

sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 51, No. 1
September, 2000

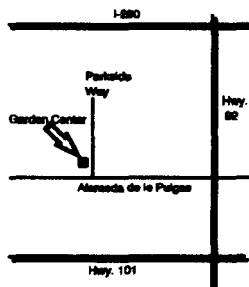


This Month's Program

Tom Ryan, biologist with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, will present a program on those aptly named birds, **SWIFTS, THEIR NATURAL HISTORY AND IDENTIFICATION.**

TORY AND IDENTIFICATION.

Tom was formerly chief biologist with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, has worked in South America and has given extensive time to studying these highly maneuverable insect catchers. Thursday, September 14 at the San Mateo Garden Center on Parkside at Alameda.



Next Month's Program

This meeting will be held on the Coastside instead of at our usual location. We will meet at the ranger headquarters at the end of Kelly Street in Half Moon Bay at the State Beach. A park ranger will present a birding program. See next month's *Needles* for more information.

Eating Machines

Sea anemones look like pretty flowers. Actually they are very efficient predators. They will ingest almost anything offered. They have tentacles armed with minute stinging structures. If a crab or small fish touches the tentacles, the anemone will sting the organism and draw it towards its mouth. An anemone will quickly digest any food, and "spit out" any indigestible shells or bones.



From the President

Changes are coming to our Chapter starting this fall! National Audubon is implementing the Membership part of its Strategic Plan. According to the plan, each part of NAS must be financially self-sufficient and the Membership part is not. NAS attributes this to the fact that the cost of acquiring new members is so great. NAS has determined that they can no longer give the Chapters a share of the dues until NAS has recouped these recruitment costs. The end result of this is that our Chapter income from National will suffer a 75% decline by the end of three years. This income from National has always been close to what is needed to fund the printing and mailing of our Chapter Newsletter, the *Needles*.

SO — This year we will be sending out a full *Needles* once each quarter and a one page flyer for the other months. July and August will continue as currently, without a newsletter of any kind. At the same time we will be revising and expanding our Web page so current information will be available at all times. Audubon-California has been hosting us on their website, but National Audubon has decided not to host Chapters after October 31, 2000. We will be responsible for designing, financing and maintaining our website this year. I know that every one doesn't have home access to the Web, but our libraries do. Give it a try when you go to check out books!!!

Mystery Members! Sequoia Audubon has about 1700 members, but many of you are a "mystery" to me! I know and interact with some 200 of our members and we receive generous donations from many others that I don't know personally. But what about the rest of our membership?

I assume you support the Audubon idea of enjoying and preserving birds and their habitats. Do you read the *Needles*? Will you miss receiving it each month? What things can Sequoia Audubon do to encourage you to become more active? Please call me at 325-3306 or our office, 345-3724 and share your ideas and concerns.

Writing about birds is fun, so I'll close with my latest sighting. An adult and a young California Thrasher are holding forth in my front garden. I love watching them scurry in and out under the flowering shrubs searching for insects. The young one keeps focused on its parent and begs rather piteously whenever mom or dad finds a tasty morsel. When the adult isn't paying attention, the young thrasher finds his own tidbits and gobbles them down. No sharing there!!

The young bird is very curious and not very wary of humans. He walked right up to the dog and stood beak to nose until mom or dad saw him and unleashed a stream of scolding chatter that sent him running away and under cover.

It won't be long before he's on his own. I hope he decides to live in my yard and sing to me in the spring.

—Robin Smith

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



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 — 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, SEPTEMBER 9, BEGINNERS/ FAMILY TRIP — SEA CLOUD PARK

This is the first of the monthly trips, held on the second weekend of the month, especially designed for beginners and families. We have plenty of binoculars to share. Besides looking at the birds we will discuss binoculars, field guides and the basics of bird identification.

Questions gladly answered! To get there take Hillsdale Avenue east from 101 and make a right turn on Edgewater Blvd. Go 1.3 miles, turn left on Pitcairn Drive. Look for the park entrance on the right. We'll meet at the far end of the parking lot at 9 AM.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 — GENERAL MEETING — SWIFTS, THEIR NATURAL HISTORY AND IDENTIFICATION.

Presented by Tom Ryan, former chief biologist of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and currently a biologist with the Santa Clara Water District. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Informal get-together at 7:30 with the meeting beginning at 8 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 — POINT REYES

We will be looking for fall migrants, vagrant species and those early arriving winter residents in one of the premiere birding destinations in the state. Our trip will take us to the outer point, unless we try for reported vagrants in another location. Expect some moderate walking. Wear layered clothing since the weather at Point Reyes is extremely changeable. We will meet at the Bear Valley Visitor Center at 8:30 AM. To get there take 101 north across the Golden Gate Bridge and exit at San Anselmo. You will travel west on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. to Olema. Turn left at the stop light and make the first left turn onto Bear Valley Road. The next left will be for the Bear Valley Visitor Center. Park near the rest rooms in the upper (left) parking lot.

LEADER JUDY SPITLER 355-9362

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, PHIPPS COUNTRY — This combination produce stand, berry-pickin' farm and barnyard menagerie, formerly known as the Phipps Ranch, has become a favorite birding spot with rare and unusual birds turning up annually. To get there take Hwy. 1 to Pescadero Road. Follow Pescadero Road through town until you come to the farm stand. Park away from the farm stand so as to leave the nearest spaces for customers. We will meet at 8:30 AM.

LEADER GARY DEGHI 726-1340

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5 — 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, OCTOBER 7 — BAIR ISLAND

Here's a chance to bird in the newest part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Sequoia Audubon volunteers work at Bair Island in various ways. You can become one of the volunteers, too, or you can just enjoy birding at Bair. Take 101 to the Whipple Avenue exit in Redwood City. Go east on Whipple across the frontage road. There is a parking area here, but WATCH OUT for the frontage road traffic! Meet at 9 AM at the refuge sign inside the gate.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12 — GENERAL MEETING — AT STATE PARK HEADQUARTERS IN HALF MOON BAY.

Birding program to be presented by ranger personnel. The Headquarters building is on the coast at the end of Kelly Avenue in Half Moon Bay. Go south from the intersection of Highways One and 92 and take a right at the first light. Follow it to its end. The park building will be on the right. Informal get-together at 7:30 with the meeting beginning at 8 PM.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14 — SEA CLOUD PARK — BEGINNERS/FAMILY TRIP.

The second of our monthly trips designed for beginners and families. Besides looking at the birds we will discuss binoculars, field guides and the basics of bird identification. Questions gladly answered! Sea Cloud Park in Foster City is reached by taking Hillsdale Avenue east from 101 and making a right turn on Edgewater Blvd. Then 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 AM.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 — SAN FRANCISCO ZOO.

Bird the Zoo!! David Anderson, Director of the SF Zoo, will lead us in searching for local resident birds and any migrants or even vagrants. We may be able to see a Bald Eagle in flight, part of the Zoo's rehab/recovery program. A \$6 donation per person is expected. Park on Herbst Road and enter through the service gate by 9 AM. To get to Herbst Road: Take 280 North to 19th Avenue, 19th to Sloat Blvd. Turn left on Sloat, and then left on Skyline Blvd. From there turn left on Herbst Road OR Take 280 north to Brotherhood Way, follow it to Lake Merced Blvd., turn left on Lake Merced Blvd., cross Sunset and continue on Lake Merced Blvd. and cross Skyline Blvd. on to Herbst Road.

LEADER BARBARA STEWART 359-3899

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 — CRISSY FIELD — Bird the New Marsh! Explore an area newly restored, including a tidal marsh, in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. See what is in the marsh at this season. Identify the birds in and over the bay waters, even those pesky gulls! Take 101 north to Van Ness Avenue. Follow Van Ness to Bay, turn left on Bay and, soon, right on Marina Blvd. Follow Marina past the Marina Green to the entrance to Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Park in the parking area and meet at the large kiosk at 9 AM.

LEADER FRANCIS TOLDI 344-1919

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE - 2000-2001

DATE	DAY & TIME	TYPE	LOCATION	LEADER
9/9/00	Saturday 9 AM	Beginners/Family Trip	Sea Cloud Park	Robin Smith 325-3306
9/16/00	Saturday, 8:30 AM	Fall migrants	Point Reyes	Judy Spittler 355-9362
9/23/00	Saturday, 8:30 AM	Fall migrants	Phipps Ranch	Gary Deghi 726-1340
9/30/00	Saturday 9 AM	Fall Shorebirds	TBA	TBA
10/7/00	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
10/14/00	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Sea Cloud Park	Leslie Flint 573-6279
10/21/00	Saturday	Behind the Scenes	SF Zoo	Barbara Stewart 359-3899
10/28/00	Saturday	New Marsh	Crissy Field	Francis Told 344-1919
11/4/00	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
11/12/00	Sunday	Beginner/Family	Coyote Point	Sue Cossins 347-9358
11/19/00	Sunday	Fall Shorebirds	Coyote Point	Sue Cossins 347-9358
12/2/00	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
12/9/00	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Sea Cloud Park	Garth Harwood
12/16/00	Saturday	Christmas Bird Count	Crystal Springs	Al DeMartini
12/30/00	Saturday	Christmas Bird Count	Ano Nuevo	Garth Harwood
1/6/01	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
1/13/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Bay Front Park	Robin Smith 325-3306
1/20/01	Saturday 9 AM	Land and Sea Birds	Sharp Park	Judy Spittler 355-9362
2/3-4/01	Saturday & Sunday	Wintering Waterfowl & Raptors	Los Banos/Panoche Valley	Cliff Richer 873-1754
2/10/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Sea Cloud Park	TBA
2/17/01	Saturday 9 AM	Water & Shorebirds	Princeton Harbor	Gary Deghi 726-1340
3/3/01	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
3/10/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Sea Cloud Park	TBA
3/17/01	Saturday 9 AM	Upland Birding	Arastradero Preserve	Garth Harwood
4/7/01	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
4/14/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Arastradero Preserve	Garth Harwood
4/22/01	Sunday 9 AM	Land and Water Birds	Coyote Point	Sue Cossins 347-9358
4/29/01	Sunday 8 AM	Unique Habitat Caravan	Mines Road	Cliff Richer 873-1754
5/5/01	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
5/12/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	Bay Front Park	TBA
5/19/01	Saturday 9 AM	Coastside Canyons	Higgins-Purisma/Verde Rd.	Rick Johnson
5/26/01	Saturday 9 AM	Coastside Creek	Whitehouse Creek	Nicole Salgado
6/2/01	Saturday 9 AM	Refuge Trip	Bair island	Robin Smith 325-3306
6/9/01	Saturday 9 AM	Beginner/Family	TBA	TBA
6/16-17/01	Saturday-Sunday	Sierra & Cienega	Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley	Cliff Richer & Company
6/23/01	Saturday 9 AM	Butterflies & Birds	Hidden Villa	Garth Harwood
7/13-16/01	Friday-Monday	Riparian & High Desert	Kern Valley	Bob Barnes

While we will attempt to stay to this schedule as closely as possible, circumstances may dictate changes. Check in your monthly Needles for complete details.



Some field trips may require reservations. Check in your monthly Needles for details.

The Colorado River Delta — Getting a Second Chance



The Colorado River Delta in Mexico was once covered with millions of acres of lush wetlands formed by the

ever-shifting, powerful flow of the river. But upstream dams and diversions have taken their toll during the last century. The delta is now a salt-soaked desert with hardly a plant in sight.

The mouth of the river once sustained fields of cotton and wheat in communal farming settlements. Now, only a fraction of the land is still good for agriculture and busloads of delta people leave for jobs at foreign-owned farms or factories near the border.

During the past 20 years, flood flows and wastewater have rejuvenated a few places in the delta, creating isolated patches of river and wetland habitat. These signs of life have inspired hope and energized Mexicans who care about the delta. And for the first time, environmental groups in the United States are looking over the international border that hides the mouth of the Colorado River from the rest of the basin.

They're trying to change the oldest unwritten western water law: Take all you can get, and never let it go.

In 1922, conservationist Aldo Leopold spent several weeks paddling a canoe through the delta's wetlands in Mexico. "The still waters were of a deep and emerald hue, colored by algae, I suppose, but no less green for all that," he wrote. "A verdant wall of mesquite and willow separated the channel from the thorny desert beyond. At each bend we saw egrets standing in the pools ahead...Fleets of cormorants drove their black prows in quest of skittering mullets. Avocets, willets and yellowlegs dozed one-legged on the bars; mallards, widgeons and teal sprang skyward in alarm."

In its prime, the Colorado River dumped about 70 percent of its substantial sediment load near its mouth. Over time, the Colorado deposited a deep wedge of

fertile soil stretching from California's Coachella Valley to the Gulf of California. The soil was the foundation for the verdant forests Leopold described, and supports the irrigated agriculture of the Mexicali and Imperial Valleys.

The Gulf of California is famous for the enormous tides that barrel up through the narrow channel between the Baja Peninsula and mainland Mexico. The sometimes violent mix of waters in the delta formed one of the largest and most productive estuaries in the world. Fish such as corvina, mullet and tilapia were plentiful in the southern delta, and shrimp abounded in the upper gulf. The Cucapa tribe once lived off the delta's harvest and found their best hunting grounds at the mouth of the river.

But the river people and the delta's wildlife were the last to be considered when the waters of the Colorado were divided up. The 1922 compact on the river split the water among the seven US basin states. No water was set aside for Mexico until 1944. That treaty promised Mexico 1.5 million acre-feet of water every year (about 10 percent of the river's flow) but all of that was diverted for irrigation of the border-hugging Mexicali Valley.

Hoover, Glen Canyon and the many lesser dams didn't erase the tidal bores, but they did change them. High tide now overwhelms the paltry flow of the river, and the conditions in and near the river mouth are grimly referred to as a "negative estuary," a flow nearly as salty as the ocean. The salt has poisoned much of the wildlife that used to thrive here, and overfishing has almost finished off several species. The dams also trapped the rich silt so that the soil in the delta is eroding, not accumulating.

Now the delta may be finally getting a few lucky breaks. Three years ago, a University of Arizona professor named Edward Glenn flew over the northern end of the Colorado River Delta in Mexico. Glenn had never had a bird's-eye view of the river above its confluence with the Rio Hardy, but he'd been exploring the delta region for more than two decades. He expected little more than a panoramic perspective of tamarisk groves and salt flats.

Instead, he saw a winding green thread of native cottonwood and willow trees along the river channel — products of the "wet" years of the 1980's when all reservoirs on the river were full, and the US. Bureau of Reclamation had allowed

the extra water to occasionally flow across the border. In the flood year of 1983, the river even reached the Gulf of California for the first time since Glen Canyon Dam went up. The wet winters of the 1990s continued the sporadic floods. Glenn says fish populations in the Mexican stretch of the river have "exploded," increasing as much as tenfold since the beginning of the floods.

Even though most of that water arrived too early in the year to help the river-side habitat, some of the native vegetation on the northern end of the delta has already sprouted back. When migratory songbirds cross the border, they're now welcomed by a 60-mile-long corridor of forest, stretching from Morelos Dam to the river's confluence with the Rio Hardy. Because the Mexican side is relatively free of riprap and concrete channels, the flood-fed recovery in Mexico is especially dramatic. Researchers estimate there are 34,500 acres of forest containing cottonwoods and willows along the river in Mexico — about triple that along the lower Colorado in the United States.

That good habitat is sustained by chance alone. Another accidental generosity of the Bureau of Reclamation has figured in the delta's revival. A little more than a decade ago, its engineering unintentionally created some of the best wildlife habitat in the delta.

In 1977, the Bureau completed the MODE canal, which annually carries 35 billion gallons of irrigation runoff southward from Yuma, Arizona. The runoff dumps out on the eastern edge of the delta in Mexico where it has formed a lake and 50,000 acre marsh — *la Cienega de Santa Clara*. The cienega is a mistake. Originally it was intended to be a sink for brine from a \$250 million de-salinization plant in Yuma while the de-salted water was to be returned to the Colorado River. Delays in completing the plant caused all of the water to end up in the cienega.

Now the plant is completed and it sits there — a giant white elephant — for in 1993 the cienega was designated a biosphere reserve. Any release of salt and alkali-rich brine to the cienega would kill its plants and animals. Nevertheless, the plant has the potential to be a rogue elephant as there are powerful interests in

(Continued on Page Six)



FALL 2000 BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY OCT 11

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

*****Check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be October 19-22, 2000**

Confirmation and details will be sent via mail.

Half Moon Bay____ Burlingame____ San Carlos____
Pacifica____ San Mateo____ Atherton____

	# BAGS	\$-COST-\$
AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX.....20 lb @ \$10.00/bag	_____	= _____
red & white millet plus black oil sunflower		
RED/WHITE MILLET MIX.....20 lb@ \$9.00/bag	_____	= _____
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....25 lb@ \$13.00/bag	_____	= _____
WHITE PROSO MILLET.....25 lb@ \$8.00/bag	_____	= _____
THISTLE.....5 lb@ \$9.00/bag	_____	= _____
SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....25 lb@ \$24.00/bag	_____	= _____

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible)..... _____

CHECK # _____ GRAND TOTAL _____

THE NEXT SEED SALE WILL BE FEBRUARY 2000

Please enclose a **stamped self-addressed envelope** to receive your order confirmation and directions to pickup location. Mail check and order to: **SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Name _____ 30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202
Address _____ San Mateo, CA 94403
City _____ Zip _____ (650) 345-3724
Phone _____
E-Mail _____

Colorado River Delta Revival

(Continued from Page Four)

both Mexico and the US who want that de-salted water delivered to the Colorado Delta or to the thirsty Los Angeles or San Diego metropoli.

Under the "use it or lose it" provisions of western water law, California has been taking more than its allocated 4.4 million acre-feet of water from the river. The excess was water not "used" by upstream states. Population increases and better plumbing in the other states have been whittling away at the California excess and there is increased pressure from Mexico to restore flows to the delta. Even the US Dept. of Interior has acknowledged that 80% of the best habitat along the lower Colorado is in Mexico. Deputy Interior Secretary Hayes has written that "Restoring the ecological integrity of the Delta is in the interest of both the US and Mexico".

The fate of the Colorado River delta had begun to arouse some interest and political influence in the Mexican government. The defeat of the long-entrenched PRI party at the polls this summer leaves a lot of questions unanswered. How high on the priority list can the delta be for a new government that has 70 years of political empire to dismantle? Will they put it back on the shelf while they consolidate their gains? Will they seize it as an opportunity to embarrass their big uncle to the north? Or will they take up the issue in a determined but cooperative manner that can contribute to the restoration of what was once one of the world's great wildlife environments? Time will tell.

(Condensed and adapted from an article by Michelle Nijhuis in the July 3, 2000 High Country News.)

Birds at Home TV

Howard Rathlesberger has called to our attention the birding series, *Birds at Home*, which was featured on KCSM, Channel 60. The current cycle of shows is now history, but in the inevitability of public television will undoubtedly resurface at some future date — keep your eyes open. The scattered episodes that I was able to catch were well worth it.

The Curmudgeon

Cliff Richer

Publish Or Perish

Restating the Obvious

A new study written in part by a professor at UC-Berkeley and published in the August issue of *Conservation Biology*, criticizes the captive rearing techniques used to raise young condors, citing that one-third of released condors die in the first year.



According to the report, the condors face a risk of lead poisoning from carcasses containing lead bullet fragments.

Authors say the combined effects threaten the population of released condors. They are calling for a change in the condor release program as well as a restriction on the use of lead-based ammo.

"Many condors are reared in captivity by humans using condor-shaped puppets, and this has created birds that readily approach people, cars and buildings," said co-author Vicky Meretaky, an assistant professor at Indiana University.

The authors cite examples of released condors attempting to reunite with humans, whom they are supposed to naturally fear, including the well-known instance when a group of birds ripped open a screen door to enter a human residence.

The study ignores the fact that these "facts" have been known and *well-documented* for years and that the condor release professionals have changed their rearing and release procedures several times to improve the survival chances of the endangered vultures. The lead shot issue is even older — its use has long been forbidden on federal lands — and ammunition manufacturers as well as state and federal agencies have been researching alternatives for more than a decade. As to the death rate — how many second and third year plumage gulls do you see? More than 90% of first year gulls die.

We would suggest that the professors devote more time to reading what others are *doing* and less time to writing ill-informed and obsolete articles.

DNA Analysis Leading Up to Splits

The Sage Grouse around Gunnison County, Colorado are different from other Sage Grouse in size, plumage, displays, and vocalizations. A recent study has provided genetic evidence that Sage Grouse should be considered two species. The researchers made genetic comparisons between "large" and "small" Sage Grouse. The small birds are now found only around Gunnison County, but birds extirpated from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and other parts of Colorado in recent times are also thought to have belonged to this group. All other populations are treated as members of the main group. The authors conclude that the genetic differences between the two groups, and the lack of gene flow between them provides sufficient evidence to elevate the small-bodied birds to species level.

Kevin P. Johnson and Michael D. Sorenson also published the results of their DNA work on puddle ducks with some startling conclusions. They found that the Eurasian sub-species of the Green-winged Teal was as different from the North American sub-species in its DNA makeup as the Mallard was from the Pintail. European taxonomists are already using its old name, Common Teal, and treating it as a separate species. The *nimias* sub-species, breeding on the Aleutians and Pribilofs, was determined to be a sub-species of the Common Teal and not related to the Green-winged Teal.

These researchers also found no significant DNA differences between Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, but qualified this by saying their analysis was based on two individual birds and more work needed to be done before coming to any firm conclusions.

DNA tests on black-billed and yellow-billed magpies are also causing some second thoughts. The DNA comparison of our two North American species is closer than expected, and both differ markedly from Eastern European sub-species of the black-billed magpie. Yet, there are no cases of hybridization in the North American birds in their narrow zone of overlap. This test should be one that is going to be debated for some time.

Pilchuck Audubon Society Wins Suit Throws Monkey Wrench into Federal Land Exchange Program

This spring the Pilchuck Audubon Society successfully challenged the Huckleberry Mountain Exchange, by which Weyerhaeuser was going to trade 30,000 acres of logged land for 4300 acres of federally-owned old-growth forest.

The federal Court of Appeals agreed that the deal heavily favored the timber firm and that the Forest Service had inadequately assessed the environmental impacts before approving the deal. This sets a precedent for future exchanges and will help assure that the government will make a fair and thorough examination of any such transactions.

County Approves Fitzgerald Marine Plan Extension

Additional funding to extend the consultant contract for completion of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve master plan has been approved by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

Since November, 1997 there have been four meetings with Technical Advisory Committee groups, four public hearings, and numerous meetings between the consultants and the county staff to arrive at the present plan.

Among the recommendations in the master plan is the construction of a new education center with classroom facilities. This building would be constructed on the present parking lot and would be approximately 1950 square-feet, as opposed to the tiny shack now being used. The plan also calls for closure of certain areas of the intertidal area, allowing the reef's plant and animal life to recover. Visitations to the reserve over the years has grown to levels that have stressed the Reserve's resources, particularly in the tide pool area.

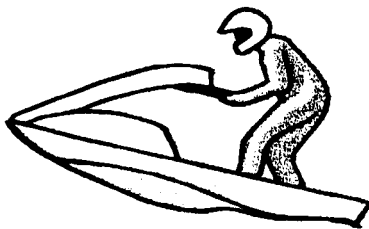
Funding for an environmental impact report after the master plan is completed has been approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

First Bob Breen Scholarship Awarded

Rosalyn Claret of Half Moon Bay is the first student to be awarded the newly-established Bob Breen Scholarship. Recipients of the award must be seniors who plan to attend college and major in the natural sciences. Ms. Claret was a member of the team representing HMB High School in the recent National Ocean Science Bowl contest. The award of \$300 was presented by Dona Juergens, president of the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Refuge, sponsors of the annual award named in honor of Bob Breen, the long-time (30+ years) Reserve naturalist. Students are selected on the basis of overall grades, as well as marks in the sciences.

Federal Jet-Ski Ban

Effective April 20 the National Park Service (NPS) banned jet-skis and similar "personal motorized water-craft," at scores of national parks and seashores.



Jet-skis had already been banned along the 59 miles of Golden Gate National Recreation Area coastline and will remain that way under the new rules.

Under the Park Service regulation, jet-skis will be banned in 66 parks, recreational areas and sea-shores.

Robert Stanton, the agency's director, called the new restrictions "a prudent approach" that will allow some use of the watercraft "yet protects park values."

At the same time, the agency said they may continue to be used at 10 federal recreational areas where water sports traditionally have been a focus of activity.

The agency also gave 11 other park areas — mostly federal sea-shores — a two-year "grace period" before they have

to eliminate jet-ski use, or obtain a special approval.

Many conservation groups felt the ban did not go far enough. "The ray of hope we see in this is that the Park Service is recognizing that they have a serious problem with thrill vehicles," said Sean Smith, the public lands director for the San Francisco-based Blue Water Network, a leader in the fight against jet-skis. (*I love that term "thrill vehicles", which I would also apply to snowmobiles, dirt bikes, dune buggies and many SUVs.—Ed.*)

Smith pointed out that the Organic Act mandates that the national park service leave park lands unharmed from development and pollution as much as possible. His group, backed by other environmental groups plans to file a lawsuit against the Park Service that calls for the total elimination of jet-skis.

"The Park Service has admitted that jet-skis pollute both air and water, harass wildlife, and interfere with other visitors. Yet they propose to allow most use to continue," complained Tom Kierr president of the National Parks and Conservation Association.

But the Personal Watercraft Industry Association felt the ban was too broad and said in newer models, noise and pollution have been reduced significantly.

In all, the Park Service allowed these craft to be used in 87 parks, recreational areas and seashores. where motor-boating is allowed. In 66 of the 87 areas, local superintendents will have to get approval from Washington before allowing their use. While jet-ski use is marginal in many of the parks, overall usage has risen dramatically in recent years.

A Fungus Among Us

In 1992 a fungus, *Armillaria ostoyae*, was found near Mount Adams, Washington, whose roots covered 1500 acres. At the time it was declared to be the world's largest organism.

A new champion has just been declared. Another *Armillaria* covering 2200 acres — 3.5 miles across and 3 feet thick — has been found in Oregon's Malheur National Forest. DNA samples taken from different sections confirmed that it is a single organism, certainly the largest found to date and perhaps the oldest as well at an estimated 2400 years.

Help Needed!

We need a volunteer or volunteers with computer skills who can:

Help us keep the Bair Island Volunteer Database

and/or

Set up and maintain our web page

Contact Robin Smith (325-3306) or the office (345-3724)

Sequoia *NEEDLES* is published monthly except in January, July and August. Members are encouraged to submit material to be published in the *NEEDLES*. The deadline for the submission of materials is the first day of the month preceding publication. These may be original articles, original artwork or cartoons, or uncopyrighted material from other sources. Items dealing with conservation issues must be submitted to the Conservation Committee prior to publication.

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

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

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY'S WEB PAGE'S URL is <http://Sequoia.ca.audubon.org/>

The *Needles* e-mail address is Ulticoot@yahoo.com

OFFICERS

President	Robin Smith	325-3306
Past President	Francis Toldi	344-1919
Vice-president	Marilyn Noah	
Secretary	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Treasurer	Lisa Moody	

DIRECTORS

Term ending '01	Merry Haveman	344-2146
	Cliff Richer	873-1754
Term ending '02	Rick Baird	574-1067
	Tom Vanden-Bosch	369-8305
Term ending '03	Mary Bresler	
	Gary Deghi	

STAFF

Nicole Salgado	345-3724
Fax	345-3748
e-mail	sasoffice@neteze.com

STANDING COMMITTEES

ACR Hosting	Barbara Stewart	
Audit	Rick Baird	574-1067
Christmas Count	Al DeMartini (Crystal Springs)	
	Garth Harwood (Año Nuevo)	
Conservation	OPEN	
Education	OPEN	
Field Trips	Anne Moser	324-1718
Bluebird Recovery	Howard Rathlesberger	367-1296
<i>NEEDLES</i> Editor	Cliff Richer	873-1754
Circulation Editor	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Programs	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Publicity	Nicole Salgado	345-3724
Membership	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Finance/Budget	Rick Baird	574-1067
Hospitality	Merry Haveman	344-2146
	Eileen Kay	592-4626
ACR Representative	Leslie Flint	



SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

30 West 39th Avenue, #202
San Mateo, CA 94403-4561

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN MATEO, CA.
PERMIT NO. 293

We Invite your membership in the National Audubon Society & SAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SAS, 30 West 39th Ave., #202, San Mateo, CA 94403

- ☐ National Audubon Society Membership
New \$20 (1 year) Student/Seniors \$15

Members receive *Audubon Magazine* & *NEEDLES*.

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.

- ☐ *Needles* subscription only. \$10 for 9 issues
☐ **Donation:** SAS appreciates your tax-deductible donation which helps fund the chapter's education, conservation and ongoing activities.

For membership renewal information call
National Audubon Society at (800) 274-4201

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

7XCH C16

Printed on Recycled Paper



Time Valued Material - Please Do Not Delay