanization of the San Mateo County coast. Our outings group is one of the many grassroots organizations determined to solve the problem - the occasional closure of Hwy 1 due to road failure at Devil's Slide - with the solution that makes sense for San Mateo County: a permanent repair of the road along its present alignment.

The members of our Outings Group have been trained in Montara Mountain lore and natural history. It is our goal to introduce others to the mountain's unique ecosystem with its endangered plant communities, abundant wildlife, historic road & trail crossings and spectacular ocean views.

Our services are free, We will tailor your hike to fit your organization's interests and needs. Youth groups may be able to arrange an overnight camp-out and mountain bike tours are a possibility. To set up an outing, scheduled April through November, please call Joe Barnwell at 415-728-0468, Jill Forester at 415-728-5986 or Chuck Kozak at 415-728-8239. We hope to see you soon on Montara Mountain!



Report from Cairo

By Peter A. Berle, President

National Audubon Society

Last month I participated in the United Nations Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I was extremely proud to lead an Audubon delegation including four Audubon staff and seven grassroots activists to this watershed meeting in Cairo, Egypt. The conference produced a 20-year plan of action which makes stabilizing world population growth, improving the health and status of women, and charting a course towards environmentally sustainable development worldwide a concrete possibility. While the conflict with the Vatican over abortion and family planning overshadowed everything else in the world press, the conference made major strides in declaring the critical importance of integrating environmental protection, women's health and economic status, and

sustainable development into a collective set of goals, if we are to lower population growth. Getting 190 world leaders to recognize the critical interaction of these issues represents major progress.

Audubon played a real leadership role for the environment at the conference. I chaired several meetings, lobbied delegates and was the only U.S. environmental CEO to address the delegates as a whole. Pat Waak, Director of Audubon's Population Division, served on the U.S. delegation to the ICPD as the only NGO advisor from the environmental field. Tanya Thomas, Grassroots Coordinator for Population, co-chaired the U.S. Network for Cairo, facilitating the participation of citizens from across the United States and ensuring that different voices were heard in the ICPD process. Lisanne Nelson, Audubon's Population and Sustainable Development Specialist, coordinated the Environmental Caucus at the NGO Forum in Cairo, bringing together nearly 300 environmentalists from all regions of the globe to highlight environmental concerns. Audubon activists held workshops and networked with new colleagues.

The ICPD conference signals the return of the United States to a leadership position on population issues and sets the stage for work on a national population policy which will include bringing our own population and consumption into balance. The role of NGOs in policy making and creating innovative programs is clearly acknowledged in the official documents of the conference. Audubon's activities in fostering the partnership between local people, national governments and international bodies were specifically commented on by Tim Wirth of the U.S. State Department, who led the official U.S. delegation.

Audubon will be hosting a follow-up population conference for NGOs and activist as part of our National Convention in Florida next month. Entitled "The Road from Cairo," this meeting will be a unique opportunity to organize groups in this country to work effectively together to carry out the mandates from Cairo, including laying the groundwork for a U.S. national population policy. I hope to see you in Florida next month, along with 1,000 other Auduboners from around the country.



Fifth Annual Audubon Sail

By Rick Bielat

On Saturday January 28, 1995 the San Francisco Bay Oceanic Crew Group will hold its Fifth Annual Audubon Sail. Audubon members (who are 18 years or older) are invited to spend the day sailing and birding with us. There were 10 boats in the last "Bird Sail" with over 60 participants. We hope for the same enthusiastic response in 1995. It is a wonderful day. Boats sail in different parts of the bay trying to identify as many bird species as possible, usually anchoring in a cove for a potluck lunch.

Boats generally leave the dock between 9 am and 11 am and return between 5 pm and 7pm. The weather can be sunny and breezy or wet and foggy, so bring layered clothing. Please wear soft-soled shoes that do not have black soles. For lunch bring whatever you want to eat or drink.

Spaces on boats will be available on a first come first serve basis. We will maintain a waiting list in expectation of cancellations. If you have any questions, please write to SFBOCG, Station B, Post Office Box 2286, San Francisco, CA 94126, or call us on our hot line and leave a message 415-979-4866. Someone will get back to you with an answer.

Reservations are to be made by mail only: Please mail you names, address and phone numbers to me no later than January 1, 1995:

Richard Bielat, Service Sail Coordinator
115 Hobart Ave, Apt E
San Mateo, CA 94402-2846
415-349-3826



Response to November Backyard Birder

By Wendee Beldon

Dealing With Squirrels, Part II

As president of the newly conceived Squirrel tolerance League, it behooves me to address the issues raised by the Backyard Birder in the November 1994 newsletter.

Evolutionary Leaps

Mr. Held suggests that to outwit the squirrel, bird feeders be placed at a

distance greater than the five foot range. However, by placing the feeding platform at a distance greater than the five foot launching platform, Mr. Held is inviting the squirrel to adapt to greater leaps (remember Bob Beamon's high jump in Mexico City's Olympics?). Other evolutionary aspects, such as mating with flying squirrels, are also possible.

Rather, I suggest to Mr. Held, we move the bird feeding platform closer and closer, so that within a few squirrel generations, the squirrel will be a tree potato, unable to leap two inches and only able to feed by pressing the remote control branch and having the acorns fall into its mouth.

Piffle on Baffles

Evolution being what it is, and human kind frequently being outwitted by peabrained lesser orders, I suggest that Mr. Held's baffle is another blunder. We know that the squirrel will soon develop velcro paws or suction claws to grasp the slipperiest of metals.

And when it comes to steel-trap-spring-loaded-automatic-door-jams to defeat the heftier weight of the squirrel, I can see Mama throwing Junior from the tree, with her underpaw softball pitch. Junior lands lightly in the sunflower seeds, munches contentedly, and in between, practices his overpaw, ninety-miles-an-hour return of seeds to home base. *Besarubn* the way it otta be!

Location

If squirrels produce angst of the highest order, a move to the desert may be an alternative. One must, however, be aware of the trade-offs. A desert tortoise may take up residence under the ocotillo, or a jack rabbit inhabit the prickly pear. And, of course, spoiled as we are by the rich intellectual life of the Bay Area, there are no bookstores and coffee houses in Tumacacori, Arizona – but I hear that the neighbor saloon has a pool table (hand your stirrups before you play). So birding in the desert still has its downside.

Unconditional Positive Regard

Dealing with ambiguity is one of life's most demanding tasks. Just when we think that we have our lives, and our birds, aligned, then along come the squirrels. However, we are mistaken if we perceive that squirrels alone are at issue here. What about the raccoons, possums, and skunks – to mention a few of the

habitants of my backyard. Anticipating the "problem" suggests eternal vigilance against the vicissitudes of rampaging beasts out to get the sparrow's seed. Rather anticipate the variety and diversity of the backyard, and wish there were more – for all too soon, there may be none.



Join the Christmas Bird Counts

The Christmas Bird Count is one of the most popular of Audubon activities. It is for everyone, from industrial strength birders to novices.

What makes this event so successful? It's just plain fun! For many it is a first chance to learn the joys of birdwatching. For others it is 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 database 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.

This event also helps raise funds for Sequoia Audubon Society. This year we are participating in our usual two counts: December 17 for Crystal Springs and December 31 for Año Nuevo.



Don't Delay, Sign Up Today!

Please send your check for \$5 for each count you want to participate in along with your name, telephone number and the count(s) you want to register for.

For more information or to register by phone call the Sequoia Audubon Office (345-3724) during office hours, 8:45 am to 12:45 pm Tuesday through Thursday

Or fill out the registration form on this page and mail it to the SAS Office, 30 West 39th Ave., Suite 202, San Mateo 94403.

See the registration form on page 7.



Don't forget our January meetings:

January 5, 7:30 pm SAS Board Meeting at the Audubon Office.

January 12, 7:30 pm SAS General Meeting. (see program details on page 3)

WINTER 1995 SAS BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

All Orders With Payment Must Be Received By Wednesday February 15!

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

Please check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be Feb 23 - 26 with details to be advised later.

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

	# Bags	Cost
AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX20 lb @ \$8.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
red & white millet plus black oil sunflower		
RED/WHITE MILLET MIX20 lb @ \$8.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER25 lb @ \$15.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
WHITE PROSO MILLET25 lb @ \$10.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
THISTLE25 lb @ \$38.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
.....5 lb @ \$9.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____
SUNFLOWER CHIPS25 lb @ \$31.00/Bag	_____	= \$ _____

Prices include Sales Tax.

Contributions beyond the bird seed amount to Sequoia Audubon Society are tax deductible.

Mail to Sequoia Audubon Society. 30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202. San Mateo, CA 94403.

Contribution Amount \$ _____ Total \$ _____

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

 Clip and mail today!

Sequoia Audubon Society Registration Form 1994 Christmas Bird Count

I would like to participate in:

- ☐ Crystal Springs Bird Count (\$5) Dec. 17
☐ Año Nuevo Bird Count (\$5) Dec. 31
☐ I am an experienced birder willing to serve as an area leader.

For Crystal Springs

I would like counting this area:

First choice: _____

Second choice: _____

Third choice: _____

For Año Nuevos

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:

Dec 17 _____ Dec 31 _____

I will be at the compilation on:

Dec 17 _____ Dec 31 _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

**Please cut out and mail
with your check to:**

Sequoia Audubon Society
30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
San Mateo, CA 94403.

Membership: We invite your membership in the National Audubon Society/SAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SAS, 30 West 39th Avenue, # 202, San Mateo, Ca 94403

- ☐ **National Audubon Society Membership:** New members \$20.
Members receive *Audubon* magazine and the *Needles* newsletter. Make check payable to National Audubon Society.
- ☐ **Needles only subscription:** \$10 annually (includes 9 issues per year).
Make check payable to Sequoia Audubon Society.
- ☐ **Donation:** SAS greatly appreciates your tax deductible donation which helps fund the Chapter's education, conservation and ongoing activities.

For membership renewal information, call National Audubon at 1-800-274-4201.

Name _____ Gift From: _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ 7XCH C16

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 last day of the month two months prior to the month of publication. 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. Please notify Sequoia Audubon Society at (415) 345-3724 of name or address changes. Please send RENEWAL MEMBERSHIPS directly to National Audubon in the envelope accompanying your renewal notice. LATE RENEWALS should be sent through Sequoia Audubon Society to avoid a lapse in magazine or newsletter issues.

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.

Pete Popin (DTC Tool Company)

Sue Pfohl

Robin Smith

John and Nena Padley in memory of William J. Simpson

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