

This Month'S Program

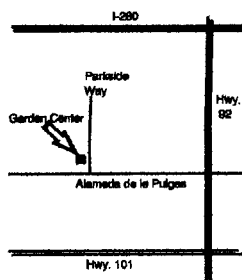


Paul Nobel of Santa Clara Valley Audubon and the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory will present a program on the identification of owls.

Paul is an industrial strength birder, an experienced tour leader and an enthusiastic speaker and this should be a great opportunity to watch, listen and learn.

We want to thank Paul for having the flexibility and patience to allow us to make a last minute switch and change his program from February to April.

Meetings are 7:30 PM, on the second Thursday of every month at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside.



Next Month'S Program

The Kern River Preserve

Bob Barnes, long-time Audubon activist and birder, is on the staff at Audubon's Kern River Preserve. The Preserve — a stunning riparian area in Kern County — was recently acquired from the Nature Conservancy by the National Audubon Society. Bob will also be leading a Sequoia field trip to the Kern River Preserve and adjacent desert and mountain areas on June 6, 1998.

Christmas Count Discrepancies

Our Christmas Count results published last month contained a number of discrepancies. We are reviewing these and the corrections will be published next month.

If you requested a copy of the 27 year Christmas Count results, we will delay sending out any of these until the results are corrected.

Note that these are our errors in copying data and were not made by the compilers.

From the Editor

Cliff Richer

The Shade-Grown Coffee Crusade

In December I expressed my cynical doubt about the merits of this particular crusade. One of my reasons for this doubt was my lack of credibility in the sponsoring organization. After being taken to task by Ms. Rodriguez of the Rainforest Alliance, — "Mr. Richer has confused our organization with the Rainforest Action Network..." — I admitted my error and resolved to take a harder look at this problem.

Well, after having done so, I remain cynical and unconvinced that this is a legitimate crisis. But, I am aware that it has the potential of growing into one.

Several articles that I have read (including the one that prompted my initial reaction) give the impression that farmers all over Central America are making the conversion from shade-grown to sun-grown coffee. In fact, this trend so far seems to be confined to Mexico, which is technically part of North America, not Central America. My inquiries would indicate that there seem to be no such conversions going on in Honduras or Costa Rica. Farmers are inherently conservative and are usually reluctant to change what has worked for centuries until it is proven to be advantageous to them.

All of the articles I have read emphasize the importance of the shade trees to neo-tropical migrants. Again my research sources feel that these trees are of negligible value to Honduran and Costa Rican birdlife. In some cases, the shade trees are introduced species that are unattractive to the native and migrant species and in most cases, heavy pesticide use makes the coffee plantations hostile to bird life.

My main reason for cynicism however is the fact that there was no publicity about this problem until a small coffee company began marketing its custom-made, ecologically sound, guaranteed shade-grown coffee under a variety of names and through a number of environmental organizations, including National Audubon. (I have received no response to my faxed inquiries regarding Audubon's decision to start selling this product and a telephoned inquiry gave the impression that their decision was based solely on the coffee company's sales pitch.) I find the coincidence compelling.

The overwhelming bulk of the coffee grown in the world is still shade-grown, so you can continue to use your off-the-shelf product with a clear conscience. If this problem troubles you, write to the company, express your concerns and ask for the source of their product.

I am also willing to be convinced that my cynicism is mis-directed. If you have any hard facts or personal experience that would contradict or support either side of this argument, please let us know.

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

April

THURSDAY, APRIL 2 — 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, APRIL 4 -- ED LEVIN COUNTY PARK --

The following collection of Santa Clara Valley Association of
 1911-1912, 1913-1914, 1915-1916, 1917-1918, 1919-1920, 1921-1922, 1923-1924, 1925-1926, 1927-1928, 1929-1930, 1931-1932, 1933-1934, 1935-1936, 1937-1938, 1939-1940, 1941-1942, 1943-1944, 1945-1946, 1947-1948, 1949-1950, 1951-1952, 1953-1954, 1955-1956, 1957-1958, 1959-1960, 1961-1962, 1963-1964, 1965-1966, 1967-1968, 1969-1970, 1971-1972, 1973-1974, 1975-1976, 1977-1978, 1979-1980, 1981-1982, 1983-1984, 1985-1986, 1987-1988, 1989-1990, 1991-1992, 1993-1994, 1995-1996, 1997-1998, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, 2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, 2035-2036, 2037-2038, 2039-2040, 2041-2042, 2043-2044, 2045-2046, 2047-2048, 2049-2050, 2051-2052, 2053-2054, 2055-2056, 2057-2058, 2059-2060, 2061-2062, 2063-2064, 2065-2066, 2067-2068, 2069-2070, 2071-2072, 2073-2074, 2075-2076, 2077-2078, 2079-2080, 2081-2082, 2083-2084, 2085-2086, 2087-2088, 2089-2090, 2091-2092, 2093-2094, 2095-2096, 2097-2098, 2099-2100, 2101-2102, 2103-2104, 2105-2106, 2107-2108, 2109-2110, 2111-2112, 2113-2114, 2115-2116, 2117-2118, 2119-2120, 2121-2122, 2123-2124, 2125-2126, 2127-2128, 2129-2130, 2131-2132, 2133-2134, 2135-2136, 2137-2138, 2139-2140, 2141-2142, 2143-2144, 2145-2146, 2147-2148, 2149-2150, 2151-2152, 2153-2154, 2155-2156, 2157-2158, 2159-2160, 2161-2162, 2163-2164, 2165-2166, 2167-2168, 2169-2170, 2171-2172, 2173-2174, 2175-2176, 2177-2178, 2179-2180, 2181-2182, 2183-2184, 2185-2186, 2187-2188, 2189-2190, 2191-2192, 2193-2194, 2195-2196, 2197-2198, 2199-2200, 2201-2202, 2203-2204, 2205-2206, 2207-2208, 2209-2210, 2211-2212, 2213-2214, 2215-2216, 2217-2218, 2219-2220, 2221-2222, 2223-2224, 2225-2226, 2227-2228, 2229-2230, 2231-2232, 2233-2234, 2235-2236, 2237-2238, 2239-2240, 2241-2242, 2243-2244, 2245-2246, 2247-2248, 2249-2250, 2251-2252, 2253-2254, 2255-2256, 2257-2258, 2259-2260, 2261-2262, 2263-2264, 2265-2266, 2267-2268, 2269-2270, 2271-2272, 2273-2274, 2275-2276, 2277-2278, 2279-2280, 2281-2282, 2283-2284, 2285-2286, 2287-2288, 2289-2290, 2291-2292, 2293-2294, 2295-2296, 2297-2298, 2299-2300, 2301-2302, 2303-2304, 2305-2306, 2307-2308, 2309-2310, 2311-2312, 2313-2314, 2315-2316, 2317-2318, 2319-2320, 2321-2322, 2323-2324, 2325-2326, 2327-2328, 2329-2330, 2331-2332, 2333-2334, 2335-2336, 2337-2338, 2339-2340, 2341-2342, 2343-2344, 2345-2346, 2347-2348, 2349-2350, 2351-2352, 2353-2354, 2355-2356, 2357-2358, 2359-2360, 2361-2362, 2363-2364, 2365-2366, 2367-2368, 2369-2370, 2371-2372, 2373-2374, 2375-2376, 2377-2378, 2379-2380, 2381-2382, 2383-2384, 2385-2386, 2387-2388, 2389-2390, 2391-2392, 2393-2394, 2395-2396, 2397-2398, 2399-2400, 2401-2402, 2403-2404, 2405-2406, 2407-2408, 2409-2410, 2411-2412, 2413-2414, 2415-2416, 2417-2418, 2419-2420, 2421-2422, 2423-2424, 2425-2426, 2427-2428, 2429-2430, 2431-2432, 2433-2434, 2435-2436, 2437-2438, 2439-2440, 2441-2442, 2443-2444, 2445-2446, 2447-2448, 2449-2450, 2451-2452, 2453-2454, 2455-2456, 2457-2458, 2459-2460, 2461-2462, 2463-2464, 2465-2466, 2467-2468, 2469-2470, 2471-2472, 2473-2474, 2475-2476, 2477-2478, 2479-2480, 2481-2482, 2483-2484, 2485-2486, 2487-2488, 2489-2490, 2491-2492, 2493-2494, 2495-2496, 2497-2498, 2499-2500, 2501-2502, 2503-2504, 2505-2506, 2507-2508, 2509-2510, 2511-2512, 2513-2514, 2515-2516, 2517-2518, 2519-2520, 2521-2522, 2523-2524, 2525-2526, 2527-2528, 2529-2530, 2531-2532, 2533-2534, 2535-2536, 2537-2538, 2539-2540, 2541-2542, 2543-2544, 2545-2546, 2547-2548, 2549-2550, 2551-2552, 2553-2554, 2555-2556, 2557-2558, 2559-2560, 2561-2562, 2563-2564, 2565-2566, 2567-2568, 2569-2570, 2571-2572, 2573-2574, 2575-2576, 2577-2578, 2579-2580, 2581-2582, 2583-2584, 2585-2586, 2587-2588, 2589-2590, 2591-2592, 2593-2594, 2595-2596, 2597-2598, 2599-2600, 2601-2602, 2603-2604, 2605-2606, 2607-2608, 2609-2610, 2611-2612, 2613-2614, 2615-2616, 2617-2618, 2619-2620, 2621-2622, 2623-2624, 2625-2626, 2627-2628, 2629-2630, 2631-2632, 2633-2634, 2635-2636, 2637-2638, 2639-2640, 2641-2642, 2643-2644, 2645-2646, 2647-2648, 2649-2650, 2651-2652,

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 — GENERAL MEETING — Paul Nobel of Santa Clara Valley Audubon and the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory will present a program on the identification of owls. — at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. An informal get-together begins at 7:30 with the General Meeting at 8 PM. See page one for details.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19 — MINES ROAD — This auto caravan trip winds through an isolated valley where



Phainopepla, Lewis' Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon are

near certainties while Roadrunner, Wood Duck, Wild Turkey, Costa's Hummingbird, and

Rufous-crowned Sparrows are likely. Yet, despite its seeming isolation, you will never be more than 45 minutes away from either Livermore or Interstate 5 so that you can break away and return to civilization at any time. This is an all-day trip, ending at dusk, so bring lunch and liquids. Weather is unpredictable, with temperatures in the past varying between 40 and 90 degrees at this time of year. There are only two reliable restroom facilities, at lunchtime and at mid-afternoon. There *may* be gasoline available at the halfway point, but this is not reliable and varies from year to year. To get there, take I-580 past Livermore to the Vasco Road exit. Take a right at the exit and follow Vasco Rd. to its end on Tesla Rd. Take a right on Tesla and follow it a little less than a mile until you come to Mines Road on the left. We will meet on Mines Road at the intersection at 8:30 A.M. Late-comers can catch up if they follow Mines Road. At this time we have no information on any storm damage to the road, but be prepared for possible inconveniences or detours.

LEADER

CLIFF RICHER

873-1754

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 — WILLIAMS SISTERS' RANCH —
This trip has been postponed as El Niño has taken its toll on the Ranch. It will be rescheduled when conditions permit.

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Brown-headed cowbirds are known to parasitize 216 different species of North American birds.



News From Audubon Canyon Ranch

Betsy Stafford

Mother's Day BBQ and Silent Auction

Come one, come all! This celebration is held each year in the lovely, secluded meadow of Volunteer Canyon at ACR's Isolinas Lagoon Preserve. Proceeds benefit Marin Audubon's wetland and marsh restoration as well as the ACR and Marin Audubon's conservation efforts. Tickets are \$10.00. A cash bar is available. For more information, call 415/947-2222 or visit www.audubonmarin.org.

70 feet of the Adirondack Park Typess Grove Preserve and wiped out the rare, rich, freshwater marsh, giving ACR yet another fundraising opportunity; (2) filled the waterfall, streams, and meadows to bursting at Bouverie Preserve, guaranteeing a spectacular spring wildflower show; (3) washed out bits and pieces of the parking area in Bolinas Lagoon Preserve; (4) felled two nest trees behind Smiley's Tavern in Bolinas, rendering several Great Blue Herons homeless and sending some of them over to squabble for nesting sites in Picher Canyon.

Greg and Rachel Kanunan, our devoted hydrologists who have volunteered many hours of their time to ACR, report that the storms' toll "could have been much, much worse."

Something Special for Our Audubon Friends

Remember to call ahead to reserve a place for a private wildflower walk at Bouverie Preserve in Sonoma's Valley of the Moon, Saturday, May 16. We expect a sellout. Call (707) 938-4554.

170 Docents for 170 Classrooms

“We’re still having fun,” writes fourth grader Tom Villanueva of Otis Elementary, “talking about the telescopes over here. I had the most fun spying on those egrets and herons.”

Within just three short months this spring ACR's docents will travel to 170 Bay Area classrooms and take more than 4000 schoolchildren on nature walks throughout our preserves. Our docents come from all over — Marin, Sonoma, San Francisco, and the East Bay. Bouverie Preserve just graduated 27 new docents and Bolinas Lagoon Preserve will begin its 23 Wednesdays of docent training in September. If you'd like to join this inspired group of volunteers, call us at (415) 969-9244.

We Still Need Your Help

Without the hands-on support of our Audubon friends, we wouldn't be able to handle the thousands of weekend visitors during our public season March 14-July 12. If you haven't yet signed up to host on a Saturday or Sunday, we'd appreciate your calling our office to do so. And a big thank you for those of you who have already signed up.

Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

—Chief Seattle

Super Birdathon Coming!

Watch your mail for the announcement and recruiting letter for this year's Birdathon!

Not all of the details were available as the *Needles* went to press but what was available was spectacular.

First prize for the team raising the most money for SAS will be a seven day cruise for two by **Discovery Voyages Alaska** in the waters of Prince William Sound. Winners will live on a 65 foot motor yacht while exploring the wonders of both land and sea. All expenses are included.

Second prize will be a three day all-expense stay for two at **Wild Wings Alaska**, a well known birding lodge in the Alaskan Interior.

Mono Lake Breeding Bird Count Emilie Strauss

For ten of the last fifteen years, we have conducted a breeding bird count at Mono Lake and we're looking for participants for 1998. We survey the Christmas Count circle centered in Lee Vining, which includes much of the western shore of Mono Lake, as well as parts of Lundy and Lee Vining Canyons. This project was initiated by David Gaines and Mono Lake birders have celebrated his memory by continuing it.

Last year, on June 14 with Mono Lake's level at 6,382 feet, more than a dozen intrepid counters braved an unseasonably late snowstorm to participate in the 1997 Count. Enduring rain, snow and hail, we set a new record with 117 species. (The earlier record had been 112 in 1991.) We confirmed nesting for Blue Grouse and Vesper Sparrow and observed four new species (Peregrine Falcon, California Quail, Indigo Bunting and Northern Mockingbird). Over the past eleven years, we have tallied a total of 177 species in the count circle.

The nesting species data has been forwarded to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory which will be compiling this information into GIS maps documenting the decline of riparian and songbird species in California. These maps can be viewed at their web site (www.prbo.org/prbo).

We hope you can join us on Saturday, June 13, for the 1998 counts. Participants need to have a working knowledge of common California birds. Be sure to bring food, water, binoculars, and a clipboard. A spotting scope and a 4WD vehicle are also useful. Expect Mono's birds to be at the height of song and activity. Abundant Mono Lake species at this time of year include Green-tailed Towhees, Sage Thrashers, House Wrens, Red-breasted Sapsuckers and Brewer's Sparrows.

Contact Emilie at emilie@stillwatersci.com or (510) 540-8749 for more information. If you plan to attend, please contact her by June 1.

(SAS's Peter Metropoulos has been one of the most dedicated Mono Lake counters for years and wholeheartedly recommends your participation. —Ed.)



The S A S Calendar

May

THURSDAY, MAY 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, MAY 14 — SAN PEDRO VALLEY COUNTY PARK — This park provides a variety of wooded, riparian and grasslands habitat for many species of birds. The trip will entail some walking along easy trails. It begins at 9:00 AM in the parking lot of the park. To get there take Highway 1 to Pacific

THURSDAY, MAY 21 — GENERAL MEETING — Bob Barnes, of Audubon Old Growth and Audubon's Kern River Preserve will present a program on the Preserve, a stunning riparian area in Kern County, recently acquired from the Nature Conservancy. Bob will also be leading a Sequoia field trip to the Kern River Preserve and adjacent desert and mountain areas on June 6, 1998. — at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. An informal get-together begins at 7:30 with the General Meeting at 8 PM.

SATURDAY, MAY 23 — PIPER SLOUGH — See next month's *Needles* for details.

LEADER MERRY HAVEMAN 344-2146

June

THURSDAY, JUNE 4 — BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING at the Audubon Office at 7:30 PM.

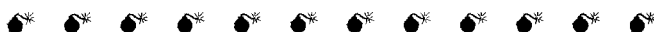
SATURDAY, JUNE 6 — KERN RIVER PRESERVE — See next month's *Needles* for details.

LEADERS BOB BARNES & FRANCIS TOLDI 344-1919

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 — ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS, GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER — at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside at 6:30 PM.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JUNE 13 & 14 — YUBA PASS AND SIERRA VALLEY — Dates may be subject to change — Watch the *Needles* for details.

LEADERS TED CHANDIK & CLIFF RICHER 873-1754



British scientists have launched a study of the giant basking shark. The seven ton monster is the only shark found regularly in the seas around England and is endangered because its liver produces oil used as a lubricant in high altitude jet engines.

Education Committee Update

Robin Smith

The final figure on Audubon Adventures classrooms is 50! Thanks to all of the teachers and especially to all of you who supported this effort.



The Noahs (Vice-president Marilyn and spouse) and Robin Smith were present for the judging of the San Mateo County Science Fair. The

Noahs spent the evening interviewing students about their projects while Robin spent her time ferreting out two projects for the SAS awards.

The SAS award winners were:

Moriah Nachbaur, a 6th grader who did a project called *Anna's Choice*. A number of feeders with colored ribbons were hung on Moriah's house and she tracked the hummer's visits to each feeding station to see which color attracted them most often. Day-glow orange was the winner by a slim margin.

Shane Arslan, a 5th grader, did a project titled *Which Type of Insulation Will Retain the Most Heat?* He tested wool, cotton, feathers and two man-made insulation materials.

Nick Coiro and Robin Smith gave a presentation to Farallone View School in Montara on Monday, March 9th as part of the school's oceans week study. Their theme this year — El Niño!

The binoculars obtained under the BofA grant have been marked with large, yellow SAS's for identification and placed in plastic containers for storage, transportation and use.



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There is no expedient to which a man will not go to avoid the real labor of thinking.
—Thomas A. Edison

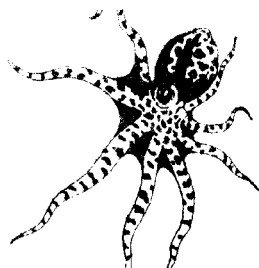
Notes From The Marine Reserve

Rick Johnson, currently heading up our Breeding Bird Atlas Project, and a former SAS officer and director, has been elected a director of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. In this he follows in the footsteps of his parents, Bill and Muriel, who were active in both SAS and the Reserve for many years. (Some of the "old-timers" remember Bill's pancake breakfast field trips to the Reserve with great fondness.)

There is considerable concern at the Reserve over the damage that has been done and will be done to the life of the 82-83 storms scoured the Reserve. The heavy rains, doing great damage to the marine life. It is feared that this year's storms — which have already destroyed the bridge over the creek — may be equally or even more devastating.

The Wily Octopus

The octopus, long depicted in stories and movies as the great killer "Devilfish" is really a shy and gentle creature. A mollusk without a shell, the octopus has a highly developed nervous system, and is the most intelligent invertebrate. They can have a memory up to three weeks duration.



The North Pacific great octopus, also known as the giant octopus, can grow to about 24 inches in length. It feeds on a variety of crustaceans, fish and mollusks.

The North Pacific great octopus is also found locally, but is rarely seen. About 20 years ago an eight foot octopus did wash ashore on Moss Beach.

(From Between the Tides, the newsletter of the Friends of Fitzgerald MRLR)

California Coastal Access Guide

New 5th Edition

If you don't already have one of the previous editions of this Coastal Commission book, this is a worthwhile purchase.

If you have one of the earlier editions, you probably shouldn't bother. Despite its claim that it is "newly revised and expanded", it omits several significant sites and a number of improvements in public access to other sites.

(From California Coast and Ocean, the newsletter of the Coastal Conservancy.)

James Island

If you've heard someone refer to James Island as Mono Lake, don't be surprised — but don't look for it on the map either.

The Mono Lake Committee and other Mono Lake activists have given this unofficial name to the remains of the former land-bridge that once joined Negit Island to the mainland.

While we applaud this move, we expect that this land-bridge will be completely covered by the time the lake reaches the court-mandated level. We would like to see a more permanent and more official monument to David Gaines, whom many consider to have been California's most effective activist since John Muir.

Greening of the CIA

The CIA now has a section that focuses on the environment as a national security issue. This group views deforestation, desertification and erosion as potentially de-stabilizing forces and is using its spy satellites to track them. The satellites will also be used to monitor compliance with international environmental treaties and to detect illegal dumping.

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"The 'Wise Use' groups are the first threat to the environmental movement that I have seen in ten years."

—Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)

SPRING 1998 BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

Please check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be April 23-26, 1998 with details to be advised later.

☐ San Bruno	☐ Burlingame	☐ Belmont	☐ Half Moon Bay
☐ Pacifica	☐ San Mateo	☐ Atherton	☐ San Carlos

			# BAGS	\$-COST-\$
AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX.....	20 lb @ \$10.00 /bag		_____	_____
red & white millet plus black oil sunflower				
RED/WHITE MILLET MIX	20 lb @ \$ 9.50 /bag		_____	_____
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....	25 lb @ \$14.00 /bag		_____	_____
WHITE PROSO MILLET	25 lb @ \$ 9.50 /bag		_____	_____
THISTLE	5 lb @ \$ 8.50 /bag		_____	_____
SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....	25 lb @ \$27.50 /bag		_____	_____

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible) _____

CHECK # _____ TOTAL _____

THE NEXT SEED SALE WILL BE HELD IN OCTOBER

Please enclose a **stamped self-addressed envelope** to receive your order confirmation and directions to your pickup location.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Mail your check and order to

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202

San Mateo, CA 94403

345-3724

Elkhorn Slough Classes Offered



Shorebird Identification and Wildlife Photography classes are being offered on selected Saturdays this spring at Elkhorn Slough. The classes are designed for nature lovers and photographers alike. The classes will be held on April 4 and May 16 from 8:45 AM to 12 Noon. An afternoon class on April 25 will be held from 1:15 to 4:30. The classes will be held at the Elkhorn Slough, which is a unique and beautiful area offering a unique opportunity to get up close and personal with the shore-bound nature lover can not get.

Shorebird ID classes are led by Ron Norden or Jennifer Green and will be held on April 4 and May 16 from 8:45 AM to 12 Noon. An afternoon class on April 25 will be held from 1:15 to 4:30.

Frank Balthis will head up the photo class on Saturday, April 18 (8:30 AM to Noon). This class should offer great opportunities for seal and sea otter studies.

The fee is \$35 for the birding cruises, \$38 for the photo excursion. Pre-registration is required. Limited to 15 participants on each outing. To register, call 408-633-5555 and ask for either the "Spring Bird Cruise" or "Frank's Photo Cruise."

National Audubon Convention Estes Park Center



(YMCA of the Rockies)
Estes, Colorado
July 6-12

For more information

Write to: Audubon Convention
4150 Darley Ave.
Boulder, CO 80303
Phone: 303-499-3622
Fax: 303-499-0286
e-mail: convention@audubon.org

Auguste Heerman 1827-1865

Auguste Heerman was a physician and member of the Philadelphia Academy of Science when he journeyed to California in 1849. Only 22 years old, it is likely he came more in search of gold and adventure than for scientific research. Nevertheless, when he returned to Philadelphia, he published a book, *The Californian and American Ornithology*, which was a description of the birds of California. Heerman.



Heermann made one more trip to California in 1855 as part of the Pacific Railroad Surveys and his reports on the birds found on that expedition are part of its permanent records.

Plagued by ill health, (it was generally assumed he had contracted syphilis) he retired from active life in his early thirties, spending his summers in Philadelphia and his winters at his brother's ranch near San Antonio.

In 1865, only 38 years old, he died of a bullet wound. Officially, it was listed as a hunting accident.



Conifers Threatened Pine Pitch Canker

This fungus disease was first discovered in the Monterey pines of New Brighton State Beach in Santa Cruz County 12 years ago. Since then it has spread along the coast from San Diego to Mendocino. Most of our native pines are susceptible with Monterey pines being most heavily impacted. The common use of Monterey pines as ornamental trees has hastened the spread of this disease. It is not native to North America and was unknown until its appearance in Virginia more than 50 years ago. Today it is widespread through the southeastern states and most of Mexico.

It is spread from tree to tree by tree-boring beetles and, along with the beetles, made great headway during the drought years.

In 1996, a symposium sponsored by the California Department of Forestry (CDA) made a tentative recommendation that all infected trees be removed and destroyed. The recommendation was withdrawn after the cost of tree removal from Carmel alone was calculated to be \$15,000,000!

A recent discovery is even more distressing -- the disease was found in a stand of Douglas fir in Santa Cruz. The economic and environmental implications of this discovery are enormous and could be catastrophic.

The California Native Plant Society is conducting Wildflower Walks at Edgewood Park every Saturday and Sunday in April and on selected days in May and June.

For more information, contact Dr., Donald Owen, Pine Pitch Canker Task Force, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 6105 Airport Rd., Redding CA 96002. (916) 224-2445.

Wildflower Walks at Edgewood

The California Native Plant Society is conducting Wildflower Walks at Edgewood Park every Saturday and Sunday in April and on selected days in May and June.

All walks begin at 10 AM and last about three hours. No reservations are necessary. Water and restrooms are unavailable on these hikes. The meeting place is the Park and Ride lot at the intersection of Edgewood Road and I-280 for all walks through May 17.

The May dates are Saturdays, May 9 and 30; and Sundays, May 10, 17 and 24. The last hike will be on Sunday, June 7. The hikes on May 23 and 30 and on June 7 will meet at the parking lot of the day camp. The May 9 hike will feature grasses, but wildflowers will not be ignored.

For more information call 853-5634



Howard Rathlesberger

Under the County Parks Program, Lee Franks is setting out 10 boxes at Edgewood Park, the Friends of San Bruno Mountain under Kathy Manus has arranged for six houses and the San Pedro Valley Volunteers, led by Jim Pommier, are maintaining ten bluebird houses. Sequoia Audubon has committed to continuing these trails if, for any reason, the original founders do not continue.

Independent bluebirders include Stewart and "Red" Pendleton with 10 boxes at Woodside Hills and Canada College; Marilyn Walter & Ann Chiller with 10 boxes at Coal Mine Hill in Portola Valley; Polly Savoy and her two boxes at Buena Vista in Portola Valley and Evelyn Chetaldi at Olympic Golf Course.

If you haven't yet joined the California Bluebird Recovery Program I urge you to do so. You'll then be on the mailing list for the newsletter, which will include the 1997 count results. To join, or for more information on maintaining a bluebird trail contact Howard Rathlesberger at 367-1296.

Sequoia Audubon Society

The California Bluebird Recovery Program was inaugurated in 1994 and has grown by leaps and bounds ever since.

In 1997, 304 individuals and groups monitored 3677 bluebird boxes. In addition more than a hundred specialized boxes for wood ducks, kestrels and owls were monitored.

El Dorado County led the way with 165 monitors — more than all of California in 1996 — and nearly 1100 boxes.

Last year San Mateo County had only two monitors — Howard Rathlesberger and Red Pendleton — but between them they monitored 114 boxes. Howard's experience was typical of the first year. Only 12% of his boxes were occupied and only 17 birds were fledged. For unknown reasons, the second year usually shows a dramatic increase in both of those figures.

It appears clear that we will have many more county monitors this year and should double the total number of boxes available to cavity nesters in San Mateo County.

However, we can use more. While a few of our volunteers monitor more than a hundred boxes, many more bluebirders have a single box in their back yards. If you are interested in setting up and monitoring one or more boxes, contact Howard Rathlesberger at 367-1296. If you would be interested in monitoring boxes at Junipero Serra, Huddert Park or any other County Park, contact Cliff Richer at 873-1754.

One of the areas we are interested in developing are the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District Parks along Skyline. If you have an "in" to the MPOSD administration and can arrange for a bluebird trail in one or more of these parks, please let us know.

While we don't have the open space that El Dorado County has, we have a lot more potential bluebirders and should be able to match their enthusiasm.

There are those who say that tropical rain forests are propagated by scattered seeds, and bats do 95% of the scattering.

Volunteer Opportunity at GGRO Allen Fish

The Pacific States' largest bird of prey migration passes over the Marin Headlands each autumn. Since 1983, the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory has



trained volunteers to study these magnificent hawks, eagles, kites, vultures, and harriers — collectively called “raptors” — using counting, banding, and telemetry.

More than 270 GGRO volunteers — from all over the greater Bay Area — tracked and monitored the 1997 migration of nineteen different raptor species. New volunteers are being sought for the 1998 training class. Volunteers must be 18 years of age, and able to commit to one regular day every two weeks from August through December 1998; along with some weekend and evening training in July.

The GGRO's 1998 Recruitment Meetings are open to the public. Come on Tuesday, April 28th, or Thursday, April 30th, from 7 to 9:30 PM, or come on Saturday, May 2nd, from 10 AM to 12:30 PM, to see if you want to get involved with the GGRO. All meetings will be held at Golden Gate National Recreation Area headquarters, Building 201 at Upper Fort Mason, in San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay.

For more information, call the GGRO at (415) 331-0730.

House Wrens (and Marsh Wrens) have a habit of invading the nests of their neighbors and destroying the eggs by piercing them with their sharp beaks. A Canadian bluebird, resenting these destructive activities, has created a House Wren trap and is actively promoting it.

The California Bluebird Recovery Program disavows this activity entirely. Not only is it unethical, but it is illegal under state and US law. A bird-banding license or scientific collection permit is required to trap any native bird.

Gifts and Bequests

Thomas Goodier in memory of Mildred Swanson
 Kumiko Ishida for sponsorship of an Audubon Adventures classroom
 The estates of Thomas and Agnes Oczkewecz for the donation of birding reference books
 Francis Toldi Allan Wofchuck

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.

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RARE BIRD ALERT



(415) 681-7422

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