

sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 51, No. 2
December, 2000

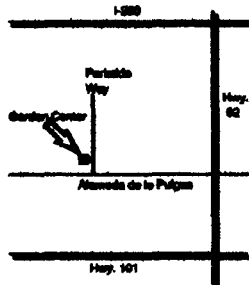
December Program Winter Birding in Japan

Thursday, December 14th: Ted Chandik will present "Winter Birding in Japan".

Ted was a naturalist for the city of Palo Alto for 32 years and currently travels worldwide to view birds. Last year he presented, "A Bird Lister's View of Alaska" at our October general meeting.

A fine birder, photographer and speaker, Ted always keeps us interested.

Don't forget — December is potluck time at the San Mateo Garden Center.



From the President

A Pair of Christmas Bird Counts to Remember

Really cold weather was predicted for the Bay area and there were warnings about frozen pipes and plants. On my way home I stopped at Orchard Supply and bought the last pieces of pipe insulation — the same sort of material used to protect pipes in Sierra cabins. As darkness fell I insulated the outside pipes and protected all my new tropical plants from frost.

Feeling smug, I laid out a selection of warm clothes and went to bed. When the alarm went off at 4 a.m. I got up and stumbled to the back door to look at the hi-lo thermometer, so I could decide how many layers to wear. Through the window it seemed to be recording a temperature of 20 degrees!

Potluck Time

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

The Potluck Dinner begins at 6:30 PM on Thursday, December 14 at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside and will be followed immediately by the business meeting and program.

Coming Up

On Thursday, January 11, 2001, world traveler, Leslie Flint will present "Where I Went on my Summer Vacation; Birds and Mammals of Kenya".



Despite this year's severe drought Kenya's diverse habitats harbored a wealth of birds and mammals from Mt. Kenya to the Rift Valley to the Kalumega rain forest to the Masai Mara. Leslie will share a few slides of the over 650 birds and 40 mammals seen on her trip.

Thursday, February 8, Nicole Salgado will present "The Central Coast Riparian Bird Conservation Plan" This will be at a coastside location, probably Half Moon Bay State Beach. Watch the *Update* for details.

I could hardly believe my eyes!!! It had never been even close to 20 degrees before (and it hasn't been 20 degrees since that cold snap).

Smugness gone, I layered on my Nepal trekking clothes, grabbed my binoculars and headed out to meet the rest of my Christmas Bird Count team.

It was an unreal morning! Everywhere there were broken pipes and ice slicks on the streets from the released water. Careful walking and driving were a must. It was clear and COLD.

The birds were there all the same. We started in a creek bottom where it must have been about 15 degrees and were rewarded with Varied Thrushes and Bewick's Wrens, a Song Sparrow and an American Robin. All the birds' feathers were puffed out to retain heat making them resemble small, fat feather dusters. We found we could approach fairly closely before they summoned the will to move. This was lucky because my binoculars, which weren't armored, conducted the cold to

(Continued on Page Three)

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



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2 — BAIR ISLAND

— bird in the newest part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and learn about Sequoia Audubon's volunteer work at Bair Island. You can become one of the volunteers, too, or you can just enjoy the birding! 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, DECEMBER 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, DECEMBER 9, BEGINNERS/ FAMILY TRIP — SEA CLOUD PARK — This trip is 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 GARTH HARWOOD

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14 — GENERAL MEETING AND POTLUCK — WINTER BIRDING IN JAPAN. — Presented by Ted Chandik, retired chief naturalist at the Palo Alto Baylands. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Potluck begins at 6:30 PM with the meeting and program following immediately thereafter. See Page One.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16 — CRYSTAL SPRINGS CHRISTMAS COUNT — SIGN UP NOW! — The Crystal Springs Count is regularly one of the top ten for numbers of species identified and is often joined by the Año Nuevo Count. Only one thing distinguishes our counts from the other top counts — numbers of participants. Hundreds of birders turn out for the southeastern Texas counts and top birders from all over California look at the Moss Landing Count as an annual reunion. Compare this to our 30-50 birders! We need you!

SEE PAGE SIX FOR DETAILS.

COMPILER AL DE MARTINI

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30 — AÑO NUEVO CHRISTMAS COUNT — This count has the potential to match or exceed the Crystal Springs Count in species diversity and numbers of birds, but is traditionally under-reported due to the small number of participants. **SIGN UP NOW.**

SEE PAGE SIX FOR DETAILS.

COMPILER GARTH HARWOOD

THURSDAY, JANUARY 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, JANUARY 6 — BAIR ISLAND — See description of the December 2 trip for details.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11 — GENERAL MEETING featuring, Leslie Flint on the **Birds and Mammals of Kenya**. At the Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social get-together at 7:30 PM with the meeting beginning at 8.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13 — BAY FRONT PARK — Come to "Robin's secret place" and look for ducks, shorebirds, wading birds and land birds on this site that was originally the fill and cover dump for Menlo Park. Easy walking on flat ground. Good for kids and strollers. Take Hwy. 101 to Marsh Road, follow Marsh Road east to the park entrance. We'll meet at 9 a.m. by the red pump house on the left.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 — PRINCETON HARBOR. The only sheltered harbor between Santa Cruz and San Francisco, Princeton Harbor is winter home to a good variety of bay ducks, loons, cormorants and other divers as well as gulls and shorebirds. Oldsquaws and Glaucous Gulls are regular winter visitors and the area almost always has one or two surprises. To get there take Hwy. 92 to Hwy. 1 and follow Hwy. 1 north to Capistrano Rd. and turn left at the lights. Take your first left and another immediate left into the parking lot where we will meet at 9:00 A.M.

LEADER AL DE MARTINI 345-3724

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20 — SHARP PARK SHORE AND GOLF COURSE. This area can be extremely productive as it encompasses a harbor with scoters, loons and mergansers; a beach, a fresh-water marsh and isolated groves of trees, all of which have been known to yield surprises. We will meet at 9 AM at the Anchor Monument just south of the fishing pier on Sharp Park Beach. The trip should break up at noon. Heavy rain cancels the trip.

LEADER JUDI SPITLER 355-9362

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1 — 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, FEBRUARY 3 AND SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4 — LOS BANOS REFUGES AND PANOCHE VALLEY FIELD TRIP. This overnight field trip covers two diverse areas and exposes us to a variety of rare and unusual birds. The refuges of Los Banos are noted for White-Faced Ibis, Sandhill

Cranes, a large variety of waterfowl and shore birds, raptors and owls. Twenty miles south of Los Banos, Little Panoche Road winds its way through the Diablo Range into Panoche Valley where wintering flocks of Mountain Plovers, Vesper Sparrows, Mountain Bluebirds, Long Billed Curlews, and perched raptors vie with the resident Roadrunners, Phainopeplas and Chukars for the birders' attention. Saturday we plan on meeting in the parking lot of the Los Banos Wildlife Area on Henry Miller Road north of the town of Los Banos at 9:00 A.M. Sunday we will meet at the parking lot above Little Panoche Detention Reservoir at 8:30 AM. The trips will go on rain or shine. Motel reservations are recommended at this time of year.

LEADERS CLIFF RICHER (873-1754) & FRANCIS TOLDI

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8 – GENERAL MEETING featuring Nicole Salgado, who will present “**The Central Coast Riparian Bird Conservation Plan**” This will be at a coastside location, probably Half Moon Bay State Beach. Watch the *Update* for details. Social gathering at 7:30 PM with the meeting and program beginning at 8.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10 – BEGINNERS/ FAMILY TRIP — SEA CLOUD PARK — This trip is 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 TO BE ANNOUNCED

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17 – PRINCETON HARBOR — See description and directions on previous page for trip of January 14.

LEADER GARY DEGHI 726-1340

From the President

(Continued From Page One)

clumsy. Soon clumsiness ceased to be a problem, though; the binoculars became so frigid they wouldn't adjust. All morning I was relegated to birding without bins. It took setting them on the sunny dashboard of the car as we ate lunch, before they were usable again.

The Crystal Springs count had the usual amount of species. Two weeks later, though, at the Ano Nuevo count, the two week cold snap had clearly taken its toll. There were no insects, and so, no warblers. Not a yellow-rump anywhere, which was eerie. Black Phoebes had taken to the shore and were eating flies off the kelp piles. We didn't see an Anna's Hummingbird all day. At the countdown no one reported seeing any hummers and we feared that they'd all died. Finally a counter from Pescadero arrived and told of having 40 Anna's coming to his feeder!!! Quarts of feeder syrup later, it finally began to warm up to more normal winter temperatures.

This Christmas count sticks out in my memory, not only because of the cold, but because of the adaptive behavior of the *Sequoia Audubon Society*

birds. Anything can happen on a Christmas Count. That's what makes them so interesting.

What will be the major theme this year? Please join the rest of us addicted counters in December and see how the 101st Christmas Bird Counts play out.

—Robin Smith



Great Newspaper Headlines

(All verified!!!)

Include Your Children When Baking Cookies
 Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
 Drunks Get Nine Months in Violin Case
 Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
 Is There a Ring of Debris around Uranus?
 Prostitutes Appeal to Pope
 Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
 British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands
 Teacher Strikes Idle Kids
 Clinton Wins Budget; More Lies Ahead
 Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told
 Miners Refuse to Work After Death
 Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
 Stolen Painting Found by Tree
 Sisters Reunited after 18 Years in Checkout Counter
 War Dims Hope for Peace
 if Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last a While
 Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide
 Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge
 New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
 Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Space
 Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
 Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
 Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead

From the Conservation Committee

Members of the Conservation Committee attended the Parks and Recreation Committee, Planning Commission and City Council meetings in San Mateo to try to influence the outcome of the proposed development plans for the site surrounded by the future Tidelands Park. The Planning commission voted against the development but the City Council, a week later, voted to accept the plan.

This site is surrounded on three sides by the wetlands area that will become Tidelands Park and a lot of energy was spent advocating for the birds and wildlife. Councilwoman Lempert cast the only vote against the development. It was obvious that she understands the value of wetlands.

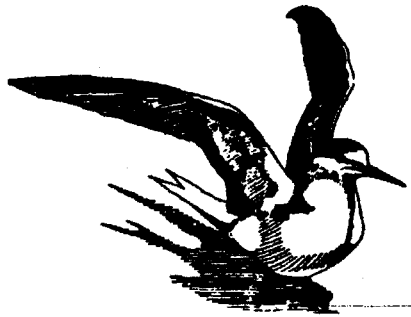
A preliminary hearing on the proposed project next to Sea Cloud Park in Foster City was held last month. Again Sequoia Audubon was represented by members of the Conservation Committee. This project has changed dramatically from what was originally proposed and would now have an undesirable impact on the shorebirds that currently use the area. Residents of Foster City are urged to get involved before this 19 acre parcel is fundamentally altered. This is the last seasonal wetland in Foster City proper. Attend one of our Sea Cloud Park field trips and learn the full story!

Alameda Air Station to Become Refuge

Thanks to a long-time lobbying effort by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the US Navy and the Fish and Wildlife Service are in the final stages of negotiating a property transfer of a major portion of the closed Alameda Air Station. That portion provides roost areas for thousands of Brown Pelicans and shorebirds and is one of the few nesting places left on the West Coast where Least Terns nest.

Whether the new refuge will become part of the existing SF Bay NWR or will be a separate refuge in its own right has not yet been determined.

The American Bird Conservancy has already declared the area a Globally Important Bird Area (IBA).



As a footnote, it should be noted that coastal airstrips have proved to be an acceptable substitute for the Least Tern's natural nesting habitat —undisturbed beaches. In the past, your editor has observed Least Terns feeding their flightless chicks on the hot tarmacs of the San Diego Naval Air Station and the Marathon, Florida airport.

War On Weeds Cliff Richer

Two of our favorite places — Audubon Canyon Ranch and Edgewood County Park — would seem to be winning battles against invasive weeds.

At ACR, Len Blumin, a member of the ACR Board, has been waging a volunteer war on cape ivy. Cape ivy is deceptively easy to remove but discouragingly difficult to eradicate since it can re-sprout from the tiniest fragment of the plant or its roots. The project to manually eliminate the plant has taken four years and has involved school children, Boy Scouts, employees of Patagonia, Inc., goats and ACR's work day volunteers.

So far the program is a qualified success. Cape ivy has been removed from three acres and native plants have returned. Unfortunately, these three acres must be patrolled vigilantly to cull the cape ivy "sprouts", and to discourage other invasive species such as poison hemlock and Italian thistle.

At Edgewood Park, European star thistle was the culprit. Several years of hand removal have significantly reduced the presence of this alien. And this year, it would seem that biological science has

come to the rescue. After several years of research, several "predator" species were identified — bugs which would attack or consume the star thistle without themselves becoming a problem. These predator species have been introduced and seem to be working. This year's crop of star thistle is smaller and less healthy. Both the volunteers and rangers involved in this project are now convinced that the combination of biological controls and hand-picking can at last bring the star thistle under control.

Bees Aplenty

In the July 10 *Chronicle*, Glen Martin, reported that a Utah State entomologist and a National Parks Service Resource Manager had identified 410 species of bees at Pinnacles National Monument. This total does not include wasps, hornets and yellowjackets, which are in the same order but belong to a different family.

410 species! Wow — talk about diversity.

Bigmouth Is Coming!

For years, rangers at wetlands such as Pescadero Marsh have feared possible invasion by the common bullfrog — native to the east, but a real danger to ecosystems in the west.

It has now become established in Arizona, where it is steadily eating its way across the state, consuming fish, snakes, other frogs and even birds. Best known as a desert state, Arizona is crisscrossed with artificial waterways that have become bullfrog paradise. These creatures lay 20,000 eggs each year and nobody knows how to stop them without damaging the entire eco-system.



Enroll New Members!!

Fatten the Chapter Coffers

National Audubon is running a special membership promotion through the month of December. Participating could benefit the chapter now and in the future.

Here's how it works. For every new member we enroll before the end of December we receive \$30.

No fuzzy math here! It costs \$20 to enroll as a new member and the chapter will receive \$30. Chapter generated members continue to bring in a larger dues share when they renew their memberships in the future. So, this promotion provides two ways to add to chapter funds as well as providing knowledge and education through *Needles* and the Audubon magazine that come with a membership.

How about a gift enrollment for a student, grandchild, relative, fellow worker, teacher or politician!

New Office

Sequoia Audubon is in it's new digs in Redwood City.

Again, thanks to **Ben Pless** for providing the space. Kudos go to **Dan and Don Keller** for moving our office from San Mateo to Redwood City, down a flight of stairs and up another. Our heartfelt thanks to the Keller brothers. Many board members helped in sorting and boxing our library, files and historical records, in dismantling the office storage system, recycling and transporting items to resale stores.

Nicole Salgado was instrumental in seeing that our computerized records were in good order and "backed up" before the she bid her cyber-companion a fond farewell!

We welcome any visionary suggestions that you have about relocating next summer. Our dream is to be near the bay where we could do some outreach to the public. Send us your ideas!!

WISH LIST

As we no longer have a staff person, we are looking for someone to help us keep our membership database up-to-date.

This would involve approximately 2 hours a month inputting information received from National Audubon's membership department.

This could be done in our office or on your own PC at home. We currently use FileMaker Pro, but are flexible.

Brown-Headed Cowbirds in California

Brown-headed Cowbirds were originally confined to the regions of the Great Plains where they accompanied the vast herds of bison in their annual migrations. Their parasitic nesting behavior was ideally suited to this pattern. By laying their eggs in the nests of other species along the path of the migration, the cowbirds freed themselves from the necessity of caring for the young birds and could follow the bison northward. By the time that the bison herds returned the young cowbirds were fledged and ready to join their biological parents.

When the European immigrants arrived coming north from Mexico or west from the Atlantic coast they brought grazing animals with them. The cowbirds found these a suitable substitute for the rapidly declining herds of bison and quickly adapted.

Cowbirds were unknown in California for many years. In the 1870s, Charles Bendire found them to be rare in the Great Basin States and could not locate any west of the Sierras. By 1889 some birds were found in the Mojave Desert. By 1911, they were recorded in Fresno and Palo Alto. By 1955 they had spread into British Columbia.

They rival the Cattle Egret as the fastest-spreading bird in North America in the era of written history. But unlike the Cattle Egret, which has carved out its own unique and unintrusive ecological niche, the Brown-headed Cowbird has become the scourge of songbirds throughout the continent. One has only to see a bluebird or warbler feeding a chick three times its size to appreciate the impact of the cowbird on our other species.

Cheetahs in Trouble

Cheetahs are one of the most admirable of the big cats. They are the fastest and perhaps the most graceful of all land animals. Although the males do not stay with the females after mating (neither do most cats), at least they do not kill the cubs, as lions do. And cheetah mothers are among the most conscientious.



But cheetahs are a genetic mystery. In the 1980s researchers discovered that all cheetahs are genetically similar — so much so that skin grafts from one cheetah to another produced no immune reaction. The finding caused geneticists to rethink the cheetah's evolutionary history.

Roughly 20,000 years ago cheetahs ranged around the world. At different times there were two species in North America. But cheetah populations apparently suffered a drastic decline about 10,000 years ago, and all now appear to be descended from a relative handful of survivors. No one really knows what this signifies for the future, but there is great concern that inbreeding may produce an inherent and fatal genetic flaw.

The latest short-term threat is from the United Arab Emirates where wealthy young men, many of them oil-rich sheiks, have adopted the notion that they should raise baby cheetahs, a threatened species, and teach them to hunt gazelles in the desert.

The demand has loosed a flood of illegal cheetah imports into the nation, according to the international Cat Specialist Group. In the past two years perhaps a hundred cheetahs — some only two or three weeks old — have been smuggled into the country from Somalia.

A government breeding center has been established to care for any cats that may be confiscated.

Coyotes — for the Birds

Kevin Crooks of the University of California Santa Cruz, and Michael Soule of The Wildlife Project in Colorado found when they studied habitat around San Diego that wherever coyotes roamed other predators such as foxes, raccoons and domestic cats declined because the animals moved away or ended up as coyote snacks.

With the decline of the smaller predators the numbers of surviving birds increased.

(National Wildlife Federation)

The Eyes Have It

King penguins nest on land, where sunlight can be dazzling, and feed in the dark sea depths down to 900 feet. In sunlight the pupils shrink to pinholes but when the birds dive, the pupils quickly widen to half an inch — 300 times the area. Thus they can spot their prey in what is — to us — complete darkness.

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, 2001

Fly into 2001 by attending the 5th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 12-15, co-sponsored by the Morro Coast Audubon Society.

Birding experts will lead over 35 field trips in this Globally Important Bird Area, recognized for its thousands of resident and wintering birds. Last year, the pelagic trip yielded a Short-tailed Albatross sighting, and not just one, but five California Condors were spotted in the Los Padres National Forest!

Workshops and evening programs will emphasize increasing your birding identification skills, and the festival's evening programs will feature presentations by Kenn Kaufman, George Lepp, and Brad Schram. For more information or a brochure, sign onto their website at www.morro-bay.net/birds or call the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-231-0592.

The Value of Rehab (?)

The value of investing time and resources rehabilitating individual birds or animals that have been injured or are sick has been questioned in some instances, particularly in the case of oil spills.



An analysis of rehabilitation of peregrine falcons in the Midwest provides a rare look at the subsequent success of rehabilitated birds (*Morbidity, Survival and Productivity of Rehabilitated Peregrine Falcons in the Upper Midwestern U.S.*, Steven J. Sweeney, Patrick T. Redig, and Harrison B. Tordoff, 1997. *Journal of Raptor Research*, 31: 347-352). The authors examined the fates of 168 peregrine falcons that were brought to a rehabilitation facility in need of veterinary care. Most of the birds (81 percent) had suffered traumatic injuries as the result of collisions. Of 161 birds, 66 were successfully treated, rehabilitated, and released into the wild.

Subsequent survival and reproductive success were calculated by assessing re-sightings, and the data were compared with non-rehabilitated falcons. The survival rate for rehabilitated birds was at least 20 percent at the end of three months and almost 14 percent at the end of one year. These rates are about the same as for untreated, unbanded birds. Over a period of five years after release, 10 percent of the birds formed pairs, and 6 percent successfully fledged young, figures also comparable with unrehabilitated birds. The mean brood size at the time of fledging was three, also comparable with other peregrines. The results of this analysis suggest that rehabilitation of individual birds is justified, because even though subsequent survival and success are low, they are equal to that of uninjured birds.

Thank You!!

The following have made donations to Sequoia Audubon during this year.

We thank you all and apologize for not having acknowledged your generosity earlier.

C. ADACHI, J. ALIBERTI
J. ANDERHOLM with a matching grant from Bank of America
J. BARKAN, LEONA BARTELL
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LISA WAAG
MERCEDES WILLIAMS

*Multiple donations



The Shell Wood River Refining Company of Illinois has been fined \$20,000 after more than 40 migratory and protected birds were discovered dead in waste oil impoundments at one of their facilities. The money will go to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the company was aware of the problem, and bird deaths at the facility had been documented back to 1983.

Gifts and Bequests

In memory of Phyllis Matthews
P. CAROZZI, N. ORMAN, STEVE SCHUBERT
JEFF STEEN, M WASHINGTON, J WEBSTER

Other donations may be found on Page Seven

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

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

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

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

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Office	Phone	369-1093
	Fax	369-8172
	e-mail	sasoffice@neteze.com

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☐ **National Audubon Society Membership**

New \$20 (1 year) Student/Seniors \$15

Members receive *Audubon Magazine* & **NEEDLES**.

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.

☐ **Needles/Update 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

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Sequoia Audubon Society

Update for November 2000



Volume 1, Issue 2
November 2000

SEQUOIA AUDUBON GENERAL MEETING:

Thursday,

November 9TH

'ALBERTA BIRDING'

*With Tom VandenBosch &
Alan Wofchuck, 7:30 pm, at
the San Mateo Garden Cen-
ter, at Alameda & Parkside
Way, San Mateo*

President's Letter- Robin Smith

My "Secret" Place for Ducks Ducks, ducks, all kinds of ducks. Every kid's old friends the Mallards, those subtly patterned Gadwalls, Northern Shovelers with their spatulate bills, beautiful rusty trim little Green-winged Teal, those hard-winged Teal, and, later in the season, Ruddies, red-eyed Canvasbacks, svelte Pin-of-Scaup, American Wigeon, Goldeneye, once, a lone Redhead. Ducks are fun to good sized and stay put so new birders can study them easily. In the spring some stay in my "secret" place to have their ducklings which is an added viewing pleasure. I recommend this place to all of you as the most reliable place in the county to find Blue-winged Teal. I saw a small group of them on October 7th, already in their favorite wintering spot in the slough. Ducks aren't the only birds in my "secret" place. Shorebirds and wading birds are there, too. So are raptors, pheasants, phoebes, mockingbirds, hummers, sparrows, gulls, terns, stilts and avocets, swallows, finches, starlings and pigeons. Quite a collection just off highway 101 in Menlo Park. My not-so-secret spot is Bayfront Park at Marsh Road and Bayfront Expressway. Open from early morning to early evening to automobiles and accessible from dawn to dusk by foot and bicycle, it is a great place for a quick stop to assuage the urge to go birding when time is in short supply. So, next time you want to see a good selection of birds in a short amount of time and have fun doing it, give Bayfront Park a try. I think it's just ducky and I bet you will, too.



Cinnamon Teal, to-find Blue-snappy looking tails, both species Bufflehead and, watch! They are

**Check out SAS
November Trips!
See inside for
more detail.**

Nov. Field Trips

**SATURDAY,
NOV. 4TH**

**Bair Island Trip-
Don Edwards Nat'l
Wildlife Refuge
9:00 am**

**SUNDAY,
NOV. 12TH
Sea Cloud Park
9:00 am**

**SATURDAY,
NOV. 18TH
9:30 am Bayside
Systems Authority**

**SUNDAY,
NOV. 19TH
Sea Cloud Park
9:00 am**

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

One of our members, Ben Pless, has come to our rescue with interim office space for Sequoia Audubon. As you know, we have been given notice at our San Mateo address and immediately discovered that the price of office space in the county had skyrocketed beyond our budget! Ben has made a space in Redwood City available to us through the spring. It is a very special gift. Thank you, Ben!



A special thanks is also due to our office manager, Nicole Salgado. She has done a really nice job helping SAS to enter the Internet age and to network with many other environmental groups. She has kept your flyers coming to the right addresses filled with current information, filled your birdseed orders, kept the books, spearheaded the Central Coast Riparian Monitoring

SAS Field Trips for November 2000 (for info call 345-3724)

Saturday, November 4th, 9:00 AM Bair Island Refuge Meet at the entrance, easy walking on dike trail. See shorebirds, raptors. Take 101 to Whipple Ave. exit in Redwood City. Go east on Whipple across the frontage road. Watch out for traffic! Leader, Robin Smith 325-3306

Sunday, Nov. 12th Sea Cloud Park 9:00 am This is the first of the monthly trips, held on the 2nd 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! Sea Cloud Park in Foster by taking Hillsdale Avenue east from 101 and making a right water Blvd. Then go 1.3 miles and turn left on Pitcairn Drive. park entrance on the right and meet at the far end of the park- Leader: Sue Cossins 650-347-9358



City is reached turn on Edge- Look for the ing lot at 9 a.m.

Saturday, Nov. 18th 9:30 am Bayside Systems Authority ley's daughter, is going to give us a tour of the S. Bayside Sys- the waste water treatment plant. We can eat our lunch (bring then walk on the dike. There are ponds with birds also. Chil- are welcome Take 101 to Redwood Shores Parkway, go east to the junction with Radio Road turn right to end, and go through gates into parking area. Leader: Kathy Sutter 359-3207.

Sunday, Nov. 19th Sea Cloud Park, 9:00 am Shorebirds! Leader: Sue Cossins 650-347-9358 See above

Saturday, December 2nd Bair Island Refuge Trip, 9:00 am Leader, Robin Smith 325-3308 See above

Saturday, December 9th Sea Cloud Park, 9:00 am Leader, Garth Harwood Beginners/ Family .

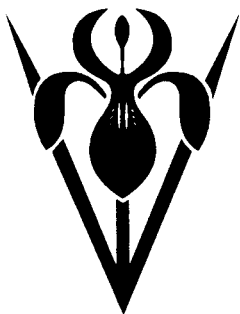
Saturday, December 16th Christmas Bird Count Crystal Springs, call office for information

Saturday, December 30th Christmas Bird Count Ano Nuevo, call office for information

Thank-you, continued from Page 1:

Project in San Mateo County, made innumerable phone contacts and generally been the cheery voice of Sequoia. Nicole is leaving to pursue her "other job" full-time at SLUG, the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, as their Native Plant Nursery Manager at Log Cabin Boys Ranch in La Honda. Nicole will stay active with the chapter by continuing to edit the SAS Update in the interim, and remaining as Central Coast Riparian Bird Conservation Project Coordinator. Thank you for all you've done for Sequoia, Nicole. On the note of moving, please stay patient during this move- we'll provide you with any changed contact information as soon as it becomes available in the next issue. -ROBIN SMITH

Conservation Committee



Mariner's Blvd. and J. Hart Clinton Drive in San Mateo. This is in the area where San Mateo is working on finalizing its Shoreline Master plan, which includes the plans for Tidelands Park. The proposed development is surrounded on three sides by Tidelands Park lands, which are slated for restoration to wetland and seasonal wetland habitat. The proposed office building with large paved parking area will have heavy impacts on the wetlands and the birds and animals that use them. The San Mateo City Council meeting is on October 16, 2000. Look for further news in next month's Needles.

The Conservation Committee is hard at work on a proposed development at

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS COMING UP SOON! SAVE THE DATES: CRYSTAL SPRINGS, DEC 16TH, & ANO NUEVO, DEC. 30TH

Sequoia Audubon has two Christmas Bird Counts each year. The counts take place in a predetermined circle 15 miles in diameter.

Saturday, December 16th, 2000 and Saturday, December 30th, 2000. All be assigned to a team to cover an area members need to be able to identify see. Teams also need a recorder to numbers. Our counts usually have

ally rank in the top 20 in the nation. It costs \$5 to participate and have your name listed in the CBC results issue. The more counters we have, the better we'll do. PLEASE JOIN A TEAM -You'll enjoy the spirit of camaraderie and the fun of going birding for a day in San Mateo County. Call the office at 345-3724 or Robin Smith at 325-3306 to sign up. More detailed information will be in the December issue of our now-quarterly newsletter, Needles.



The Crystal Springs Count will be on the Ano Nuevo Count will be held on counters are welcome. Participants will within the circle. To be effective, team the birds, common or unusual, that they list the species seen and record their

high numbers of species seen - we usu-

In Memory of Betsy Crowder -Robin Smith

The environmental movement in San Mateo County lost one of its great activists upon the death of Betsy Crowder. Betsy was a Sequoia Audubon member along with her other roles in the community. I had the pleasure of knowing her through our birdseed sales. My house was her pickup location and she always took time to chat and let me know what was coming to her feeders. I will miss those interactions and the community will miss her talent and verve for improving the environment in our county. Betsy's death is a great loss for all of us. The following is an article that Betsy wrote.

How I became an environmentalist, by Betsy Crowder

When I was young the words "environment" and "ecology" were not bandied about as they are today. "Conservation" meant to conserve something such as a historical site or a declining resource. I grew up during the Depression. My father had the unfortunate occupation of a stockbroker, not exactly remunerative in those days. We spent every summer at our camp on an island in New Brunswick, Canada, where we lived in a log cabin that had no running water, electricity, or plumbing. I played in the woods and on the beaches, walking every evening a mile through the woods to a farm to buy milk and fresh vegetables. There were rabbits, birds, fish, seals, and an occasional moose and wildcat. The forest had been logged but was growing up through the slash. First raspberries, birch, alder, and then spruce trees seemed to be the plant succession. During college I was an active member of the Outing Club, although in New England the activities were not in very wild areas. When I moved to California in 1948 a whole new world of wilderness opened up to me. With other members of the Stanford Alpine Club, I explored Yosemite Park, a glorious place. Traces of earlier human activities there were not clear to me at that time: it seemed pristine. I married a geologist, Dwight Crowder, in 1950 and as Osa Johnson wrote in her book "I Married Adventure," I have led an adventurous life ever since. Dwight and I spent every summer in the field in the north Cascades Mountains of Washington where he did field work. Our daughters grew up with that life, learning to walk on steep slopes and playing with marmots in holes near our camp. Gradually we became aware of the ravages of commercial logging in the marvelous forests of the Northwest. Logs six feet or more in diameter were being carried down to sawmills: roads were being bulldozed everywhere. The term "multiple use" was the euphemism employed by our National Forest Service for the desecration of the land. Restoration was not done, even by Weyerhaeuser, the self-designated tree-planting company. Sheep were grazed through the meadows, leaving a stinking, denuded mass in their wake. No effort to replant or to spread out the damage was made. In our years in Europe we saw restoration taking place, trees neatly planted in rows in Germany and Austria, areas fenced off from the sheep and planted with native trees in Scotland. Eventually replanting of the forests was attempted in the U.S. but enormous areas of the arid West were not suitable to this and remained barren, turning to desert after the tree cover was removed. My national efforts at improving the environment have been limited to letter-writing and memberships in organizations such as Audubon, the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land, who work more effectively than a single voice ever could. Locally, however, I feel that I have made a difference and will continue to support land protection and restoration.

SAS UPDATE

Sequoia Audubon Society
30 W. 39th Avenue #202
San Mateo, CA 94403

Phone: 650-345-3724

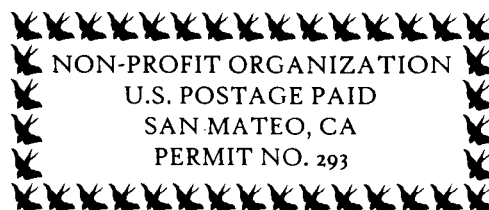
Fax: 650-345-3748

NOTE: NEW E-MAIL!

Email: office@sequoia-audubon.org

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San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching

"Despite being one of its smallest and most intensively urbanized counties, San Mateo has one of the highest numbers of breeding bird species of any county in Northern California. This richness is due to a wide variety of habitats, ranging from rocky shoreline and sandy beach along our coast; to chaparral, grassland, oak woodland, and coniferous forest in our interior; to salt marsh along our bayshore. Among our breeding avifauna are healthy populations of two endangered species, the Marbled Murrelet, and California Clapper Rail. In addition, the Sequoia Audubon Society's two Christmas Bird Counts regularly tally between 180 and 200 species, ranking among the Top 20 out of 1600 such counts conducted in the U.S. each year." —Peter J. Metropulos

**Attention Potential New
& Returning Members!!!**



Discover all these places and more in Sequoia Audubon's
guide to San Mateo County birding:

**COMPLIMENTARY TO ALL NEW MEMBERS!
RETURNING MEMBERS, PICK UP A COPY
AT OUR NEXT MEETING!**



Sequoia Audubon Society SAS **Update for October 2000**

Volume 8, Issue 1
October 2000

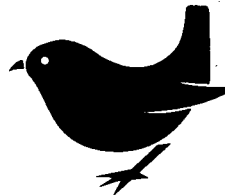
**NEXT SEQUOIA
AUDUBON
GENERAL
MEETING:**

Oct. 12, 7:30 pm
Half Moon Bay
(Francis) State Park,
Kelly Avenue, HMB

President's Letter -

BACKPACKERS' DELIGHT

At the end of summer in the Sierra, only the local birds remain. The migrants have already flown south or at least nights have grown cold and even the days to them. Into this season strode our little group, determined to make a circuit to back. You might find it interesting, as we Peeler Lake sits on the crest of the Sierra cause it has two outlet streams, one to the mountains and one to the east. Not so unique, was the bird of this trip, the Dark-eyed Junco. We see lots of them in the winter in our area, and people tend to dismiss them as "common birds". In the Sierra we saw them in all of the different habitats going about their daily lives and they added immensely to our enjoyment of the trip. They were along the shadowed streams, on the forested slopes hunting for food in the duff under the trees, at the edges of rockslides, flitting across the high meadows and, most surprising to me, on a small snowfield feeding just like Gray-crowned Rosy Finches. I tried hard to make them into those finches, but even with the marginal little binoculars I'd managed to carry, every one of them was a Junco. The whole flock was feeding on insects stuck in this remaining snow field and they were both a surprise and a charming sight. It reminded me that our "common birds" provide lots of enjoyment to all of us. Please plan to come on the chapter's fall field trips and enjoy some of these "common birds"



The migrants downslope, the have a nippy feel backpacking Peeler Lake and did, to learn that and is unique be- west side of the

**Check out SAS
October and Fall
Events! See
inside for more
detail. See you
there!**

Field Trips

**SATURDAY,
OCT. 7TH**
Bair Island Trip- Don
Edwards Nat'l Wildlife
Refuge

**SATURDAY,
OCT. 14TH**
Sea Cloud Park
Beginner/Family

**SATURDAY,
OCT. 21ST**
Behind the Scenes
at the
San Francisco Zoo

**SATURDAY,
OCT. 28TH**
Crissy Field Marsh

HELP! WE'RE LOSING OUR OFFICE! CALLING ALL CONCERNED SAS MEMBERS!!

Like many other non-profits in the Bay Area, SAS has been asked to vacate the office space along with all other tenants at our current location. This is yet another big financial and organizational challenge facing us, albeit unexpected. Most of you have never been to our office, though. We have a few desks, bookcases, files cabinets, a computer, and shelves for storage. We currently use it for board meetings, but we could hopefully find a temporary extra place for them. We figure in a pinch we could use up to 2/3 the space we're currently using. This would end up being something like 175-200 square feet total, for our office manager Nicole Salgado to carry on the business of the chapter. Our rent was an affordable \$325/month. The board is asking all of our membership to please help us find a new spot, as we only have thirty days notice. We'd prefer to be centrally located, but we will consider all suggestions. **WE WELCOME ALL INPUT FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS OR ACTUAL PLACES TO VISIT. CONTACT: 650-345-3724, sasoffice@neteze.com. Thanks!!**



SAS Field Trips for October 2000 (for more info call 345-3724)

Apologies from the September 9th Field Trip Leader to Sea Cloud Park in Foster City: "Little did I know that it was the opening day of soccer season! I couldn't figure out why cars were parked a half mile away. I did arrive, on foot, at the back of the lot, 10 min late, but could only find soccer moms and pops. All the players, coaches, and photographers were gathered. I was impressed by the organization of everything but carpooling! So I'm sorry if you wanted to join the field trip but couldn't find us. I did bird there for a while. Few ducks, warblers (yellow and orange-crowned), and it was high tide, so only the long-legged egrets and herons were in Belmont Slough. Please join next month's trip with Leslie Flint." -SAS

Saturday, September 30th Palo Alto Duck Pond 9:00 am Sort through ducks and gulls at the pond. Scout the mudflats for shorebirds. Park in lot at far end. Leader: Garth Harwood

Saturday, Oct. 7th Bair Island Refuge Trip 9:00 am 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 the refuge sign inside the gate. Leader: Robin Smith 650-325-3306

Saturday, Oct. 14th Sea Cloud Park 9:00 am This is the first of the monthly trips, held on the 2nd 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! 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 a.m. Leader: Leslie Flint 650-573-6279

Saturday, Oct. 21st Behind the Scenes at the San Francisco Zoo 9:00 am David tor of the SF Zoo, will lead us in searching for local resident birds and any migrants or may be able to see a Bald Eagle in flight, part of the Zoo's rehab/recovery program. \$6 son. Take 280 N to 35 N (Skyline). Follow 35 to Herbst Rd and turn right. Park on enter through the service gate. Leader: Barbara Stewart 650-359-3899



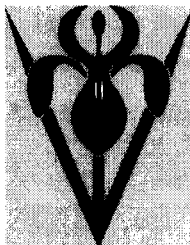
Anderson, Direc-
even vagrants. We
donation per per-
Herbst Road and

Saturday, Oct. 28th Crissy Field Marsh 9:00 am Explore an area newly restored and 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. Leader: Francis Toldi 650-344-1919

Conservation Committee Update

Carol Migden has been signed into law by Governor Davis. It establishes an account for purchase of wetlands on San Francisco Bay. While the media gave the idea that the sole purpose of this bill was to acquire the Cargill salt ponds to be used for mitigation for the proposed SFO runway expansion project, this is not actually the case. A brief summary follows.

This bill appropriates \$25 million and establishes gram Account under the auspices of the Wildlife ing and restoring wetlands and lands that may be cisco Bay area. The bill would authorize the board Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report, including prop- the performance of conditions prescribed in the Baylands Campaign to restore wetlands around San Francisco Bay. The staff working on the campaign and our California Legislative Director, John McCaull, were instrumental in this effort. Sequoia Audubon contributes,



the San Francisco Baylands Restoration Pro- Conservation Board for the purpose of acquir- enhanced to support wetlands in the San Fran- to acquire any lands identified in the Baylands erty owned by the Cargill Salt Division, upon bill. This is a giant first step in Audubon's

through Bay Area Audubon Council, to the funding for John McCaull. This and several other wet- lands bills passed this year represent your dues and donations at work.

From National Audubon: CA Audubon: Help Save our Nation's Marine Fisheries



Nearly half of all fish stock in the U.S. are overfished. In other words, they are being caught and killed faster than they can reproduce. Populations of some species of sharks have dropped over 80% in the past 15 years, and will require decades to recover, if ever. The U.S. Congress has before it legislation that would stop this overfishing, rebuild fish populations, and protect essential fish habitat:

BILL # H.R. 4046, THE FISHERIES RECOVERY ACT OF 2000. The Audubon supported Fisheries Recovery Act addresses the problem of our nation's fisheries head-on. It prohibits the overfishing of vulnerable marine stock. You can get more information about it by contacting Russ Dunn with Audubon's Living Oceans Program, at (202)861-2242.

****The important thing to do today is to contact your local representative and urge them to cosponsor H.R. 4046.**** In San Mateo County this is Anna Eshoo, at (202) 225-3121. Please call, and tell your friends to do the same. The fish thank you.

FALL 2000 BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

THE NEXT SEED SALE WILL BE FEBRUARY 2000

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--\$

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BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....25 lb@ \$13.00/bag _____ = _____

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SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....25 lb@ \$24.00/bag _____ = _____

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

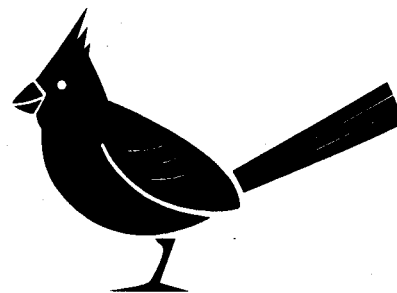
Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible)_____

CHECK # _____ GRAND TOTAL _____

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 30 West 39th Avenue, Suite 202 San Mateo, CA 94403 (650) 345-3724

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SAS UPDATE

Sequoia Audubon Society
30 W. 39th Avenue #202
San Mateo, CA 94403

Phone: 650-345-3724
Fax: 650-345-3748
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San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching **Published by Sequoia Audubon Society, Inc.**

"Despite being one of its smallest and most intensively urbanized counties, San Mateo has one of the highest numbers of breeding bird species of any county in Northern California. This richness is due to a wide variety of habitats, ranging from rocky shoreline and sandy beach along our coast; to chaparral, grassland, oak woodland, and coniferous forest in our interior; to salt marsh along our bayshore. Among our breeding avifauna are healthy

Attention Potential New & Returning Members!!!!

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Peter J. Metropulos

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RETURNING MEMBERS, PICK UP A COPY AT
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