



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society
San Mateo County Volume 52, No. 8
June, 2002

This Month's Program The Origin of San Francisco Bay

Dr. Kenneth R. Lajoie, a geologist with the US Geologic Survey Office in Menlo Park will examine the environmental geology of the San Francisco Bay region, dating marine fossils and the mapping of earthquake faults and ground ruptures.

Potluck Time

Our Spring Potluck Dinner begins at 6:30 PM on Thursday, June 13 at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. The dinner will be followed immediately by our annual election of officers and the scheduled program.

Those people whose last names begin with the letters **A through F** should bring a **casserole or other hot dish**; those whose names begin with the letters **G through L**, bring a **dessert**; and those whose names begin with the letters **M through Z** should provide a **salad**. Be sure your offering will feed at least five people.

Election of Officers

The Nominating Committee has proposed the following for officers for the coming year.

President	Martha O'Neal Macho
Vice President	Bill Bechtell
Second Vice President	Howard Rathlesberger
Secretary	Sue Cossins
Treasurer	Peter Grace
Directors	
Term ending 2003	Peggy Bechtell
Term ending 2005	Tom Vanden Bosch
	Rick Baird

Nominations may also be made from the floor if done with the permission of the nominee.



From the President

Two Days, Three New Birds

What does one do when you find you will be in Denver for two days at the end of March? Look for life birds, that's what. I was lucky enough to be in that position this year and took the opportunity to try and see white-tailed ptarmigan, three-toed woodpecker, and brown-capped and black rosy finches.

I arrived in Denver on Thursday, rented a car and headed for my motel in Georgetown, 30-40 miles west of Denver at about 9,000 feet altitude. Friday morning I headed for Pine Valley Lake Park, in the mountains southwest of Denver to look for the woodpecker. The park has a lot of burned over areas, which make good habitat for three-toed woodpecker. I spent parts of two days there, walked about six miles of trails, saw lots and lots of evidence of woodpeckers but was unable to find the three-toed woodpecker.

While I did see a pair of hairy woodpeckers and a dipper feeding off a partially submerged log in the park lake, it turns out you have to locate the birds by sound and those of you who know me know that my hearing prevents me from doing that. I'll go back someday and take a tape for that try.

From Pine Valley Lake Park I headed west and north to Guanella Pass to look for ptarmigan. The pass is about 11,000 feet and a favorite wintering spot for white-tailed ptarmigan. The weather cooperated by being sunny with some clouds and about 50 F. It was windy! There was lots of snow at the pass, but the wind kept the trail I wanted relatively clear of snow, so walking was not difficult, except for the frequent stops to catch my breath. From the parking area one walks south to a trail sign and then up hill. About the time I began to feel that I would never find a white bird in all the snow, something moved and there they were. I eventually counted about two dozen birds. Some were resting huddled together in the shelter of bushes or rocks and others were shuffling through the snow eating from willow bushes. The hard part was deciding to go back down and get my camera and climb back up for pictures. It was worth the effort and a new life bird.

From Guanella Pass it was back down to Georgetown and then heading about 60 miles west and north for Kremmling, Colorado. The attraction was feeders that have all the rosy finches. When I arrived at the feeder spot in mid-afternoon there were lots of finches including some funny looking blackish gray-crowned rosy finches along with the normal looking ones. "Check your book dummy," I told myself, "they probably are black rosy finches", and sure enough they were. No brown-capped rosy finches though. But very nice looks at another life bird.

Then back to Georgetown, supper and sleep.

Saturday morning early it was up again and off to try again for the three-toed woodpecker with the same lack of success. From Pine Valley Lake Park I headed back to Georgetown and then about 12 miles west to the Loveland Ski area and more feeders. It's a short walk from the parking lot to lift #1 and the bird feeder. There even is a sheltered bench to sit on and watch the

(Continued on Page Three)

The mission of Sequoia Audubon Society is to participate in environmental education, and conservation and in the restoration, preservation, protection and enjoyment of our native natural resources with emphasis on birds and their habitats.



The S A S Calendar

THURSDAY, JUNE 6 — 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 8, SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN FAMILY TRIP (not recommended for strollers) **9 AM to NOON** — Look for a number of nesting or post-nesting birds as we walk along a service road and adjoining trails. From 101 take the Brisbane exit. Follow Old Bayshore north to Guadalupe Canyon Parkway, turn left and follow the parkway to San Bruno Mountain County Park, turn right into the parking lot to meet the leader. Possible parking fee.

LEADER **LESLIE FLINT** **573-6279**

THURSDAY, MAY 9 — GENERAL MEETING — THE ORIGIN OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY, with **Dr. Kenneth R. Lajoie**. The program and Election of Officers will be preceded by our spring potluck dinner. At the Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Potluck begins at 6:30 PM with the election and program following immediately thereafter. See Page 1 for additional details.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JUNE 15-16 — TIOGA PASS AND MONO LAKE — Travel across the Sierra and see the breeding birds in full swing. It's a spectacle that'll bring joy to your heart! Call the leaders for directions and information.

LEADERS **JOE MACHO & MARTHA O'NEAL** **692-8138**

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, BAIR ISLAND, 8:30 AM — Always something new to see here. Learn about Bair Island and the restoration plans. Meet at the kiosk just inside the gates at the east end of Whipple Avenue. Take 101 to Whipple Avenue exit in Redwood City, go east on Whipple and cross the frontage road. There is parking here, but do watch out for the frontage road traffic as you pull in. Meet at 8:30 AM by the Refuge sign just inside the big, white gates. There are no bathroom facilities, so come prepared!

LEADER **ROBIN SMITH** **325-3306**

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, EDGEWOOD PARK 8 AM — See the birds of early summer. Meet the leader in the parking lot adjacent to the Day Camp area. The Edgewood Park entrance is east of 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City.

LEADER **LEE FRANKS**

Birdathon 2002

Francis Toldi

On April 23, 2002 we ran this year's edition of Birdathon--a dream of a day for an avid birdwatcher, and probably agony for any normal, sane person.

I had a Board Meeting on Monday night, so I didn't get to bed as early as I had hoped. I don't usually sleep well before these days anyway. It's like a kid before Christmas. It seemed

like only a few hours, and in fact was, when I heard the tap tap of my brother John's quiet knock at my door.

3:30 a.m. We quickly loaded his stuff into my car, then picked up the third member of our team, Adam Winer. By 4:15 we were out on the coast and our "day" had begun.

We worried as we drove south through the thick, billowing, fog. Heavy fog makes it difficult, if not impossible, to see seabirds offshore.

We put that out of our minds, and concentrated at the task at hand, which was to locate night birds. Without too much trouble we managed to get Virginia and Sora Rail to call from deep within their wetland habitat at Pescadero Marsh. The owls were more challenging, but by working various locations along Gazos Creek and Cloverdale Roads, eventually we heard the calls of all of the likely species except one, the very common Barn Owl. At first light we stood along Gazos Creek Road and heard many species giving their characteristic dawn songs.

We headed for the coast at Pigeon Point in the early morning with about 40 species noted so far. A good, if modest, beginning. Much to our astonishment, the first warming rays of the sun had dissipated much of the fog. The immediate coast was completely clear, with a thick bank about a half mile or so offshore. We enjoyed the clear morning and identified dozens of new species, mostly gulls, shorebirds, and other seabirds. The tubenoses, jaegers and other denizens of the far-offshore zone, however, were lost in the fog. That cost us a half-dozen or so species that we had hoped to see.

We made our way up the coast, stopping at a few reliable spots for species that can often be surprisingly difficult to pin down, such as Red-shouldered Hawk and Yellow Warbler. By the time we headed over the hill to the San Francisco Bay locations it was 10:30 a.m. and we had a little over a hundred species--fair, but not great.

We had timed the schedule so that we worked our way down along the Bay at peak high tide. At this time many shorebirds are loafing on shell mounds and rocks along the Bay, awaiting the receding tide. It is fairly easy to pick through them and find otherwise rare and elusive species. Add to this a few late lingering duck species that haven't yet made their journey north to the breeding grounds, and the list grows longer.

We stopped in Coyote Point, south to Redwood Shores (not much habitat left there; it's mostly houses now), Palo Alto Baylands, and finally to Alviso at the bottom of the Bay. Alviso was almost a complete bust -- a number of "stakeout" species that we had seen just days before our count day were nowhere to be seen.

We finally reluctantly left the Bay Area at about 1:30 with 140 species, well off our previous marks. As we drove the highways eastward through the Livermore Valley we ate a late lunch, listened to a great Gerry Mulligan tape, talked strategy, and--except for the driver (!)--took a quick catnap. Upon arrival at Mines Road south of Livermore, we all snapped awake for more intense birding. It was hot and still, lovely conditions for a picnic but not so good for birds. They tend to hide deep within the bushes and trees, not showing themselves to anyone. With diligence, we made our way up Mines Road and over into remote San Antonio Valley. The wildflowers were fading, but still quite lovely.

(Continued on Page Three)

Two Days, Three New Birds

(Continued from Page One)

birds. Lots of gray-crowned rosy finches including the gray faced race. (I added it to my list in case of a later split.) And as predicted, plenty of brown-capped rosy finches for my third life bird, all topped off with a number of pine grosbeaks and mountain chickadees.

What a fun two days! Now I have to figure a way to get back for another try for three-toed woodpecker.

Thank You!

Many thanks to all those who gave so generously to our year-end appeal. Your generosity is much appreciated.

I. AKERBLUM, K. ALEXANDER,
J. ANDERHOLM, G. ANDERSON,
W. ANDERSON, A. ANGSTADT,
M. ARNAUD, H. ARPS, A. ARTOUS,
J. BAILEY, R. BAIRD, B. BARKAN,
A. BARNES, S. BERNHARD,
N. BLACKLEDGE, J. BOTT,
J. BRENNAN, M. BRESLER,
A. BROWN, M. BRUSH,
R. BURTSCHER, S. CARPENTER,
J. CHAMBERLAIN, L. CHAPMAN,
B. CLOEPFIL, N. COIRO,
T. COLLINS, J. CORCORAN,
L. CURTHOYS, C. DAILEY,
G. DEGHI, D. DEMAREE,
C. DOYLE, J. DURICK, J. DURKAC,
J. EPPERSON, J. FEICHTL,
J. FISHER, L. FLINT, L. FORNO,
L. FRANKS, C. GARDNER,
A. GEOFFROY, P. GRACE, N. GRAF,
J. GRAHAM, M. GRANDFIELD,
F. HANNIG, F. HARLOW,
L. HARTER, S. HECOX,
D. HERSHEY, K. HIMES,
E. HINRICHS,
N. HOEBEL-HEINRICH, S. HUNT,
J. INGWERSEN, D. IPSEN,
R. JONES, M. JUDNICH, R. KATZ,
E. KAY, R. KENNEDY, E. KERN,
G. KIRCHGATTER, S. KRITZIK,
K. KURUCZ, A. LAMBERTSON,
W. LEE, B. LEONARD,
W. LINDSTROM, J. LITTLE,
I. LUKE, J. MACHO,
C. MACINTOSH, L. MANN,
D. MCINTYRE, B. MICHALEK,
A. MILLER, L. MILLER,
W. MONTOYA, N. MORITZ,

A. MOSER, P. MUFFLEY,
S. NAGUMO, B. NERICCIO,
J. OAKES, L. ODONE, J. PADLEY,
P. PAPELEUX, S. PARLEE,
R. PERRY, K. PESSNER, R. PRICE,
M. PROFFITT, D. PUTNEY,
C. RICHER, H. RIETZ, S. ROSS,
S. ROTH, J. RUNYEON, P. RUSE,
G. SAIN, R. SANDSTROM,
R. SMITH, S. SMITH, J. SOMMER,
W. STANLEY, J. STALLNGS,
A. TOMADONI, J. TOMSIC,
R. THOMEN, C. TIERNEY,
A. TRUESDELL, J. TYLER,
H. ULRICH, M. UTTERBACK,
T. VANDEN BOSCH, D. VEDDER,
L. WAGNER, M. WEBBER,
H. WEIDNER, L. WEINSTEIN,
B. WHITING, R. WILKINSON,
A. WOFCHUCK, J. ZUCCA

Birdathon 2002

(Continued from Page Two)

Bit by bit we added some of the specialties of this area, such as Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis's Woodpecker, Nashville Warbler, Green Heron, Costa's Hummingbird, Canyon Wren, and many others. We fell a bit behind schedule and found ourselves at the end of Del Puerto Canyon Road near Patterson in the Central Valley at 6:00 pm.



We wound our way through various Central Valley wetland and riparian areas, ending up in the buggy marshes south of Gustine. Even this late in the season, when the seasonally flooded marshes are draining and drying and most birds are heading out, this is still a gorgeous area. We discovered a new colony of Great-tailed Grackles mixed in with the very showy Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Long lines of White-faced Ibis passed overhead. Ducks and shorebirds dabbled in the dwindling mud. Clouds of insects were all about—annoying to the human,

but good dining opportunities for all the birds. The light and our energy gave out at about the same time.

Our final tally was 185 species.

That's not our best by a long shot, but is still quite a list. As always there were some conspicuous absences, notably Warbling Vireo, Lazuli Bunting and Barn Owl. How could we miss those? Part of it is our route, which traverses their prime habitat only late in the afternoon when many birds have stopped singing and are less active. Warbling Vireo used to be a common species along the coastal canyons, like Gazos Creek Road, but is now quite rare on the coast. Part of it is laziness — at the end of the day we knew exactly where to go for a Barn Owl (and Common Poorwill, too), but decided to head on home instead. Partly it is pure luck. When you have only 5 minutes to bird an area it is easy to miss something common. That is part of the fun, the challenge, the aggravation of Big Day birding.

Thanks to all of you who donated to this year's Birdathon. To those who did not, it's never too late to send something our way!

Now only 364 more days until next year's run...

—Francis Toldi, for the Megatiks (Francis and John Toldi, Adam Winer)

Wish List

HELP!!! WE NEED A BIRDSEED DROP-OFF LOCATION!

Our birdseed supplier has changed owners and delivery system. They will be delivering the seed in a huge sized truck which does not fit in urban cul-de-sacs. We need a business drop-off point where the seed could stay until Iona Luke and Robin Smith can pick it up, perhaps two days. **CAN YOU HELP?** We'd be very grateful. Please call Iona at 349-1555 for further information.

For 2002-2003

Sequoia Audubon needs:

A Field Trip Coordinator
A Program Chair or Co-Chairs
An ACR Host Coordinator (spring only)
Conservation Committee members
Please share some time with our chapter, three or four hours a month would do it.

We Invite your membership in the National Audubon Society & SAS. To join, please complete and mail this form with payment to SAS, PO Box 3897, Redwood City, CA 94064-3897

☐ **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. \$15 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

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO Box 3897
Redwood City, Ca 94064-3897

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

T2/P418
Lisa Moody
32 Maple Ave
Atherton, CA 94027-3815



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

TXCH C16

Printed on Recycled Paper

Time Valued Material - Please Do Not Delay

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

OFFICERS

President	Robin Smith	325-3306
Past President	Francis Toldi	344-1919
Vice-president	Rick Baird	574-1067
Secretary	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Treasurer	Lisa Moody	

DIRECTORS

Term ending '02	Tom Vanden-Bosch	369-8305
	OPEN	
Term ending '03	Mary Bresler	
	Gary Deghi	
Term ending '04	Merry Haveman	344-2146
	Cliff Richer	873-1754

Office	Phone	369-1093
	Fax	369-8172
	e-mail	office@Sequoia-aud.org

STANDING COMMITTEES

ACR Hosting	OPEN	
ACR Representative	Leslie Flint	
Audit	Rick Baird	574-1067
Christmas Count	Al DeMartini	
Conservation	Rotating Chair	
Education	OPEN	
Field Trips	Anne Moser	324-1718
Bluebird Recovery	Howard Rathlesberger	367-1296
<i>NEEDLES</i> Editor	Cliff Richer	873-1754
Programs	Sue Cossins	347-9358
Publicity	OPEN	
Membership	OPEN	
Finance/Budget	Rick Baird	574-1067
Hospitality	Eileen Kay	592-4626

THE BIRD BOX
(415) 681-7422

