

sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 48, No. 9
June, 1998

This Month's Program



President Francis Toldi will be our speaker at the annual General Meeting and Potluck Dinner. The program will be a slide presentation showing the mammals, habitats, people, and birds encountered on an overland trek through Central Africa from Johannesburg to Nairobi.

The program will follow the annual Election of Officers.

Election of Officers

This year's Nominating Committee, consisting of Francis Toldi, Marilyn Noah and Merry Haveman has come up with the following slate of nominees for the June General Meeting:

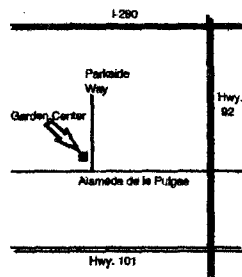
President	Francis Toldi
Vice-president	Marilyn Noah
Treasurer:	Tom Vanden Bosch
Secretary:	Barbara Arrais
Directors:	Merry Haveman
	Cliff Richer

Nominations from the floor are acceptable if agreed to by the nominee. The election of officers will take place as part of the regular business of the meeting, immediately following the potluck dinner.

Potluck Dinner

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

The Potluck Dinner begins at 6:30 PM on Thursday, June 11, at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside and will be followed immediately by the business meeting, annual election, and the program.



From The President

Francis Toldi

It is with great regret that we announce Terri Simpson's departure as our office manager. I'm sure all of you that ever had any contact with our office can verify how friendly, competent, professional and efficient Terri has been. Even those of you that have never come into direct contact with Terri benefited from her superior office skills in managing the membership list, printing labels, answering correspondence, managing book sales, and so many other duties. We wish Terri the best of luck in whatever she chooses to do next.

Thanks to the efforts of the indefatigable* Anne Moser, we have located a capable replacement for Terri. Celinda Sanchez comes to us with a strong business background, having previously served as an Assistant Store Manager at Payless Drug. She also has a strong technical background, including a Bachelor of Science in Electronics and Communication Engineering, and significant experience in computer applications. We are fortunate to have found her. Terri will be teaching Celinda the ropes over the next few weeks, then Celinda will be on her own. If you happen to call the office, be sure to say hello!

One of the unheralded but critically important summer Sequoia Audubon projects is our **annual potluck and planning meeting**. We have a very flexible agenda, and are happy to discuss any topic of interest to Sequoia members, including everything from the logistics of running the chapter as well as fundamental policy issues. I will set the date and time later in the year. Let me know if you are interested in attending, and I'll do my best to schedule a date that is convenient.

Have a great summer, and happy birding!

Francis Toldi

**(This is the first time I've ever seen "indefatigable" outside of its natural habitat — the Victorian novel. However, if ever anyone was indefatigable, it is Anne Moser.*

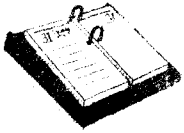
—The Editor)

If you haven't been yet, there's still 5 weeks to go until the end of the public season.

Visit Audubon Canyon Ranch

An experience not to be missed!

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

June

THURSDAY, JUNE 4 — BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING at the Audubon Office at 7:30 PM. All members are welcome to attend.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6 — KERN RIVER PRESERVE — See below for details. Note that reservations are required for this trip. Time is short, so do it now!

LEADERS BOB BARNES &
FRANCIS TOLDI 344-1919

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 — ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS, GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER — Francis Toldi will present a program on his travels in Africa, following the Election and Potluck — see Page One for details — 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 — THIS TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELED due to last minute — and unavoidable — changes in the leader's other commitments.

The Kern River Preserve Trip

Francis Toldi

Sequoia Audubon members have a wonderful opportunity to take an extended field trip in the bird-rich Kern County area during the period June 5-8, 1998. The trip will emphasize the spectacular Kern River Preserve, now a wildlife preserve operated by National Audubon Society. We will also bird in other nearby areas including desert oasis and montane habitats. Bob Barnes, a longtime Audubon activist and one of the founders of the Kern River Preserve, will lead the trip on all days.

The Kern River Preserve protects one of the most important wildlife areas in the United States. Nowhere else north of Mexico do so many types of plants and animals come together in one place. The narrow cottonwood and willow forest, surrounded by semi-arid scrub, is host to over 115 species of mammals. The nearly 200 species of breeding birds include Wood Duck, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow and Brown-crested Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Tricolored Blackbird and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Sadly, 95% of the similar riparian corridors have been cut, filled and "developed." This preserve encompasses one quarter of all the remaining riparian forest left in the State of California.

The trip will also include visits to contrasting habitats nearby. The Sierra Nevada range ends just north of the Kern

River Preserve. We expect to find the typical montane bird species usually associated with Yosemite, including alpine woodpeckers, Mountain Quail and possibly booming Blue Grouse. We will also make excursions into the desert including stops at the famous Kern County vagrant traps where nearly anything can show up. Although the timing of the trip may be a bit early for the Yellow-billed Cuckoos, it is in the best season for breeding montane species and rare vagrants at the desert oases.

Bob Barnes is an expert not only in preserve development and management, but also in the birds found in this region. He has led this trip many times and knows those special locations for special birds. Amazingly, there is no charge for the trip. Of course each participant must cover his or her own food and lodging expenses. A donation to the Friends of the Kern River Preserve is also encouraged, as a way of expressing thanks to Bob and to helping the survival of this critical project.

The trip is limited to 12 participants. Bob will be available from the afternoon of Thursday, June 4, through Tuesday morning, June 8. Participants may join in for any or all of the birding on each day. Many birders choose to join in for the morning, then spend the afternoon resting. Some do the opposite. Some bird non-stop for the entire period.

A list of recommended campgrounds and motels will be provided to all participants.

Please call me to reserve your place as soon as possible. First come, first served!

Playing Possum?

Marvin Schelhaus of Placer County reached overhead to clean out one of his Wood Duck boxes last year when he got a rude surprise. It seems the box had been taken over by an opossum who, resenting the intrusion, bit the groping hand and took off with all the speed that it could muster. Marvin tried to catch the critter, but it was making itself very scarce. As a result he had to go through the whole rabies shot ordeal.

(Do marsupials get rabies? --Ed.)



Howl

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has re-introduced gray wolves in Yellowstone and red wolves in North Carolina. It is now about to bring the Mexican gray wolf back to Apache National Forest in Arizona. Meanwhile, Canadian wolves are beginning to show up in Maine on their own.

Birds of Costa Rica

Francis Toldi

Any member who has attended a General Meeting in the last few years knows about the video wizardry of our own Rich Kuehn. All that practice with "name that bird" has allowed Rich to polish his skills. The result is Rich's first full length video, entitled *The Birds of Costa Rica*. It is a 120 minute video featuring over 225 close up portraits of birds in Costa Rica in a variety of different locations, with continuous helpful commentary by Rich on the basics of identification of the birds pictured.

This video has so many highlights it is difficult to decide what to describe first. Virtually all of the species are pictured in sharp, close-up views, including many difficult to find — let alone video tape — species. Common, everyday birds that every birder in Costa Rica should know parade by, along with the rarest and most sought-after species. The footage on the Snowcap, Resplendent Quetzal, Silvery-throated Jay, White-necked Puffbird and White-collared Manakin are simply phenomenal.

The featured species are often engaging in fascinating behavior, including many on the nest. I must add, however, that since this is a family newsletter I cannot describe the, uh, interesting behavior of the Roadside Hawks.

Another nice element is the many introductory shots of the region in which the birds are pictured. The sequence showing the Tapanti region is particularly compelling.

I would be failing in my job as objective reviewer if I didn't mention a few quibbles. These are not major flaws, but perhaps might be kept in mind should there be any future editions. The introductory scenes mentioned above could be expanded somewhat; a few are too limited, and don't really give an accurate impression of the locale. I would also recommend that the very few borderline shots be omitted altogether. For example the Rufousbrowed Peppershrike, Green Honeycreeper, Long-billed Starthroat and White-collared Seedeater footage is

vastly inferior to the other 221 species on the video. The Magnificent Hummingbird footage is so close it is — well, it is so close you can't really see the bird! The tape would not have suffered had these just been left on the cutting room floor.

The background voices are occasionally somewhat misleading. Frequently there are strong background bird calls — such as the ubiquitous Black-



facéd Solitaire — throughout the image of a different (and silent) species. An inexperienced viewer might then be under the mistaken impression of the pictured bird's song. In a very few instances the commentary could have been more focused, such as with the excel-

lent footage of the Scintillant and Volcano Hummingbirds, It would have been nice if the commentary highlighted the differences between these two very similar species.

So how does this tape measure up? I can only offer this recommendation: **BUY THIS TAPE! BUY THIS TAPE!** And again, **BUY THIS TAPE!** It is a masterpiece! If you are anticipating your first trip to Costa Rica you will be doing yourself a huge favor by getting and studying this tape in advance. I understand that Dan Keller includes this tape in his pre-trip review for all of his excellent Costa Rica trips. If you have already been to Costa Rica, you will enjoy reliving the wonderful birds you saw, and quizzing yourself on remembered field marks. If you have never been and have no intention to go to Costa Rica, buy it anyway, and you will change your mind!

The video does present the viewer with a few lingering questions. The owl shots on the day roost — how the heck did he get those pictures? Will the mosquito land on the White-whiskered Puffbill's bill? Only Rich knows the answer, and he isn't telling.

(This very positive comment is nevertheless the most negative review of Rich's tape that I have read. You may recall my own earlier review in which I said that it was simply the best birding video I had ever seen. However, the comments on the background noises are well taken, even if the practice of "backgrounding" other species' calls is very common on bird videos.

— The Editor)

National Audubon Convention

Estes Park Center
(YMCA of the Rockies)

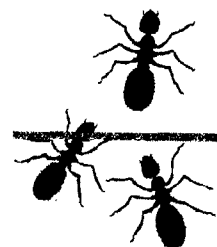
Estes, Colorado
July 6-12

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

Tiny Predators

Last month we reported that Nature Conservancy biologists at Fort Hood had discovered that fire ants were invading birds' nests, driving off the adults and killing and consuming the nestlings.



Now it appears that our own ants — although less virulent — are also nest predators. Cin Greyraven, monitoring 29 nestboxes in San Bernadino's Bearpaw Sanctuary found evidence that adult birds would abandon their eggs in the face of ant invasion. Cin also found high nestling mortality in ant-infested nests.

Mites were also a problem for some species — notably Tree Swallows. Dee Warenycia of Roseville found undernourished and dead swallow chicks in boxes containing mites. 23% of her swallow nests were infested with mites, and she lost 83% of the nestlings in those infested nests. On the other hand, 50% of her Ash-throated Flycatcher nests were infested but they suffered no known losses. *(There are documented instances of some species turning the table on mite and insect invaders by feeding on them. Could this be operating in this case? — Ed.)*

Jan Wasserman of Ventura County also reported high losses from mites in her Tree Swallow nestboxes. 19 of the 37 nestlings died in the infested nests.

Obviously, predators don't have to be big and nasty. They can be small and very nasty.

Forest Activist Summit



Are you concerned about the future of our forests and the bird and wildlife habitat they provide? Do you

wonder what is being done to protect this great resource, or how you could get involved in forest conservation? The National Audubon Society Forest Campaign will be holding a Forest Activist Summit during the NAS National Convention this summer in Estes Park, Colorado to address these questions and many more.

For two days, July 9-10, we will focus on the issues and threats currently facing our forests and Audubon's response to them. Activists and staff from around the country will present the good work they do on behalf of forest habitat. Workshops, presentations, panel discussions, and strategy sessions will be held on a number of issues relating to Audubon's forest work, including but not limited to:

- The Audubon Forest Campaign
- Regional and state updates
- Grassroots coordination, organizing and activism
- Advocacy Skills development
- Forest management issues (for community forest management, state and private forestry, and commercial logging of public lands.)

The Forest Campaign wants your input and participation in developing our long-range goals and strategies. We see grassroots representation as critical to the success of the Summit. We invite anyone currently involved or interested in forest habitat conservation to join us this summer in Colorado and help plan the future of our forests.

For More Information, Contact:

Todd Morgan,
National Audubon Forest Campaign,
1901 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1100,
Washington, DC 20006;
Phone: (202) 861-2242, Ext3030;
Fax: (202) 861-4290; or
email: tmorgan@audubon.org.

"Bad" Forest Bill Goes Down

On March 27, the House of Representatives strongly rejected a bill promoting logging as a means to healthy forests. In a precedent-setting vote, the House voted 201-181 against Congressman Bob Smith's (R-OR) logging bill, H.R. 2515. 51 Republicans and 149 Democrats opposed this pro-logging legislation, including many representatives specifically targeted by Audubon Activists.



Congressman Smith's bill would have subsidized and promoted more logging by ignoring that insects, disease and dead trees are necessary natural processes. It would have required National Forests to be identified as having too many insects and diseased and dead trees based on undetermined criteria. It would have allowed logging and road building in our healthiest forests, including roadless and ancient forests.

The Forest Campaign looks on this success as a testimony to the potential of grassroots activism.

Sierra Nevada Field Campus 1998 Classes

The Sierra Nevada Field Campus of San Francisco State University is offering another summer of great birding classes taught by experts in their field.

Birds of the Sierra Nevada — Dave Shuford — June 8-12 — \$165 — Identification and natural history of the birds of the coniferous and mixed forests, high desert and Sierra Valley wetlands.

Bird Identification by Song — Luis Baptista — June 15-19 — \$165 — Identification of birds by song, exploration of current knowledge and study techniques through discussion, field trips and experiments.

Birdwatching in the Sierra Nevada — Dave Lukas — June 22-26 — \$165 — identification and natural history of the birds of Yuba Pass and Sierra Valley.
Sierran Bird Banding — Jim Steele — July 27-31 — \$165 — Participants will

learn to set up and operate mist nets, band birds, identify and interpret key elements of bird anatomy, record data and experience the thrill of examining small birds in the hand.

Sierran Bird Banding — Jim Steele — August 3-7 — \$165 — A repetition of the July course.

In addition the Field Campus offers general courses on nature and ecology, geology and astronomy; as well as more specific courses on botany, insects and mammals. Special interest courses on algae, fungi, butterflies, spiders, bats and stream restoration are also offered. Accommodations at the campus are in large platform tents with beds (\$11/day) and meals (breakfast, dinner, sack lunch) are \$14.75 per day. Students may stay in local motels if they prefer. For more information, including a full catalog and a list of motels (if desired) contact Jim Steele, College of Science and Engineering, SF State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132-9987. Telephone 415-338-1571.

Lichens Cliff Richer

It's fortunate that lichens don't move around a lot, because it is very difficult trying to identify them. They are unique in that they are partly fungus and partly alga. The alga uses sunlight to provide food from dust, dew, fog and water, while the fungus provides everything else. They are not very bright. No one has ever taught a lichen to roll over. They grow very slowly and they spend a lot of time sleeping.

Their only advantage as a pet is that you never have to walk your lichen. It has no excretory system.

With these characteristics — one wonders particularly how the first alga and the first fungus got together to form the first lichen — it's a wonder that they're both common and diverse. There are nearly 1000 species of lichen in California alone and they thrive in every habitat.

If, like me, you have relatives that fit this description, just remember that lichens do have their place in nature, even if we haven't figured out what it is yet.

It Isn't Easy Being Small

Cliff Richer

There are stories that the praying mantis occasionally will catch and eat hummingbirds. The more I think about it, the less likely this seems. The one picture I've seen of this phenomenon definitely looked staged — the Calliope Hummingbird looked much too large for the mantis to handle. On the other hand, if there are some Godzilla-sized mantises out there.....

Some tropical web spiders can and do catch hummers. Some of these spiders are Godzilla-size. I once found a dead Anna's Hummingbird who had evidently gotten herself fatally tangled in a spider web. There was no evidence that the spider had done anything more than build the offending web, however. When I found it, it was the ants who were profiting from what seemed to be an unfortunate accident. Since Anna's Hummingbirds construct their nests from spider webs, it is surprising this doesn't happen more often.

Other birds apparently will grab a hummer if it is clumsy or stupid enough. At the Sierra Nevada Field Campus outside of Sierra City, I saw a Pygmy Owl carry one into its nest cavity.

I once found the desiccated remains of a hummer on the barbed wire along the road from San Bruno to the Portola Discovery Site on Sweeney Ridge. This was apparently some Loggerhead Shrike's larder since there were remains of several rodents and many Wrentits on the wire.

And in the May/June issue of *Birdwatcher's Digest*, Charles Nelson writes of a black day for Ruby-throats at Point Pelee, where he watched a Scarlet Tanager catch and beat to death a hummer that came too close. Shortly thereafter another birder said he had just seen a Great Crested Flycatcher take a hummer on the wing, either a miracle of timing or sheer accident.

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30 West 39th Ave., #202,
San Mateo, CA 94403

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMPS AND WORKSHOPS

The Audubon Ecology Workshop series is offered weekly throughout the summer. We offer something for everyone: for adults 19 years of age and older, for families, and for youth ages 10-18. Field studies range from geology and marine life, to birds, mammals, plants, insects, weather, astronomy and citizen science research skills.

Camps and Workshops are offered in breathtaking settings: on a wild island in Maine, in Minnesota's northwoods, in the shadow of Wyoming's Wind River Mountains, among scenic pastures and woodlands in Vermont, and in the lush, deciduous woodlands of Connecticut.

Faculty are nationally renowned educators and specialists in field sciences, education, environmental public policy, ecology, science education and the cultural arts. College credit is available.

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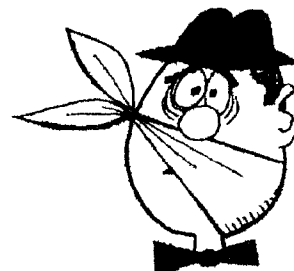
Audubon Ecology Camps & Workshops,
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E-mail: aew@audubon.org



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When Calvin Coolidge was President, he was asked by a governor how he managed to meet with so many visitors every day and still leave the office at 5 p.m. The governor complained that he himself rarely left the office earlier than 9 p.m.

Coolidge replied, "You talk back."



Bird Quiz

Francis Toldi

Identify which of the bird names listed below are real, and which are imaginary. The general location of the species is indicated in parentheses.

1. Naked-faced Spiderhunter (Philippines)
2. Heart-spotted Lovebird (Thailand)
3. Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise (New Guinea)
4. Twelve-wired Coffeepecker (Guatemala)
5. Yellow-bellied Berrypecker (New Guinea)
6. Cut-throat Finch (Africa)
7. Blood-breasted Flowerpecker (Indonesia)
8. Doncara Fig Parrot (Bali)
9. Double-eyed Fig Parrot (New Guinea)
10. White-bellied Go-away Bird (Zaire)
11. Carbonated Flowerpiercer (Peru)
12. Semi-pickled Piculet (Costa Rica)
13. Great-gutted Honeyguide (Samoa)
14. Amethyst-throated Sunangel (Venezuela)
15. Superciliaried Hemispingus (Peru)
16. Golden-browed Forestrunner (Brazil)
17. Glowing Puffleg (Venezuela) :
18. Northern Beardless Tyrannulet (Mexico)
19. Southern Beardless Semi-Tyrant (Peru)
20. Southern Bearded Petty-Tyrant (Cuba)

The phones are
2,4,8,12,13,16,19,20

And Some Others You May Have Heard of...

Cliff Richer

1. The Urban Wobbler (Usually found outside of bar rooms after closing time.)
2. The Loon/Wobbler (A motorized Urban Wobbler, once known as the Black-tired Booby.)
3. The Double-breasted Hypocrite (Known to frequent middle management.)
4. The Common Harasser (Still abundant despite efforts made to reduce its activities.)
5. The Greater Harasser (Limited in range from Arkansas to the District of Columbia.)
6. The Gingrich (not a problem by itself but the flock can sometimes cause severe environmental damage.)

Birdsource — From Audubon & Cornell

The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology have collaborated to create BirdSource — an interactive web site in which birders and ornithologists can share information on bird sightings, movements and populations. Eventually you will be able to make online data submission as well as retrieve data from Project FeederWatch, the Christmas Bird Counts and other databases. Creating a web site capable of processing both historic data and continuously updated reports stretches the capabilities of present applications. Still, programmers at the Cornell Theory Center who designed the system had BirdSource partly operational in late February for the first nationwide backyard bird count.

"When it's completed, you'll be able to go to BirdSource and ask, 'Where were Dark-eyed Juncos in December, 1934?' and instantly see a map displaying reported sightings of that species," says Lab director **John Fitzpatrick**. "Eventually, you'll be able to 'watch' as millions of migrating hawks from North America funnel through Central America on their way to South America. You'll also be able to come home from a day of birding, log on to BirdSource, and share your checklist with thousands of other birders and professional ornithologists who need your data." Ultimately, BirdSource will also be a learning tool, providing detailed pictures, recorded songs and calls as well as data.

According to **John Flicker**, president of Audubon, BirdSource will provide the most current and comprehensive data available on the distribution, migratory pathways, and population trends of North American birds. "This partnership is a perfect marriage of Cornell's high-tech computer capabilities, the Lab of Ornithology's science team, and Audubon's thousands of volunteer birders collecting data at the grassroots level,"



he says.

BirdSource will also offer an array of new opportunities for citizen-science participation in birding. "An estimated 30 to 60 million people in North America watch and feed birds," says Fitzpatrick. "At this moment, thousands of people are jotting down their observations. If they would 'jot' their notes into BirdSource, we'd have their data recorded in an immediately usable form. We will eventually have up-to-the-minute accounts on where birds are at any given moment — and so will anyone who opens BirdSource."

Both Flicker and Fitzpatrick emphasize how valuable this data collected from thousands of birders from across North America will be to bird conservation. "If

we could have had something like BirdSource in the 1890s, when there were still Passenger Pigeons and Carolina Parakeets, perhaps we could have seen their declines early enough to save those birds. Now, we'll be able to get information about diminishing

species in a form that we can understand and use while there is still time to help them."

You can check into BirdSource and watch its development on the World Wide Web at:

<http://birdsource.comell.edu>

(From **Bluebirds Fly!**, the newsletter of the California Bluebird Recioery Program)

Whew!

According to Bill Calder (U.Arizona), the Rufous Hummingbird has the longest migration route of any creature since it travels 49,000,000 body lengths. This is approximately equal to a human being walking and swimming twice around the equator in the spring — and then doing it again in the fall!



Wood Storks

What's Happening?

Cliff Richer

My "life" Wood Stork was listed almost four years after I actually saw it in the wild. I was crossing Florida on the Tamiami Trail when I came across a break in the vegetation where a culvert ran under the highway. This little bit of open water beside the highway had a number of wading birds who were evidently feeding on fish as they exited the culvert. A Great Blue Heron, Snowy and Great Egrets, White Ibis, a Tri-colored Heron and a sleepy alligator were all crowded into this little stretch of open water, smaller than most backyard pools. While cars whizzed past at 70 mph, I hastily took two pictures, got back into my car and managed to reinsert myself into the traffic flow. Several years later, after having changed jobs and coasts, I finally got around to organizing my slides. Now, under magnification and without the distraction of speeding cars, it became apparent that there was a large bird lurking in the reeds just behind the ibis. It didn't take much skill to identify the gray head and huge bill as belonging to a Wood Stork.

Now this posed a dilemma for me. Was this a life bird or not? Obviously I had seen it even if I hadn't noticed it and even if I identified it several years after the sighting. I finally compromised, listing my Salton Sea birds as my "lifers", but adding the Wood Stork to my Florida list on the date on which I'd identified it from the slide. (I have two other lifers ID'd from photos. In one case [Brewers Sparrow] the picture was taken for the purpose of later identifying all of the species in a mixed flock. In the other case, I was taking a picture of an oriole at a hummingbird feeder, when a strange — to me — bird popped up in the background. Later I discovered that I had successfully changed the focus to get a good full front view of a Green-tailed Towhee.

I had no problem with identifying those to be lifers since I'd taken the pictures in hopes of identifying the birds.

During the '80's, I became fascinated with condors and storks because they were both in serious decline and shared the traits of being awkward and ungainly — even ugly — on the ground but magnificent on the wing. (DNA tests later proved they were also more closely related to each other than to hawks or wading birds.) I made annual pilgrimages to Southern California to see both birds and was usually successful.

In Florida, the Wood Stork was in big trouble. From its peak populations in the early '60's the breeding population and the numbers of nestlings dropped steeply. Drought was partly to blame, but the principal

problem was the timed releases of water from Lake Okeechobee. These releases were timed to suit agricultural and flood control purposes and did not coincide with the natural rhythm of the Everglades. There were several years in which the storks at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary failed to produce any young at all.

However, even during this decline the storks were finding their own way out of their dilemma. Scientists had thought a small nesting colony in Northern Florida was a fluke, but in 1980, the storks were found along the Savannah River in Georgia and since then have been reported at numerous sites throughout South Carolina and Georgia. Hurricane Hugo devastated their nest sites in South Carolina and biologists feared that the storks' venture into the state was doomed, but the following year they returned in greater numbers to nest among the remaining trees.

And in the 90's the Florida population began to prosper. The Corps of Engineer became more enlightened and the Bureau of Reclamation less powerful. Water releases were more tuned to natural patterns and immature storks became a common sight. While they are not yet

back to their pre-80's levels and Florida is again going through a drought, I found storks everywhere in South Florida on my last visit in '96.

John Ogden, who ran both the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the Condor Project for Audubon, now manages a water district for the state of Florida. He is both pessimistic and optimistic. He believes "both the southern Everglades and the Big Cypress are going to deteriorate. At the same time I think, that with restoration, the situation is going to get better. I keep telling those biologists in Georgia and in South Carolina that we're going to take our storks back from them".

Bee Catchers

There is a whole genus of tropical birds called Bee-eaters, but bee catching and consuming is little known outside of this group.



Tanagers, particularly Summer

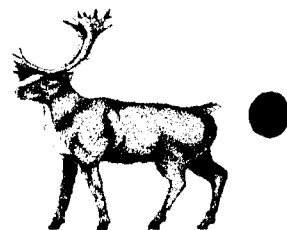
Tanagers, are known to relish bees and sometimes stake out a known hive site.

However Dee Warenycia of Placer County observed a Western Bluebird doing this same thing last year. Dee was monitoring her bluebird trail on the Woodcreek Golf Course when she noticed a male bluebird returning repeatedly to the base of a rotted out blue oak tree. He was capturing honey bees that had a hive in this tree and taking them to the nestlings in one of Dee's boxes.

It may be that honeybees are a regular part of bluebirds' diets. Certainly, they forage in the same habitats and it would be surprising if the bluebirds didn't pick up at least an occasional bee along with their other insect fare.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced in October that the status of the Northern Goshawk warrants further review to determine if it should be listed as threatened or endangered. The Service was ordered by the U.S. District Court to reconsider its previous decision that a petition to list the goshawk did not contain substantial information.



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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