



sequoia needles

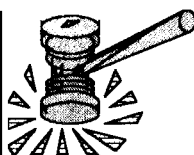
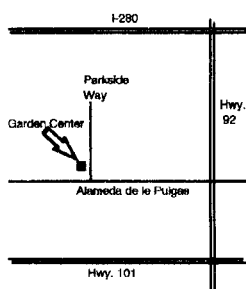
Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 46, No. 2
October, 1996

This Month's Program

Birding And Biology In Southern South America

Al Jamarillo, one of our Directors and the Wildlife Biologist at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, was born in Chile but grew up and was educated in Canada. As a scientist and as a tour leader for

Eagle-Eye Tours, Al has birded extensively on three continents. His presentation will concentrate not only on his homeland of Chile, but Argentina as well. The meeting will be at the San Mateo Garden Center on Thursday, October 10 at 7:30 PM.



From The President

Frances Toldi

It gives me great pleasure to announce the publication of *San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching*, Sequoia Audubon's bird-finding guide to San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. This is a fully revised version of the same title published over 10 years ago. We have updated the text, added coverage of new areas, improved the maps and illustrations and expanded the Resources and References section. One of the most important new features is a chart prepared by Peter Metropulos showing where and when to find key species in our area.

Many individuals helped in the arduous process of writing, drawing, editing, typing, reviewing and organizing this publication. I could fill the rest of the available pages in this month's newsletter describing the long hours put in by all involved. I would like to express particular

thanks to Rich Kuehn, who shepherded the book through the final steps in the process. Without Rich's determination and time the book would still be languishing in

All New!

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching

Only \$14.95

(plus \$1.31 for sales tax and \$1.99 shipping and handling)

Send your check made out to Sequoia Audubon for \$18.25 to our office at 30 West 39th Ave, #202, San Mateo, CA 94403 or pick up a copy at the General Meeting and save the shipping charge.

Copies may also be available on some field trips.

SAS Positions Open

Sequoia Audubon has urgent need of volunteers to fill four vacant positions.

Audubon Canyon Ranch Board Representative. Sequoia has three representatives on the ACR Board of Directors. One of our current directors recently resigned for personal reasons. We need to appoint another SAS member to join the other two continuing representatives.

Publicity Committee Chairperson. This SAS member would help get the word out on SAS activities, and act as a liaison to the press. No formal press experience is necessary, but a willingness to make phone calls and write letters is important.

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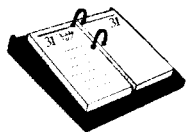
book limbo: written but unassembled and unpublished.

Details on how you can purchase a copy appear in the box on this page. In addition to helping Sequoia fulfill our mission to provide current vital information about birds in our region, the book also represents an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for Sequoia. Here are some ways you can help us to sell more copies:

- buy a copy for yourself
- buy copies for your friends and family
- ask about the book at your local bookstore; encourage the store to stock the book
- buy a copy and donate it to your local community or school library. Libraries are sadly short of book purchase funds these days, and this is a reference that should be available in all our public libraries.

Thanks for your help, Enjoy your copy!

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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members are welcome. Please call ahead to be sure to confirm time and space.

THE SHARP PARK FIELD TRIP SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 6 HAS BEEN CANCELED. WE WILL TRY TO RE-SCHEDULE THIS AT A LATER DATE.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9 - HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE - Hayward Regional Shoreline remains one of the best examples of salt marsh restoration anywhere. Noted for its shorebirds and ducks this area has also produced such rarities as Cattle Egrets, Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, Blue-winged Teals, Burrowing Owls, a Lark Bunting and two species of longspurs. To get there take Hwy. 92 across the Dumbarton Bridge. Take the first exit after crossing the bridge and turn left. Look for the signs to the interpretive center where we will meet at 9 AM. **RAIN CANCELS THE TRIP.**

LEADER **NICK COIRO** **349-1834**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 - GENERAL MEETING at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. An informal get-together begins at 7:30 with the General Meeting and Program at 8 PM.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 - FIELD TRIP TO HAWK HILL (MARIN HEADLANDS - POINT DIABLO) This is a traditional time and place to watch hawks soar and wheel as they gather their courage to cross the Golden Gate. Accipiters outnumber all other species combined so this trip should give everyone a chance to test their pet theories on how to distinguish between sharp-tailed and Cooper's hawks. However, bald and golden eagles, Swainson's and broad-winged hawks and goshawks have all been observed from here in past years. Bring lunch, liquids and layered clothes. Our leader has acquired her expertise in 7 years of hawk-watching for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. We will meet at the base of Hawk Hill at the point where Conzelman Road becomes one-way at 9:30 AM. To get there take 101 across the Golden Gate Bridge and exit almost immediately on Alexander Street. Swing back under the freeway and follow the road up the hill.

LEADER **LESLIE FLINT**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 - FIELD TRIP TO BURLEIGH-MURRAY STATE PARK - This 1860's era farm was preserved for its historic buildings but is also an excellent birding area. Riparian and grassland areas abut the chaparral-covered hillsides yielding an excellent variety of local resident and wintering species. Last year's inaugural trip yielded more than 60 species. We will meet at 9 AM in the graveled parking area just inside the gate off Higgins-Purisma Road. To get there go south 1.5 miles from the Hwy. 1-Hwy 92 intersection in Half Moon Bay. Turn inland on Higgins-Purisma Road and proceed 1.7 miles to the park entrance on the left.

LEADER **CAROL MILLER** **726-2025**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 - CHARLESTON SLOUGH AND MOUNTAINVIEW FOREBAY - This area affords some of the most varied shorebird and waterfowl wintering habitat in a small area and in every year it has produced a surprise bird or two. Parasitic Jaegers, Red-necked Grebes, Ross' Geese and Tufted Ducks are only some of the past visitors. The trip will involve walking on level well-defined paths. We will meet at 9:00 AM at the foot of San Antonio Rd. where it intersects with Terminal Road. To get there, take Hwy. 101 to San Antonio Rd. and take the San Antonio Rd. (North) exit. Follow San Antonio Road for a short distance until it makes a right angle turn and becomes Terminal Road. Stop and park as close to the intersection as feasible. Trip breaks up at noon.

LEADER **DAN KELLER**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 - STUDENT FIELD TRIP TO THE PALO ALTO BAYLANDS - Bring binoculars, an adult, and a spotting scope if you have one available. Directions: Take 101 to Palo Alto and exit on Embarcadero East. Go past the airport to the end of the road and turn left to the Baylands. Meet at the Duck Pond at 9:30 AM. You can park at the Duck Ponds or across the road from it. Anyone (including adults) is welcome to attend, but please notify the leaders. The trip will break up at 11:30 AM. For further information contact the leaders.

LEADERS: **ROBIN SMITH** **325 - 3306**
 MARY BRESSLER **994 - 3687**
 MAY BLOSSOM-WILKERSON

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 - BOOK-SIGNING PARTY - SAN PEDRO VALLEY COUNTY PARK - SAS will take over the Visitors' Center for a book-signing party for the new and revised San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching. 1-5 PM. Authors, illustrators and committee members present to sign copies of the book.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 - COYOTE POINT - 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. We will meet at the lower end of the museum parking lot near the picnic benches. **RAIN CANCELS THE TRIP.**

LEADER **NICK COIRO** **349-1834**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING at the Sequoia Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members are welcome. Please call ahead to be sure to confirm time and space.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 - GENERAL MEETING at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. An informal get-together begins at 7:30 with the General Meeting and Program at 8 PM.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 - SHARP PARK SHORELINE AND GOLF COURSE. This area can be extremely productive as it encompasses a harbor with scoters, loons and mergansers, a beach, a fresh-water marsh and isolated groves of trees, all of which have been known to yield surprises. We will meet at 9 AM at the Anchor Monument just south of the fishing pier on Sharp Park Beach. The trip should break up at noon. Heavy rain cancels the trip.

LEADER **JUDI SPITLER** **355-9362**

SAS Positions Open

(Continued from Page One)

Birdathon/Wild Goose Chase Coordinator. Two of our biggest fund-raisers of the year are the Spring Birdathon and the Fall Wild Goose Chase (to resume in the Fall of 1997). We need someone to coordinate this effort. Prior birding experience is not necessary, just a willingness to talk to people and good organization. Substantial assistance will be available to the Coordinator.

Membership Committee Chairperson. This position heads the committee responsible for developing plans to increase SAS membership and to better serve the existing members.

Please call me (344-1919) or Anne Moser (324-1718) if you are interested in holding any of these positions, or if you want more information. Thanks for your help! —*Frances Toldi*

Water Pollution Seminar

The San Francisco Estuary Institute and School of Science of Cal State Hayward are presenting a seminar on the prevention of water pollution on Saturday and Sunday, October 26 and 27.

Designed primarily for students and teachers, the conference will also feature field trips to sites all around the Bay on November 2 and 9.

The conference fee is \$30 (\$40 with lunch) and the field trips are \$20. A surcharge of \$50-80 applies if you are taking the seminar for academic credit.

For details and to register contact the San Francisco Estuary Institute, 1325 S. 46th Street, Bldg. 180, Richmond, CA 94804 (510) 231-9539.

Chutzpah!

Chutzpah is a Yiddish word that is usually defined by example. For instance, the Menendez brothers throwing themselves on the mercy of the court because they were orphans — that's chutzpah!

Another example is a bill by State Senator David Knowles (R-El Dorado). It allows "thinning" of forests for fire protection reasons, leaving **as few as four trees per acre.** (*Q. When is a clear-cut not a clear-cut? A. When its fire protection.*) The loggers would be largely exempt from existing state forestry standards and environmental regulations. Somehow Knowles got this awful bill through the Senate Natural Resources Committee. (Did anyone read it?) Environmental lobbyists are seeking to kill it in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Coyote Point Museum Calendar

Saturday, Oct. 12 and Sunday, Oct. 13, 1-4 p.m. The second **Family Activity Days** of the season highlights "Animals - Inside-Out." The Five Senses Puppet Show is the highlight along with craft activities. Live snakes will be shown. Free with Museum admission.

Saturday, Oct. 19, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Composition and **basic photo techniques** will be taught in the class open to age seven up. Pre-registration covers both adult and child. Fees are \$25 for Museum members, \$31 for non members.

Saturday, Oct. 19, 7 p.m. - 9 a.m. An overnigher, for parents and their children from ages six to 11 with night accommoda-

tions in Coyote Point Museum. Nighttime exploration around Coyote Point Park as well as the Museum itself is included. Breakfast provided. Registration required at (415) 342-7755. Fees are \$25 for museum families, \$35 for non-members.

Sunday, Oct. 20, 1-3 p.m. Dried fall flowers are turned into decorative wreaths during this program. Pre-registration required at (415) 342-7755. Fees are \$9 for Museum members, \$12 for non members.

Friday, Oct. 25, 7:30-9 p.m. Live bats are the feature of the evening lecture by Christine Scott of California Bat Conservation Fund, who will talk about these often misunderstood creatures. Pre-registration requested at (415) 342-7755. Fees are \$3 for Museum members, \$5 for non members.

Sunday, Oct. 27, Noon - 4 p.m. The annual **Halloween Fest** returns with games, crafts, costume parade, search for treats and a carved pumpkin exhibit. Live bats will be shown from 1 to 3 p.m. by the California Bat Conservation Fund. Free with usual museum admission.

Call (415) 342-9969 for Program information:

To Register, Call (415) 342-7755.

Chukars at Coyote Point??

R. Jones wrote us a letter saying there were four Chukars running around loose behind the museum at Coyote Point.

Since this is hardly typical chukar habitat and since the chukars are a notoriously non-migratory bird of high desert areas, one assumes that these are released birds and can't be counted if you're a lister. However, it is a chance to get acquainted with these little relatives of our California Quail.

Bay Area Environmental Forums

The Bay Area Environmental Forum is a coalition of local conservation groups working together to provide a monthly forum for the discussion of current environmental issues.

Does Your Vote Make a Difference? How you can influence environmental policy by your choice of candidates.

Thursday, October 10, 1996, 7-9 p.m. at the Mountain View City Council Chambers, 500 Castro Street in Mountain View. Panelists include: Sam Schuchat, Executive Director for the League of Conservation Voters; Gary Patton, General Counsel for the Planning and Conservation League; and Stephen Van Beek, Professor of Political Science at San Jose State. For more information, please call 408-491-9374

Voluntary Simplicity.- Don't Be Consumed by the Holidays. Tuesday, November 19, 1996, 7-9 p.m. Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 E. Bayshore Road in Palo Alto. If you are tired of spending your hard-earned money on material gifts that people don't appreciate learn subtle ways to make life easier, about giving meaningful gifts, and about voluntary simplicity -just in time for the craziest season of the year!

For more information on The Forum, please call (415) 390-8494 or 968-7243.



Technological progress is like an ax in the hands of a pathological criminal.

—Albert Einstein

Decline Of The Red-Legged Frog

Cliff Richer



After a year's moratorium on listing, the California red-legged frog was the first animal to be declared a threatened species under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Although its present status is part of an as yet unexplained crisis affecting amphibians worldwide, this creature is a good illustration of what effect that humans have on wildlife.

Its decline began in 1849 with the influx of gold-hungry 49ers. Unfortunately, the prospectors and their hangers-on had other hungers as well and food was in short supply in the Bay Area. Millions of shorebirds, ducks and geese were slaughtered by the meat hunters; the Farallons became the province of eggers who raided the nests of cormorants and murre; and the fast-growing population discovered frogs' legs. By the end of the nineteenth century some 80,000 frogs were being harvested annually.

When red-legged frogs became hard to find, the frog hunters imported eastern bullfrogs. This alien species quickly established itself and preyed on almost anything it could swallow - which included the red-legged frog.

On the bay and in the Central Valley, the red-legged frog's habitat was filled in, drained or diked. Its homes became building sites, salt ponds and agricultural fields. In the foothills, streams became clogged with silt from mining, road-building, lumbering and ranching. New and unfamiliar predators were introduced — red foxes, sunfish, and at least four species of bass — all with a taste for frogs. Most of its streams became too polluted to support the frog. It is a wonder that any of them survived at all.

A great deal of its habitat today is found on public lands such as Pescadero Marsh. Some of the habitat is found on the acreage of more enlightened private owners. Some were recently found at Shamrock Ranch in Pacifica for example.

The hope is that the listing will stop the century-and-a-half decline and give our native frog time to recover.

Mono Lake Update

This spring Mono Lake had risen four feet under the implementation of the court-ordered restoration plan proposed by the State Water Resources Control Board and it is expected to rise another 1-3 feet this year.



Nevertheless, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power continues to resist full implementation of the court order at every opportunity.

Under the Stream Restoration Plan, the Department of Water and Power (DWP) must prepare a proposal to "restore, preserve, and protect the streams and fisheries of Rush, Lee Vining, Walker, and Parker creeks. DWP's final proposal for the restoration of Mono Lake's tributary streams, contained significant flaws.

One issue is the amount of water which will flow down the streams to create so-called peak flows, which are vital to the dynamic functioning of the stream systems. Peak flows do the work of shaping the stream by moving sediment, scouring pools, flooding banks, dispersing seeds, and more. DWP's proposal for stream restoration completely ignores this requirement.

Another issue is the lack of a plan for modifying the Grant Lake Reservoir release facility. Because it was designed for diversions, the Grant Lake facility restricts the amount of water that can pass from the reservoir back into Rush Creek. Currently, it can't deliver the scientists' recommended flows.

Instead DWP has proposed a scheme to supplement Rush Creek releases with Lee Vining Creek water transferred through the aqueduct and released into Rush Creek below the dam. This ignores the effect this may have upon Lee Vining Creek and assumes that there will always be sufficient capacity to provide water for both streams.

DWP's proposal also rejects the construction of fish passage facilities at its diversion dams.

Additionally, the proposal replaced the construction of sediment bypass

facilities at the dams to allow gravel and other sediment to move downstream to facilitate restoration with a plan to dredge the diversion ponds and place the material in the stream below the dam.

It's proposal for restoring waterfowl habitat also falls short. Acknowledging that there is little chance of restoring this habitat along the diverted waters, the DWP proposes to enhance the habitat along Mill Creek, the DeChambeau Ponds and at some other locations. This plan is practical but ignores or glosses over the fact that DWP does not control all of the necessary water rights to guarantee the maintenance of that habitat. The proposal also states that these projects are "not financially feasible without significant funding contributions from other sources". Inasmuch as neither the court nor the state made any allowance for outside funding, this portion of the DWP proposal smacks of fantasy rather than fact.

The Mono Lake Committee and its allies (including National Audubon) have filed their objections to the inadequacies of this plan. The court's decision on the plan is expected this fall.

Alien Invader Alert

A new intrusive exotic plant is creeping its way up the coast. First detected on a golf driving range south of San Diego, it has now spread throughout San Diego County. *Ehrharta longiflora* is a grasslike flowering weed with no common name but is closely related to Veldt grass — also considered an intrusive and invasive species. Native to South Africa it has adapted well to the climate of the Southland and should have no problem in spreading to everywhere except the driest, wettest and coldest areas of California.

There is a strong likelihood that the plant is more widespread than San Diego County. In one case the invader's introduction was traced to a potted plant purchased in Los Angeles and there are indications it may be present in Berkeley.

Claire Brey of the California Exotic Pest Plant Council is credited with having detected the plant's presence and believes that a "Red Alert" should be called for to eradicate this alien. She has found it

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Sequoia Audubon Society



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FALL 1996 SAS BIRDSEED SALE - - - ORDER FORM

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Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

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BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....	25 lb @ \$13.00 /bag			
WHITE PROSO MILLET	25 lb @ \$ 9.00 /bag			
THISTLE	5 lb @ \$12.00 /bag			
SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....	25 lb @ \$24.00 /bag			

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30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202

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Alien Invaders

(Continued from Page Four)

impossible to pull up, since it regenerates from root fragments left in the soil. It spreads by wind and by attaching itself temporarily to socks, shoelaces and animal fur.

Compounding the problem, it is difficult to identify. It resembles many grasses and other flowering weeds and it took more than three years to get a positive identification. California scientists to whom the samples were sent were unable to name it. When it came, the identification was from botanists at Utah State University and Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Little is known about the plant outside of South Africa and the long-term implications of this invasion are unknown. On a short-term basis it has already been seen to displace sea dahlia and miner's lettuce — both native plants.

Chinese Medicine And Bears

The Chinese are keeping Asiatic black bears, not as zoo specimens but as sources of traditional Asian medicines. They implant a drainage tube in the bear's gallbladder, extract its bile and dry it. A bear, milked monthly, produces about five pounds of dried bile per year.

This bile which is believed to alleviate liver disease and other maladies is exported to South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, where it sells for as much as \$1,400 an ounce. The Bear Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature believes the Chinese have as many as 10,000 animals on these "bear farms".

The farms are legal and Chinese officials say that they are "saving" the bear population since one live bear yields a hundred times as much bile as a dead one. Even so, many wild Asian brown and North American black bears are being poached solely for their gallbladders and paws.

Trade in bear parts is still legal in several US states and if the bear paws and gallbladders are exported from these states it becomes very difficult to track and prosecute poachers.

Dressing for the Birds

At one time or we may have all wondered whether the color of our clothes made any difference in finding and watching birds. It is widely assumed that bright colors, especially white, tend to scare birds away, and a great many of the industrial quality birders have cautioned against wearing bright colors in the field.

There is, so far as we can find out, only one study done of the subject, and all other evidence is either anecdotal or intuitive. The one study partly supports the "bright is bad" hypothesis, but also indicates that more work is needed. Kevin Gutzwiller and Heidi Marcum addressed the question in a series of 20-minute point counts conducted in Texas in January and February. The observers tested the reaction of birds to bright colors by wearing a blaze orange hunting vest. During the counts, 13 species were detected frequently enough that their reaction to the vest could be assessed. Of the 13, only three — Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and American Goldfinch — appeared to be repelled by the presence of the vest. A fourth species, the Blue Jay, may also have been repelled by the vest, but the results were uncertain. The other nine species — Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Northern Cardinal — apparently did not care one way or the other.

No mention was made of what the observer had on when not wearing the vest, or of how many counts were conducted while the observers were wearing the orange vest. Many variables can affect the results of such counts, and not all of them were addressed. It seems likely that more research will be conducted.

In the future it may be necessary to require drab or camouflage clothes on Christmas Counts.

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To a person uninstructed in natural history, his country or seaside stroll is a walk through a gallery filled with wonderful works of art, nine-tenths of which have their faces turned to the wall.

—Thomas Henry Huxley

## What Gull Is That?

Birders who pride themselves on identifying those gulls that don't look quite right should take



caution form a public tiff between two well-known ornithologists. The argument is between Agnar Ingolfsson and Richard Snell. Ingolfsson has reported, starting in 1970, that there is extensive hybridization between Herring Gulls and Glaucous Gulls in Iceland. Snell has countered that Ingolfsson's hybrids are actually European herring gulls from a population with whiter wings. The argument is highly technical, revolving around sample sizes, melanin indices, and disagreements over statistical approaches.

The breeding gulls of Iceland have been studied very rigorously for more than 20 years and there is a great deal of data available. Yet two gull experts cannot agree on what they are looking at, measuring, and collecting. The taxonomy of large, white-headed gulls is a quagmire at best. (Some taxonomists even insist that they are all *Iceland Gull* subspecies). Such confusion and disagreement among the expert scientists should give pause to those who cavalierly identify oddly plumaged gulls.

## So Long Northern, Welcome Back, Bullock's

The re-classification of the Northern Oriole back into two separate species was long overdue and is now a fact.

Many feel that the lumping of these two species was based on politics rather than science in the first place and never should have been endorsed by the American Ornithologists' Union. The scientist who did the study and came to the conclusion that the birds were one species was one of the most prominent and well-known members of the AOU. His colleagues felt uncomfortable publicly questioning the validity of his work even while privately criticizing almost every aspect of it.

Was it just coincidence that the AOU reversed its earlier decision (with very little debate) almost immediately following his death?



## The Wandering Tattler

Anne Moser

*(Last month we left Anne somewhere in the wilds of South Carolina. The saga continues...)*

I found side roads that would get me from Columbus, S.C. to Clover, across the state going west. On Road 213, I came around a corner and almost ran into three black vultures feeding on a deer carcass. They fluttered off but soon returned. I sat and watched, fascinated. Ugly but efficient, I decided.

I stopped at Chester State Park, a lovely place with a mixed forest and almost no people. I soon found a catbird family -- two adults and juvenile with just a stump for a tail. Cute! In a few more minutes I was able to add an Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Bluebird, a Red-headed Woodpecker and an Eastern Wood Pewee to my list. It definitely was family day as I found an adult and a juvenile Brown Thrasher and a juvenile robin.

After visiting my stepmother and her husband in Clover, I finished my driving journey by returning to Charlottesville, Virginia where I was to join a Field Guides' trip. It was a long day's drive and I found the state rest stops a good break and a chance to do some birding. I didn't find any new birds but there were at least a half dozen eastern species to enjoy at each stop.

The next day, June 5, I visited Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. After hearing our guide and seeing all his practical intentions, I wondered if today he might not have been labeled "Attention Deficit Disorder". How his mind must have hummed!

Birding was my main focus for the next four days. After visiting several places our group traveled to Barton, West Virginia where we stayed in a motel for three days, returning to Charlottesville on June 9. Warblers were our main objective and we did indeed see many -- a total of 24 species.

On Hart's Mountain in Virginia, I was trailing behind the group when I heard a chip. I squeaked and a Worm-eating Warbler popped out six feet away.

While this is not a spectacular bird, its soft coloring is lovely. On the same mountain I had good looks at a Kentucky Warbler, and I found the Cerulean disappointing -- much more drab than the field guide. Later that day, in another place, a Prairie Warbler gave us good views and an Indigo Bunting perched where the sun caught his glorious color. A Yellow-breasted Chat also perched where we could see him clearly.

The next day started with an Orchard Oriole outside the motel -- a nice way to start! Along a particularly peaceful valley we found a Golden-winged Warbler who flew in front of the group several times. That is one striking bird! We spent time in a spruce forest, along many roads and beside ponds. This was really lovely country that I had never seen before. My personal highs in West Virginia were a Canada Warbler, both waterthrushes -- Northern and Louisiana, an Ovenbird, and a Wood Thrush. These were all life birds to me. Just writing their names brings back the impact of seeing them in the binoculars and realizing that this is the bird you've read about and wanted to see.

This was a wonderful trip that ended just as a series of gigantic thunderstorms rolled across the eastern states disrupting air traffic. I hardly minded a bit even though my tickets had to be rewritten three times because of canceled flights and missed connections. It was a thrilling end to a great adventure!



## The Bookworm A Birder's Guide To Florida

by Bill Pranty

This newest version of the birding guides originally written by Jim Lane and published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society is the biggest, most ambitious and most complete of the series. Unlike the earlier guides by Lane and his successor Harold Holt, this one is written by a local birder who has many years of first-hand experience with most of the locations.

The guide shares in the common fault of all such guides in that it is instantly outdated by the circumstances of human life. For example, Pranty gives detailed directions to nine burrowing owl

sites in a relatively small area southeast of Palm Beach. I checked the sites twice, giving them both a cursory and a detailed investigation. One site had been bulldozed, one site had a well-marked -- but abandoned -- burrow and the other seven showed no signs of recent owl use.

The book also is less than adequate in its discussion of birding the Keys. To its credit it does recommend that you purchase the National Audubon Society's excellent and inexpensive little booklet (\$! donation to the NAS Research Station in Tavernier) if you are birding this area.

I have used editions of this guide by all three of its authors. I miss the humor and gentle satire of Jim Lane and I had the greatest luck with Harold Holt's book. Pranty's version seemed to me to be a touch wordy but I found it to be accurate in its directions and expected species. I did have some problems with the politically correct, but historically inaccurate, introduction but these faults did not intrude themselves into the main text.

Despite my problems with the book I still consider it a valuable guide to the area and would recommend it to any birder visiting Florida. The book is available from the American Birding Association (800) 634-7736 for \$18.95.

---Cliff Richer

## Sandhill Crane Viewing

Enjoy magnificent flocks of sandhill cranes coming in to roost at the California Department of Fish and Game's Woodbridge Ecological Reserve near Galt. A series of 2¼ hour public viewings led by DFG naturalist Bruce Forman will be conducted on the two properties (including one that is normally closed) in the late afternoons of the first and third Thursdays and Sundays from October 1 through March 1. Registration is required. Call (916) 258-2353. A \$5.00 donation per person is requested. Trips do fill quickly, so call early.

*(Participants on our last field trip to this area will recall that we "jumped the fence" to do some non-intrusive birding into one of these marsh areas off Woodbridge Road in '95. We intend to do some*

# Gifts and Bequests

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**Mary Jane Zirkel**  
in memory of  
**Nancy Ross**

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