

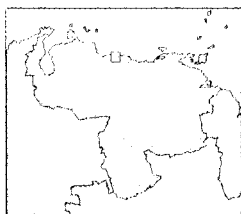


sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 47, No. 3
November, 1997

This Month's Program

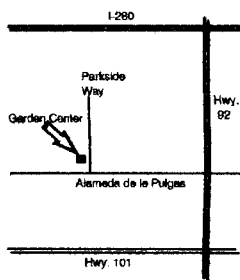
Tom Ryan
On the Trail of James Bond



No, not 007, but the Caribbean ornithologist whose name Ian Fleming stole for his superspy. Tom's two expeditions to the little-known High Jungles of Venezuela resulted in the re-discovery of the Pygmy Palm Swift, first described by Bond in 1928, and thought to be extinct.

Come explore this virginal rain forest habitat with Tom, visit its exotic wildlife and finally, find the nest of the Pygmy Palm Swift.

Tom is the chief biologist at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and is highly sought after as a speaker. We are extraordinarily lucky to obtain him on short notice.



Meetings are the second Thursday of the month at the San Mateo Garden Center at Parkside on the Alameda. Informal get-together begins at 7:30 PM with the meeting at 8 and the program following immediately thereafter.

See Page Seven for an account of Sequoia's dramatic triumph in the SFBBO Birding Challenge.

Next Month's Program



Christine Scott will give us an insight into the mysterious night time world of bats with her program "Guardian Angels of the Night". Don't forget that this will also be the night of our annual Potluck Dinner.

Be a Hero!

Robin Smith and Cliff Richer

Audubon Adventures is a National Audubon program aimed at elementary school students. In return for a nominal fee of \$35 per classroom National Audubon provides nine newsletters and a teacher's guide to each participating educator. Each newsletter covers a different conservation or natural history topic in language appropriate for third to sixth grade classrooms. From its inception, Sequoia has been an enthusiastic supporter of the program and has included funds in its budget to fund it.

This year's efforts to enroll more classrooms in the Audubon Adventures Program have been successful beyond our wildest dreams and especially beyond our budget. At this time there are 13 unfunded classes! We need some people to step forward and hold out a helping hand. If you can sponsor one of these classes please send your \$35 donation to Terri in the office. If you know a teacher or student who would like to be included in this program, we can even allocate your donation to a specific classroom. You won't be stealing the program from another class. Somehow we will get every classroom enrolled in this plan! There can be no higher priority than the opportunity to educate a class of children about the environment and encourage them to participate in protecting habitat for wildlife.

Past Presidents Rick Baird and Julia Mandeville have lead the way with their donations to the program. Let's go!

Be a Hero - Part II

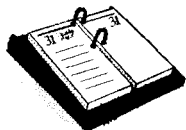
Once again we have the opportunity to participate in gathering information for the world's largest and oldest data base. For over a hundred years Audubon members have censused wintering birds across the United States...and now all over the world! Year after year Sequoia's two **Christmas Counts** have been among the ten most diverse and productive in the United States.

You don't have to be a hotshot birder to participate!

Be a driver, a clipboard jockey or an extra pair of eyes. We need them all!

**Call Robin Smith (325-3306)
or the office (345-3724) to volunteer.**

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 Sequoia Audubon Calendar

November-December 1997



November

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 — REDWOOD SHORES —

This area is quite productive in birdlife, particularly shorebirds, raptors and waterfowl. Meet at 9 AM near the water treatment plant. Take the Holly St./Redwood Shores Blvd. exit east from Hwy. 101 and follow it to its end. **RAIN CANCELS THE TRIP.**

LEADER NICK COIRO 349-1834

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6 — 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.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 — SHARP PARK SHORE

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 yielded surprises. Meet at 9 AM at the Anchor Monument south of the fishing pier on Sharp Park Beach. The trip should break up at noon. Heavy rain cancels the trip.

LEADER DAN KELLER

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13 — 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. See Page One for details.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15-16 — THE SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES, GRAY LODGE AND THE BUTTES.

Biologists are predicting a "crash" in the Snow Goose population so this may be your last chance for a while to see the clouds of geese we have been treated to the last few years. This is a car-caravan tour 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. **Trip reservations are required** so that we may know how many to expect at each rendezvous point. Call the leader for more information and for your trip reservation.

WILLOWS' MOTELS

All area Code 916

Blue Gum Motel 934-5401

Casa Linda 934-4224

Crossroads West 934-7028

Golden Pheasant 934-4603

Grove Motel 934-5067

Super 8 Motel 934-2871

Western Motel 934-3856

Willows Motel 934-4778

LEADER CLIFF RICHER 873-1754

December

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4 — 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.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 — THE RAPTORS OF ALTA-MONT 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.

LEADER CLIFF RICHER 873-1754

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11 — ANNUAL POTLUCK &

GENERAL MEETING — at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. The Potluck begins at 6:30 with the General Meeting and Program immediately following. See next month's *Needles* for details.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16 — 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 A.M. The trip should end at noon. **HEAVY RAIN CANCELS THE TRIP.**

LEADER NICK COIRO 349-1834

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 — THE CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3. — THE AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT

COMPILER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

BLM-California

A Report on 1996

Cliff Richer



Despite the Clinton administration's outrageous "buckling under" to ranching interests in '93 by firing the enlightened Jim Baca as BLM chief, the nation's largest landowner continues its slow transition from its "Bureau of Logging and Mining" days to a role as a genuine custodian of our public lands.

The total number of mining claims and patents issued declined again last year and a new regulation (43 CFR 3715) went into effect prohibiting squatting.

Squatters are defined as persons who are illegally residing on or running unauthorized non-mining businesses on BLM-managed lands. The rule clarifies that a claimant's use and occupancy must relate to active and continuing exploration, mining or processing operations.

Once confined to the occasional "desert rat", squatting became a near epidemic in the 70's, and a good deal of BLM's resources were used in disproving claims and evicting bikers, unreconstructed hippies, and a wide range of others including a recording studio and a pirate radio station. The new regulation closes a few loopholes left in the law.

A nationwide effort to combat noxious weeds took center stage in 1996, according to the BLM. Weeds, even those that look like pretty flowers, can harm the land by reducing and destroying wildlife habitat, competing with native plant species, reducing forage for wildlife, degrading recreation opportunities, and increasing soil erosion.

This policy is a big step up from the days of "range improvement", which consisted primarily of making the world safe for cattle.

The BLM treated 308 acres of saltcedar (tamarisk) and planted 2,500 cottonwood and willow cuttings in riparian areas with a \$3,000 Challenge Cost Share from the California Environmental Project for Saltcedar Control. The control of this South African weed, imported in the late 1800s by the railroads, is a huge problem. While it was perfect for stabilizing roadbeds in southern desert areas, it is also the ultimate desert survivor. Seed and plant can survive for years in a dormant state and then spring full-blown at

the first sign of water. Its dense and aggressive root system chokes out all other vegetation and its stems and leaves are inedible to our native insects and animals. Other areas in which tamarisk eradication projects were initiated included riparian and oasis areas in Dos Palmas, Big Morongo and the Santa Rosa Mountains.

The BLM also initiated pilot exotic weed control programs to eradicate Himalayan Blackberry and the Tree of Heaven on Sacramento Island, a 70-acre valley oak riparian area; and cooperated with the Intermountain West Joint Venture to develop and distribute a brochure informing the public how to identify and control perennial pepperweed or tall whitetop.

In an attempt to stem the infiltration of noxious weeds on public lands, BLM is enlisting the help of amateurs throughout the state.

An interagency group called the Lassen County Star Thistle Task Force was created to stem the spread of that European weed. The Task Force recruited volunteers to pull up young plants, allowing the BLM to get a quick start at eradicating it.

The BLM worked with the San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture to release over 300 seed eating hairy weevils in a yellow star-thistle patch in the Carrizo Plain Natural Area. *(I am always leery whenever I hear of the deliberate introduction of a non-native species. I hope they did their homework well. A previous attempt by the Department of Agriculture to introduce thistle-eating weevils brought some native thistle plants to endangered status.)*

The biggest cooperative effort however is the current alliance with the California Native Plant Society

The CNPS's Vegetation Committee developed *A Manual of California Vegetation*, the first publication to define California plants in a scientific manner. This manual has been adopted by the BLM as a basis for classifying and sampling vegetation and has spurred the BLM decision to "establish and maintain the best representatives of all distinct (plant) community types in each physiographic province in which they occur on BLM-managed lands" in California.

"My experience while serving on the BLM's Desert Advisory Council has

convinced me that scientific information is more valuable than public opinion when it comes to modifying agency behavior," says Steven L. Hartman, a vice-resident of CNPS. "The Society's Rare Plant Program has led the way in species-level protection of California's endangered flora."

This policy of working with qualified volunteer groups has special significance since it runs contrary to an earlier attempt by some Congressmen to forbid the participation of volunteer organizations in developing biological information for use by government agencies.

By affirming the reliability of "amateur-generated" information the BLM is lending creditability to Christmas Count and Breeding Bird Atlas statistics and validating their use for a great variety of planning and conservation purposes.

Lodi Crane Festival

November 7-10, 1997

A consortium of private organizations and government entities is sponsoring the Lodi Crane Festival this month.



This event will celebrate the concentrations of cranes wintering along the river lowlands of the Delta, particularly near Woodbridge Road in nearby Thornton.

The festival will include:

- 30 Naturalist-led tours to public and private lands showcasing magnificent flocks of sandhill cranes and over 100 species of birds.
- Family activities — art lessons, beginning birding, a discovery room, games, storytelling and origami.
- Fine art show featuring the best of California's crane artists and international children's crane art display.
- Workshops on wildlife photography, cranes of the world and farming for cranes.
- Over 20 booths with displays and outstanding videos.
- Opportunities to volunteer on a wetlands restoration project!

For information call 1-800-304-LODI

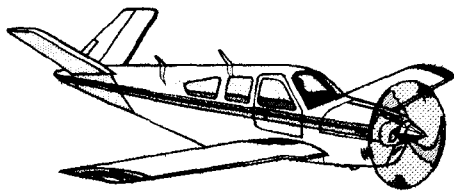
Sponsors include the
San Joaquin Audubon Society



Least Tern Habitat Threatened

Efforts by environmentalists, including several Audubon chapters, were successful in securing 525 acres of the former Alameda Naval Air Station as a Least Tern sanctuary. Asst. Secretary of the Interior Garamendi was instrumental in acquiring the acreage for the Least Tern.

However, as we went to press a new threat was looming. One of the proposals for future use involves the creation of a general airport. The runway proposed for use is the one that runs through the sanctuary. The Least Tern actually nests on this runway. When the military used the station, every effort was made to avoid using this strip during the spring and summer. No alternative is included in the



general airport proposal — because private aircraft do not have the power of commercial or military planes and can not utilize the alternate runways under normal wind conditions. The airport proposal would obviously negate the sanctuary's purpose.

We'll try to follow through and let you know what happens on this issue.

o o o o o o o o o o o

Vegetables are living things, too. True, they aren't much as pets...but they reproduce and respire, which is as much as you can say for a lot of us. Wherever you draw the line on the food chain, you're to some extent a biological elitist

--Bob Wieder



Aftermath of Civil Wars Threaten Mountain Gorillas

Although civil wars in Congo, Rwanda and Uganda are technically over and the lands are temporarily at peace, the continued rumbles of insurgent factions, tribal feuds and an increase in poaching are threatening the endangered mountain gorillas. Congo's Virunga National Park and the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest straddle the boundaries of the three states and form the last home of the remaining 600 giant apes.

Ten gorillas were killed in Congo's civil war last year and 18 have fallen to poachers since then. The area is also home to an unknown number of human guerrillas — armed insurgents from Congo and Rwanda who have fled across the borders to their neighbor nations.

A year ago, while the Congo (then Zaire) civil war was still raging, rebel leader Laurent Kabila vowed to make the refuge and its gorillas one of the highest priorities of his new administration. He pointed out that tourists paid more than \$1.5 million a year for entry to the park while former President Mobuto spent only \$100,000 to maintain Virunga.

On September 10, the park was reopened to tours, but no money is budgeted for its operation or maintenance. Park rangers, who earn less than a dollar a month, have yet to be paid anything by the new government.

Vital Katembo, a naturalist with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and the Congo Institute for the Conservation of Nature, says, "It's so sad...things are just getting worse. The impact in terms of conservation efforts is terrible."

Morro Bay Bird Festival

January 16th Through 18th

Once again Morro Bay, a coastal area known for its natural beauty and over 230 bird species, will celebrate the return of the wintering birds. The Festival, held over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, offers over 35 guided field trips including a "Big Day", a rarities tour, ocean trips to see pelagic birds and whales, kayak trips on the Bay, van trips to look for California Condors, Sandhill Cranes, and over 20 species of raptors and owls.

There will be field trips to a monarch butterfly wintering site, a search for mushrooms in an "elfin forest", bird photography and over twenty workshops and presentations, including Beginning Birding, California Warblers, Gull Identification, Elephant Seals on the Rebound, Field Guide Update, Nestboxes, Gardening for Birds and Butterflies and more.

An art exhibit will feature local areas. A nationally known bird artist will lead a workshop and field trip on "Field Sketching".

The Saturday banquet will feature Luis Baptista, an expert in bird vocalizations, who will give some insights on "How Birds Communicate".

The Festival, co-sponsored by the California Morro Coast Audubon Society, will be headquartered at an inn overlooking the bay.

To obtain a brochure either write to the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 876, Morro Bay, CA 93443 or call them at (800) 231-0592.



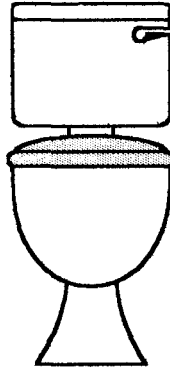
A Last (?) Word On Low-Flow Toilets

Cliff Richer

Since we raised the question of so-called low flow toilets last year, nationally syndicated humorist Dave Barry wrote about it in a similar vein, it became a short-term phenomenon on conservative talk radio, (Is the right to flush really guaranteed under the Second Amendment?) and I discovered the existence of a black market in white porcelain.

In Florida, you can obtain an old-fashioned 3.2 gallon full-flow toilet — if you know the right plumber and for the right price. Most of these are toilets “salvaged” from the buildings destroyed by Hurricane Andrew and from recent remodeling and demolitions.

In a more serious vein, I decided to determine the actual efficacy of my own appliance. Was it actually



more of a water user than the old toilet, or was it just an annoyance? First, I calculated flushing efficiency. I documented 100 actual flushing “incidents” that required 182 flushes. Then I measured the actual capacity of my 1.5 gallon toilet and discovered that it really took 1.9 gallons per flush.

In my old toilet 100 flushes would have used 320 gallons of water. To be fair, even the old toilet wasn’t 100% effective so I included a 5% “two-flush” factor bringing it up to 336 gallons.

My new “water-efficient” toilet used 346 gallons. In the statistics (and plumbing) business, that’s called a wash.

HOW ABOUT AN AUDUBON CHRISTMAS?



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A SPECIAL LIMITED TIME, MEMBERS ONLY PRICE

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Available at Meetings

To order by mail send a check for \$15.00 (includes sales tax, postage and handling) for the first book and \$14.00 or each additional book to:

Sequoia Audubon Book Sale
30 West 39th Ave., Suite 202,
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- ☐ **National Audubon Society Membership**
New \$20 (1 year) Student/Seniors \$15
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Make checks payable to the National Audubon Society.
- ☐ **Needles subscription only.** \$15 for 9 issues. *Needles* subscription checks should be payable to Sequoia Audubon.

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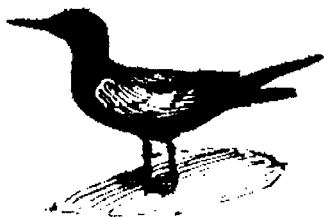
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PRBO to Study Black Terns

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has contracted with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory to undertake a survey on the status of black terns which have been in serious decline throughout the world. Dave Shuford, the traveling man of PRBO, will be the point man of the survey and kicked it off with an article in the Point Reyes Bird Observatory newsletter, the *Observer*. The following items are extracted from that article.

In North America, the Black Tern, stands alone among other terns, its plumage largely black and charcoal gray set off by white undertail coverts. It is much less reliant on fish, as it forages extensively over lakes and marshes, snatching dragonflies and other insects from the air or from marsh vegetation.



In the marshes the terns place their nests on floating mats of vegetation or scrap boards, or less often on small mud islands, muskrat lodges, or the old nests of other marsh birds. Today in some locations they have adapted to floating nesting platforms that people have built.

If nests are approached, the young scurry into the water where they escape detection among the reed beds and floating debris.

With its distinctive plumage, atypical foraging habits, and historical abundance, the Black Tern was quick to attract the attention of early naturalists. Such would not be the case today. Although in North America the species still breeds widely across Canada and the northern US, its range has retracted and populations have suffered widespread declines in the heart of their breeding range.

To conduct a comprehensive assessment of the species' status throughout North America, PRBO will compile all available information and make recommendations on critical habitat, conservation and recovery needs.

PRBO must gather more breeding data to assess the extent of the tern's

population demise, but it is already obvious that the causes of declines are not well documented. The most likely culprit is habitat destruction, given that we have lost 50% of the historic wetlands in the United States and over 90% in California. In Europe, habitat loss has been exacerbated by pollution that has caused the loss of plants favored for nesting. Circumstantial evidence also suggests that unknown causes have reduced the terns' prey base of large insects.

In 1944, Grinnell and Miller, the patriarchs of bird lore in California, considered the Black Tern locally common in the Central Valley and in the northeastern portion of the state. Today, it is extirpated in the San Joaquin Valley. In the

Sacramento Valley, wetland loss has been partly compensated by cultivation of flooded rice fields. While some Black Terns have adapted to this change and now nest in ricelands, almost nothing is known of the extent of

such use, the number of terns involved or their nesting success in this managed habitat. Black Terns appear to have fared better in the Modoc Plateau region of northeastern California, but this is based on anecdotal evidence rather than population surveys.

To remedy this situation, PRBO will initiate thorough surveys of Black Terns in the northern reaches of the state, where they have been conducting censuses of gull colonies. The goals of the project are to determine the size of the Black Tern breeding population, its distribution, and the types of habitats used for nesting. This effort will be expanded to the Central Valley in 1998.

As California's population continues to grow it is incumbent upon PRBO and those who support its mission to document the status of the state's birdlife.

Declining and vulnerable species such as the Black Tern are particularly important if we are to leave intact a legacy of the state's biological wealth.

—*Liberally adapted from "Black Beauty", an article by Dave Shuford, which first appeared in the Observer, the quarterly newsletter of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in Spring of 1997.*



The Feather Duster

The Ultimate Survivors Cliff Richer

You have to wonder how coots survive. They appear to be the origin of the term "bird-brain". They are short-tempered and fight among themselves constantly. They rarely fly, and when they do they are barely competent at it. When they dive they pop up at the same place in a very short time. They are a game bird with no bag limit. And when they hatch they are a bright orange-red, fairly screaming "eat me!" to predators.

Yet, these anti-survival characteristics may be the keys to the coot's survival. Their stupidity and short temper combine so that they will make impressive mock attacks on predators much larger than themselves — such as raccoons and foxes. While this can lead to the demise of the parent coot, it often results in the startled departure of the predator. Their unwillingness to fly keeps them from falling prey to the Peregrine Falcon and their short-term dives are a reasonable protection from marauding eagles.

Hunters long ago learned to avoid coots. Any shooter who comes home with a bag of coots will quickly become the butt of his fellows' jokes. And those who consider themselves sportsmen won't shoot a "sitting duck", much less a gullible coot. The real reason for their safety from hunters however, is best illustrated by this old recipe for preparing coot.

"Take one coot and plunge it into a large pot of water, along with one large stone. Boil eight hours. Drain the water. Throw away the coot. Eat the rock."

Even the juvenal coot's bright red bill and orange plumage may act to its benefit. Researchers at the University of Calgary in Alberta have discovered that parents tend to feed the most colorful chicks and ignore the dull ones. At this time the cootlets are rarely allowed to venture onto open water and the reds and oranges become grays and blacks in the shadows of the marsh. This is probably the only time in its life that a coot can be considered bright and it pays off.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory's Fall Birding Challenge

Sequoia Sweeps Major Categories!

Francis Toldi

This year the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) launched a new fund-raising competition, the Fall Birding Challenge. It is similar to the famous World Series of Birding in New Jersey and to Birdathon, with the twist that participants have to stay within a single county. All funds raised by team participants was to be shared by the Observatory and any organization selected by the participant.

Sequoia Audubon decided to enter a team, both to raise funds and for the greater glory of San Mateo County. We all know what incredible bird riches there are in this county, but we also know that the less-fortunate residents of other counties have not received the news.

We fielded our usual Birdathon team (Barry Sauppe, Bert McKee and me) and Peter Metropulos. In addition to being a knowledgeable, stalwart of San Mateo county birding, Peter is also a scientific adviser and long-time supporter of SFBBO. We selected for our count day Thursday, September 25, a date that we hoped would be late enough for arriving wintering species, but early enough to catch departing breeding birds and migrants.

The day began inauspiciously. Coming over Highway 92 at 4:00 a.m. I noticed that my car's temperature gauge was on "H" and steam was pouring out of the hood. Not a good sign. When

we met up with Barry, he told us that while his foot was healing from his recent surgery, it was not yet 100%, and his mobility would be limited. As we made our way past Pescadero, even in the pre-dawn darkness we could see that there was a solid wall of fog that would prevent virtually all seabird observation, a critical element of our plan. This was shaping up to be a miserable day.

But then, it all started to click. The rails responded to

Barry's and Bert's calls at Pescadero Marsh, four species of owl responded to Bert's expert hoots at Butano State Park and a surprisingly large number of species were still singing at dawn in the Gazos Creek area. We didn't even stop at Pigeon Point because of the still-heavy fog. We modified our plan to fit the con-

ditions, hoping that we could return later in the day to find some seabirds. The bird list steadily accumulated, with a bird here and another there. While looking for Osprey at Crystal Springs Lake (which we didn't find), we were pleased to see a Peregrine Falcon fly by, and perch on a pole. Nearby an unexpected Greater White-fronted Goose stood in with some Canadas. And so it went all day.

Later in the afternoon we returned to the coast and managed to salvage a respectable number of seabirds by scoping off the Pescadero shore. As the daylight waned we made our way in to Phipps Ranch, hoping for a few stray migrants. Just as we were leaving without any results, Barry called out two warblers zipping past his head.

Peter quickly got on the one that remained, and said "Red-eyed Vireo no wait..."

Bert said "Why isn't that a Yellow-green?"

I didn't say anything, but counted my blessings to be with such a high-powered group of birders. Yellow-green Vireo it was: a first county record, the bird of the day, probably the bird of my year!

On Saturday all the participants of the Fall Birding Challenge gathered at SFBBO headquarters to compare results and celebrate another year of that worthy organization. When the results were tallied, SAS grabbed top honors for total number of birds seen (158), highest percentage of regularly occurring birds in the county (57.25%), best bird (the vireo, of course). We raised approximately \$400 for SAS and SFBBO.

What fun! We'll have to do it again next year!

(In addition to raising money for SAS and SFBBO, the team garnered a number of valuable prizes, including a Leitz spotting scope. Since this was an official team, Frances felt that the prizes belonged to Sequoia. In a unanimous vote the Board of Directors voted to let the team fight it out as to how they were going to divide one scope among four drooling birders.

—The Editor)



Some say the mountain man era came to a close because they killed off all the beaver.

Not so — fashion did them in. The invention of the felt hat saved the beavers and probably some seal species from extinction.

Gifts and Bequests

A Special Thanks to
Ray Cheung of Fleet Data Systems for donation of a 486-66 computer for our office

Heroes of the Month Award to
Past Presidents Rick Baird and Julia Mandeville for sponsoring Audubon Adventures Classrooms

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. Information for all officers and chairpersons should be mailed to 30 West 39th Ave., Suite 202, San Mateo, CA 94403-4561. Please send **RENEWAL MEMBERSHIPS** directly to National Audubon in the envelope accompanying your renewal notice.

Please send **LATE RENEWALS** or **NEW MEMBERSHIPS** through Sequoia Audubon Society to insure continuity of newsletter or magazine subscriptions.

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY'S WEB PAGE'S URL is <http://www.belmont.gov/orgs/sas/>

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