



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society ♦ San Mateo County ♦ Volume 44, Number 6 ♦ March 1995

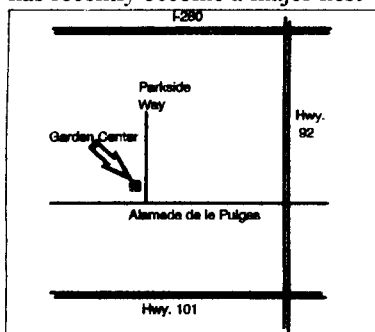
This Month's Program



Valerie Layne began working as a volunteer of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory while still in school. After graduation she joined SFBBO's staff as a wildlife biologist.

One of the Observatory's most important functions during Valerie's entire involvement with it has been the study of the nest sites among the wetlands and salt ponds of the South Bay. Always an important to the nesting of stilts and avocets, the South Bay has recently become a major nest site for California gulls as well.

Valerie will present a program based on the SFBBO's Colonial Breeding Birds Study involving these and other species.



April's Program

April is Audubon month. Jill Shirley, our National Audubon Western Region Representative, will present the main program on "Highlights of the Western Region." Audubon Canyon Ranch will also make a short presentation.

Nom Com Announces New Slate Of Officers

Anne Moser, Sue Cossins and Bob Wilkinson - your 1995 Nominating Committee has had an easy job this year. Despite her earlier indication that she would be stepping down this year, Debbie Frantz has decided to stay on as Treasurer. All other officers and directors had previously indicated their desire to stay on for another term.

President	Julia Mandeville
Vice-president	Rich Kuehn
Treasurer	Debbi Frantz
Secretary	Francis Toldi
Directors	Robin Smith
	Cliff Richer

From Your President

Julia Mandeville



The House of Representatives followed the action of the United States Senate and passed mandate relief legislation during the first week of February. House Resolution 5 was passed on an overwhelming vote of 360 to 74. The Senate passed its version of the relief bill on a vote of 86 to 10. The measures will now go to a conference committee where the differences will be worked out. At this point, differences appear to be minor and the White House has indicated strong support for the measure. The final version approved by the conference committee and sent to the President for signature will be numbered as Senate 1 (Kempthorne, R-IW).

S.1 will:

1. Require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to prepare a cost estimate of any legislation considered after 1/1/96 which imposes more than \$50 million annual in costs to state, local or tribal governments. This may significantly restrict the environmental monitoring and clean-up legislation and reauthorization legislation (e.g., for the Endangered Species Act).
2. Mandates over the \$50 million limit which are not funded will be optional unless funding is provided.
3. The present version of S.1 does not include legislation protecting the environment as an exception.

This bill is only one example of the efforts of the new Congressional leadership to implement the "Contract with America." While we understand the burdens imposed upon local governments by mandates from the state and federal governments, we believe that relief from unfunded mandates should not be accomplished through the weakening of laws protecting the environment. This is especially so, because local governments, such as cities and regional agencies are often the most effective agencies in preventing environmental damage before it occurs.

The Sequoia Audubon Board of Directors has asked me to urge our members to write, telephone, telegraph and/or "internet" (I know its not a verb) our Congressional representatives, the President and the Congressional leadership with concerns about S.1. Our Congressional representatives have a good track record on environmental matters, but they need to know of our support. Communicate with the President and the Congressional leadership, telling them that S.1 should contain an exclusion for laws protecting the environment.

Our conservation chair, Bob Wilkinson, has written another article on legislative activities. During the rest of 1995, we will remind you of the Board's concern with specific items pending in the legislature. We trust that you will take the time to make your opinion known.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

"My perspective is that we weren't managing that resource (Mono Lake) very well. It's been a learning experience for us, albeit not a pleasant one. We're changing the way we look at all water as a resource.

---Mike Gage, President, Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power



Calendar

March

THURSDAY, MARCH 2 - BOARD MEETING at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members welcome. Please call ahead to be sure there will be room.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7 - COYOTE POINT FIELD TRIP. A special week day field trip to explore the birds and environmental assets of this very special area. the trip will begin at 9:00 AM at the lower end of the museum parking lot near the picnic tables. Rain cancels the trip.

LEADER: NICK COIRO 349-1834

THURSDAY, MARCH 9 - GENERAL MEETING featuring Valerie Layne of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory on their **Colonial Breeding Birds Study**. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM with the program at 8:00. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside.

SUNDAY, MARCH 12 - THE ECOLOGY OF PESCADERO MARSH. Pescadero Marsh docents John and Nina Padley love "their" marsh and will share its complexities and secrets with us. This is a multi-faceted field trip which will deal with all aspects of the marsh's ecosystem. But, of course, since Pescadero Marsh is one of the premier birding spots in the county, birders need not worry that their interests will be overlooked. The weather may be cold or warm depending on fog and wind conditions, so be prepared accordingly. Boots are recommended, but walking will be relatively easy and on level grades. We will meet at 9:00 AM in the first parking lot south of the bridge over Pescadero Creek on Highway One.

LEADERS JOHN AND NINA PADLEY 345-2984

SUNDAY, MARCH 26 - GRANTS RANCH COUNTY PARK/HALLS VALLEY LAKE FIELD TRIP. We are privileged to have as leader one of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's "primo" birders. This may be a joint venture with SCVAS so not only do we have a chance to return to this superb birding area after a long absence, but we may have a chance to meet some fellow birders and make new friends. This is golden eagle country and the variety of habitats will produce grassland, oak woodland and wetland species. Lawrence's goldfinches are regular here and this is a well known spot for early migrants. To get there take Hwy. 101 south past the Hwy. 17 junction and take the Alum Rock Ave. East exit. Follow this for about 4 miles and turn right on Mt. Hamilton Road (Hwy. 120). Follow Mt. Hamilton Road 7-9 miles until you see the entrance to Grants Ranch County Park. Go past the entrance about 100 yards to the Halls Valley Parking area on the left. Meet in this parking area at 8:30 AM. There is a \$3 entrance fee.

LEADER ALAN THOMAS 408-265-9286



News From Our Ranch

Dan Murphy

BOB CONRATH: I'm sad to report the loss of our very

good friend and former president, Bob Conrath. Bob was a leader of ACR when I first joined the Board. He helped acquaint me with the inner workings of ACR and was one of several role models who helped me develop my appreciation for the Ranch. He was the ACR president in 1983-84 and subsequently served as a board member and advisor. Bob was the kind of guy who really made an impression. He was a birder, a world traveler, one of the most knowledgeable people I ever met about world affairs and he had a marvelously wry humor. His counsel was respected, his friendship valued and his love for nature and his fellow man unquestioned. Bob was not only a friend ACR will miss but a man who will be missed by everyone whose lives he touched.

PUBLIC SEASON BEGINS MARCH 18: It's that time again. With all the rain the hills will be greener than Ireland. The earliest wildflowers will be in bloom and the birds will be in. The herons arrived by the end of January and the egrets will certainly be waiting for our first visitors. The trails will still be a little damp but the hiking will be great.

HOSTING AT THE BOLINAS LAGOON

PRESERVE: Our supporting chapters have traditionally provided hosts for the Ranch during the public season. We can really use your help as a weekend host. During the past several years ACR has had quite a bit of trouble getting enough volunteers for this very important job. We need hosts for each and every weekend of our public season between March 18 and July 16. **Sequoia Audubon will provide hosts for all weekend dates during May and on May 29.** If you cannot make it at that time but want to host, call the Ranch at 868-9422.

STUDY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: This is the fifth year of our Harbor Seal Census/Disturbance Study. We need volunteers who can make a commitment of at least five sessions of 4-5 hours each. Our North Bay Counties Heron/Egret Project is also in its fifth year. We continue to need field observers who can make a minimum 4 day commitment between March and June. Call Mary Ellen King (707-537-1546) to volunteer for the seal study and John Kelly (663-8203) for the heron study.

Sunday, March 5 is the Spring Work Day at the Bolinas Preserve.

From The Conservation Committee

Remember Earthday! April 22, 1995

San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan Forum: The first Habitat Conservation Plan in the country was the San Bruno Mountain Plan, adopted in 1982 as a compromise to allow development on the mountain in areas with endangered species. What has happened in the intervening 13 years? Are the goals of the Plan being met? What does the future hold?

These and other questions will be addressed at a public forum on Saturday, March 11 at the Brisbane Community Center, 250 Visitation Avenue in Brisbane. The forum is scheduled to begin at 9:30 AM and last until 12:30 PM.

The Republican Contract with America's Environment: Was the election "mandate" a vote to set aside the environmental protections which have been built up over decades? Public polls don't support that notion. One of the top five spending priorities selected by the public is to help the environment. (Crime, education, health and drug addiction are the other four.)

In the face of this support for environmental spending the Republican Contract for America calls for crippling the enforcement of both anti-pollution laws and the Endangered Species Act as well as eliminating funds for habitat acquisition.

The most revolutionary element is the intention of changing the historical interpretation of personal property rights. Property owners would be entitled to be compensated for any diminution of property values as a result of changes in governmental environmental regulations. State and local governments would no longer be required to comply with the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act or the Endangered Species Act unless the federal government pays in full for the costs.

All environmental clean up funding in the defense base conversion programs would be eliminated although these defense bases are among the most heavily polluted areas in the country,

Let your elected representatives know how you feel about this!



Calendar

(Continued from Page Three)

April

THURSDAY, APRIL 6 - BOARD MEETING at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members welcome. Please call ahead to be sure there will be room.

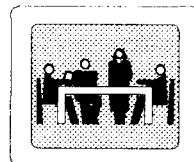
SATURDAY, APRIL 8 - SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN FIELD TRIP - Mac McCormick, an accomplished birder with the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the author of the San Bruno Mountain Checklist and of the chapter on San Bruno Mountain in our soon-to-be-published update of *San Francisco Peninsula Birding*, is our leader on this trip. More details in next month's **NEEDLES**.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13 - GENERAL MEETING - IT'S AUDUBON MONTH! Jill Shirley of National Audubon and the staff of Audubon Canyon Ranch tell us about their organizations. Meeting begins at 7:30 PM with the program at 8:00. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16 - MINES ROAD FIELD TRIP - Cliff Richer's annual four county birding excursion. We'll meet at 8:30 AM on Mines Road, just beyond the intersection with Tesla Road, east of Livermore.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23 - YERBA BUENA NURSERY FIELD TRIP - The variety of habitat and plantings at this popular nursery provides a home for an amazing variety and number of birds. The nursery welcomes birders to its public areas at all times. Let **Dan Keller** show you its fine points. Meet at 9:00 AM in the nursery parking lot.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29 - JASPER RIDGE FIELD TRIP - Louise Fletcher once again coordinates our annual field trip to this Stanford University preserve. This is a "reservations only" trip. Call the office (345-3724) to make your reservations. Details on time and meeting place in next month's **NEEDLES**.



From The Board

Meeting of February 2, 1995

The Conservation Committee reported on the increasingly anti-environmental federal government and the need for members to write letters to legislators and to newspapers.

The Nomination Committee reported that it had completed its task and prepared a slate of officers and directors to present to the membership.

The Board invited the President and Executive Director of Audubon Canyon Ranch to attend the April Board of Directors meeting.

Birdathon Planning is underway, ably headed this year by Rick Baird.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Old men give good advice to console themselves for no longer being able to set a bad example." -----Francois Duc de La Rochefoucauld

"Old women, too" -----Your Politically Correct Editor



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

30 W. 39th Avenue #202, San Mateo, CA 94403

(415) 345-3724

SPRING 1995 SAS BIRDSEED SALE - - - ORDER FORM

ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY APRIL 19TH!!

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

Please check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be April 27-30, 1995 with details to be advised later.

☐ San Bruno

☐ Burlingame

☐ Belmont

☐ Half Moon Bay

☐ Pacifica

☐ San Mateo

☐ Atherton

			# BAGS	\$-COST-\$
AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX.....	20 lb @ \$ 8.00 /bag			
red & white millet plus black oil sunflower				
RED/WHITE MILLET MIX	20 lb @ \$ 8.00 /bag			
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....	25 lb @ \$15.00 /bag			
WHITE PROSO MILLET	25 lb @ \$10.00 /bag			
THISTLE	25 lb @ \$38.00 /bag			
	5 lb @ \$ 9.00 /bag			
SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....	25 lb @ \$31.00 /bag			

STOCK UP FOR SUMMER!

THE NEXT SEED SALE WON'T BE HELD UNTIL LATE OCTOBER!

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible) _____

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

1994 CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

SPECIES	CS	AN	SPECIES	CS	AN	SPECIES	CS	AN	SPECIES	CS	AN
Red-throated Loon	41	68	Osprey	1	1	Herring Gull	260	150	House Wren	1	2
Pacific Loon	75	210	White-tailed Kite	26	41	Thayer's Gull	24	15	Winter Wren	15	32
Common Loon	45	27	Bald Eagle	1	0	Western Gull	1921	838	Marsh Wren	18	39
Pie-billed Grebe	92	28	Northern Harrier	36	31	Glaucous-winged Gull	327	518	Golden-crowned Kinglet	60	42
Horned Grebe	32	11	Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	9	Gull, GW x Western hybrid	103	0	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	376	227
Red-necked Grebe	2	1	Cooper's Hawk	17	9	Glaucous Gull	2	0	Western Bluebird	22	3
Eared Grebe	26	30	Accipiter, species:	1	0	Black-legged Kittiwake	3	4	Townsend's Solitaire	1	0
Western Grebe	173	160	Red-shouldered Hawk	22	23	Gull, species	10294	150	Hermit Thrush	102	102
Clark's Grebe	33	7	Red-tailed Hawk	120	33	Forster's Tern	40	3	American Robin	899	1027
Northern Fulmar	3	17	Ferruginous Hawk	1	1	Common Murre	386	1130	Varied Thrush	315	42
Sooty Shearwater	0	4	Rough-legged Hawk	0	1	Marbled Murrelet	11	13	Wrentit	107	79
Short-tailed Shearwater	0	2	Golden Eagle	1	0	Ancient Murrelet	5	4	Northern Mockingbird	34	5
Shearwater, sooty/short-tailed	6	15	American Kestrel	69	43	Cassin's Auklet	2	11	California Thrasher	10	1
Black-vented Shearwater	11	6	Merlin	12	1	Rhinoceros Auklet	33	68	American Pipit	100	35
Brown Pelican	262	1322	Peregrine Falcon	8	2	Rock Dove	659	45	Cedar Waxwing	147	13
Double-crested Cormorant	230	49	California Quail	282	445	Band-tailed Pigeon	198	28	Loggerhead Shrike	24	16
Brandt's Cormorant	135	288	Virginia Rail	6	17	Mourning Dove	643	173	European Starling	4700	1794
Pelagic Cormorant	116	167	Sora	2	5	Barn Owl	15	7	Hutton's Vireo	42	25
American Bittern	0	1	Common Moorhen	1	1	Western Screech-owl	14	2	Tennessee Warbler	2	0
Great Blue Heron	44	11	American Coot	748	280	Great Horned Owl	19	14	Orange-crowned Warbler	16	7
Great Egret	40	7	Black-bellied Plover	272	64	Northern Pygmy-owl	6	5	Nashville Warbler	3	0
Snowy Egret	108	17	Snowy Plover	33	28	Burrowing Owl	2	0	Yellow Warbler	1	0
Cattle Egret	3	0	Semi-palmated Plover	27	0	Spotted Owl	0	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	291	86
Black-crowned Night-heron	18	15	Killdeer	35	37	Long-eared Owl	2	1	Myrtle Race	49	14
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	0	Black Oystercatcher	4	0	Short-eared Owl	0	1	Audubon Race	381	52
Brant	48	3	Black-necked Stilt	109	0	Northern Saw-whet Owl	7	11	Townsend's Warbler	73	122
Canada Goose	238	2	American Avocet	2298	0	White-throated Swift	16	0	Townsend's/Hermit Hybrid	0	1
Green-winged Teal	476	30	Greater Yellowlegs	29	5	Anna's Hummingbird	299	80	Palm Warbler	1	1
Green-winged Teal (Eurasian race)	1	0	Lesser Yellowlegs	1	0	Belted Kingfisher	6	5	Black-and-white Warbler	1	1
Mallard	505	64	Willet	3174	268	Acorn Woodpecker	37	54	Common Yellowthroat	23	62
Northern Pintail	303	15	Wandering Tattler	2	3	Red-breasted Sapsucker	3	5	Rufous-sided Towhee	75	40
Cinnamon Teal	5	4	Spotted Sandpiper	8	0	Nuttall's Woodpecker	9	1	California Towhee	217	76
Northern Shoveler	436	41	Whimbrel	29	11	Downy Woodpecker	22	11	Savannah Sparrow	127	142
Gadwall	43	30	Long-billed Curlew	109	2	Hairy Woodpecker	24	16	Fox Sparrow	82	114
Eurasian Wigeon	4	0	Marbled Godwit	1181	36	Northern Flicker	146	60	Song Sparrow	179	236
American Wigeon	495	24	Ruddy Turnstone	20	0	Pileated Woodpecker	0	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	74	52
Canvasback	1771	36	Black Turnstone	32	30	Black Phoebe	71	59	Swamp Sparrow	0	14
Redhead	5	0	Surfbird	9	26	Say's Phoebe	24	18	White-throated Sparrow	2	4
Ring-necked Duck	76	25	Red Knot	16	0	Horned Lark	6	0	Golden-crowned Sparrow	1134	394
Greater Scaup	648	34	Sanderling	406	722	Tree Swallow	0	6	White-crowned Sparrow	845	683
Lesser Scaup	1198	5	Western Sandpiper	7451	0	Violet-green Swallow	0	54	Dark-eyed Junco	879	271
Scaup Species	17032	0	Least Sandpiper	584	10	Steller's Jay	275	132	Red-winged Blackbird	614	2040
Harlequin Duck	0	1	Dunlin	910	6	Scrub Jay	396	76	Tricolored Blackbird	17	656
Oldsquaw	3	0	Peep, species	10012	0	American Crow	20	0	Western Meadowlark	470	193
Black Scoter	1	8	Short-billed Dowitcher	8	0	Common Raven	108	64	Brewer's Blackbird	1600	536
White-winged Scoter	82	113	Long-billed Dowitcher	13	20	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	856	396	Brown-headed Cowbird	5	22
Surf Scoter	1112	411	Dowitcher, Species:	1554	0	Plain Titmouse	28	2	Northern Oriole	3	0
Common Goldeneye	927	20	Common Snipe	31	25	Bushtit	908	500	Hooded Oriole	1	0
Barrow's Goldeneye	21	0	Pomarine Jaeger	1	4	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	0	Purple Finch	79	128
Bufflehead	852	37	Parasitic Jaeger	0	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	2	0	House Finch	1111	222
Hooded Merganser	70	6	Bonaparte's Gull	4	11	Pygmy Nuthatch	156	102	Red Crossbill	3	3
Common Merganser	3	0	Heermann's Gull	26	152	Brown Creeper	24	52	Pine Siskin	578	558
Red-breasted Merganser	53	11	Mew Gull	383	401	Rock Wren	1	0	Lesser Goldfinch	115	33
Ruddy Duck	1827	94	Ring-billed Gull	444	2	Canyon Wren	0	1	American Goldfinch	458	133
Turkey Vulture	23	26	California Gull	6595	355	Bewick's Wren	84	29	House Sparrow	386	62

Bold type indicates an unusual bird or a significantly higher than usual number of these birds
Italics indicates a significantly lower than usual number of these birds

Total Species **200** 176
Total birds identified 102308 22003
Number of Observers 43 32

OBSERVERS - BOTH COUNTS

Al DeMartini Shirley Higuera Sharon Hom Grant Hoyt Karen Hoyt Dan Keller Don Keller Rich Kuehn Bert McKee
Carol Miller Anne Moser Pete Popin Dave Powell Barry Sauppe Robin Smith Judy Spitler Ron Thorn Bettina Toft

ADDITIONAL OBSERVERS - CRYSTAL SPRINGS

Rick Baird Lee Blackburn Al Eisner Marc Fenner Natalie Fenner Leslie Flint Dave Hershey Chuck Higinite
Linda Higinite Vicki Hoffman Jim Jully Iona Luke Claudette Maccan Julia Mandeville Ed Medlin Peter Metropoulos
Pat Pauch Diana Quon Cliff Richer Grace Sain Francis Tolki John Toldi John Waller

ADDITIONAL OBSERVERS - ANO NUEVO

Jim Abernathy Mike Azevedo Jim Best Carol Earle Rick Johnson
Ann Loper Steve Maskel Peter Moravcick Kristie Nelson Dick Norton
Maria Straatman Gary Strachan Allan Wofchuck

Additional Birds Seen During the Count Week

Crystal Springs Count Wild Turkeys (2) Short-eared Owls (4)
Ano Nuevo Count Common Merganser (2) Lesser Golden Plover Hermit Warbler Lark Sparrow

Birdathon '95

Rick Baird

How would you like to spend an enjoyable time looking at birds and at the same time help Sequoia Audubon and the Richardson Bay Preserve's education programs.

A great idea, a fine cause and a lot of fun --- but how do you this? It's simple. Become a Birdathoner.

The Birdathon gives you the opportunity to:

- ♦ Meet new birding friends,
- ♦ Go birding with old friends,
- ♦ Begin or expand your list of backyard birds
- ♦ Take a leisurely walk around your neighborhood or a nearby park with family or friends while keeping track of the birds seen.

Sounds great, doesn't it?

It is, but what's the catch? Well... we're going to ask you to see if you can get family, friends, business acquaintances, neighbors, etc. to pledge a certain number of cents each species you identify, or each bird you band, or each bird that visits your feeder, or anything else that is measurable and that has to do with birds. You can do this by yourself, with other birders, with non-birders or with your dog or cat.

The most common way of participating in a Birdathon is to form a team of 2-5 people (the more eyes there are on a team the more birds you'll see) and count the number of species you can identify in any continuous 24 hour period. Besides birding, the teams are responsible for obtaining pledges and collecting on them - although we'll help on the latter if you need us to send out form letters to all of your donors. For the faint-hearted pledges, you can have them put a cap on the maximum amount they will donate. For example, 10¢ per bird up to a maximum of \$20, is a common pledge to our official team, the **Megaticks**.

The official team is composed of some of our most dedicated "big day" birders. Their record is 216 species in a single day and we believe that last year's 204 species was the best performance by any Birdathon team nationally! If you

don't form or join your own team, we ask you to support the Megaticks.

We will help you put a team together. If you're interested call the office (345-3724) and leave your name and the dates on which you will be available. (The Birdathon must be conducted sometime between April 15 and May 15.). We'll help you get together with others who want to participate.

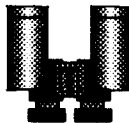
We know there are lots of people who don't have the time to go all day or even for several hours. So we want to have some backyard teams. Even if you don't live in a particularly birdy or diverse area and can only come up with 8-10 species it's educational, fun and can help raise money for Sequoia Audubon and the Richardson Bay Preserve. Have your donors pledge 50¢ or \$1 per species instead of the 10¢ to 25¢ being pledged to the "big day" teams.

If this sounds interesting, please let me know through the office. Leave your name, address and phone number and we'll get back to you to answer any questions you have. Or you can call me at home at 574-1067.

Please consider helping us out on this important fund-raising event. We would really appreciate it.

Field Trip Report

January 21, 1995
Palo Alto Baylands



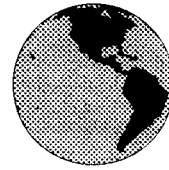
Six beginning and intermediate birders correctly guessed that the rains would pause for at least one morning and joined me for a beginner's trip.

A very cooperative clapper rail just below the parking lot set the tone for the trip. Throughout the morning we got good looks at many interesting birds, including comparisons of species that are very easy to confuse (least and western sandpipers, immature white-crowned and golden-crowned sparrows).

Our species total was 43 and the weather gods were with us. The rains returned while I was driving home.

—Francis Toldi

Breeding Bird Atlas Project Needs Help



ATTENTION ALL BIRDERS!!!

The San Mateo Breeding Bird Atlas project is in its fifth and final

year. We have compiled an impressive amount of information on the breeding birds of the county but our job is not yet done. There are still parts of the county - much of it highly accessible - that need to be checked for breeding birds.

For those of you who are new to the concept, the Breeding Bird Atlas is a census of all the birds breeding in San Mateo County. The county is divided into a grid of 5 kilometer square "Atlas Blocks". Birders check for evidence of breeding birds within their assigned block and record the results in data books. So far we have managed to document 131 species as breeding in the county and we are close to confirming another 19.

YOU CAN HELP US WITH YOUR PARTICIPATION. We will train you in atlasing techniques and provide you with the materials you need to collect data. Advanced and intermediate birders can easily census an open block and beginners can help in their own yards and neighborhoods.

We particularly need help in:

Belmont San Mateo San Carlos
Hillsborough San Gregorio

Please call Rick Johnson at 329-9639 or Francis Toldi at 433-0660 (days) or 344-1919 (evenings before 9 PM) to volunteer or with any questions.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

If you've been looking for a better understanding of the breadth of the Bay Area environmental community, check out the Green City Calendar. The bi-monthly calendar is your resource for workdays and special events sponsored by over 325 Bay Area environmental organizations. Call 285-6556 for a free copy.

+ + + +

Some sloths continue to hang upside down even after death. The others just look that way.

In Search Of The Bohemian Waxwing

Francis Toldi

(Continued from last month)

After a good night's sleep in Klamath Falls, we took one last drive through the Tule Lake refuge, and did manage to find a good congregation of ducks and geese. Coyotes were everywhere, engaging in much the same exercise with the sick and the dying as our beloved national bird. Remarkably, we saw in the midst of a mass of unconcerned geese a Bald Eagle feasting on the corpse of a Snow Goose.

Our last chance for Bohemian Waxwings was also our best chance for them. The Fall River Christmas Count had reported good numbers near Glenburn, as well as two American Tree Sparrows. We cruised into this area and were immediately captivated by its beauty and by the wondrous bird life. Even though it was still cold (but not minus one like in Klamath Falls) and snowy, we found an abundance of birds: Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, Common and Hooded Merganser, Blue-winged Teal, numerous other duck species, Northern Shrike, three species of nuthatch, woodpeckers and the American Tree Sparrows (always a good sighting) and many others. But no Bohemian Waxwing.

We spent the night in Gridley and the next morning at Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area, where we traveled at the foot of a mountain of rocks, the formations of geese and cranes stretched out in the sky above, honking and cackling as they flew by. Later we succumbed to and fought list mania, and had a surprisingly easy time finding Mountain Plover, Eastern Phoebe and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Davis area. We ended the day and our trip meandering around the Sacramento Delta, looking at this and that.

So how did it add up? We missed our target, our Grail of the moment. We had a marvelous trip: good company with my favorite birding companion, spectacular scenery, great birds, lousy football games on the radio, nice little towns, a brief escape from the lives we happily lead at home. Can I go again next week?

The Wandering Tattler Down Under

Anne Moser

(Continued from last month)



I flew from Auckland, NZ to Sydney via Melbourne to join the Southern Australia segment of a commercial operator's

tour. I was with them for three weeks and then on my own for a week. Using major towns as reference points we went from Sydney to Melbourne to Adelaide to Perth to Alice Springs. I left the group there to go on to Ayers Rock from which I returned to Adelaide by the Ghan, a legendary train, and continued on to Sydney by bus and train before flying home.

Reflecting back, the immense distances, drought stricken land, glorious cloud formations, beautiful silver-barked trees, colorful wildflowers and empty beaches of white sand remain in my mind along with the wonderful birds.

The parrot family are not my favorites - they're so noisy - but seeing them in the wild is awesome. They are majestic, colorful and yet very well camouflaged. A flock of 100+ budgerigars landed on a decorated Christmas tree. About 30 white-tailed cockatoos were downing cones in a pine tree. By the side of the road near Alice Springs we saw a pair of pink (Major Mitchell) cockatoos feeding on lemons.

We were able to see six different species of fairy wrens, little feathered bundles in brilliant shades of blue. The southern emu wren was also tiny, sky blue and cinnamon and as defiantly singing on its territory as our marsh wren. Another tiny beauty was the marsh-dwelling golden-headed cisticola.

Sewer ponds are always special to birders and those at Melbourne and Alice Springs are now part of my collection. I love shorebirds so it was exciting to see both the black-winged and banded stilt, the red-necked avocet, Latham's snipe, marsh sandpiper, wood sandpiper and sharp-tailed sandpiper. These were all

added to my list along with three species of rail.

Mallee fowl are mound nesters, building a soil and debris mound in which they bury their eggs. They regulate the temperature by removing or adding debris. When the eggs hatch the precocial chicks work their way out of this natural compost heap and immediately commence life on their own. We observed a pair named "Charlie and Di" in a preserve but were also privileged to see another pair in the wild.

I could go on and on. There was so much to see and do. Kangaroos, koalas, echidna, a wombat and wallabies stay in my mind along with the birds. Ayers Rock has to be experienced to be believed. Inner Australia is vast, dry and inhospitable, yet fascinating. The Magnum Bars (ice cream) are the best. Traveling by train and bus lets you meet ordinary people who live in the country and I have several new friends in my address book. The YWCAs are clean, safe and friendly to solo women travelers. So, save your money and travel Down Under.

Its great!

Accounting Consultant Needed



As you know from Page One, Debbi Frantz has agreed to continue as Treasurer for another year. However, she has

recommended that we convert our system to *Peachtree II* accounting software.

However, Debbi has not had any "hands-on" experience with *Peachtree II* and we need someone to train both she and Terri in its use.

Do we have a member who is an accountant, with Peachtree experience, who would be willing to train Debbi and Terri and act as a consultant?

Since Debbi has said (again) that this is absolutely her last year, we also need a member who is willing to serve as a "Treasurer in training", work with Debby and then take over from her in '96.

Gifts and Bequests

Sequoia Audubon 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 the Society. 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 the *NEEDLES* and personally on behalf of the Society. All gifts are tax-deductible.

Nancy Greenfield

Sequoia *NEEDLES* is published monthly except in January, July and August. Members are encouraged to submit material to be published in the *NEEDLES*. The deadline for the submission of materials is the first day of the month preceding publication. These may be original articles, original artwork or cartoons, or uncopyrighted material from other sources. Items dealing with conservation issues must be submitted to the Conservation Committee prior to publication.

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