

This Month's Program



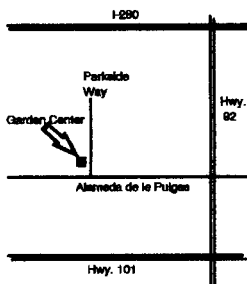
Joe DeDenado of the East Bay Regional Park District will tell us of this marvelous park system across the Bay and will give us details on the return of the Bald Eagle to Del Valle Park.

January's Program

Winter Wildlife Of The San Francisco Bay Area

Bruce Elliott, who heads up the southern half of the State Department of Fish & Game's Central Coast Region, headquartered in Monterey County will address the status of our wildlife and some of the current efforts to protect and enhance this natural resource. He wears two hats as the Senior Biologist Supervisor and District Supervisor. He oversees a staff of wildlife biologists, plant ecologists and land technicians for the area between San Francisco and the San Luis Obispo-Santa Barbara County line.

Bruce has been with the Department for over 26 years. He was trained as a professional ornithologist at Western New Mexico University and the University of Arizona, and remains an enthusiastic birder and student of bird biology. His particular study interests include the behavior of owls, and the distribution of Pacific seatowl.



Potluck Time!

This month also brings us to our annual December Potluck Dinner.

Please remember to bring your own utensils and plates and a paper bag in which to take them home. Those people whose last name begins with the letters A-F should bring a **CASSEROLE or other hot dish**; those whose names begin with the letters G-L, a **DESSERT**, and M through Z should provide the **SALADS**. Be sure your offering will feed at least 5 people.

The Potluck Dinner begins at 6:30 PM.

Memories Of Costa Rica

Birding With Dan Keller

(Second of Two Parts)

Rich Kuehn

As you rejoin me and the other members of SFBBO who went to



Costa Rica birding with Dan Keller this past August, we are leaving Chacon's Lodge. While it is at 7200' in the central highlands, our next stop on our way to the Caribbean lowlands was at 9200'. Just below timberline and the wind-swept *paramo*, we spent a couple hours looking for some of the higher elevation species.

Amongst the bromeliad-laden oaks we had excellent views of Fiery-throated Hummingbird, Collared Trogon, Ochraceous and Timberline Wrens, Sooty Robin, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Black-and-yellow Silky-Flycatcher, and the often elusive Wrenthrush (*Zeledonia*), which likes the moss-draped banks. Only the Volcano Junco evaded our searching eyes before we resumed travel on the Pan-American Highway.

We passed through San Jose and headed into the northeastern lowlands traveling amongst banana plantations. We stopped along the highway to scope our first Laughing Falcon and then pressed on to Gavilan Lodge, located on the Sarapiquí River. The weather is much warmer and more humid. With the change in habitat, we are soon ticking new species again. Before the bus is unloaded and our cabins assigned, we see Banded-backed Wrens in a palm tree and a Scaly-breasted Hummingbird in the ginger flowers.

Two of the four days in this area we birded at La Selva OTS, its marvelous system of cleared and often cemented trails through tall primary forests and restored second-growth known for allowing the visitor to become immersed in the sights and sounds of the rain forest. It was here we saw collared peccary, Central American agouti, white-nosed coati, northern tamandua anteater and heard the raucous noise of the mantled howler monkeys amongst a staggering variety of birds. Fruiting trees yielded Olive-throated Parakeets, Keel-billed and Chestnut-mandibled Toucans, the beautiful Snowy Cotinga, Olive-backed Euphonia, Plain-colored Tanager, Blue Dacnis and a host of others. The shaded forest interior revealed Rufous and Broad-billed motmots, Gray-headed Kite, Great Curassow, White-whiskered Puffbird, and Black-throated and Slaty-tailed Trogons. Birding at the forests edges, we viewed Double-toothed Hawk; watched a Semiplumbeous Hawk spot, capture and devour a lizard; Lineated, Pale-billed, Chestnut-colored, and Rufous-winged Woodpeckers drill and probe for insects and at an overgrown pasture saw the often sought Pink-billed Seedfinch.

(Continued on Page Four)

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 - REDWOOD SHORES

FIELD TRIP — These points of land between Foster City and Bair Island appear desolate and dusty in the summer, but can be teeming with birdlife in the winter when the 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/Redwood Shores Parkway exit. Follow Redwood Shores Parkway to the overseas radio broadcasting station, where the road takes a sharp right turn. We will meet there at 9:00 A.M. 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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 -- 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 12 — 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 Avenue. Follow Harvard west a couple of blocks until it ends 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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 - ANNUAL DECEMBER

POTLUCK DINNER - The meeting will be at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. The Potluck begins at 6:30 PM. The program featuring the East Bay Regional Park District and the return of the bald eagles to Del Valle Park will follow immediately thereafter.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 — THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT — SEE PAGE SIX FOR THE SIGN-UP SHEET. SIGN UP NOW! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

THURSDAY, JANUARY 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.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4 — THE AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT — SEE PAGE SIX FOR THE SIGN-UP SHEET. SIGN UP NOW! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8 — FOSTER CITY — Wintering ducks and shorebirds will be our main interests along the bays and lagoons of Foster City as we look for the fieldmarks that separate Barrow's from Common Goldeneye and Greater from Lesser Scaup. Learn how to identify the Red Knot (who is really gray) and pick the knot out of the flocks of dowitchers, plovers, willets and dunlins. Meet in the parking lot at the Recreation Center on Shell Blvd. at 9:00 AM. Heavy rain cancels the trip which should end at noon.

LEADER NICK COIRO 349-1834

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, — RAPTORS OF ALTAMONT

PASS — This area east of Livermore is best known for its windmill farms - except to birders. For birders, Altamont Pass is noted as the winter home of a great number and variety of

hawks and eagles. Every winter the resident red-tails, prairie falcons and golden eagles are joined by their cousins fleeing the snows and cold of the north. Peregrines, bald eagles, rough-legged and ferruginous hawks are only some of the visitors to these rolling grasslands and rocky outcrops.

This trip normally extends into the afternoon so bring lunch and liquids. We'll begin our caravan of the area at 9:00 AM. To get there take I-580 past Livermore to Vasco Road. Take the Vasco Road exit south. We'll meet near the gas station on the right a short distance down Vasco Road. Because of potential weather problems in this tour will be by **reservation only**. Call the office (345-3724) to make a reservation. There is no participation number limit. The trip can be excellent with many raptor and other bird sightings in favorable weather, but next to impossible, with rain and fog, in inclement weather. To be certain that the trip will go on (particularly if the weather forecast is questionable) call Nick Coiro (349-1834) before 10 PM the night before.

LEADERS NICK COIRO/LINDA DAVIES

COMING UP IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, Feb. 2 -- Woodbridge Road, Thornton -- Cliff Richer

Saturday, Feb. 8 -- Foster City -- Nick Coiro

Saturday, Feb. 16 Beginners' Trip, Palo Alto Baylands
Francis Toldi

Saturday, Feb 15 Tule Lake and Klamath Lake Refuges
through Eagles of the Klamath Basin

Monday, Feb. 17 Cliff Richer (Reservations Only)

Saturday, Feb. 22 -- Filoli Estate -- Donna Petersen





Bairing The Facts - In Tokyo

Bob Wilkinson

For years the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge and the Friends of Redwood City have worked hard to protect Bair Island in Redwood City from becoming another Redwood Shores. It has long been earmarked for expansion of the Refuge because of its potential wetlands value if the dikes were to be breached to allow tidal water to return to the approximately 3,000 acres of land. Even now, without restoration, it is home to such species as Burrowing Owls, Great Blue Herons, Double-crested Cormorants, and Short-eared owls (*THE STILT*, Spring 1995, and reprinted in the Needles, Dec. 1995). The owner, Kumagai Gumi, a Japanese company based in Tokyo, has refused all offers to sell and does not reply to letters from local citizens. It has remained insulated from environmental concerns. A year ago California Audubon entered the lists with public relations skills in the form of Bill Rukeyser who, in league with the above mentioned organizations and others, developed a full page New York Times ad and organized a press conference on the day the ad appeared. The ad's message was directed to Kumagai, telling the owner that Bair Island is a valuable natural resource for wildlife, and that he faced many obstacles, natural, legal, and political, if he tried to develop it.

The story was not only carried by a host of Bay Area TV, radio, and newspaper media, but more importantly, in terms of the strategy conceived by Audubon, reached the Japanese media on Kumagai's doorstep. It was on the front page of the largest Japanese daily newspaper, Yomiuri Shimbun, and covered by other media. So, Kumagai can no longer ignore environmental - including 15 conservation groups in Japan which signed onto the ad - concerns and resistance to any development ideas they may harbor. While no negotiations to sell the land have begun, there is reason to believe that the company is more aware now that it would face overwhelming opposition if it chose to put forth a plan for development. In

contrast, as the ad indicated, Mr. Kumagai could receive acclamation and appreciation if he were to enable the land to return to its historical function.

Mr. KUMAGAI Taishiro
Kumagai Gumi Company, Ltd.
2-1 Tsukudo-Den
Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 162 JAPAN

Use
60¢
postage

Be a good corporate neighbor and release
Bair Island from your worldwide real estate hold-
ings. By selling your undevelopable lands at a fair
price, you will make an invaluable contribution
to the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife
Refuge and to the future of the critically endan-
gered California clapper rail

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

USF&WS Updates Endangered Spe- cies Candidate List

...but Congressional Morato- rium Prevents Full Listing

The US. Fish and Wildlife Service is presenting an updated list of plants and animals regarded as candidates for possible listing as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. "The revisions to the candidate species list strengthen the scientific basis of the endangered species program," said Fish and Wildlife Service deputy director John Rogers. "The new candidate species list clearly identifies those species with

strong scientific evidence indicating they are likely to be in need of listing as endangered or threatened. This will enable the Fish and Wildlife Service, other agencies, and private partners to focus attention and resources on the species that most need help."

The revised candidate notice identifies 192 species as candidates for listing. (Candidate species are plants and animals native to the United States for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has enough scientific information to warrant proposing them for listing as endangered or threatened.) Identification of species not yet listed, but facing immediate, identifiable risk helps resource managers to alleviate threats and thereby possibly remove the need to list species as endangered or threatened. Conservation actions for candidate species are often the most effective and least expensive means for restoring species.

Prior to this revised candidate list, there were nearly 4,000 candidate species. Under the revised list, only those species for which there is enough information to support a listing proposal will be called candidates. Under the old system, these were known as category I candidate species,

The Fish and Wildlife Service will no longer maintain a list of species formerly known as category 2 candidates. These are species for which the Service does not have enough scientific information to support a listing proposal. "The Fish and Wildlife Service remains concerned about many of the species formerly on the category 2 candidates list, and will continue working with States, The Nature Conservancy, and others to gather information about these and other species that may be at risk." Rogers said. "Any of these species could become candidates in the future if additional scientific information becomes available indicating they are endangered or threatened."

None of the current candidate species is likely to be listed as endangered or threatened in the near future because of an April 1995 Congressional moratorium on adding new species to the official list. Proposals to list candidate species have also been delayed by reductions in the Service's endangered species budget. The Service is continuing efforts to stabilize the status of candidate species through conservation partnerships.

Before breakfast each morning, we also birded the grounds at Gavilan Lodge and saw Scaled Pigeon, White-throated Crake, Blue Ground-Dove, Black-striped and Orange-billed Sparrows. On one occasion a tour member discovered you couldn't even take time off to go to the bathroom: it was precisely then that one of our guides, Jay Vandergaast, sighted the uncommon and flighty Bare-necked Umbrellabird. She was philosophical --- she now had one MORE reason to come back to Costa Rica.

On the third day, we traveled to middle elevations on the Caribbean slope and birded the gorge from the road leading down to La Virgen del Socorro. At the bottom, near the bridge over the Rio Sarapiquí, Dan found a "life bird" for himself and everyone else: Lanceolated Monklet, a member of the Puffbird family. It was great hearing the excitement in our guides' voices. We also stopped at the feeders at El Mirador Restaurant. Though the fog only allowed occasional looks at the thundering waterfall in the distance, we added 'up close and personal' looks at Violet Saberwings, Coppery-headed Emeralds, Green Thorntails, Green Crowned Brilliants and the ever present Rufous-tailed Hummingbird. Returning, we spotted a pair of Bat Falcons drying themselves in a large tree.

Heading back through San Jose, we journeyed Northwest into the semiarid ranch lands of Guanacaste Province, located near the Gulf of Nicoya. Headquartered at Hacienda Solimar, a cattle ranch in transition to becoming a popular ecotourist destination, we spent 2 days exploring the Tempisque Basin. Arising early and walking along the edge of a pasture containing championship Brahman cattle, we saw Double-striped Thick-knees, Spot-bellied Bobwhites, Common Ground-Doves, Inca Doves, Cinnamon Hummingbird, Black-headed Trogon, Rose-throated Becard, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Nutting's Flycatcher, White-throated Magpie-Jay, Rufous-naped Wrens, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, Spot-breasted Oriole, and Olive Sparrow. As the Estero Madrigal, a 300-acre wetland, was inaccessible due to recent rains, we headed for the auto ferry at the northern end of the Gulf, where it meets the Rio

Tempisque. On the way, we stopped to view a Lesser Ground-Cuckoo and later a Hook-billed Kite near a Streak-backed Oriole. After crossing the water and viewing Magnificent Frigatebirds, Neotropical Cormorants, Roseate Spoonbills and other members of the Heron family, we drove to a wetland area inhabited by Anhingas, Bare-throated Tiger-Herons, Wood Storks, White Ibis and some familiar shorebirds, as well as Harris, Gray, Roadside and Zone-tailed Hawks. Our only major disappointment was not locating a Spectacled Owl. Food was again served family-style and these accommodations also boasted a swimming pool.



With only 4 days remaining on our trip, we traveled south to our final destination: Tarcol Lodge. It is a remodeled beach

house (*great euphemism - it used to be a brothel. --Ed.*) with a wide cement porch located on the Tarcoles River mouth where it empties into the Pacific Ocean. The tide can rise and fall as much as 10 feet here. Birding in the immediate area on a new trail named for Tony, the resident manager and guide at Tarcol, or nearby in Carara Reserve, which protects one of the last intact stands of transitional lowland forest on the Pacific slope, produced a number of spectacular new birds. These included Chestnut-backed Antbird, Mealy Parrots, Riverside Wrens, Scarlet Macaws, Golden-naped Woodpeckers, White-necked Puffbird, Boat-billed Herons, Crested and Yellow-headed Caracaras, Orange-chinned Parakeets, Plain-capped Starthroat, Fiery-billed Aracari, White-ringed Flycatcher, and many more. Night birding was also quite successful here and yielded excellent looks at a pair of Pacific Screech-owls, a Common Potoo and a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. After 16 days of power birding, it was with a mixture of sadness and relief that we headed back to San Jose in order to return to the Bay Area. I know I'll go back to Costa Rica again as it is indeed a birder's dream come true.

If my travelogue has whetted your appetite to travel to Costa Rica with Dan Keller, also, there are still a few spaces

reserved on his upcoming trip January 5-18, 1997. A price of \$1 850.00 includes lodging and meals at four locations, all ground transportation, park fees, some laundry, guiding by Dan Keller and local guides, class time locally for trip preparation, complete birding check lists, AND a custom Costa Rica T-shirt. It does not include airfare, estimated to be \$750.00 with United Airlines, bottled drinks and alcoholic beverages, or tips to local providers. As Dan would like to book SAS members, he will personally donate \$150.00 per person to our chapter. Group size is limited to 12 people plus guides. For further information, contact the SAS office, phone number 345-3724.

(Coming up in February -remember there's no January issue - is the first of three parts by Peter Metropulos on birding in Spain)

Trade-Offs

1. Boats And Ducks

The Keokuk Pool, on the Mississippi River bordering Iowa, is an important migratory stopover for diving ducks, with more than 250,000 birds a day recorded in 1986 and 1987. In the last decade duck numbers there have declined at an alarming rate --- more than four times as fast as the decline in breeding populations

The cause is human disturbance from recreational boaters. Ducks were flushed four to six times a day, causing significant expenditures of energy and loss of feeding time. The authors of the survey, are recommending that areas of the river be designated as no boating zones during migration. The boating lobby is expected to oppose any effort to restrict access.

2. Common Eiders: Net Loss

Catm culturing is a growing industry in the Northeast and some of the sites are protected by underwater nets. At one site near Provincetown, Massachusetts, more than 50 common eiders were found dead in the nets, following the discovery of almost 150 eiders washed up on shore.

3. Orange-Loving Parrots

Efforts to save two endangered parrots in Dominica have proven successful but are creating a new problem. The parrots now pose a threat to the citrus crops on the island.



A Christmas Suggestion

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching — Sequoia's own guide to 25 of the best birding spots in San Mateo and San Francisco counties — is now available.

It can be ordered direct from the office for \$14.95 plus tax and shipping (\$18.25 total) or can be picked up at the meeting, selected field trips and fine book stores

carrying environmental works throughout the county.

Your birding friends — wherever they are located — will appreciate a copy!

Other Holiday Suggestions

Sequoia Audubon T-shirts are a special bargain at \$5 each -- but quantities and sizes are limited.

Gift memberships in Audubon are another great gift. Use the sign-up form on Page Eight and be sure to enclose a separate piece of paper noting that this is a gift.

Check the list of items below. Surely there is something there that will interest some of your friends and family! Make your holiday shopping easy and help SAS at the same time.

Season's Greetings from all of us to all of you!

ITEMS FOR SALE OR RENT

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

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

Items Sold at SAS Office or at Meetings

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

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

Items Mailed to Customers

20.00
13.00
13.00
4.50
8.50
24.50
6.00
3.50
1.50
2.00
2.75

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

ALL PRICES INCLUDE SALES TAX

Please make all checks payable to:
Sequoia Audubon Society
 30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
 San Mateo, CA 94403-5671

COME COUNT WITH US!

Calling All Birders to the 1997 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. This year, the Crystal Springs Count will be held on Saturday, December 21 followed by the Año Nuevo Count on Saturday, January 4, 1997. All levels of birders are WELCOME and NEEDED. Join a team, enjoy the camaradeie, have fun and contribute to the effort!!!

What makes this event so successful? For most, its lots of fun. For some, its the competition. Our counts are among the top ten nearly every year in numbers of species counted. For many, its the chance to participate in a vital scientific endeavor. Each year, the data from more than 1500 counts is published in *Audubon Field Notes* and entered into a master database at Cornell University. This resource is tapped over and over again by scientists and researchers worldwide to uncover important trends. There is simply no better source for bird population 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, 9AM to 12:30 PM or call Robin Smith (415-325-3306) in the evening.

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

The 1996 Christmas Counts

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

REGISTRATION FORM

THE 1996 CHRISTMAS COUNTS

I would like to participate in the:

- ☐ Crystal Springs Bird Count (\$5 Fee) -- December 21, 1996

I would prefer to count on the Coastsides ☐

I would prefer to count along the Bayside ☐

I will attend the compilation dinner (\$5) ☐

- ☐ Año Nuevo Bird Count (\$5 Fee) -- January 4, 1997*

- ☐ I will count my feeder or backyard (NO FEE REQUIRED)

On December 21 (Crystal Springs Count) ☐

On January 4 (Año Nuevo Count) ☐



Please cut out or copy this form and mail it with your check to

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

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

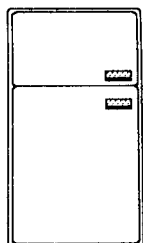
Telephone _____

*No compilation dinner on 1/4/97

Freon Smuggling

In an effort to avoid continuing destruction of the Earth's ozone layer, the federal government, acting under an international treaty, banned the manufacture and import of freon on Jan 1, 1996. Under that treaty most developing nations may continue manufacturing and using freon until 2005.

Recharging your leaky or worn-out air conditioner, freezer or refrigerator



used to be relatively easy and inexpensive. Now its cheaper to scrap the old unit rather than retrofit it to use the newer, less harmful but more expensive, refrigerants. As a result a black market in freon has developed. The

illegal importation of freon, primarily from Mexico and Central America, is now the number two smuggling problem (after drugs) for the US customs service.

The outlook is that the demand for and the smuggling of freon will grow as more and more appliances wear out. Another side-effect of the ban is the likelihood that the value of older automobiles with air-conditioning should drop substantially.

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The cause is human disturbance from recreational boaters. Ducks were flushed four to six times a day, causing significant expenditures of energy and loss of feeding time. The authors of the survey, are recommending that areas of the river be designated as no boating zones during migration. The boating lobby is expected to oppose any effort to restrict access.

2. Common Eiders: Net Loss

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than 50 common eiders were found dead in the nets, following the discovery of almost 150 eiders washed up on shore.

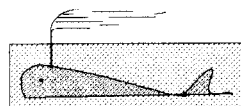
3. Orange-Loving Parrots

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Iceland May Start Whaling Again

Along with the other international

members of the Whaling Commission, Iceland gave up commercial whaling when the



commission imposed its ban, but like Norway and Japan, continued some whaling for "scientific" purposes. In 1989, Iceland voluntarily ceased what they considered public hypocrisy and ceased whaling entirely.

Icelanders however retained their taste for whale meat and it has never entirely disappeared. Recently, sentiment has changed on the island republic. In 1992, Iceland dropped out of the Whaling Commission and this year it is likely that the Althing, the nation's legislature, will be presented with an official request from the government to re-authorize the whaling industry.

Nest Parasitism In Waterfowl

Although interspecific nest parasitism is well known in waterfowl, little is known about how the host species reacts to the presence of other bird's eggs in the nest. This is especially true of cavity-nesting waterfowl, where any attempt to eject the intruder's eggs creates significant risks for the host species' eggs. Now there is evidence that the hosts do recognize eggs other than their own, and that they have evolved a system to deal - somewhat - with the situation. In "Responses of Nesting Mergansers to Parasitic Common Goldeneye Eggs" (Animal Behavior 46:1226-1228,1993), M. L. Malloy and P. J. Weatherhead reported that female Hooded and Common Mergansers, both frequent victims of

parasitism by Common Goldeneyes, responded by moving the Goldeneye eggs to the periphery of the clutch. Because all eggs in the nest were numbered as part of the study, the observers discovered that the mergansers regularly shifted the position of the eggs in the clutch, presumably so that each received equal time at the center. Eggs at the center of the clutch receive more heat during incubation. The birds did not rotate Goldeneye eggs into the center of the clutch, however, and when the experimenters moved the Goldeneye eggs away from the periphery, the mergansers moved them back. While the strategy apparently does not stop all Goldeneye eggs from hatching, it minimizes the chance that the Goldeneye eggs will hatch first, and that the females will desert their own, still-incubating eggs, to follow the young Goldeneyes away from the nest.

Letter to the Editor

Dear SAS:

Enclosed is a check for a *Needles* subscription and for conservation activities in SAS. I now live in Georgia and am a National Audubon member through our local chapter. However, I grew up in San Mateo — leaving the Bay Area in 1978. In visits to family over the last several years, I have realized all of the wonderful environmental work which has been done in my "homeland" that I had no idea was happening. It has renewed my spirit to see the open areas, preserves and new parks that have been acquired for the birds and animals to live in. My favorite place so far has been the Pescadero Marsh — each time I go, I see new wonders (the heron nests, the Wrentits, Black Phoebe, *all* the ducks, the oystercatchers, the White-crowned Sparrows).

Thanks for your part in bringing some sanity and beauty back from the brink of total loss, I wish the folks here in Atlanta would wake up and learn from other parts of the country.

Thanks. I enjoy reading your newsletter.

Sandy Brinks
Stone Mountain, GA

(Remember Sandy, that the folks in Georgia have had a 200 year head start in screwing things up and still didn't do as badly as some. You could be in northern New Jersey.

—Ed.)

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.

The family of Carroll Kuehn in memory of Carroll Kuehn

John and Nena Padley in memory of Jack McCaw

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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