



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 50, No. 3
November, 1999

This Month's Program



Cliff Richer is in the process of preparing a program tentatively titled "Sewage Ponds I Have Known and Loved". At

this point he will be as surprised as you are to see what he finally produces

Remember the "Name That Bird" segment of past general meetings, done by various members, but most notably featuring Rich Kuehn and Dean Schuler's videos?

Robin Smith will introduce a fun twist to a birding ID quiz at our November meeting called "Where Am I Birding?" She will show us a few slides from her trips so we can guess the locations. It should be fun and we hope other members will volunteer to show a few of their slides at other upcoming meetings.

Bair Island Update

As you read this, our core group of volunteers will have started work at Bair Island conducting a use survey and contacting visitors.

A very special thanks is due **Mike Spence**, the creator of those marvelous "Birds of" identification cards, who donated the use of the newly renovated Foresters' hall in Redwood City for our training sessions. This very significant contribution enables us to use our grant money to its maximum effectiveness.

Clyde Morris, the SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge manager, will lead the trainees and any other interested members on a field trip to inner Bair Island on Sunday, December 5. See the Calendar on page two for details.

There is still time to sign up for the Bair Island docents program! The more volunteers the merrier! The goal is to have enough people available so everyone works one three-hour shift each month. Contact our office at 345-3724 or Robin Smith at 325-3306 to sign up.



From the President

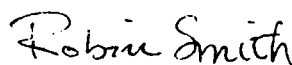
A short summer vacation finally came my way at the end of September. I headed for Yosemite to spend a few days becoming reacquainted with the high country. The weather was glorious and warm by day and the stream bubbled through the canyon at night where I slept bathed in moonlight. The sound of the stream brought to mind dipper I have seen throughout the Sierra.

John Muir, in *My First Summer in the Sierra*, describes them this way: "I have been making the acquaintance of a very interesting little bird that flits about the falls and rapids of the main branches of the river. It is not a water-bird in structure, though it gets its living in the water, and never leaves the streams. It is not web-footed, yet it dives fearlessly into deep swirling rapids, evidently to feed at the bottom, using its wings to swim under water just as ducks and loons do. Sometimes it wades about in shallow places, thrusting its head under from time to time in a jerking, nodding, frisky way that is sure to attract attention."

Even John Muir would have been hard pressed to write so lyrically about the dipper that Anne Moser and I saw while lunching by the shore of a Sierra lake. No stream, no rapids, not even wind caused waves on this lake, but there was a dipper.

I was munching on my sandwich when I noticed something thrashing about in the water a few feet offshore. The thrashing was followed by the strange something lurching forward out of the water and then disappearing under the surface. How odd! I thought as I tried to get it in focus in my binoculars. Another thrashing movement sent water flying and was followed by the bird diving under water. It was indeed a dipper and it continued these same actions all the way across the arm of the lake. Then it came up on a little shoulder of ground and foraged for a few minutes before launching itself into the deeper water to thrash and lurch its way back across the same shallow lake arm. Not exactly as John Muir described it, but wonderful all the same.

You don't have to go to the Sierra to see dipper, they live and breed right here on the San Mateo County coastside. These and many other bird species can be seen on Sequoia Audubon field trips. If you know people just starting to bird, encourage them to attend the trips for beginners on the first Saturday of each month. Do come on the regular field trips yourself and learn from our many accomplished leaders. What could be better than being outside in good company enjoying a rich variety of birds? You might even spot your very own dipper!



Robin Smith



The mission of Sequoia Audubon Society is to participate 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

NOVEMBER

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4 —
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
— 7:30 PM — At the Sequoia Audubon
office. All members are welcome. Call

ahead to make sure that there will be enough room.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6 — SEA CLOUD PARK — Our monthly **BEGINNERS' FIELD TRIP**. A brief discussion on the use of binoculars and field guides as well as on opportunity to ask questions will precede the trip. Sea Cloud Park in Foster City is reached by taking Hillsdale Ave. east from 101 and making a right turn on Edgewater Blvd. Go 1.3 miles and turn left on Pitcairn Drive. Look for the park entrance on the right and meet at the far end of the parking lot at 9:00 AM. Advanced and intermediate birders are invited so they can lend their advice and expertise.

LEADER

ROBIN SMITH

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11 — GENERAL MEETING — with **Cliff Richer** presenting a slide program on **Sewer Ponds I Have Known And Loved**. Details were still sketchy at press time. Social get-together begins at 7:30 PM, with the General Meeting at 8, and the program following immediately thereafter. At the San Mateo Garden Center off the Alameda at Parkside.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19-20 — THE SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES, GRAY LODGE AND THE BUTTES. A chance to see clouds of geese over the Central Valley. 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 at this time of year. **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 530

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 — BAIR ISLAND — Clyde Morris, the manager of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, will lead us on a tour of Inner Bair Island. Intended mainly for our Bair Island docent trainees, it is nevertheless **open to all**. Meet at the *bayside* end of Whipple Avenue at 9 AM.

November, 1999

FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:

Wild and Scenic,

Not Dams

Bob Wilkinson

For the first time in a decade a significant addition was made to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers System when AB496 passed the legislature. With the support of local legislators Ted Lempert and Lou Papan, a 39 mile section of the South Yuba River was saved from flooding and destruction that would have resulted from two dams desired by Yuba County. Building the dams would have resulted in the flooding of thousands of acres of public recreational land, two state parks, and much of an historic mining town, in addition to important riparian habitat.

The Corps of Engineers had concluded that two dams would not have been economically or environmentally feasible and had recommended strengthening downstream levees to prevent flooding. More than 2/3 of the riverside property owners were supporting the measure, and negotiations had provided for \$100 million in the proposed state water bond for flood-prone areas like Yuba County. The dam forces nevertheless waged a fight to kill the bill. Constituent support for saving the river conveyed to legislators was important in this environmental victory.

At press time the bill was awaiting the Governor's signature.

Endangered Species Law Needed

Would you believe that Canada does not have an endangered species law of any sort? Canada has a reputation for being environmentally sensitive, and the country is perceived as an active participant in international conferences on the environment. The lack of a law analogous to the US Endangered Species Act frustrates Canadian environmentalists, who have seen efforts to pass one die in the Parliament each year.

U.S. environmental groups are now using NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) to take action. Several organizations have asked the U.S. government to investigate whether trade sanctions against Canada are required under the treaty to which Canada, the United States and Mexico are signatories. It calls for roughly equal law in all countries as they affect trade, and the U.S. groups are arguing that the lack of an endangered species law gives Canadian mining, logging and other natural resource industries an unfair advantage.

The United States and Canada have already clashed over the issue of protecting salmon in the Pacific Northwest, some species of which are endangered. Environmentalists in Canada were cheered by the action in the United States, but groups on both sides of the border expressed skepticism that the United States would actually impose trade sanctions.

Even a law which would have protected endangered species only on federal land, less than 5% of the country, failed, and individual provinces are prohibited from passing similar legislation until a national bill is enacted.

Sequoia Audubon Society

Report from Alaska Thanks Sequoia Audubon Francis Toldi

Those of us who spend considerable time and not a small amount of money in support of Sequoia Audubon Society do so for any number of reasons. We love nature — birds in particular — and want to do what we can to help preserve the natural splendor around us. That is undoubtedly the common denominator. Beyond that our reasons vary. Some love to be around other people of like interests, some just want the newsletter, some just want to see birds, some are particularly motivated to help out in one of our many conservation battles. If there is one reason that does not appear on any of our lists that would be “to win prizes.”

It was with some trepidation that I accepted, gratefully, the prize of a trip for two aboard a small Alaskan cruise vessel for having raised the most money for Sequoia in last year's Birdathon. I didn't do it for the prize, but, well, there I was, with the letter in hand saying that the prize was mine. It helped that I had never been to Alaska and had always wanted to go. I contacted the owner of the boat for more information and to begin making arrangements.

The Discovery is a 65 foot, 12 passenger boat that works the Prince William Sound, primarily between Whittier and Cordova. Captain Dean Rand, owner and master of the Discovery, is also a trained naturalist with many years in Alaska. I was welcome on any trip he does, subject to space availability. After mentioning the trip to my family, we delivered to Dean almost a full boatload of relatives. In all, 9 of us (2 with free tickets) scheduled a trip for early August, the only time period that worked for everyone.

As I did my bird and wildlife research, I quickly came to realize that where we would be going was not particularly great for birds in that season. August in Alaska is very late: there are a mere 9 hours or so of daylight, and everything is winding down, birdwise. My traveling companions were all very avid nature enthusiasts, but only casual birders at best. The “real” Alaskan specialties are all off in even further away places such as Nome and the Pribiloffs, all off

the Discovery itinerary and too expensive for me to get to at this time. Too bad. Time for a reality check: I'm going to Alaska, on a partially subsidized trip, to cruise in comfort amidst the rocks and glaciers and verdant forests, with mammals and (largely familiar) birdlife all around, and I'm DISAPPOINTED? Nonsense!

With a properly adjusted attitude, I continued planning for the trip with great enthusiasm. And what a trip it turned out to be!

We flew into Anchorage, staying at the very pleasant Copper Whale Inn right near “downtown.” Unfortunately we arrived late in the evening, so our explorations of Anchorage would have to wait for another day. Early the next morning I slipped out for an early walk along the Coastal Trail, a marvelous bike/hike path along Cook Inlet. Even in that largely urban setting I managed to pick up one life bird, a couple of noisy Alder Flycatchers. “Dusky” Canada Geese were honking overhead, nearly always in view.

We rode the Alaska National Railway down to Whittier, passing by Tugay Arm, the abandoned town of Portage and finally through the tunnel (no roads here!) to Whittier, a small fishing port and ferry terminal. Along the way we saw the first of many Bald Eagles, Red-necked Grebe, Dall Sheep up on the hillside, and many ducks in their cryptic late summer plumage. We were met by the crew, and taken aboard the Discovery, our home away from home for the next 5 days.

The fantastic spread of wine, cheese, smoked salmon, fresh fruit and berries and homemade bread, piping hot from the oven, was a good omen of what was to come. As it turned out, only one other person booked the same trip, so it was 10 people (9 related) and a crew of 4. Not a bad ratio!

Our first stop was a Black-legged Kittiwake breeding colony on some nearby cliffs. Watching the antics of hundreds of kittiwakes, with fluffy chicks still on the nests, was quite a sight! A biologist working in the area came over and showed us some chicks she was banding and patiently answered our questions about the colony and her research. Pigeon Guillemots, White-winged Scoters

and the ubiquitous Marbled Murrelets were nearby.

From there we steamed on up to the first of many tidewater glaciers. In the icy waters off the glacier I picked out my only lifer for the boat portion of the trip: a pair of Kittlitz's Murrelet. The glaciers were utterly stupendous: massive piles of ice flowing into the sea, with occasional big chunks breaking off with a thundering roar. We took frequent landings in two small zodiac motorized rafts to walk in the verdant spruce and alder forests, sinking ankle deep in the thick moss. The flowers were still very good in the Sound, with the local varieties of fireweed, small bog orchids and insectivorous sundews being personal favorites.

For the next five days we wound around the sound, cruising right up to glaciers and inshore waters that the big ships can't reach. At night we would find a cozy anchorage in some small inlet or bay. The weather gave us a bit of everything except snow. The blue of the glaciers was particularly rich under an overcast sky.

There was no shortage of birds and mammals, at least at sea. Marbled Murrelets were everywhere, as were the kittiwakes and gulls of several species. We saw jaegers with some frequency, even quite close to shore. One concentration of over 15 Pomarine Jaegers was particularly impressive. Puffins, both Horned and Tufted, were common, if a little local, but did allow very close views. I particularly enjoyed the large flotillas of Harlequin Ducks that we came upon from time to time, one with over 30 birds. Oddly, on shore there were few cheeps or twitters from the lush forests.

The mammals were also impressive, with the abundant otters throughout the area being a special treat. Alaskan Sea Otters are larger than ours (95 vs. 65 pounds) and occur in much larger numbers. I counted over 150 otters in one small part of Orca Inlet near Cordova. We also enjoyed close encounters with a Humpback Whale and a solitary Orca. We missed the Grizzlies, but did manage to find a couple of healthy looking Black Bears. Another highlight was a raft trip up a shallow lagoon to see spawning

(Continued on Page Four)

Report from Alaska

(Continued From Page Three)

salmon. Gulls were standing by to scoop up the deceased and nearly spent salmon, with an occasional tussle with one of the many Bald Eagles swooping down from their nearby roosts.

The crew was lively and entertaining. We were always welcome in the wheelhouse, and spent many hours talking and watching the scenery from that locale. The food was a never-ending gourmet delight: halibut, salmon, leg of lamb, pork roast, fresh fruit and vegetables, dessert with both lunch and dinner, fresh-baked bread at every meal, decent red or white wine (or beer or mineral water or whatever, as you please). The cabins were small, perhaps too small for large people, but everyone in our groups seemed comfortable. All in all, the perfect blend of comfort and adventure.

After debarking in Cordova, we enjoyed two nights at a B & B in this charming town. We took an excursion out to the Copper River Delta — impressive with its miles of twisting waterways and mudflats. Even in this late season we had good looks at Trumpeter Swans, waterfowl, Moose, and even a little muskrat swimming by. It must be sensational here in May, when millions of shorebirds pass through — the largest concentration of shorebirds in North America.

Although the time was short, we managed to squeeze in a “flightseeing” trip over the mountains near Cordova and the adjacent Copper River Delta. What a sight, looking down on the massive ice fields, the broken-down Million Dollar Bridge across the Copper River, the endless mudflats along Orca Inlet! A short rafting trip down the Sheridan River added a little spice to the day as well.

Then we headed back to Anchorage for another night, this time with enough time to tour the town a bit. The impressive Museum of Art and History should be on anyone’s list for Anchorage. We rented a car and made a brief loop to the north, passing just south of Mt. McKinley (great views from our motel window one night!), and east on the Denali Highway to the famous Tangle Lakes Lodge. It was very late for the season. The owner said they would be closing up for the year in about three weeks! Even so, the birds

were still very good here and along the highway. Lifers included Arctic Warbler, Willow Ptarmigan, Smith’s Longspur and Bohemian Waxwing. Berries were everywhere, and ripe and tasty too!

On the drive back to Anchorage we were treated to impressive views of the Wrangell Mountains, a family of beavers building a beaver lodge, and best of all—a Northern Hawk Owl perched by the side of the Glenn Highway in plain view. Back in Anchorage the weather was spectacularly clear. A swarm of little birds in the Alders near our Inn proved to be Common Redpolls, another lifer. On our last morning I slipped out for one last birding walk, and was rewarded with my final lifer, a Boreal Chickadee.

My trip totals were 93 species of bird, 16 mammals, and about 15 rolls of film. My thanks to all who have supported Sequoia Audubon and our Birdathon over the years, and to Dean Rand for his generous contribution of two passages on his Discovery. If anyone wants more information on the Discovery trips please let me know. You can also check out his website at www.Discoveryvoyages.com.

While in Cordova I was introduced to a gentleman who was in the process of forming a new Audubon Chapter, the Prince William Sound Audubon Society. As thanks to Dean for his generosity in favor of Sequoia, I made a contribution to the new chapter in Sequoia’s name.

Restoring the Bay

Audubon-California and the Bay Area Audubon Chapters (BAAC) have signed on to a plan that could restore more than 60,000 acres of tidal marsh around San Francisco Bay and create tens of thousands of acres of managed wetland. It represents a commitment by a broad consortium of public agencies and environmental interests to see that the next hundred years reverse some of the damage that has been done in the past century.

The plan was based on determining what would be necessary to sustain healthy populations of fish and wildlife in the San Francisco Baylands, with emphasis on 120 key species of invertebrates, fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

According to Arthur Feinstein of Golden Gate Audubon Society, this is not “just one more report that will sit on a shelf”. Feinstein, who has been working with National Audubon during the three-year development process, points to the report’s solid scientific basis and its comprehensive public and private base of support. “We had 65 scientists from agencies, academia and biological consultants, along with a Regional Wetlands Management Team, including every resource agency you can imagine: the Environmental Protection Agency, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the state Department of Fish and Game, and on and on,” Feinstein says.

The document, the “San Francisco Estuary Baylands Ecosystem Goals” calls for farmed and grazed baylands to be restored to tidal marsh, or to seasonal pond habitat where farming and grazing could still occur. Salt ponds also would be restored to tidal marsh, or to managed saline ponds that would provide habitat for waterbirds. Thousands of acres of seasonal ponds would be created where managed agricultural and grazing practices would be allowed.

In the North Bay, the plan calls for increasing the area of tidal marsh from the existing 16,000 acres to more than 37,000 acres, and creating 8000 to 12,000 acres of managed seasonal ponds. The target areas are along the Petaluma River, Sonoma Creek and the Napa River. According to the plan seasonal wetlands would be enhanced at several locations, especially in the Sonoma Creek area and on the Marin shoreline. Some of the inactive salt ponds would be managed to maximize their habitat values for shorebirds and waterfowl; others would be restored to tidal marsh. The goals also include protecting and enhancing tributary streams and riparian vegetation, protecting and improving upland buffers, restoring shallow subtidal habitats, and preserving and restoring eelgrass beds.

Public support will be essential in order to move this agenda through the political and economic challenges of the coming decades. Audubon-California is mounting a campaign to build this support so we can expect to hear more about this plan.

Memorial Park

San Mateo County's First Park

Prior to 1920, many county residents camped in the redwoods on land owned by the McCormick family. In the early twenties, the McCormick family decided to sell the property to Edwin Peterson, one of seven logging operators in the area.

Two county employees who knew and loved the area, Roy Cloud (Superintendent of Schools) and Bert Werder (Fire Chief), heard about the transfer of the property and immediately appealed to county government, various agencies and concerned citizens to purchase the magnificent virgin redwoods and set them aside for future use. Their efforts succeeded with the acquisition of 314 acres in 1924, for the price of \$70,000.

The park was dedicated on July 4, 1924 in memory of the men who served or lost their lives in the First World War.

The property remained as it was under the care of several caretakers until the mid-thirties and was used primarily as a roadside stop for sightseers, picnickers and the resident summer population. In 1934 the Federal government, in cooperation with state and county agencies, established a Works Project Agency Camp at the far west end of the park. The agency was responsible for the construction of the initial roadways, 16 restrooms, a sewer system, numerous stone and mortar barbecue pits and hand-sawn redwood picnic tables. By the end of 1937 the basic structures of the park were completed.

Besides the park's famous redwood trees there are virgin tan oaks on a 12-acre portion purchased that same year.

The forties found three separate agencies utilizing the park. Three dam sites on Pescadero Creek provided them with their own swimming areas: at the far west end of the park (Homestead Flat) were the San Francisco YMCA; the San Mateo Boy Scout Council was in the present Bay Tree Flat area; and the County park, open for day use in Tan Oak Flat with overnight camping in Creek and Azalea Flats. The park was open only on a seasonal basis and was supervised by Henry Blomquist who influenced the development and operation of the park until his retirement in May 1971.

The major part of park development was completed in 1956 with the construction of 91 family campsites in Sequoia Flat. By this time, the Boy Scouts had moved five miles upstream on Pescadero Creek to their new camp at Camp Pomponio and were responsible for the network of trails that exist now in the county's Pescadero Creek Park. The YMCA moved about six miles upstream and resettled in Jones Gulch.

This park has seen continual use by several generations of families and communities in this area. From the thirty or so people that used the park on a drop-in basis in the 1920's, the attendance has grown to more than 300,000 persons yearly.

(Excerpted and condensed from an article in the summer edition of Volunteer News, the San Mateo County Parks' volunteer newsletter)

Lyme Disease Vaccine Approved



99,000 cases of Lyme disease from 1982 to 1966 make it the most common tick-borne illness in the United States. Although infections have occurred in 48 states, the disease is most prevalent in the Northeast and upper Midwest, but is growing rapidly along the Pacific Coast.

The symptoms of Lyme disease typically include a ring-shaped rash, headache, fever, joint aches, and other flu-like symptoms. If untreated, the disease can lead to arthritis and heart abnormalities.

Lymerix, the first vaccine effective against Lyme disease, has received approval from the US Food & Drug Administration. Manufactured by Philadelphia-based SmithKline Beecham. FDA trials have established Lymerix as being effective in preventing the infection in both its symptomatic and asymptomatic forms. Lymerix apparently prevents infection by infecting the tick with antibodies.

Dead Zone Choking Gulf of Mexico

Seven million tons of fertilizer are used in the Mississippi Valley each year. Rains and runoff deliver some of those compounds to the Mississippi's mouth and into the Gulf. Nitrogen-fed algae create vast blooms that deplete so much oxygen in deep Gulf waters that nothing can live there — a condition called hypoxia. Although the dead zone changes in size and shape according to season and weather, it has been known to cover as much as 7000 square miles.

Although fish and shrimp can avoid the zone, it forces them to feed elsewhere, reduces their foraging area and kills bottom life like clams, starfish, snails, and worms. Nancy Rabalais of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium advocates reducing the nitrogen levels in the fertilizers and restoring buffering natural systems such as wetlands.



Birders' Exchange

You can give new life to old equipment — such as binoculars, scopes, field guides and ornithology texts — by donating it to Birders' Exchange. In turn, this collaborative program of the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and the American Birding Association distributes the equipment to Latin American and Caribbean conservation groups, schools, universities and governments. To date, the program has sent equipment to more than 200 organizations in 34 nations.

For more information, contact:
Betty Petersen at 508-224-6521,
(bpetersen@manomet.org)
or Paul Green at 719-578-9703,
(paulgrn@aba.org)

Three-Eyed Desert Monster

Yarrow's spiny lizard has a rudimentary "third eye" on top of its head. Left to its own devices, the eight inch lizard can almost always find its home range in the rocky canyons of the Sonoran Desert. But biologists have found that if they covered the third eye, the creatures wandered aimlessly.

The parietal eye, a sensory organ connected to a gland in the brain called the pineal, perceives sunlight but cannot focus as the lateral eyes can and works with the lizard's internal clock to tell it where its home is located. When the biologists shifted lizard body clocks ahead six hours by keeping the reptiles in the laboratory for a week under artificial light, the little critters became confused and when they were released they promptly headed in the wrong direction.

Refuge Created for New Bird Species

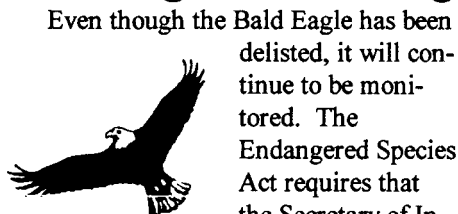
A bird that was not even known to ornithologists until 1998 already has its own refuge, before it is even officially named. A foundation financed by group of American and British conservationists has purchased 1,500 acres in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador for what native Ecuadorians call the Jocotoco. The new species is the 48th known species of the notoriously secretive ant-pittas.

Robert S. Ridgely, director of the Center for Neo-tropical Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and John Moore, a bird song expert, made the stunning discovery.

The 10 inch, black-and-white bird has a heavy bill, dark red eyes, long neck, and almost no tail. It eats insects and large earthworms and sounds like a "barking dog with a hooting quality."

The two scientists were walking along a path when they heard the unfamiliar song. Moments later, they glimpsed the bird as it ran from them along the ground. They immediately realized it was a new species. The bird's scientific name and description will be published later this year in the *Auk*.

Bald Eagle Monitoring



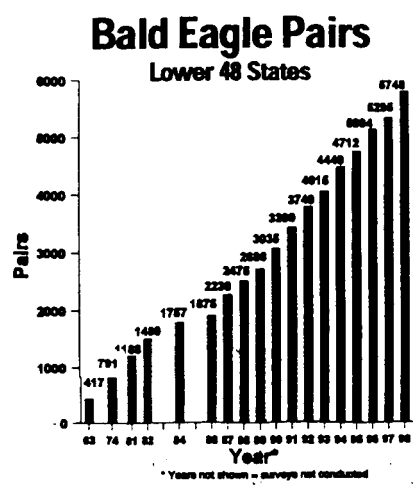
Even though the Bald Eagle has been delisted, it will continue to be monitored. The Endangered Species Act requires that the Secretary of Interior "implement a system in cooperation with the States to monitor effectively for not less than five years the status of all species which have recovered."

The purpose of the monitoring program is to document Bald Eagle population numbers and range and numbers of young fledged as indicators of population health. If, during this monitoring period, these indicators show that there is a problem, the species could be re-listed.

Since 1978, nesting and productivity have been monitored throughout the lower 48 states producing an excellent data set that forms the basis of the delisting and follow-up monitoring. After 5 years, the US Fish and Wildlife Service will compile the data, assess the results and make the information public.

Bald Eagle Recovery Graphed

The following graph based on statistics from the US Fish & Wildlife Service shows the dramatic recovery of the Bald Eagle from its endangered status.



New Zealand's Keas

Keas, New Zealand mountain parrots, "try to eat almost everything," says New Zealand government zoologist Judy Diamond. Cars often have rubber moldings removed, windshield wipers ripped off, and seats and wiring attacked.

Keas are sometimes carnivorous as well, scavenging sheep carcasses and even wounding live sheep. This last habit led to a bounty being placed on them and hunters killed 150,000 before they were protected in 1986. Today authorities relocate any of the remaining 3000 Keas if they harass sheep.

Keas are not a threat to people. Probably because there are fewer people in that country than in Arizona...and most of them live in cities.

Dueling Peregrines



Last October biologists on the Farallon Islands witnessed an unusual death by drowning of two peregrine falcons.

During combat over a mourning dove the falcons drifted out over the ocean. During the scuffle, one bird fell into the water, extracted itself from the surf, and flew out of sight behind a rock. Minutes later, the peregrine was seen floundering in the water, obviously in trouble. Peter Pyle of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory launched a rescue boat, but by the time he and US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Joelle Buffa reached it, the falcon was dead.

About 15 minutes later, the second bird was found floating on the ocean, also drowned. Both birds were retrieved. Both were adult males, one of the race anatum and the other of the race pealei; one bird had been banded on August 29, 1998 at Hawk Hill. Biologist Pyle noted that peregrines winter, but do not breed, on the Farallon Islands.

Young Cattle Egrets are able to leave the nest and climb in vegetation when they are only two weeks old; as a result, they are known as "branchers."

Edgewood Recaptured from Yellow Star-Thistle

This summer the Friends of Edgewood Park redoubled their efforts to remove exotics from Edgewood, with a new intense program focused on yellow star-thistle.

In May the Friends realized that yellow star-thistle was so far out of control that manual removal alone would not be enough to reduce its extent, so in late May they invited County Parks and Recreation personnel to inspect the extent of the problem.

Following the inspection a mowing program was begun and the Parks Dept. confirmed their commitment to the removal of exotic and invasive species.

The Friends identified potential mowing sites and surveyed them to determine plant densities to use as a measure of the effectiveness of the efforts. Four 100-foot transects were laid out in two selected mowing sites, the plants were identified at 6-inch intervals along these transects. Not surprisingly, the majority of plants were yellow star-thistle.

On June 19th thirteen volunteers answered a special call for help, marking the first of many weekend star-thistle removal events. The group removed thousands of plants, representing the potential for millions of seeds for new plants next season.

The two sites were mowed on June 22nd, and over the next few days the Friends "weed-whacked" near what came to be known as Mow Site 1, north of the service road and west of the frog pond.

On June 26, Mow Site 2 (along the Service Road near the junction of the Franciscan Trail) was removed to clean up some of the areas around rocks and shrubs. A small brush fire broke out when the mower blade struck a rock.

July was designated "attack" month and kicked off the effort with a challenge at the Friends of Edgewood Executive Committee meeting on July 1. The creative challenge was to offer a free pair of weeding gloves to anyone who would commit to any level of weeding effort

during July. At that meeting, 10 people signed up for 141 hours. The challenge was also issued to the California Native Plant Society meeting and flyers were posted at Edgewood to recruit casual visitors.

During the month of July three-hour weeding parties were held every Saturday morning. Many volunteers who had not previously done weeding came out and helped. A woman who had come from the east coast to visit her new grandson, saw the poster and helped on one Saturday. Other neighbors and Edgewood hikers who noticed the activity dropped in as well. Two volunteers drove in from Sacramento after seeing a company intranet posting. The spirit of volunteerism had reached new heights.

Roger Myers in particular caught the spirit when he attended the July 17th Friends of Edgewood Docent Reunion. The meeting included a brief weeding effort and a visit to the "bush mallow site," an area that is recovering from an early 90's arson fire. Roger became so concerned about the invasion of thistle at this site that he made a special request to adopt it as his personal weed removal project. By the end of August he had devoted a total of 34.5 hours and had single-handedly removed 27,666 plants by exact count, effectively clearing that site. This site adoption may set a precedent for managing weed removal in the years to come.

The weekend sessions continued through August with more mowing and weed whacking, expanding the extent of Mow Site 1. Volunteers from Hillcrest Juvenile Hall came out on two occasions..

Throughout this period, the Friends continued regular Tuesday and Wednesday evening and Friday morning sessions

All of these sessions proved tremendously valuable and cleared large areas of the thistle along the Edgewood Trail near the west kiosk. It was important to rework these areas as a follow-up to prior years' weeding efforts.

While removal of the plants is effective in limiting site re-infestation, the seeds can survive for several years in the ground. The amount of germination from previous years' seeds is relatively small but large enough so that each site requires

continual monitoring. Records were kept of the year-over-year efforts to clear a dense isolated 20' x 45' colony near the frog pond.

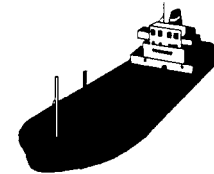
The statistics describing their efforts this summer are truly impressive.

- Acres cleared — 4
- People doing weeding — 62
- Work hours — 474
- Plants removed by hand — 27,000

While it has not been eradicated, yellow star-thistle no longer "owns" the park and next year the Friends hope to make even greater inroads toward removing yellow star-thistle from Edgewood.

Ship Owner to Pay \$9.4 Million for Spill

Last fall, Marion Noah wrote in these pages about the tanker that had illegally discharged oil off our coast. Now, the ship's owner has pleaded guilty to, and agreed to pay the cleanup costs from the 3,000 gallon oil spill.



The Coast Guard caught up with the ship off Central America by following the oily sheen in the tanker's wake and identified it by DNA "tags" positively linking it to the San Mateo beach pollution.

The Greek company, Anax International Agencies, agreed to pay more than \$9.4 million in fines, cleanup costs and environmental restoration damages while Captain Dimitrios Georgantas was barred from US ports for three years. The terms of the plea bargain are subject to approval by the US District Court on December 13.

The Liberian-flagged tanker, Com-mand, had been docked in San Francisco for fuel tank repairs but left for Ecuador on September 26, 1998. Despite Coast Guard orders not to use a damaged tank, Georganta ordered oil transferred to it at sea, according to the plea agreement. At least 170 birds were killed when the oil reached the San Mateo County coast. Cleanup costs were estimated at \$1.28 million.

Numbers to Remember

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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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