

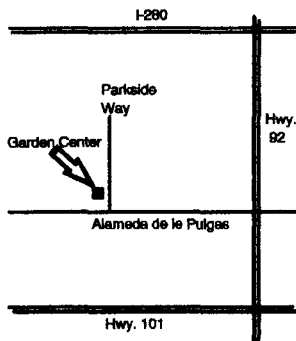
sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume ~~44~~, No. ~~2~~
November, 1995 45 3



This Month's Program Audubon Ecology Work- shop in Maine November 9, 1995

SAS members Rich Kuehn and Dean Schuler attended the June, 1995 National Audubon Society sponsored session in Field Ornithology on the beautiful, diverse Maine coast. The 6 day program took place on Hog Island, in the headwaters of Muscongus Bay. Participants experienced a wide variety of field trips, lectures, discussions, boat trips and bird banding demonstra-



tions under the tutelage of ornithology instructors. Come and learn about this wonderful NAS camp and the breeding biology of birds, especially warblers and colonial seabirds. In addition to a slide program, there will be a video presentation (filmed by Rich) including footage of Machias Seal Island nesting Atlantic Puffins, Razorbill Auks, Common and Arctic Terns as well as a graphic demonstration of how male warblers defend their territory from 'floater' males.

December's Program The Splendors of India December 14, 1995

Beth Huning of the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary returns to us to show us her slides from the Audubon tour of India's Wildlife preserves and National Parks.

Also, remember that next month is Potluck Month!

The Christmas Counts

Did you know that the Crystal Springs Christmas Count is older than Sequoia Audubon? It was the Santa Clara Valley Audubon organizers of this Christmas Count who broke off to form Sequoia Audubon in 1950. To join this year's count, see page 5.



From The President

Julia Mandeville

The trials and tribulations of budgets, dues share calculations and broken office machines. Does this sound less than uplifting? Well it has been for the Sequoia Audubon Board. At the September General Meeting our Treasurer, Debbie Frantz reported to the membership the details of the revised and "improved" budget for the 1995-96 fiscal year. The news is not great. The dues share calculation for our chapter has been reduced by approximately \$650.00 from the 1994-95 allocation. This is a direct result of fewer National Audubon Society dues paying members. The dues received from National are by far the largest source of revenue for our Chapter.

Your participation as a revenue generator is essential to the survival of the chapter. In addition to a cash contribution to the chapter, you could encourage friends to renew or join National Audubon, donate needed office equipment, or volunteer to serve as the Membership chair or the Finance chair. A contribution of \$125.00 pays for the cost of publishing the *Needles* (not including the mailing and printing costs). You could sponsor an issue of the *Needles*. A contribution of \$35 pays for the cost of providing one classroom with Audubon Adventures. You could sponsor one classroom.

The impact our Chapter has on local environmental issues is directly affected by reductions in our budget. The Conservation committee monitors planning and land use issues in the County of San Mateo. This requires the use of postage, telephones, copy machines, and the ordering of official documents from governmental entities. All of these activities cost money. You could sponsor the postage and copying costs of the Conservation Committee for one month, or challenge other Chapter members to match your contribution for Conservation Committee activities. We can all do a little to improve the revenues of the Chapter, and insure the continued services we provide to our members and the community.

On a happy note we are please to welcome **Iona Luke** to the Board. Iona will serve the vacated term of Rick Baird. Iona has been the successful operator of our bird seed sale, and will continue to serve in that capacity. I know Iona would add to my list of things you can do to improve revenues. You can buy bird seed from the chapter. We always have a small supply on hand and our next *big* sale is in February. Look for details in next month's *Needles*.

Has your office just updated its copier? Or moved from a 486 to a Pentium system? Or gone to a plain paper fax? A tax-deductible contribution of used, but usable, office equipment can be worth more to you than its trade-in value.

Have a great November, plan your year-end charitable contributions to include Sequoia Audubon and get ready for the Christmas Bird Counts.

The mission of Sequoia Audubon Society is to participate actively in environmental education, and conservation and in the restoration, preservation, protection and enjoyment of our native natural resources with emphasis on birds and their habitats.



The S. A. S. Calendar

November

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2 - BOARD

MEETING at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members welcome. Please call ahead.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7 - REDWOOD SHORES FIELD

TRIP - This points of land between Foster City and Bair Island appears desolate and dusty in the summer, but can be teeming with birdlife in the winter when rains turn the former salt and oxidation ponds into shallow pools ideal for many shorebirds and dabbling ducks. The area also has grassy areas (unfortunately slated for future development), sloughs and oxidation ponds where horned larks, tri-colored blackbirds, diving ducks and larger shorebirds can also be found. To get there take Hwy. 101 to the Holly Street exit and follow Redwood Shores Parkway to the radio broadcasting station at its end. We will meet at the side of the road in front of the radio station at 9:00 A.M. **NOTE THAT THESE ARE THE REVISED AND CORRECT INSTRUCTIONS. LAST MONTH'S INFORMATION WAS TAKEN FROM AN OLD AND OUTDATED FILE.** (Sorry ...Ed.) Although there will be very little walking, some of the areas may be muddy so boots are recommended. Trip should break up at noon. Rain cancels the trip.
LEADER **NICK COIRO** **349-1834**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7 - CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members welcome. Please call ahead..

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 - GENERAL MEETING - THE AUDUBON ECOLOGY WORKSHOP IN MAINE -

SAS members Rich Kuehn and Dean Schuler attended the 1995 Field Ornithology workshop on the beautiful, diverse Maine coast. Participants experienced a wide variety of field trips, lectures, discussions, boat trips and bird banding demonstrations under the tutelage of ornithology instructors. In addition to a slide program, there will be a video presentation of Machias Seal Island nesting Atlantic Puffins, Razorbill Auks, Common and Arctic Terns as well as a graphic demonstration of how male warblers defend their territory from 'floater' males. Social gathering beginning at 7:30 PM with the meeting and program at 8 PM. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18-19 - THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY WILDLIFE REFUGES - Clouds of geese and enormous rafts of ducks are typical of & the sights that greet the birder at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuges or at the nearby Gray Lodge refuge. These are primarily car-caravan tours since walkers tend to disturb the wildlife. We will meet at 7:00 AM in the parking lot of the Blue Gum Motel on Saturday morning and again at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. The motel is just off I-5, 3 miles beyond Willows. Take the next off-ramp after the motel's sign and turn right onto Blue Gum Road. At the end of the road turn

left. The motel is approximately 1/4 mile on the left. There are other motels in Willows and along I-5 and camping at the state park in Colusa. Motel reservations are advised at this time of year. The Blue Gum Motel's phone number is (916) 934-5401. Trip reservations are not required but you are requested to call the office (345-3724) or the leader so that we may know how many to expect at each rendezvous point.

LEADER **CLIFF RICHER** **355-4058**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30 - PRINCETON HARBOR

FIELD TRIP - 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. Go past the marina and take the next left at Prospect Way/Harvard Ave. Follow Harvard west a couple of blocks until it ends at Westport and Stanford, 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 **CAROL MILLER** **726-2025**

December

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4 - SMITH AND STEINBERGER

SLOUGHS - With an early start in this area of southern Redwood Shores we will hope to see Short-eared and Burrowing Owls, a variety of raptors, including possibly Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, as well as 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.

LEADER **AL DeMARTINI** **345-6988**

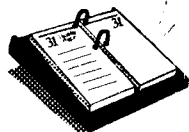
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5 - CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members welcome. Please call ahead..

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14 - POTLUCK AND GENERAL MEETING - following the Potluck, Beth Huning will present her photographic slide show of **India**. The meeting will be at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. The Potluck begins at 6:30 PM. The General Meeting follows.

(Continued on Page Three)



The S A S Calendar

(Continued from Page Two)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16 - THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT - SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS AND SIGN-UP SHEET.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21 - PALO ALTO FLOOD CONTROL BASIN FIELD TRIP. Geographically isolated from the other areas of the Palo Alto Baylands, this complex area of salt and freshwater ponds, brackish marshes, creeks, sloughs, grasslands and riparian growth offers a wide variety of wildlife in the midst of the highly industrialized and developed western bay-front. As a result it offers much to both the beginning and the skilled birder. Relatively rare birds such as blue-winged teal, redheads, merlins, moorhens, and short-eared owls are regular winter residents and a wide variety of other species can be observed in a relatively small area with a minimal expenditure of time. To get there, take Hwy. 101 to the Embarcadero exit and proceed east to the first traffic light at Frontage Road. Take a right on Frontage Rd. and look for a small parking lot on the left after approximately 1.2 miles. We will meet there at 9:00 A.M. and bird until noon. Regardless of weather expect to encounter some muddy going. Other than that the terrain is flat and the small amount of walking that will be done will be easy going. The trip will be timed so that ardent rail-watchers will have plenty of time to visit the Baylands at the high tide.

LEADER JUDY SPITLER 355-9362

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30 - THE AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT - SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS AND SIGN-UP SHEET.

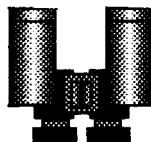
Field Trip Schedule

1/1/96 through 6/30/96

Day	Date	Place	Leader
Wednesday	Jan. 10	Foster City	Nick Coiro
Saturday	Jan. 20	Foster City	Nick Coiro
Saturday	Jan. 27	Los Banos and the Grassland Refuges	Cliff Richer
Sunday	Jan. 28	Little Panoche Valley	Cliff Richer
Saturday	Feb. 3	Altamont Pass	Nick Coiro
Wednesday	Feb. 7	Coyote Point	Nick Coiro
Saturday	Mar. 2	Pescadero Marsh	John and Nina Padley
Saturday	Mar. 16	Sawyer Camp Trail	Werner Schumann
Sunday	Apr. 14	Mines Road	Cliff Richer
Saturday	Apr. 27	Jasper Ridge	Louise Fletcher
Sunday	May 19.	Williams Sisters Ranch	Frances Toldi
Tuesday	May 27.	Shamrock Ranch	Judy Spitler
Saturday	June 8.	Yuba Pass and	Cliff Richer
Sunday	June 9.	Sierra Valley	Cliff Richer

Field Trip Schedules are made up at the beginning of the year and are subject to change. We expect to add some trips. Dates may be subject to change. Trips scheduled after the beginning of the year are strictly tentative since weather, private land access, facility availability, etc. may require changes or cancellations.

Always check the latest issue of the Needles for updates..



The Wandering Tattler

Anne Moser

(Your editor apologizes for the late publication of this particular column which got lost in the confusion surrounding the last changeover of editors. The current Tattler column appears on page seven.)

I spent four days over the Presidents' Birthday weekend visiting Moraga Preserve, Joshua Tree National Monument, the Salton Sea and Anza-Borrego Desert with a birding friend. I listed 99 species including one new bird, the spotted dove, and two new California birds - the Gila woodpecker and common ground dove. It was too early for migrants or for the southern species that the Salton Sea is famous for, but we saw four burrowing owls, a roadrunner, several Abert's towhees, flying sandhill cranes and both the blue-gray and black-tailed gnatcatchers, as well as many familiar birds. In Brawley, we found an old date orchard that had a great variety of birds. That's where we saw the common ground dove as well as the Gila woodpecker. The spotted dove was in my friend's yard in Manhattan Beach.

Later that week, after returning home, I went to Golden Gate Park looking for the tufted duck and cattle egret. I also visited the Arboretum. Their leaflet (Vol. 18, No.1, Spring 1995) had a long article "The Birds in Strybing Arboretum" by Alan Ridley. This is an excellent article on the birds of the Arboretum and where to find them. I really recommend it and would be glad to share my copy. I found varied thrushes and robins feeding near the sprinklers in the "Eastern Australia" section of the arboretum. Nearby I also found a white-throated sparrow. Their gift shop sells a map of Golden Gate Park and a plan of the Arboretum. They also sell a bird checklist but were all out. However, they were nice enough to let me photocopy their file copy. I would recommend the Arboretum for a satisfying day trip.

Best Short Trail in California?



While you may wish to dispute her conclusions, Susan Smith of the Native Plant Society has characterized the Hazelnut Trail in San Pedro Valley Park as being the best short trail in California. Susan, who has led trail workers in eradicating non-native plants along this trail, believes that its variety of plants is among the greatest in California. Considering its short length (5 mile loop) and moderate grades, she feels this is a truly remarkable phenomenon.

Tom Stienstra, outdoor writer for the *San Francisco Examiner*, has also praised the trail and included it in his writings on the best trails in California. Stienstra, however, used its previous name, calling it the Old Canyon Trail.

Whether or not you are willing to wax as enthusiastic as these two experts, the Hazelnut Trail deserves the attention of plant lovers anywhere. San Pedro Valley County Park, located at 600 Oddstad Blvd. in Pacifica, is open from dawn to dusk.



Eileen Jennis-Sauppe
Conservation Committee Chairwoman

I am happy to report that on September 23, SAS again participated in a successful clean-up effort. The event was the second annual clean-up of the Bay Front Trail at Haskins Way in South San Francisco. Conservation Committee member Mary Bresler suggested this location last year and the city of South San Francisco geared up with an all-out effort that involved their Parks and Recreation Department, city workers and their families, students from Westborough Middle School and many SAS members. Participants included our vice-president Rich Kuehn, Education Committee Chair Robin Smith and former Conservation Chair Bob Wilkinson. Bob spoke to the crowd about the value of wetlands and our SAS table was stocked with information about conserving wetland habitats much like the one we were working on that day. Included in the packet of information and goodies provided by the city and county was a list of the birds surveyed at the site by Barry Sauppe.

I anticipate our return to the same area next year, as there was no lack of trash for the dumpster! Besides the numerous bags of small debris collected by the participants (including a full, but leaking, gallon of motor oil - yuk!), city trucks and crews brought back at least five loads of **BIG STUFF** and added it to the mound of garbage. We really needed and appreciated the official participation and support of South City. If all the cities and towns along the coast and Bay were as supportive just think of what might be accomplished!

As I looked back at the water and surrounding area, I saw a peaceful, beautiful resting spot for the thousands of migrating birds who will gather food and energy here on their way south.

Once again, our remaining wetlands are threatened by more than a dumpster bursting with trash. The Senate has approved a spending bill that includes a \$430 million slash in the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund Program

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for toxic waste cleanup. If you were unable to make it to one of the Coastal Cleanup Day events this year (or even if you did) you can still take another step to work for a clean, healthy environment. Call or write your legislators and let them know that you want them to support strong environmental protection laws. Remember, we all live down-stream!

The Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at the SAS office. All are welcome.

"What If" the CVPIA Were Repealed?

(Taken from the March 1995 newsletter of the Grassland Wetlands District)

The Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) provides a firm water supply to roughly 60% of California's interior wetlands to meet historic needs and requires the Secretary of the Interior to acquire a supply to meet optimal management requirements for Central Valley Wetlands.

Current discussions involving CVP agricultural water contractors with members of Congress relate to the repeal of the refuge water supply provisions of CVPIA. This would have a devastating impact on the Pacific Flyway and on international and intercontinental wetland and wildlife resources.

Wetland acreage that has been "re-urged" through CVPIA would be reduced by as much as 75% in the Grasslands and other wetland areas in the Central Valley.

Over 3.5 million waterfowl and 500,000 other migratory birds would be forced to utilize reduced habitat or seek undesirable low quality habitat such as sewage ponds.

Waterfowl food resources would be reduced leading to waterfowl disease and death by starvation.

Loss of wetlands could require that National Wildlife Refuges be closed and that private landowners could be deprived of recreational use of private wetlands.

Depriving Central Valley wetlands of water supplies authorized by CVPIA in 1992 will have long-lasting detrimental impacts to the migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway.



The Feather Duster Crane Madness Cliff Richer

In 1989 the US Fish and Wildlife Service gave up its experiment with having sandhill cranes serve as foster parents to young whooping cranes. In recent years it had become obvious that mature whooping cranes raised by sandhills believed that they too were sandhill cranes. They completely ignored other whooping cranes in conducting their breeding rituals and dances and displayed only for the benefit of sandhill cranes.

At least one of them was successful. A hybrid sandhill/whooping crane was found in Colorado last October. It was accompanied by its parents, a male whooping crane and a female sandhill. *(There is no solid proof for the rumor that she was very near-sighted.)*

The Bosque del Apache flock of whooping cranes, all sandhill crane foster children, will most certainly die out. This means the Aransas flock is the only viable population of whooping cranes left in the wild and a single natural or man-made disaster could wipe out the entire population.

Earlier this year the USFWS inaugurated another experiment in hope of establishing a separate population. This time Florida was chosen as the site. Florida's sandhill cranes are non-migratory and it was hoped that captive-raised whooping cranes introduced into the state would find the environment equally appealing and become a resident population. So far the 14 introduced adult birds have shown no instinct to migrate, but they have also shown little instinct for avoiding predators. Despite earlier training in avoiding dogs and humans, four of the introduced birds were soon killed by bobcats. This is not an abnormally high percentage - except that the introduction site had been surveyed and a number of bobcats removed before the birds had been released. It seems the tough little cats may be more adaptable than the cranes and researchers are now trying to teach the next batch of cranes the necessary survival skills.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖
An eagle has a 110° field of vision.
You and I, about 45°

Sequoia Audubon Society

COME COUNT WITH US!

CALLING ALL BIRDERS FOR THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

December brings a chance to participate in one of our chapter's most important activities. Sequoia Audubon holds two Christmas Bird Counts each year. The Crystal Springs Count will be held on Saturday, December 16 followed by the Año Nuevo Count on December 30. All levels of birders are **WELCOME** and **NEEDED**. Join a team, enjoy the camaraderie, have fun and contribute to the effort!!!

What makes this event so successful? It's lots of fun. For many it is the first chance to participate in a vital scientific endeavor. Each year the data from more than 1500 counts is published in Audubon Field Notes. 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.

SO, please join us for one or both counts. Send your check and registration form to the Sequoia Audubon office along with your name, telephone number and address. For more information call the office (415-345-3724) during office hours, Tuesday through Thursday, 9 AM to 12:30 PM.

It really helps the compilers to know as soon as possible who will participate. Teams need to be organized and information sent to the leaders. Please fill out the form **TODAY** and send it on its way.

The Christmas Counts!

Sequoia Audubon Society

Registration Form

1995 Christmas Counts

I would like to participate in:

- ☐ Crystal Springs Bird Count (\$5)
December 16, 1995
- ☐ Año Nuevo Bird Count (\$5)
December 30, 1995
- ☐ I am willing to serve as an area leader

For Crystal Springs, I would like to count this area:

1st Choice: _____

2d Choice _____

3d Choice _____

For Año Nuevo, I would like to count this area:

1st Choice: _____

2d Choice _____

3d Choice _____

I will count any area assigned:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I will monitor and report my feeder on:

Dec. 16 _____ Dec. 30 _____

☐ I will be at the compilation on Dec. 16
(No compilation on Dec. 30)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

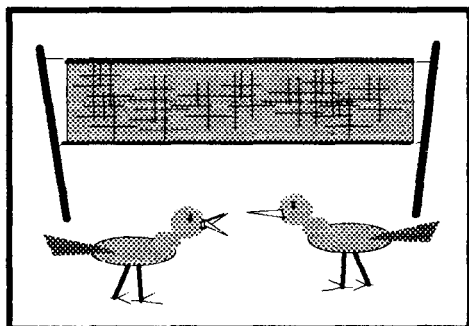
Zip Code: _____

Telephone _____

E-mail: _____

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

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



I need a new ring. Let's get banded.

Reporting Banded Birds

Robin Smith

On a recent birding excursion to Pescadero Marsh, Anne Moser and I spotted a snowy plover festooned with both colored and silver bands. Al Wofchuck, who was passing through on his own birding excursion, corroborated the sighting. We carefully noted the number, location, colors and sequence of the bands so I could report the information to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Upon returning to the car that day we found a Herman's gull that had met its demise on the highway. I retrieved that band with some difficulty as it (and the gull) had been flattened by passing vehicles. I later sent this band to the Bird Banding Laboratory in Maryland.

It was very gratifying to receive a response from both banding programs. SFBBO had forwarded the information I had given them to the local snowy plover banders, who responded with a handwritten note to the Observatory. This snowy plover was a male which had been banded on the central California coast and had not returned there to breed this year.

The notification about the Heerman's gull was in the form of a Certificate of Appreciation! It had been banded near Isla Rasa, Mexico by Ms. E. Velarde on June 20, 1989 when it was too young to fly. Its sex was unknown.

There was further interesting information on the back of the certificate. "About 50 million birds have been banded in America through 1991. Nearly 3 million bands have been recovered and reported. These reports provide information on migration routes, survival rates, harvest patterns of game species, behavior

and other aspects important to the study and management of bird populations."

(Your editor is surprised to learn on this. The only band he ever found was on a very dead pelagic cormorant that had been banded in British Columbia the year before [1984]. The information he received was that the recovery rate for these bands was "very low". Considering that the return of any band is a purely altruistic effort and that birds are world travelers, I would consider nearly 6% to be a remarkably high recovery rate)

Bird bands and color-marker sightings of all species can be forwarded to **Mary Gustafson, Bird Banding Laboratory, 12100 Beech Forest Road, Laurel, MD 20708**. Their E-mail address is **BBL@nbs.gov**. The Bird Banding Laboratory is under the general direction of the National Biological Service which narrowly escaped being abolished by Congress this summer.

Field Trip Reports



Pescadero Marsh Sunday, March 12

The weather gods were kind for the group of 11 people who enjoyed the walk along the Sequoia Audubon Trail at Pescadero Marsh.

We saw all the normal marsh birds and ducks and observed the great blue herons nesting in the eucalyptus trees on the north edge of the marsh.

At one point a rail crossed the trail, but so quickly that we were unable to get a positive identification. We also saw mating western pond turtles and a mule deer.

John and Nina Padley

Sunday, March 26 Grant Ranch

An enthusiastic, well-behaved mob of 47 birders from Santa Clara and Sequoia Audubon enjoyed a sunny morning of birding at Grant Ranch County Park. Alan Thomas of SCVAS led the group to the lake where all five of the common swallow species were found. A pair of eared grebes mingled with the more common duck and grebe species and a pair of honking Canada geese were easily seen.

Spring migrants were sparse at this early date but we did manage a male northern oriole, a Wilson's warbler, three empidonax (probably Pacific-slope) flycatchers, a rufous hummingbirds and several orange-crowned warblers. Varied thrushes were seen in three locations and great blue herons were observed on nests in the eucalyptus near the park entrance.

We were mildly embarrassed at not being able to find a golden eagle for a visiting Texan who needed it for his life list. After all, Grant Ranch is a known breeding location of the bird. A red-tail harassing an eagle about ½ mile away was the best we could do and this fell short of fulfilling anyone's idea of a like look at a bird.

Thanks to Alan for his skillful leadership of such a large group.

Grant Hoyt, SCVAS

Point Reyes

Wednesday, September 21

Sequoia's 1995/96 field trip season got off to a rousing start with 22 congenial participants, good Pt. Reyes birding weather (overcast with no wind), and magnificent birds.

Our first stop at the Nunes Ranch produced a Cape May Warbler (an obvious good omen) which was later followed by a Chestnut-sided and a Tennessee Warbler at the Fish Docks.

By mid-afternoon the surviving eight birders made the long trek to Abbott's Lagoon where we had spectacular shorebirding: Sharp-tailed, Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers, a Ruff, Pacific Golden and Snowy Plovers. To cap it off we even had a final songbird for the day, a Palm Warbler.

Thanks to everyone who had a part in making it a great birding day.

Bird Books for Sale

Over 400 new, out-of-print & rare bird books. Noted illustrators, colored plates, indiv. species, intl. ID guides. All in fine condition. For information or appointment please phone or write

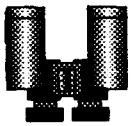
Sharalyn Spiteri

Grapevine Books

PO Box 1134

San Mateo, CA 94403

(415) 341-7009



The Wandering Tattler

Anne Moser

Robin Smith and I had decided to go to the Fourth Midwest Birding Symposium at Benton Harbor, Michigan in Mid-September. We flew out on Wednesday the 13th and came back on Monday the 18th. This gave us four days and they proved to be *full* days,

The organizers had done an excellent job of planning field trips with local guides on Thursday through Saturday mornings. These were followed by speakers from 11 AM to 9 PM. On Sunday, the speakers began at 8:30 AM and ended at noon.

It was really interesting to see and hear Kenn Kaufman in person. His first talk was "On How We Learn Our Birds." but his most interesting was "Fall Warbler Identification" since it came right after we had struggled with these little guys all morning. If you have a chance, don't miss a chance to hear him!

Eldon Grey, the publisher and editor of *Birders' World* magazine talked about bird migration and the clues that birds use in their journeys. Paul Lehman of the American Birding Association (*and once a member of Sequoia Audubon...Ed.*), spoke on "Migrant and Vagrant Traps of North America". Patricia Sutton of the Cape May Bird Observatory gave a fascinating talk on "How to Spot an Owl". Her slides were great! Even though these were the speakers that really impressed us, the rest of the speakers were all good and I left with new information and renewed enthusiasm.

Benson Harbor is on Lake Michigan so the birding habitats proved a real variety. Berrien County Michigan includes river mouths, wooded dunes, piers, inland lakes, riparian corridors, city parks, mature beech/oak woodlands and farm land. We took advantage of them all. I ended up with 63 species including two new "ticks", a red-headed woodpecker (both adult and juvenile) and a yellow-throated vireo. A master bird list was kept at the Symposium and it included many more species, among them lots of fall warblers that I wish I had seen.

It was intriguing to see the eastern relatives of our local birds - the blue jay,

Sequoia Audubon Society

the brown thrasher and the "unspotted" version of the rufous-sided towhee. Many old friends turned up as well. Forster's tern, white-breasted and red-breasted nuthatches, American goldfinch, house and purple finches were all old friends. A flock of mallards caught me by surprise by bathing in Lake Michigan. In my frame of reference so big a body of water should be salty! Immature rose-breasted grosbeaks were common as were the robins.

This was my first non-local birding conference. It won't be my last! It was a thrill to see and hear in person the "names" that turn up in birding articles. It was great to have local birders lead us on the field trips - thank you, Jimmy Joe and Ray.

New places, new birds, "old" birds, famous birders, local birders - it was a great adventure!



Letter To The Editor

I don't know how common it is to see a wild turkey in your front yard -- this was a first for me, and it obligingly waited 'til I found my camera. We live close to Portola Road near Westridge.

I note in "Bird Sightings" that they have been seen along 84 in La Honda as well as at Butano Park and Filoli.

It certainly made our dog's day!

Sincerely,

Clarice Vaughan

Dear Mrs. Vaughan:

First let me apologize for, first of all, any misspelling of your first name. I couldn't be sure of it from your handwritten note. Secondly, for our late response. Your note got buried in the mass of stuff that accumulated over the summer.

I have never heard of turkeys being seen either along 84 or at Butano, but both are possible. Surprisingly enough, the wild turkey, unlike its overweight domestic cousin, is a strong flyer over short distances and its appearance anywhere in the county is a possibility.

These birds have bred for years in the watershed property adjacent to Filoli and I have seen them on nearly every visit

I have made to the Pulgas Water Temple. Since they are not hunted in this area they have developed no fear of humans and can be approached fairly easily.

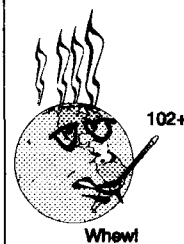
I believe that these birds have proven their ability to survive and procreate in the wild here in San Mateo County and should now be eligible for inclusion on our county check list, in our Christmas Count and on any individual lists that birders may be keeping.

The Editor

(Note that Clarice did include a photo that was unmistakably of a wild hen turkey [buff terminal band on the tail], but it was not reproducible with our technology.)

Global Warming at Oakland Museum

The Oakland Museum is featuring



an exhibit entitled "Global Warming: Understanding the Forecast from December 16 through April 14. Produced by the American Museum of Natural History and the

Environmental Defense Fund, the exhibit examines the global warming theory, its processes and its possible effects.

Also of interest to those interested in the environmental is the exhibit, "The Good Earth", which begins February 1 and goes through April 14. This exhibit of 80 color photographs from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History combines beautiful images with social and environmental issues.

The Oakland Museum focuses on California's environment, history and art. The Hall of Ecology takes the visitor on a simulated walk across the state through eight biotic zones, highlighting the relationships among plants, animals, geology and climate.

Located at Oak and 10th Streets, a block away from the Lake Merritt BART station, the museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM and on Sundays from noon to 7 PM. Admission is \$5. (\$3 to seniors & students).

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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.

Kathleen L. Wrenn in loving memory of her mother, Mrs. Jeanette McDaniel

Mark Hamilton of Frame Technology Corp., of San Jose for their donation of Frameworker 5.0 software.

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