

Sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 51, No. 4
June, 2001

This Month's Program Big Bend National Park



Francis Toldi will present a slide show and talk on Big Bend National Park located along the Mexican border in south-central Texas. Big Bend boasts spectacular desert scenery as well as a

long list of interesting birds, mammals, reptiles and plants. The park is the only locale in the United States where Chihuahuan desert occurs. It is a remote and rugged place, but one which is on the list of most desired destinations by nature lovers in general and birders in particular. Many a tired and thirsty birder has made the long hike into Boot Springs in search of the Colima Warbler. Many of them succeed, but not all.

Will Francis be one of the lucky ones? Come to the meeting and find out!

Potluck Time

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

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

Nominees

The following are the official nominees for officers for the coming year.

President
Vice-president
Secretary
Treasurer

Robin Smith
Rick Baird
Sue Cossins
Lisa Moody

Directors for the term expiring June 2004

Merry Haveman
Cliff Richer

Nominations may also be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.



From the President Change

Nothing is sure in this world except change! Sequoia Audubon has seen a lot of it this year and we're in for more. SAS needs to find a new location this month and move everything once again.

We will need to deal with the fact that our dues share from National Audubon will be 25% lower starting on July 1, 2001. You can help by being sure your membership is active at that time. If you know people who are thinking of joining, encourage them to do it now.

We will be planning the field trips for next year this summer. Do you have suggestions? Special places you'd like to visit with a leader? Would you like to join our cadre of leaders? Field trips are one of our primary educational tools.

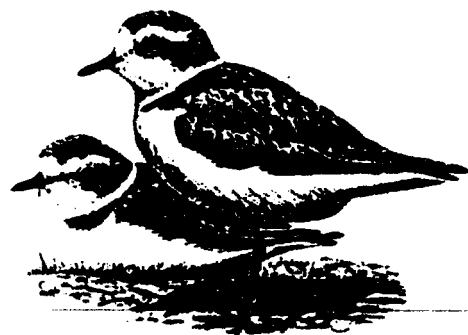
Educating people about the birds and their habitats is a top priority of Sequoia Audubon. When people feel connected to birds, local and far-flung, they become interested in protecting both the birds and the places where birds live.

Will you become an advocate for birds and wildlife? You can join our Audubon Advisory group and participate from the comfort of your home. A member of the Conservation Committee, Bob Wilkinson, sends out an Audubon Advisory three or four times a year. It explains the current issue and includes a sample letter and contact information. Then you send a letter to your legislator concerning the issue. Or you can do it by phone or e-mail. Big issues at the moment are the San Francisco Bay Restoration Campaign's negotiations to acquire the Cargill salt ponds for restoration and the proposed runway expansion at SFO. Both of these issues could bring about big changes in our own habitat!

You can choose to make changes for birds by participating in the more scientific side of the spectrum. Monitor Snowy Plovers, adopt a trail of Bluebird Boxes, conduct riparian monitoring surveys on the coastside, conduct bird counts and restoration at Bair Island, learn the local birds and join one or both of our Christmas Bird Counts in December.

Why not make a change for yourself and get more involved in Sequoia Audubon? That kind of change would benefit SAS and open new vistas for you, as well. Please call the office at 369-1093 and give us your input about anything and everything.

Enjoy the birds of summer. Why not try one of our summer field trips for a change?!



Robin Smith



The S A S Calendar



SATURDAY, JUNE 2 -- BAIR ISLAND. Visit and bird the newest section of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and learn about the area and Sequoia Audubon's volunteer work there. See the first stages of restoration. Take 101 to Whipple Avenue exit in Redwood City. Go east on Whipple and cross the frontage road. There is a parking area here, but do watch out for the frontage road traffic as you pull in. Meet at 9 AM by the Refuge sign just inside the gate.

LEADER ROBIN SMITH 325-3306

THURSDAY, JUNE 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, JUNE 9 -- SEA CLOUD PARK BEGINNERS TRIP -- 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! 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 entrance on the right. Meet at the far end of the parking lot at 9 AM.

LEADER JUDY SPITLER 329-9639

THURSDAY, JUNE 14 -- GENERAL MEETING & POTLUCK featuring **Francis Toldi** describing the natural wonders of **Big Bend National Park**. At the Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Potluck begins at 6:30 PM with the meeting, election of officers and program following immediately thereafter. See Page One for details on the Potluck.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JUNE 16-17, --YUBA PASS & SIERRA VALLEY -- On Saturday, meet at 8:30 AM at Bassett's Station (junction of Hwy 49 and Hwy 24, east of Sierra City). Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy 49 west over Yuba Pass summit, then continue on to Bassett's Station. (Or take Hwy 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including Dippers, flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday, we will meet at 8 AM. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area on Hwy 49 about 19 miles east of Sierra City. We will caravan to Sierra Valley, looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Vesper Sparrow and Lewis' Woodpecker. Camping is available at these

US Forest Service Campgrounds off Hwy 49: Wild Plum (elev 3,300 ft) 2 miles east of Sierra City, Chapman Creek (elev. 5,800 ft) 8 miles east of Sierra City and at the summit of Yuba Pass. Lodging is available at Buttes Resort and Buckhorn Lodge (530) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151, Bassett's Station Motel (530) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (530) 862-1191, Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122, Busch & Herrington Country Inn (530) 862-1501. Check for directions when you make your reservations. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

LEADERS JOE & MARTHA O'NEAL MACHO 692-8138

SUNDAY, JUNE 24TH -- EDGEWOOD PARK -- Lee Franks' monthly walk at Edgewood Park. Breeding season will be in full swing. Learn about Bluebirds and other local species. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot at 9 AM. Edgewood Park is east of 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City.

LEADER LEE FRANKS

FRIDAY, JULY 13TH - SUNDAY, JULY 15TH -- KERN RIVER PRESERVE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

-- The Kern River Preserve is an Audubon Sanctuary located near Lake Isabella, east of Bakersfield. The Preserve and its immediate environs encompass Sierra, Mojave Desert, Great Basin Desert and Riparian habitats and include many special species difficult to find elsewhere in California. Once again we are fortunate to have Bob Barnes as our leader. While there is no fee for Bob's excellent leadership, we recommend that you come with the thought of making a generous contribution to the

Friends of the Kern River Preserve. The featured bird of the trip is the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Other birds we will try and ferret out are: Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Chukar, Mountain Quail, Blue Grouse, all three swifts, Williamson's Sapsucker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Plumbeous Vireo, Summer Tanager, Brewer's, Black-throated, Black-chinned and Vesper Sparrows, Lawrence's Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak. This is a great trip with a great leader!! There are motels with various price ranges, campgrounds and decent restaurants in the area where we will have the pleasure of buying Bob dinner. If you would like to join the group, please call the Sequoia Office and provide your name, telephone number, the number in your party and what part of the trip you plan to attend. There will be a limit to the total number of participants, so please call if you are interested.

TOUR COORDINATOR ROBIN SMITH 325-3306





News From Audubon Canyon Ranch

Betsy Stafford

Snaps, howls, gurgles, warbles, squawks...it's spring again in our heronry at ACR's Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. Everyone is invited to come hear the symphony of Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, and Snowy Egrets, and explore the trails of this 1000-acre preserve. We're open every Saturday, Sunday, and holidays through July 15, from 10 AM to 4 PM. Weekday visits are by prior reservation only; please call (415/868-9244) ahead to inquire about weekdays, except Mondays when we're closed.

Cypress Grove Preserve -- Our San Francisco Bay Heron and Egret Project (HEP!) takes place each year throughout five North Bay counties and provides a necessary and accurate look at regional patterns and trends of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, and Black-Crowned Night Herons.

Just when so many threats to our fragile ecosystem are mounting at an alarming pace, the month of March brings fresh hope to our struggle to save habitats and humanity....On March 7th the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve at Audubon Canyon Ranch graduated 40 new docents, who will convey a respect and love of nature to over 3000 schoolchildren this year. Imagine the ever-growing sphere of influence these bright, energetic, and committed volunteers will spread over 4th and 5th graders in the Bay Area. Inner-city children will have a chance to explore food webs, walk on trails instead of concrete, examine a banana slug instead of stepping on it. Congratulations, new Docents, and godspeed!

The Eagle Has Landed - Again

Extraordinary circumstances led our Bolinas Lagoon Preserve Biologist, Greg de Nevers, to write the following message on April 7th to all our ACR friends:

"On Monday, April 2, a Golden Eagle visited the heron and egret colony in Picher Canyon at Audubon Canyon Ranch. The eagle killed and ate one adult Great Egret. All the other egrets abandoned the colony and went to the lagoon. The Great Blue Herons in the trees closer to the lagoon lay low in their nests. After the eagle ate the egret, it left. At that point the resident pair of Common Ravens, who are territorial in Picher Canyon, entered the up-canyon trees and ate or cached all of the eggs (about 20). Since it is common for nesting herons and egrets to become extremely skittish in response to predator disturbances, ACR closed Picher Canyon to the school program for the week. Happily, the egrets returned Monday afternoon, and by Tuesday, they were displaying, courting, laying eggs and incubating again.

On Friday evening, April 6, the eagle returned. This time all the herons and egrets abandoned the colony and flew to the lagoon. A few herons returned after the eagle left, but no egrets had returned by dark. This time the ravens were not in the vicinity and didn't take any eggs. By morning of the 7th the herons and egrets were back in the trees, but, needless to say, they were very disturbed and skittish.

Since ACR's priority is to protect the nesting birds, it was decided to close the preserve to the public on the weekend of April 6 and 7."

This 2001 story of the Golden Eagle and Common Raven predation was written on April 7 and will, of course, be ongoing. We encourage you to call ahead to the ACR office (415/668-9244) before you visit the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve this spring, and we look forward to a busy and fruitful nesting season. In the meantime, please hold a good thought for the herons and egrets.

From The Conservation Committee

Birds, Feral Cats, Their Feeders, and the Rest of Us
Pete Popin

It all began innocently enough, in 1993. That's when our own Sequoia bird experts Peter Metropulos and Al DeMartini co-discovered two increasingly rare Burrowing Owls in perfect camouflage among some rocks bordering the Bay Trail by the nine hole Mariners Point golf course.

So as to avoid disturbance to the wintering birds the find was kept secret from the rare bird alert and most other birders. With some reluctance, DeMartini showed them to me with the promise to maintain secrecy and regularly monitor their vulnerable position. Burrowing owls are almost gone from our county. Only this one and a very few others, mainly on Bair Island were still seen. Al and Peter believe these two came from Bair Island. Since 1993, they have arrived by early October and leave by early March. Why and where they go for the summer is unknown. It was hoped they would stay and start their own colony.

This regular pattern continued through spring 1997 and they remained undisturbed despite their discovery by several local walkers. However, the summer of 1997 brought new problems. The new golf course brought more foot traffic and the arrival of several feral cat colonies. On September 24, Al DeMartini made his fall pilgrimage to check on the possible arrival of the owls. They were back, but with unwanted company. One cat colony was fifteen feet away from one owl. Al immediately destroyed the crude cat houses, scattered the food and water, and removed the cat's dishes and silverware. Very distraught, Al phoned me to report all of this and suggested daily monitoring until the cats departure. Unfortunately the history of past attempts in Golden Gate Park was repeated. The structures were rebuilt a couple times and the feeding diminished only a little. I called the Peninsula Humane Society in early October to see what could be done. They were in general agreement as to the need to remove these colonies, given their proximity to rare wildlife and explained the work they had done to alleviate the feral cat problem. They gave some advice in dealing with the feeder. Most feeders, in their opinion, did their thing just before sunset, although a few went out early in the morning.

(Continued on Page Four)

Conservation

Feral Cats

(Continued from Page Three)

I was told to leave a note explaining what I was doing and why. I did so along with my work phone number. In a day or two I got a call from a very nice-sounding friend of the feeder. She explained that although her friend was upset, she was relieved to know the reasons for our actions and would begin feeding the cats elsewhere. Ah, what a nice solution. We worked it out all ourselves with just a little help from the PHS. We felt warm and fuzzy all over.

But not for long. The feeding continued but in a sneaky way. Food and water were hidden deep between the rocks, requiring more work to find them. I tried calling the Humane Society, but they wouldn't return my calls. Polite messages left by the removed food were ignored.

While I was away on a business trip, my office received several calls from an individual representing a local feral cat group who wanted to talk to me. She also wanted personal data, like my home phone and address. She was very persistent and tried to get this information from all of those with whom she spoke.

When I got back, I called the number and had a nice talk. She also asked for my personal data. When I asked why, she said I was seen shooting the feral cats! I assured her this was not possible and moreover that no one likes cats more than myself. I've had cats all my life and most have been adopted strays, (I am currently looking for good homes for two real cute kitties born April 22 to a pregnant stray I adopted)

Evidently the reason for the lies were part of an effort to get the PHS to officially recognize the colonies. When I finally did talk to someone at the Humane Society they mentioned the shooting reports and stated their position that the colonies were to be allowed to stay but at a safe distance from the owls.

The colonies produced a couple litters before winter. Another litter came in February, 1998. One owl soon left a month earlier than its normal departure date and never returned, although it could be the one reported near the old San Mateo dump site.

We continued to remove the hidden

food dishes until finally the feeder agreed to move the cats much farther away, because of our persistence. This all went well through the rest of 1998 to spring 1999.

But the colonies continued to breed out of control and In May 1999, a meeting was arranged between representatives from our SAS conservation committee, a representative from a local cat group and PHS's management. The meeting was very constructive and eventually solved the big problem. The feeder was violating her signed agreements with the cat group to follow TTVAR principals..Trap, Test, Vaccinate, Alter, and Release. All participants sign such a form.

Despite resistance from the individual feeder, the feral cat group provided extra help in managing this colony.

The problem is not the poor cats. They are victims like the owls to the delusions of some "cat people" who feel that their acts are morally justified. It's a people problem...people who dump their pets and those who continue to feed them without the extra work required by TTVAR.

Most of us want feral cat colonies kept away from sensitive wildlife areas. That's one big way where environmentalists clash with some animal right folks. Feral cat groups will take unadoptable cats and provide for them. The problem is they need space to warehouse the cats, which usually turns out to be wild fringe areas adjacent to our cities, just the places we want protected from development. Our parks, shoreline and rural nearby areas have become warehouses for feral cats.

This has become such a problem that the California Department of Parks and Recreation circulated an internal memo directing staff on how to deal with this phenomenon. State parks policy is that they are for native wildlife and for people to enjoy their natural beauty, not to become havens for colonies of feral animals.

The TTVAR programs are well intentioned but because the cat-feeding volunteers are unable or unwilling to follow them, these theoretically good principals are ineffective. There are simply too many cats. Existing colonies act as magnets for more strays. There are many better solutions to the feral cat problem...educate the public of the problem of dumping cats and

continuing to feed them, humanely remove stays and ferals from sensitive wildlife areas, neuter and keep pet cats indoors as much as possible.

One owl remains, subject to the pressures from the local cats and a burrowing owl habitat will be constructed at the old dump site when it becomes a shoreline park. Many thanks to the San Mateo City Council and especially Sue Lempert for including this in the park's plans at the suggestion by Sequoia during the public input phase.

So there is hope for the burrowing owl to reestablish itself in San Mateo County. There is lots more to this ongoing story and even more to do.

(Possibly to be continued)

NOTICE:

Fall 2001 BIRDSEED SALE will be in SEPTEMBER, rather than our usual October. See September Needles for details and order form.

Darwin Missed It!

Darwin's visit to the Galapagos initiated the train of thought that led to his theory of evolution.

Scientists have just discovered another remarkable evolutionary adaptation in the Galapagos' wildlife.

El Niño raised water temperatures, resulting in the death of much of the algae upon which the marine iguanas fed. The iguanas lost weight -- but did not starve. Instead they shrank, losing as much as 20% of their length implying that their skeletons, along with fat and muscle, adapted to the reduced food source.

Life Saver

Power lines are a known cause of death and injury to birds either from impact or electrocution. In South Africa, one electric utility, Eskom, has invented a device called a flapper. The flapper is nothing more than a red plastic oval that clips onto the power line and flaps in the breeze.

It has been credited with reducing bird mortality by 75% in some areas.

Birdathon '01

Francis Toldi

Here's a quick recap on our Birdathon day. This was the first post-Barry Birdathon team and I had my doubts about whether we would even break 160, but was hopeful nevertheless. The team consisted of me, my brother John and Adam Winer. Adam had been on the official team for the last two years, and I have run a number of other (informal) Big Days with John.

Other than silent Sora Rails, the pre-dawn birding went well. All the expected owls reported for duty when called. After the dawn chorus along Gazos and Cloverdale Roads, we headed out to the coast feeling good with our day so far. Then we hit the wall. Of fog, that is. Thick, pea soup fog, so thick that you couldn't see the rocks on the beach from Pigeon Point. A bit further south we found a patch of coastline with maybe 100 yards of off-shore visibility, so we did a quick seawatch there. We could only manage the most basic of the seabirds — loons, Brant, Surf Scoter, etc. No Murres, no Red-breasted Merganser, no shearwaters, no shorebirds. Rather than stare uselessly into the fog, without further ado we headed inland. Our list was 25 species less than on our previous worst day.

Our luck changed instantly. The fog didn't extend inland, and the weather was delightful. Coyote Point gave back much of what the coast took away, including many of the shorebirds generally associated with the rocky shoreline. As we worked out way down the Bay our list grew by leaps and bounds. Red-necked Phalarope and Snowy Plover at Dumbarton, the first Hooded Merganser ever for a Spring Birdathon at Mountainview Forebay, the Skimmers, White Pelicans at Charleston Slough — it all fell into place.

When we left Alviso at around 1 PM we were back up to a normal pace (150 or so species).

Mines Road was also cooperative, with only a few baffling misses (where were the Chipping and Lark Sparrows all hiding?). Fortunately the "specialties" — Phainopepla, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis' Woodpecker, Lazuli Bunting, Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows and Wood Duck — were all present in their

expected places. Even Del Puerto Canyon was cooperative. The Canyon Wren didn't even wait for us to play the tape — it just started in as soon as we pulled off the road.

We spent the last part of the day in the Central Valley at George Hatfield State Recreation Area and Gun Club Road in Gustine. The "regulars" — Yellow-headed and Tricolored Blackbird, Blue-winged Teal, White-faced Ibis — were all present. We also got a few gifts, namely Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern and a few American Bitterns pumping away in the reeds.

As the sun set we rechecked our list: 196 species! It was a good day after all! With no hope of hitting 200, we looked at each other and asked the question: should we drive back up Del Puerto Canyon to get a Poorwill (197), or just head on home. Homeward bound it was!

2001 Birdathon Megatiks—Francis Toldi, John Toldi, Adam Winer April 24, 2001

RED-THROATED LOON	Gazos Creek Mouth
PACIFIC LOON	Gazos Creek Mouth
COMMON LOON	Crystal Springs
PIED-BILLED GREBE	Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds
CLARK'S GREBE	3rd Avenue
WESTERN GREBE	Gazos Creek Mouth
AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN	Palo Alto Flood Control Basin
BROWN PELICAN	Coyote Point
D.C. CORMORANT	Coyote Point
BRANDT'S CORMORANT	Gazos Creek Mouth
PELAGIC CORMORANT	Gazos Creek Mouth
AMERICAN BITTERN	Gun Club Road
GREAT BLUE HERON	Redwood Shores
GREAT EGRET	Half Moon Bay
SNOWY EGRET	Coyote Point
CATTLE EGRET	Newman
GREEN HERON	Del Puerto Canyon
B.C. NIGHT-HERON	Redwood Shores
WHITE-FACED IBIS	George Hatfield SRA
SNOW GOOSE	Sunnyvale Sewage Ponds
BRANT	Gazos Creek Mouth
CANADA GOOSE	Redwood Shores
WOOD DUCK	Mines Road
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	Redwood Shores
MALLARD	Half Moon Bay
NORTHERN PINTAIL	Redwood Shores
BLUE-WINGED TEAL	Pescadero Marsh
CINNAMON TEAL	Mountain View Forebay
NORTHERN SHOVELER	Redwood Shores
GADWALL	Pescadero Marsh
AMERICAN WIGEON	Redwood Shores

CANVASBACK	Redwood Shores
GREATER SCAUP	Coyote Point
LESSER SCAUP	Redwood Shores
SURF SCOTER	Gazos Creek Mouth
COMMON GOLDENEYE	Coyote Point
BUFFLEHEAD	Coyote Point
COMMON MERGANSER	Gazos Crk. Mouth
HOODED MERGANSER	Mt. View Forebay
RUDDY DUCK	Gazos Creek Mouth
TURKEY VULTURE	Skylawn Cemetery
WHITE-TAILED KITE	Mt. View Forebay
NORTHERN HARRIER	Newman
COOPER'S HAWK	Coyote Point
SWAINSON'S HAWK	Newman
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK	Half Moon Bay
RED-TAILED HAWK	Gazos Creek
AMERICAN KESTREL	Redwood Shores
PEREGRINE FALCON	Mines Road
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	Alviso
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	Butano State Park
WILD TURKEY	Mines Road
VIRGINIA RAIL	Pescadero Marsh
COMMON MOORHEN	Gun Club Road
AMERICAN COOT	Verde Road
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	Coyote Point
SNOWY PLOVER	Dumbarton Bridge
SEMPALMATED PLOVER	3rd Avenue
BLACK OYSTERCATCHER	Pescadero Marsh
BLACK-NECKED STILT	3rd Avenue
AMERICAN AVOCET	Redwood Shores
GREATER YELLOWLEGS	Mt. View Forebay
LESSER YELLOWLEGS	Mt. View Forebay
WILLET	Coyote Point
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	3rd Avenue
WHIMBREL	Gazos Creek Mouth
LONG-BILLED CURLEW	Alviso
MARBLED GODWIT	Coyote Point
RUDDY TURNSTONE	Coyote Point
BLACK TURNSTONE	Coyote Point
SURFBIRD	Coyote Point
RED KNOT	Coyote Point
SANDERLING	Coyote Point
WESTERN SANDPIPER	Coyote Point
LEAST SANDPIPER	Pescadero Marsh
DUNLIN	Coyote Point
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER	Coyote Point
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER	Coyote Point
R.N. PHALAROPE	Dumbarton Bridge
WILSON'S PHALAROPE	Gun Club Road
BONAPARTE'S GULL	Gazos Creek Mouth
RING-BILLED GULL	Coyote Point
CALIFORNIA GULL	Alviso
HERRING GULL	Gazos Creek Mouth
WESTERN GULL	Gazos Creek Mouth
G.W. GULL	Gazos Creek Mouth
CASPIAN TERN	Gazos Creek Mouth
FORSTER'S TERN	Pescadero Marsh
BLACK TERN	Gun Club Road
BLACK SKIMMER	Charleston Slough
MARBLED MURRELET	Cloverdale Road
ROCK DOVE	San Mateo
BAND-TAILED PIGEON	Gazos Creek
MOURNING DOVE	Highway 1

COMMON BARN OWL	Cloverdale Road
WESTERN SCREECH OWL	Butano SP
GREAT-HORNED OWL	Butano State Park
NORTHERN PYGMY OWL	Butano SP
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL	Butano SP
BURROWING OWL	Alviso
WHITE-THROATED SWIFT	Crystal Springs
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD	Gazos Creek
ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD	Pescadero Road
RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD	Mines Road
COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD	Del Puerto Cyn
BLACK-CHINNED HUMMER	Hatfield SRA
BELTED KINGFISHER	Lake Lucerne
LEWIS' WOODPECKER	San Antonio Valley
ACORN WOODPECKER	Gazos Creek
RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER	Venture
NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER	Mines Road
DOWNY WOODPECKER	Venture
HAIRY WOODPECKER	Gazos Creek
NORTHERN FLICKER	Venture
OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER	Venture
WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE	San Antonio Vly
PACIFIC SLOPE FLYCATCHER	Butano SP
BLACK PHOEBE	Lake Lucerne
SAY'S PHOEBE	Del Puerto Canyon
ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER	Mines Rd
WESTERN KINGBIRD	Mines Road
HORNED LARK	Del Puerto Canyon
TREE SWALLOW	Ano Nuevo
VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW	Gazos Creek
N.ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW	Ano Nuevo
CLIFF SWALLOW	Ano Nuevo
BARN SWALLOW	Gazos Creek
STELLER'S JAY	Butano State Park
SCRUB JAY	Cloverdale Road
YELLOW-BILLED MAGPIE	Mines Road
AMERICAN CROW	3rd Avenue San Mateo
COMMON RAVEN	Butano State Park
C. B. CHICKADEE	Butano State Park
OAK TITMOUSE	Mines Road
BUSHTIT	Crystal Springs
W.B. NUTHATCH	Mines Road
R.B. NUTHATCH	Skylawn Cemetery
PYGMY NUTHATCH	Ano Nuevo
BROWN CREEPER	Gazos Creek
ROCK WREN	Del Puerto Canyon
CANYON WREN	Del Puerto Canyon
BEWICK'S WREN	Mines Road
HOUSE WREN	Del Puerto Canyon
WINTER WREN	Venture
MARSH WREN	Pescadero Marsh
AMERICAN DIPPER	Memorial Park
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	Venture
BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER	Mines Road
WESTERN BLUEBIRD	Mines Road
SWAINSON'S THRUSH	Venture
HERMIT THRUSH	Butano State Park
AMERICAN ROBIN	Butano State Park
WRENTIT	Gazos Creek
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD	Coyote Point
CALIFORNIA THRASHER	Del Puerto Cyn
AMERICAN PIPIT	Dumbarton Bridge
PHAINOPEPLA	Mines Road
CEDAR WAXWING	Coyote Point
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE	Newman

June 2001

EUROPEAN STARLING	Gazos Creek
HUTTON'S VIREO	Gazos Creek
WARBLING VIREO	Pescadero
ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER	Venture
YELLOW WARBLER	Pescadero
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER	Coyote Pt
MACGILVRA'S WARBLER	Venture
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT	Gazos Creek
WILSON'S WARBLER	Gazos Creek
BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK	Butano SP
LAZULI BUNTING	Mines Road
SPOTTED TOWHEE	Gazos Creek
CALIFORNIA TOWHEE	Butano State Park
RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW	Mines Rd
SAGE SPARROW	Mines Road
SAVANNAH SPARROW	Cloverdale Road
FOX SPARROW	Gazos Creek
SONG SPARROW	Cloverdale Road
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW	Coyote Pt
W.C. SPARROW	Half Moon Bay
DARK-EYED JUNCO	Venture
R.W. BLACKBIRD	Pescadero Marsh
Y.H. BLACKBIRD	Gun Club Road
TRI-COLORED BLACKBIRD	Gun Club Rd
WESTERN MEADOWLARK	Cloverdale Rd
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	Gazos Creek
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	Gazos Creek
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE	Mines Road
PURPLE FINCH	Cloverdale Road
HOUSE FINCH	Gazos Creek
RED CROSSBILL	Skylawn Cemetery
PINE SISKIN	Gazos Creek
LESSER GOLDFINCH	Mines Road
LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH	Mines Road
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	Ano Nuevo
HOUSE SPARROW	Pescadero

Total species: 196

If you made a pledge, please forward it to the office. Thanks!!!

The Bluebird Report

Howard Rathlesberger

April 3, 2001

We had an eventful day on Filoli Trail #1 (No./So. Road) with Max Grandfield, Anne Miller, and Dick Wiesner.

We were monitoring a modified NABS box with a slight sloping front and a 2 1/4" x 1 3/8" opening on a non-treated utility pole.

Dick Wiesner noticed a starling fly away from the same pole and discovered on the opposite side of the box a woodpecker hole at eye level 2" in diameter and 2" to the cavity, approximately 7-8" deep. The starling flew out and perched on the wires above. The box was placed

on 2-15-01, is facing SE and the hole was facing NW. Not sure which bird made it!

Thanks to Dick for observing the starling and hole. I think it's evident that the starling couldn't enter the Peterson type elongated hole, but there are 3 additional boxes along this string of poles, so it would have had lots of choices. We'll certainly come up with appropriate action once the eggs are detected or chicks hatched.

Further on the trail #1 at box 10 we recovered an OATI (Oak Titmouse) hen on 8 eggs. She had been banded last year in box 12 on trail 3, about 100 yards away on 4/17/00 when she had laid 10 eggs. Five were lost and all had failed by May 12. We hope she has better success this year. This is the 2nd banded OATI recovered so far this season, as well as one Western Bluebird recovery.

Max Grandfield and I also banded a WEBL sitting on 6 eggs on the Nielsen trail box 1 in Portola Valley and an OATI hen with 6 eggs in a hanging box in Woodside at the intersection of Crest and Ridgeway.

How Many Canada Geese Are There?

Scientists have identified at least 45 sub-species of Canada Geese and many taxonomists insist there are several different species involved. Much of the debate centers around three populations breeding in Alaska. Taverners Canada Geese breed in the northern and interior parts of the state, Cackling Canada Geese breed in western and southwestern coastal regions, and the endangered Aleutian Canada Geese, once restricted to Buldir Island, now breeds on several other islands, some close to coastal areas inhabited by Cackling Canada Geese.

Recent studies have done little to clarify the genetic relationships between the various groups. Although the DNA studies established that the island nesting birds were more closely related to each other than to mainland birds and that there was little gene flow between the island birds, the evidence was not enough to make taxonomic recommendations.

In the meantime it would appear that we birders must still identify them as honkers, cacklers and little guys.

Sequoia Audubon Society

Audubon Before Congress on National Wildlife Refuges

On March 29th, Audubon Chief Operating Officer Dan Beard addressed a House Subcommittee on the crisis facing America's National Wildlife Refuges. Participating on a panel with conservationists and representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) - the agency responsible for managing the Refuge System — Audubon took a leadership role in extending the discussion beyond the funding needs of the Refuge System.

Dr. Beard pointed out that our refuges have great potential to be the world's model of wildlife conservation. But instead, the system is in crisis. Numerous threats such as incompatible uses, the spread of invasive species, declining water quality, and increasing rates of habitat loss are harming birds and wildlife on refuges across the country.

Every year, Congress determines funding levels for the Refuge System, which is one of many programs managed by the FWS. Unfortunately, funding has fallen far short of what is needed to address the backlog of operational and maintenance needs, including needs for improved science and adequate staffing. This has had a direct effect on the birds and wildlife that call the Refuges home. More than 700 bird species, other wildlife, including 250 threatened or endangered species, rely on these fragile pieces of habitat that are either deteriorating or, in the most severe cases, are being destroyed. Our threatened Refuges are their last hope. Much of our nation's habitat outside of federally-protected Refuges has already been destroyed.

Audubon challenged the FWS to take a leadership role in protecting the Refuges, and called on Congress to pass legislation to do more to improve and protect the Refuge System before 2003, when it celebrates its 100th anniversary. Congress must significantly increase funding for the Refuge System so it can address the backlog of operations and maintenance needs - some \$2 billion and growing daily - and secure needed staff and

resources.

But money is not the only problem. The Refuge System has long been considered a stepchild of our public lands, and for good reason. It lags far behind national parks and national forests in terms of funding, staffing, and visibility to the general public.

Dan Beard emphasized that the Refuge System suffers from institutional neglect. Refuges do not receive the amount of attention and effort from the Department of the Interior that other land systems and other programs receive.

Audubon also urged FWS and Congress to enhance and expand public awareness of Refuges. After all, America's Wildlife Refuges provide an unparalleled opportunity to see birds and wildlife in their native habitat.

President Backing Down on Drilling in the Arctic?

At a news conference on March 29th, President George W. Bush announced that due to strong opposition in the US Congress to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, he was prepared to exploit oil and gas resources elsewhere in the nation on land that was not federally protected. The President also stated that if he could not wring enough fuel out of the US, he would look to Canada and Mexico to address current domestic shortages. "It doesn't matter to me where the gas comes from, in the long run, just so long as we get gas moving into the country," he said. This represented the first time President Bush has suggested that he might not achieve his goal of extracting oil from the Arctic Refuge. This was echoed in the April 5th issue of the Capitol Hill newspaper, Roll Call, which stated that drilling the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is losing votes in the Senate.

Audubon On Corps Reform

Prior to adjourning for their Easter break, Representative Ron Kind (D-Wisconsin) and Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wisconsin) introduced bill numbers H.R. 1310 in the U.S. House, and S.646

in the U.S. Senate — legislation to reform the project review and authorization procedures at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps.) The Corps is responsible for civil works projects that include planning, designing, building and operating water resources. It's mission is large and vital in flood protection, navigation, irrigation, hydropower, and recreation. In recent years, the Corps has assumed a more significant role in the areas of environmental protection and restoration. However, the Corps has come under intense fire because of alleged improprieties in connection with several controversial water resource projects, particularly their call for lock and dam expansion along the Upper Mississippi River. The project was stopped after a Corps economist exposed manipulation of cost-benefit studies of projects on the Upper Mississippi River.

In light of this situation, many of the Corps waterway projects have been put on hold, as Congress, the Administration and government agencies try to restore the Corps' reputation and get the agency back on track. Audubon believes these bills are a good solution. This legislation seeks to increase fiscal responsibility and public accountability of the Corps. These reforms include increasing public participation and input at the outset of every proposed project. The bill creates new advisory and review procedures for the Corps; requires that information on water resource project analyses be made available for review by the public throughout the planning process, and ensures that environmental damages are fully mitigated. This will require the Corps to acquire and restore an acre of similar habitat to replace each acre of habitat negatively impacted by a project.

H.R.1310/S.646 is an important bill for Audubon and it's Upper Mississippi River Campaign, an effort that seeks to return the Upper Mississippi and its watershed to a place where people prosper, and birds, fish and wildlife thrive in a healthy environment. Whether you live in the Upper Mississippi River region or not, passage of this bill will have a positive effect on all of the Corps water projects, thus ensuring a safer and healthier habitat for birds, wildlife, and people, too. Help encourage your lawmaker to weigh in and support this bill.

Gifts and Bequests

Magnus Akerblom, Rick Baird, Bill Barkan, Susan Bernhard, Ralph Blom, John E. Chambers, Valarie Clement, Stuart Crymes, Lynette Curthoys, Clara Diaz, Lyndall Erb, Deborah Farson, Ruth Gilombardo, Margaret Graham, Henry Keener, S. King, Peggy Konzen, Matthew Mickiewicz, Carol Miller, Susan Rowinski, Mrs. Paul Schultz, James Vertin, Eve Visconti, Lisa Waag, Duncan Williams, and Schwab One through the courtesy of Dick Wiesner

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 PO Box 3897, Redwood City, 94064-3897 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 Sequoia-aud.org

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

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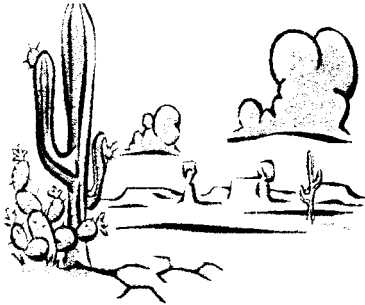


Sequoia Audubon

Update for May 2001

Volume 1, Issue 5
May 2001

President's Letter – Robin Smith



Desert Birding

A chance to go sailing at Lake Mojave? A drive across the desert during the spring migration? A visit to a new wild life refuge in Nevada east of Death Valley? A return to Joshua Tree National Park? Are you beginning to get the idea?

Doesn't take much to send me on a road trip and the desert is a favored location. Joshua Tree was calling me back to that dry wash I love to bird in the spring. Anne Moser had "dangled" the idea of a visit to Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and it sounded like a special place that needed a look. So, off I went to enjoy sailing with friends and family, as well as the wildflowers and birds of the desert.

The biggest carpet of wildflowers on the trip was beside the road winding down to Lake Mojave. The campground sported bushes full of migrating finches and yellow-rumps by day and a pair of dueting Great-horned Owls by night. Not too many birds on the water, but sailing and canoeing was enjoyed by all. On to Ash Meadows NWR north of Las Vegas near the town of Primm. Turns out Ash Meadows exists because of its wetlands which are home to birds and desert pupfish. The pupfish turn bright blue during breeding season and they were well on their way. Blue backs were visible in the clear water of the springs as the pupfish cavorted amid the algae.

Reservoirs in the refuge were still populated by wintering ducks. Spring migrants were in short supply with the exception of one vibrant Vermilion Flycatcher. He was glowing in the sun!

Maybe Joshua Tree would be more productive! So on I went to camp in my favorite Indian Cove campground. The site I chose was tucked in among huge boulders providing a quiet niche. The moon bathed the rocky cliffs with light as I drifted off to sleep. In the morning I was awakened by a chattering noise high overhead which turned out to be White-throated Swifts flying into their nesting sites in the crevices. Rock Wrens talked a blue streak, the Cactus Wren wurr-a-wurraed from the top of a cholla, down in the wash a pair of Phainopepla silently chased each other through the desert willows. A Loggerhead Shrike was hunting from a yucca that emerged from the carpet of wildflowers on the floor of the wash. The final treasure was the sweet, descending call of the Canyon Wren. Perfect!

Up higher in the park the Joshua Trees were bursting into bloom, down in the desert basin the Ocotillo were waving their red fingertips in the air. The rejuvenation of spring was in the air. Be sure you enjoy it here, you're surrounded!

Next Sequoia Audubon General Meeting

May 10th
7:30 pm

San Mateo Garden Center, Alameda at Parkside Way

Field Trips

SUNDAY APRIL 29th
Mines Road

SUNDAY APRIL 29th
Edgewood Park

SATURDAY MAY 5th
Bair Island

SATURDAY MAY 12th
Bikes, Birds, & Feral Cats

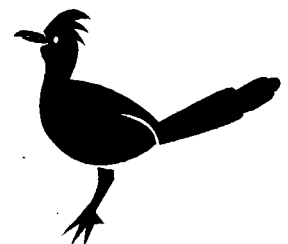
SATURDAY MAY 19th
Coastside Canyons

SATURDAY MAY 26th
Coastside Creek

SATURDAY JUNE 2nd
Bair Island

SATURDAY JUNE 9th
Sea Cloud Park

WEEKEND JUNE 16-17
Sierra & Cienega, Yuba Pass & Sierra Valley



SAS Field Trips May 2001

April 28th, Saturday Cloverdale Ranch, Pescadero, 9:00 am 325-3306.

Reservations only. A few spaces still available.

April 29th, Sunday Mines Road 9:00 am. Leaders: Cliff Richer & Leslie Flint 873-1754.

A variety of habitats provides a fascinating variety of birds! This is an auto caravan trip that lasts all day. (*you can break away if you need to*) Have a full tank of gas, water and food with you as facilities are scarce. Take the San Mateo Bridge and follow the signs to I-580. Stay on 580 about 23 miles to the North Livermore Exit. Take a right and follow Livermore Avenue through the center of town where it becomes South Livermore Avenue. Approximately a half mile beyond the center of town you will see the Nob Hill Shopping center on the left. We will meet in the parking lot at 8:30 am. If late, you can catch up by continuing on South Livermore until it becomes Tesla Road, then take a right onto Mines Road.

April 29th, Sunday Edgewood Park 8:00—11:00 am. Leader: Lee Franks.

new! Our newest addition!—Lee Franks' monthly walk at Edgewood Park. See activity as the breeding season begins. Learn about bluebirds, too. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot. Catch Edgewood Road at the Alameda or 280 in Redwood City.

May 5th, Saturday Bair Island 9:00 am Leader: Robin Smith 325-3306.

Visit and bird in the newest part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and learn about Sequoia Audubon's volunteer work on the Island. Take 101 to Whipple Ave exit in Redwood City. Go east on Whipple across the frontage road. There is a parking area here but be careful and watch out for frontage road traffic. Meet at 9 am at the refuge sign inside the gates.

May 12th, Saturday Bikes, Birds, & Feral Cats 9:00 am Leader: Pete Poppin.

Join Pete Poppin for a bike trip around Foster City visiting bird haunts and sites where feral cats hang out. Meet at 9am at the Mariners Island Golf Course, at the corner of Mariners Island Blvd. and East Third Ave in Foster City. Take 101 to 92, go east on 92, exit at Mariner Island Blvd/Edgewood follow Mariners Island Blvd across 92 to East 3rd. Leader Pete Poppin work phone: 1-800-486-8300 ext. 205.

May 19th, Saturday Coastside Canyons 8:00 am (or call the leader if you want to hear the dawn chorus) Leader: Rick Johnson 329-9639.

An opportunity to hear and see migrant and local birds as they settle in for a breeding season. Meet at the parking lot for the Purisima Creek Redwood Open Space Preserve. This trip can be a half day or longer as leader and participants determine. Take 92 west to Half Moon Bay, turn south on Highway 1 to Higgins Purisima Road, turn east and follow road about 4.3 miles to Preserve.

May 26th, Saturday Coastside Creek 9:00 am Leader: Nichole Salgado 650-747-9606.

Explore Whitehouse Creek, a new field trip. Meet in front of the San Gregorio General Store so we can car pool. Take 280 to Woodside Road exit, 84. Go west through Woodside, Skyllonda, La Honda. Follow signs to San Gregorio on 84, *Do not* turn to Pescadero.

June 2nd, Saturday Bair Island 9:00 am Leader: Robin Smith 325-3306.

See May 5th for description.

June 9th, Saturday Beginners/Family Sea Cloud Park 9:00 am Leader: Judi Spittler 355-9362.

This 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! 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.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

June 16—17, Saturday & Sunday Sierra & Cienega, Yuba Pass & Sierra Valley 9:00 am/8:00 am Leaders: Joe Macho & Martha O'Neal Macho 650-692-8138.

On Saturday, meet at 8:30 am at Bassett's Station (junction of Hwy 49 and Hwy 24, about 13 miles east of Sierra City). Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy 49 west over Yuba Pass summit, then continue on to Bassett's Station. (Or take Hwy 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including Dippers, flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday, meet at 8 a.m. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area on Hwy 49 about 19 miles east of Sierra City. We will caravan to Sierra Valley, looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Vesper Sparrow and Lewis's Woodpecker. Camping is available at these US Forest Service Campgrounds off Hwy 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3,300 ft) 2 mi east of Sierra City, Chapman Creek (elev. 5,800 ft) 8 mi. east of Sierra City and at the summit of Yuba Pass. Lodging is available at Buttes Motel (530) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151, Bassett's Station Motel (530) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (530) 862-1191, Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122, Busch & Herringbone Country Inn (530) 862-1501. Check with the proprietor for location and information about the inn or motel. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

Conservation News

SFO

The Conservation Committee has attended all the public meetings covering the San Francisco Airport runway expansion project. The NOAA scientific conference in San Francisco was first, followed by the public scoping meetings held in various areas of the county and the Save The Bay informational meeting at College of San Mateo.

The current presentations take place every 6-8 weeks and have covered a range of subjects: the techniques of building runways into the water and the engineering challenges involved, new technologies that can be used to enhance runway safety and increase landing capability in inclement weather, the use of airspace in the bay area and the complexities of managing a big airport, the hydrodynamics of San Francisco Bay including the monitoring equipment used to determine water flow, turbidity, flushing action, as well as different modeling systems used around the world. One positive result will be a far greater knowledge of the bay and the natural systems operating in it. The consultants working on the Environmental Impact Report have often been the presenters sharing their work in progress with interested stakeholders. The members of Sequoia Audubon are represented at these meetings by members of the Conservation Committee. Would you like to join the CC? We would welcome more members because it would allow us to cover even more issues in San Mateo County. We meet monthly in the evenings. Why not give it a try? Call the office for more information.

NEW HOME NEEDED

At the end of June Sequoia Audubon will again be looking for a new home. If anyone knows of a likely spot near the highway 92 corridor in San Mateo or Foster City please let us know at our office telephone number 369-1093.

Many thanks again to Ben Pless for making us welcome in his Redwood City



May 10th General Meeting Presentation

Southwest Florida Bird Photography Tour with Bob McCleary

If the lure of beaches, blue skies and warm sun isn't enough, the collection of birds living amidst some of nature's most spectacular settings certainly is. Sanibel Island, Ding Darling NWR, Venice Rookery, Corkscrew Swamp are all very popular and frequently visited areas by nature photographers. With camera in hand we perused Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis, Great White Heron, Egrets, Owls, Red-Shouldered Hawks to name a few. As you will see, Bob McCleary's travels rewarded him with some great photo opportunities and photo trophies to cherish and remember. With a passion for photography, the outdoors, nature and wildlife, he has been photographing the great outdoors since he was a young boy.

2001 CBCs

Plan ahead for the 2001 Christmas Bird Counts.

Crystal Springs: Saturday, December 15th, 2001
Año Nuevo: Sunday, December 20th, 2001

Sequoia Audubon Update

Sequoia Audubon
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"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



Discover all these places and more in our guide to San Mateo County birding:

Complimentary Copies of *San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching* available at our next Meeting!



Sequoia Audubon

Update for April 2001

President's Letter – Robin Smith

It's Breeding Season Again!

The sun was finally out! It drew me to the garden to tackle the pruning and weeding left undone during the days of rain. But, as you might guess, my attention was soon drawn by the birds. I could hear the Oak Titmice calling to each other in the oak trees and see them scouting for a likely nesting hole. The Chestnut-backed Chickadees were also searching for a new home for the season, zipping in and out of possible sites like human house hunters. There was an occasional flurry and flash of white going into the bushes as the Spotted Towhees scabbled around in the leaves at ground level. The Bewick's Wren sang a selection of songs when he wasn't busy hopping on the fence. The Northern Mockingbird covered the gamut of birdsong; listening carefully you could hear practically every bird that lives nearby in his vocal renditions. An adult Cooper's Hawk, a neighborhood breeder each year, was chuck-chucking his way through the trees across the street as a Red-shouldered Hawk displayed and called overhead. It was quite a show on that first, long-awaited sunny day.



One garden regular was not immediately in evidence. The usual pair of California Towhees has become scarce lately. The privet hedge where they've nested in past years has recently undergone a brutal trimming, so their leafy hiding places have disappeared until the new growth returns. They must have moved to new digs, or so I thought. But, no! Here came one and he headed right for my car. He hopped up on the door panel where it meets the window and proceeded to admire himself in the side mirror. He tilted his head this way and that all the while peering at his image. After a few minutes of this, he suddenly began to attack! He fought a good fight with the bird-in-the-mirror, sometimes jumping on top of the mirror housing to better peck at his nemesis. It was entertaining to watch this pugilistic towhee, though he left my car door stained with whitewash.

All this avian activity announces the start of another breeding season. Join any of our field trips and enjoy seeing the birds in action. Our new monthly field trip to Edgewood Park is a perfect way to do this. On the fourth Sunday of every month, 8-11 a.m., Lee Franks will lead a trip there. Come and join the fun!

Volume 1, Issue 4
April 2001

Next Sequoia Audubon General Meeting

April 8th

7:30 pm

San Mateo Garden
Center, Alameda
at Parkside Way

***Look inside
for April
events &
upcoming
trainings.***



Field Trips

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH
Edgewood Park*
***NOTE: OUR NEW
MONTHLY TRIP!!!**

SATURDAY, APRIL 7TH
Bair Island

SATURDAY, APRIL 14TH
Arastradero Preserve

SUNDAY, APRIL 22ND
Coyote Point

SUNDAY APRIL 29TH
Mines Road

SAS Field Trips April 2001

Sunday, March 25th: 8 am– 11 am EDGEWOOD PARK Leader: Lee Franks

Join Lee Franks on the first monthly walk at Edgewood Park. See activity as the breeding season begins. Learn about bluebirds, too. Meet at the kiosk in the parking lot. Catch Edgewood Road at the Alameda or 280 in Redwood City.

Saturday, April 7th BAIR ISLAND 9:00 am Leader: Robin Smith 325-3306

Visit and bird in the newest part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and learn about Sequoia Audubon's volunteer work on the Island. Take 101 to Whipple Ave exit in Redwood City. Go east on Whipple across the the frontage road. There is a parking area here but be careful and watch out for frontage road traffic. Meet at 9am at the refuge sign inside the gates.



Thursday, April 12th: 7:30 pm

GENERAL MEETING: CORBETT NAT'L PARK & BIRDS OF INDIA by Vivek Tiwari San Mateo Garden Center, Alameda at Parkside Way

Nestled in the foothills of Himalayas, Corbett National Park is the oldest and finest of India's National Parks. Best known for its magnificent mammals including tigers and elephants, its scenic landscapes also harbor an extraordinary diversity of birdlife, with over 500 species recorded from the park. Vivek will provide a photographic tour and take us to other parts of India, providing information on traveling and birding in that country.

Saturday, April 14th ARASTRADERO PRESERVE 9:00 am Leader: Garth Harwood 879-0724

This trip is especially for beginners and families. We'll have binoculars to share. Besides looking at birds we'll discuss binoculars, field guides, and the basics of bird identification. Questions gladly answered. With its grassy slopes, oak trees, a pond and chaparral this is a very birdy place.---Take 280 south to Page Mill Road exit, go west on Page Mill Rd. The first major intersection is Arastradero Rd. Turn right, continue and look for the parking lot on your right.

Sunday, April 22nd COYOTE POINT 9:00 am Leader: Sue Cossins 347-9358

The wetlands fronting San Francisco Bay attract numerous shorebirds in migration. The trees and grassy areas also provide good birding. --- Take 101 north to Peninsular Ave Burlingame . Go east following signs to the Park, meet at parking lot behind the Yacht Club at 9 a.m.

Sunday, April 29th MINES ROAD 9:00 am Leader: Cliff Richer 873-1754

A variety of habitats provides a fascinating variety of birds !! This is an auto caravan trip that lasts all day. (you can break away if you need to) Have a full tank of gas, water and food with you since facilities are scarce. Take the San Mateo Bridge and follow the signs to I-580. Stay on 580 about 23 miles to the North Livermore Exit. Take a right and follow Livermore Ave through the center of town where it becomes South Livermore Ave. Approximately a half mile beyond the center of town you will see the Nob Hill Shopping center on the left. We will meet in the parking lot at 8.30am. If late, you can catch up by continuing on South Livermore until it becomes Tesla Road, then take a right onto Mines Road.

Important Spring Training Dates

RAPTOR OBSERVATORY SEEKS VOLUNTEERS for 2001

Tens of thousands of hawks, falcons, and eagles pass over the Marin Headlands each autumn, and in autumn 2000, more than 260 volunteers helped monitor this flight for the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. Since 1983, the GGRO has organized volunteers to conduct ground counts, banding and radiotracking studies in order to monitor the health of our region's birds of prey. We're currently looking for new adult volunteers to commit to one day every two weeks for the August through December 2001 season, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July. Come to one of three Recruitment Classes to see if you want to get involved: Wednesday, April 25, or Thursday, April 26, from 7 to 930 pm; or Saturday, April 28, from 10 am to 1230. All meetings will be held at GGNRA headquarters, Building 201 at Upper Fort Mason, in San Francisco. Enter the fort at Franklin and Bay. For more information, call the GGRO (415) 331-0730 or e-mail us at ggro@ggupa.org. Visit GGRO website, www.ggro.org.

MORE TRAINING DATES

Point Reyes Bird Observatory & Sequoia Audubon seek volunteers for the 2001 Central Coast Riparian Bird Conservation Surveys:

Please consider joining the efforts of the second annual Central Coast Riparian Bird Conservation Plan Surveys. The Riparian Conservation Plans are part of the State Partners in Flight Joint Ventures. Last year Sequoia Audubon and the San Gregorio Environmental Resource Center volunteers joined this PRBO-initiated effort to evaluate breeding riparian songbird habitat. To compile San Mateo County data, we trekked early mornings from May to July along San Pedro in Pacifica, San Gregorio, and Whitehouse Creeks, using point counts, area searches, and vegetation surveys. This year, Gazos Creek will be added, we will enter and analyze our data, and map our studies with GIS. The training session will be at Wilder Ranch on April 21st, from 8am- 1pm. For more info, call Nicole Salgado at 560-9543, visit www.prbo.org.

Dredging and Dredged Material in San Francisco Bay

From the Conversation Committee
by Mary Bresler

Our Sequoia Audubon Conservation Committee continues to monitor the policies found in the revision of the Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) implementation by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) which was federally approved Jan. 5, 2001 for dredging and dredged material disposal.

Some of the changes include a decrease in the disposal of material in the bay and the use of a federally designated ocean disposal site. It also includes a revision of Bay Plan Maps identifying possible wetland restoration reuse sites, dredge disposal sites and possible dredged material habitat enhancement sites. Unfortunately, disposal of dredged material on land to a distant site has long been considered exorbitantly expensive.

The Conservation Committee is concerned and will follow the future of the LTMS program and particularly any project to place dredged material on the bayshore of San Mateo County.

SPRING 2001 BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

THE NEXT SEED SALE WILL BE OCTOBER 2001

ALL ORDERS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY APRIL 11th

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation and education programs

Check preferred pickup location. Pickup dates will be April 19-22, 2001. 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@ \$9.50/bag _____ = _____

BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER.....25 lb@ \$9.50/bag _____ = _____

WHITE PROSO MILLET.....25 lb@ \$9.00/bag _____ = _____

THISTLE.....5 lb@ \$8.00/bag _____ = _____

SUNFLOWER CHIPS.....25 lb@ \$23.00/bag _____ = _____

SALES TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES ABOVE

Contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (tax deductible) _____

CHECK # _____ GRAND TOTAL _____

Please enclose an email address or stamped self-addressed envelope to receive your order confirmation and directions to pickup location. Mail check and order to: SEQUOIA AUDUBON P.O. Box 3897, Redwood City, CA 94064-3897

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SAS UPDATE

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Redwood City, CA
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Phone: 650-369-1093
Fax: 650-369-8172
Email: office@sequoia-audubon.org

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San Mateo County
 Conservation & Birdwatching
 For Over 50 Years

Join Sequoia Audubon!

We invite your membership to the Sequoia Audubon Society & NAS! Please complete the form below and mail to P.O. Box 3897, Redwood City, CA 94064-3897, or e-mail to office@sequoia-audubon.org

☐ National: \$20 new, \$15 senior/student

☐ Receive Audubon magazine & Needles/Updates

☐ Needles-only: \$15 Receive Needles/Updates

☐ Donation Make check payable to

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY:

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Email



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

Discover all these places and more in our guide to

San Mateo County birding:

**COMPLIMENTARY COPIES OF SAN FRANCISCO
 PENINSULA BIRDWATCHING AVAILABLE AT
 OUR NEXT MEETING!**

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

