

SEQUOIA NEEDLES

*Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County
Founded 1949*

*Volume 55, No. 3
February-March 2005*

WHY IS SEQUOIA AUDUBON SO IMPORTANT?

BY CAROL MASTERSON

I love birds and birding. Nothing is better on a nice day than to get up early and get all my birding stuff ready. Binoculars - check, scope and tripod - check, bird book - check, notepaper - check; I head out the door. I am so fortunate to live in San Mateo County. It is the one of the best places in the U.S. for birding. We have so many environments. There are the foothills and oak woodlands, the forests, and San Francisco Bay estuaries filled with birds. And how about the coastside with its fabulous ocean birds and coastal marshes with vagrants galore? San Mateo has lots of open space and preserves to protect birds and wildlife.

Why Is Sequoia Audubon So Important? If I stop to think about how important the birding areas are in San Mateo County, I need to consider some things. Who helps to preserve these wonderful parks and natural preserves? Who presents the lectures where I learn about birds in other countries? Who organizes the annual Christmas Bird Count? Who helps fight for control of development in sensitive natural areas that are home for the birds I enjoy watching? Who helps to educate the next generation of school kids about how fantastic nature is? Who organizes the field trips that show me where to find migratory birds?

All of these services and more are provided by Sequoia Audubon -- a 100% volunteer organization. Our mission 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.

How Can You Help Sequoia Audubon Society Carry Out Its Mission?

We need volunteers to get involved. We are starting to form our committees. Are you interested in education? Are you interested in conservation? How about helping with our membership committee? Would you like to help with the two annual Christmas Bird Counts? Would you be interested in being on the Board of Directors helping to guide the organization? We are always in need of fundraisers. Would you like to run a raffle? Would you like to present a slide show to school kids about the birds of San Mateo County? Would you like to work on the Bluebird Trail monitoring birds? We need volunteers to help put on the Christmas Count Dinners. How about monitoring Snowy Plovers on the beach at Half Moon Bay? Would you like to donate money for a special conservation or education issue that is close to your heart? Are you a writer? Can you write articles for the *Needles* newsletter? Are you a computer wiz who would like to be our Webmaster? Want to write letters to your representatives about conservation issues? Would you like to help out in the Sequoia office a few hours each week?

You can find more information on volunteering opportunities on page 7 of this issue. If you are interested in participating in these or other ways, please contact Carol Masterson (650) 347-1769 or email us at office@sequoia-audubon.org.

FERAL CAT TASK FORCE

BY ROBIN SMITH

The collaboration between Foster City, Homeless Cat Network, and Sequoia Audubon Society to tackle the problems associated with homeless cats on the Foster City levee is well underway.

An audit of the nine cat colonies on the

(Continued on page 3)

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center
(See program details on page 2)

February

Thursday, 10th, 7:30PM

Program: Alaska Birding: The Corner of the North American Continent

March

Thursday, 10th, 7:30PM

Program: Sierra Birds: A Hiker's Guide

Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details on page 3)

February

Saturday, 12th Panoche Valley

Sunday, 13th Arrowhead Marsh,
Alameda County

Sunday, 20th San Francisco
Aquatic Park*

Saturday, 26th Foster City Bay Cat
Program*

Saturday, 26th Middle Bair Island
Canoe/Restoration Project

Sunday, 27th Edgewood Park

March

Saturday, 19th Coyote Point

Saturday, 19th Middle Bair Island
Canoe/Restoration Project

Sunday, 20th Edgewood Park

Sunday, 20th San Francisco
Aquatic Park*

*Beginner/Family Trip

Check the field trip descriptions for any special information or requirements. Late comers may be disappointed. For all field trips bring your binoculars, water, wear sturdy walk-

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Members may submit original or uncopyrighted material – articles, artwork, cartoons, photos – for

Needles. The deadline for submission is the first day of the month preceding publication. Send comments and contributions to:

sas_editor@yahoo.com



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MEETING PROGRAMS

BY BARBARA WILSON

Alaska Birding: The Corner of the North American Continent

by Les Chibana

Thursday, February 10th, 2005

Alaska provides abundant birding opportunities. One can see species that winter in Asia and on Pacific islands and coasts, as well as all around the North and South American continents. The common thread is that they all return to the Alaskan arctic to breed. An exciting aspect of Alaska birding is the variety of habitats that the birder explores seeking out the many species in their breeding plumages. A good trip takes the birder through various tundra settings, mountain regions, interior alder and spruce forests, as well as coastal rainforests. Experiencing the breeding ground behavior and vocalizations of many common California wintering and migrant species is as fulfilling as seeing their breeding plumages. Come and see many of the birds and habitats that one might expect to see on a birding tour around Alaska.

Les Chibana has been teaching birding for ten years, currently at the Palo Alto Baylands. He has led Alaska birding trips for three years. He also has led trips to Hawaii and Costa Rica.

Monthly Meetings

San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las Pulgas, between 26th and 28th Avenues.

Sierra Birds: A Hiker's Guide

by Jack Laws

Thursday, March 10th, 2005

Jack Laws is a naturalist, illustrator, and educator from San Francisco. He has developed and taught classes on ecology, biology, and illustration and leads monthly field sketching outings in the Bay Area. He received a B.S. in Conservation at the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana, Missoula and studied scientific illustration at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His

recent book, *Sierra Birds: A Hiker's Guide*, is the first publication in a five-year project to create an easy-to-use, fully illustrated, and portable guide to Sierra plants and wildlife.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

FEBRUARY 18-21

BY CAROL MASTERSON

We need every bird enthusiast in San Mateo County to count for the birds!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Each year thousands of birdwatchers from Nome to Key West take to their backyards to count numbers and types of birds visiting their feeders, local parks, and other natural areas. Your observations help scientists define the status of wintering birds in the United States.

All you need is basic knowledge of bird identification and access to the internet at home, school, or local library. A birding field guide is helpful to ensure proper identification of the birds.

Count the birds in the area you've chosen. Watch birds for one day or all four days. Spend at least 15 minutes on each day you participate. We recommend watching at least 1/2 hour or more so that you will have a good sense of what birds are in your area. Keep a record of the birds seen and their numbers each day you watch. Keep track of the highest number of species you observe at any one time. Fill out a checklist (found on the GBBC website: www.birdsource.org) for each area. Then send your count information to the GBBC website.

Get your friends and family together to participate. This is a great way to get kids involved in birding. Here is your chance to become a citizen scientist -- all ages and all skill levels welcome. Check the results section on the website to see data come in from your community and other areas around the country. Have fun and make a difference for the birds.



FIELD TRIPS

BY CAROL MASTERSON

Panoche Valley, south of Hollister

Saturday, February 12, 8:30 AM

Meet at 8:30 AM at the Paicines Reservoir, on the right just past the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. This trip traverses raptor habitat which usually produces Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, Merlin, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopeplas, Roadrunners, and various sparrows. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to fill your gas tank before leaving Hollister. Bring lunch and warm clothes. This is an all-day trip. Call Leslie Flint to carpool and for directions.

Leader: Leslie Flint (650) 573-6279

Arrowhead Marsh, Alameda County

Sunday, February 13, 9:00 AM

You would never suspect that between the Oakland Airport and the Coliseum would be a hidden jewel: Arrowhead Marsh. This 50-acre wetland was saved from the developers and restored. It has become an important stop over on the Pacific Flyway for hundreds of shorebirds, waterbirds, raptors, Clapper Rails, and is also an oasis for Bay Area trail walkers. Join East Bay birders Marilyn Nasatir and Inge Svoboda for a morning of great birding.

Directions: Take Hwy 880 to the Hegenberger exit and go west on Hegenberger Road. Go 0.9 mile and turn right at Parde. Turn left on Swan Way and go 0.3 mile to the entrance of Martian Luther King Jr. Shoreline - Arrowhead Marsh. Turn right onto paved road and go 0.8 mile to the parking area at the end of the road. Meet at the fishing pier at the end of the parking lot. Bring a scope if you have one. Dress in layers for variable weather. Heavy rain cancels. Call Carol Masterson for information at (650) 347-1769.

Wheelchair Accessible

San Francisco Aquatic Park

Sunday, February 20, 9:30 AM

Join National Park Service Ranger Carol Kiser on this beginners' bird walk to see shore, migratory, citified, and resident birds as we walk along Hyde Street Pier

and Aquatic Park. Bring binoculars, bird books, and dress in layers. We will meet at the Hyde Street Pier entrance at Hyde and Jefferson Streets and will go for about 1 - 2 hours. There is no charge and walk is wheelchair accessible.

Directions: Bus numbers 10, F, 30, 47, 49, and the cable car stop nearby. Call (415) 673-MUNI for details. As meter parking lasts only for one hour, parking is best at garages nearby for about \$2.50 per hour at the Anchorage Shopping Center or at Ghirardelli Square.

Beginner/Family Trip - Wheelchair Accessible

Foster City Bay Cat Program

Saturday, February 26, 10:00 AM

Come to the Foster City Shoreline and see what Sequoia Audubon Society is doing to help both the birds and the homeless cats along the bay in Foster City. We will look at the birds we are trying to protect and at the changes made to the cat feeding situation there. Lots of shorebirds and possibly Clapper Rail in the nearby marsh. Lots of ducks, grebes, and gulls in the nearshore waters. See the homeless cats and hear how things are progressing with our partners, Foster City and the Homeless Cat Network. We will be walking along the levee from the golf course toward the bridge. Good for strollers and kids. Trip ends by noon. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: Park in the golf course parking lot on East 3rd Avenue.

Leader: Robin Smith (650) 325-3306
Beginner/Family Trip - Wheelchair Accessible

Middle Bair Island Canoe/Restoration Project

Saturday, February 26, 9:00AM- 2:30 PM

Sponsored by SAVE THE BAY and the DON EDWARDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Save the Bay is partnering with Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge to restore portions of Inner and Middle Bair Island. Bair Island is a unique wetland habitat in San Mateo County. It is home to many species of nesting birds, migratory birds, marine organisms, and marine mammals.

(Continued on page 4)

Upcoming Field Trips

(Continued from page 1)

ing shoes or boots, sun block, a hat, and always dress in layers for hot sunny weather to cool windy conditions. While we will attempt to stay on schedule, circumstances may dictate changes to field trip leaders, dates, or times. For the latest schedule and updates always go to the Sequoia Audubon web site, contact the trip leader, or call **Carol at 650-347-1769.**

(Feral Cats, continued from page 1)

levee has shown that there are more than 100 cats and that 75% of those cats are already neutered.

Cimeron Morrissey, of the Homeless Cat Network, continues to trap cats that need to be neutered. The placement of two new feeding stations in October will help in this effort. Sequoia Audubon has given input on the location of the feeding stations so that they will be in the less sensitive bird areas.

Foster City is publicizing the efforts through all its media channels, putting up signs with contact information. City officials intend to prosecute anyone seen harming or dumping cats. An informational brochure has been designed by the three groups for distribution to levee users. So alert police if you see anyone releasing cats into the area when you are birding the shoreline areas.

YOU CAN HELP! Many of our members are cat lovers. Homes are needed for the socialized cats that can be returned to family life. Kittens and cats need to be fostered before this can happen. Call Homeless Cat Network at (650) 286-9013 to foster a cat or kitten while it is being socialized. Or provide the cost of neutering and vaccinating a homeless cat. Anything you can do to help will make life better for both cats and birds.

(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

The goal of the project is to restore areas of diked and leveed historic wetlands to tidal marsh. Much of the project site is off-limits to the public. We will have an introduction to the Bay and the Refuge, followed by safety and paddling discussion. We will then launch and paddle to Bair Island, along the way enjoying the wildlife and wetland habitat. Much of the day will be spent on the island removing non-native plants. Dress in layers; bring a hat, lunch, water, and enthusiasm. Gloves, tools, and canoeing equipment are provided. The cost is \$25 for Save the Bay members and \$35 for non-members. To sign up, contact Denise Shea at Save the Bay at (510) 452-9261 x109 or dshea@savesfbay.org.

Edgewood Park

Sunday, February 27, 8:00 AM

Come and talk with Lee Franks about the Bird Conservation Program at Edgewood Park. Learn how different species of birds are studied and monitored and how the information is used for conservation management. You may even want to volunteer to help out. Meet the leader in the paved parking lot adjacent to the main gate at 8:00 AM sharp. Heavy rain cancels.

Directions: The Edgewood Park entrance is east of Hwy 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City.

Leader: Lee Franks (650) 592-7733

Coyote Point

Saturday, March 19, 8:00 AM

Winter and spring are great times to view birds at Coyote Point. The wetlands fronting San Francisco Bay attract numerous shore birds. The trees and grassy areas also provide good birding.

Directions: Take 101 to the Peninsula Ave. exit in Burlingame. Go east following the signs to Coyote Point. Meet in the parking lot behind the Yacht Club at 8:00 AM. Tell the gatekeeper that you are with Sequoia Audubon Society to get in free.

Leader: Sue Cossins (650) 347-9358

Middle Bair Island Canoe/Restoration Project

Saturday, March 19, 9:00AM - 2:30 PM

See description under February 26 trip.

Edgewood Park

Sunday, March 20, 8:00 AM

Come and visit this unique habitat with oak woodland, grasslands, and chaparral. Spring is the best time for this beautiful San Mateo County Park. Sparrows, meadowlarks, flycatchers, bluebirds, hawks, and more are all possible. Depending on the winter rains we will look for spring wildflowers, ferns, and fungi. The walk is three hours over moderately strenuous terrain.

Directions: The Edgewood Park entrance is east of Hwy 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City. Meet in the paved parking lot at the main gate.

Leader: Lee Franks (650) 592-7733

Reservations: Call Carol Masterson 650-347-1769

San Francisco Aquatic Park

Sunday, March 20, 9:30 AM

See description under February 20 trip.

SNOWY PLOVER PROTECTION

BY CAROL MASTERSON

The Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) is a sparrow-sized, light-colored shorebird with dark patches on either side of the neck, behind the eye, and on the forehead. The Pacific coast population of the Snowy Plover is a threatened species.

Where Are These Plovers?

Plovers can be found on flat, open coastal beaches, in dunes, and near stream mouths. They are well-camouflaged and extremely hard to see, often crouching in small depressions taking shelter from the wind. California State Park beaches provide much of the suitable habitat remaining in California for this small shorebird.

During the winter months, Snowy Plovers eat and rest, building up fat reserves. In the spring and summer, plovers nest in loose colonies, often coming back to the same beaches every year. The breeding season lasts from early spring to mid-fall, and during that time the female may hatch more than one brood with different males. The nests are simple scrapes in the sand with 1-3 eggs that the male warms at night, while the female does day duty. Eggs hatch in about 27 days. Within hours the chicks are searching for their food of insects and other beach invertebrates. The chicks are on their own in 30 days, but surviving those two months is the trick.

How Are They Threatened?

Snowy Plovers are threatened due to disturbance, predation, and habitat loss. Because the birds and eggs are camouflaged, beach visitors can disturb nesting birds or wander right through a nesting area, never knowing the damage they have caused. Visitor use of the beaches close to nests causes adult birds to stay off the nest, exposing eggs to predators and the elements. Beach fires and fireworks disturb the nesting birds and kites flown above look like predators. During the winter, continual disturbance uses up their stored reserves and may lower their breeding success.

Predators on the beach are also threats. Dogs chase and may catch birds or destroy nests; cats prey on birds and chicks; and even leashed dogs may appear as a danger. Native predators such as skunks, crows, ravens, and shrikes are joined by exotic predators such as the non-native red fox to further pressure the birds.

Why Should I Care?

The Snowy Plover is an important part of the interconnected web of life on the shore. Plovers have lived on California beaches for thousands of years, but today human use of their remaining beach habitat seriously threatens their survival. Once numbered in the thousands, fewer than 1500 breeding

(Continued on page 5)

(Snowy Plover Protection, continued from page 4)

plovers remain. Prior to 1970 they nested at 53 locations in California, while today they nest in only half as many sites. Since Snowy Plovers are listed as a threatened species and protected by the federal Endangered Species Act, beach visitors who harm or disturb plovers or their habitat may be cited and fined. Plovers need our help if they are to survive alongside human beach recreation.

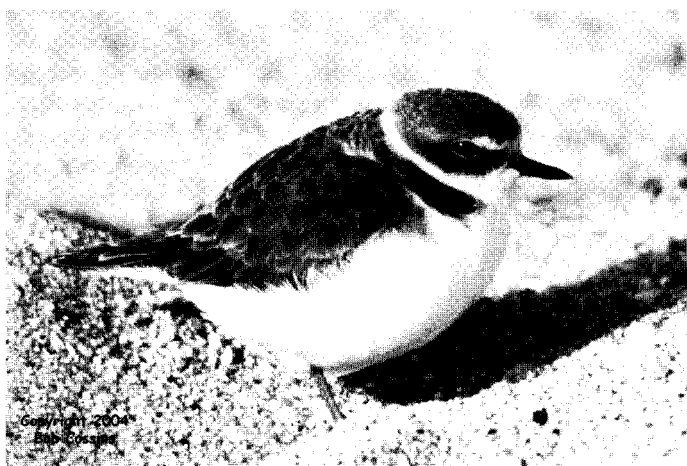
What Is California State Parks Doing To Protect Plovers?

California State Parks is doing a wide variety of things to help this bird in need. Plovers are monitored to determine the number of birds using parklands and the success of their breeding attempts. Sometimes the chicks' tiny legs are banded so that they can be identified throughout their lives. Individual nests or larger nesting areas may be fenced or delineated by signs to keep visitors away. Exotic plants that affect plover nesting habitat are removed and, if predators pose a problem, control programs are initiated. Some recreational activities are restricted and some portions of beaches are closed to dogs to protect important nesting areas. California State Parks is working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other coastal land managers to cooperatively manage the plover on California beaches.

What Can I Do To Help?

With California State Parks' efforts and your active cooperation, we can make a difference in the survival of the Western Snowy Plover on California beaches. Since Snowy Plover nesting coincides with the busy beach season, there are many things park visitors can do to avoid or minimize impacts on the birds.

- Do not approach birds or nests.
- Avoid prolonged picnicking or sunbathing near plover nesting habitat.
- Stay out of fenced or posted habitat areas, and do not approach fencing.
- Keep dogs on leashes and away from nesting areas.
- Do not light fires or camp on the beach except in designated areas.
- Dispose of garbage properly to avoid attracting plover predators.
- Do not feed any wildlife.



Snowy Plover photo by Bob Cossins

- Equestrians must stay out of nesting areas. Observe posted restrictions and keep to wet sand in plover habitat.
- Do not collect kelp or driftwood from the beach; it provides nesting and feeding habitat for Snowy Plovers.
- Do not fly kites, hang glide, or toss Frisbees or balls near Snowy Plover nesting habitat. Fireworks are prohibited.
- Report any nests, threats, or disturbances to park staff.

In San Mateo County at Half Moon Bay State Beach you can help Snowy Plovers by signing up to help with the plover watch and plover counts.

Thanks to California State Parks for this information from their website, www.park.ca.gov

QUALITY OR QUANTITY: BIRDING IN THE ECUADORIAN ANDES, PART 2

BY FRANCIS TOLDI

January 28, 2004. This was another day of excellent birding, which also served to greatly enhance the overall trip total! We awoke at our accustomed early hour and headed yet further down the western slope, this time to some fragments of lower foothill forest near the town of Pedro Vicente Maldonado, at something like 500 meters in elevation. With proper directions this is an area that one could bird without a guide, but having one really helps locate the remaining forest and the birds. Many of the best birds here announced their presence with a distinctive call from the thick vegetation alongside the road, and knowing which ones to pursue made quite a difference in our experience. Our guide Mark was superb here, not only finding and re-finding the best species, but also getting us on the harder to locate species. Very few of the species we on the day's list were "guide only" species.

The start was inauspicious to the extreme. We pulled off the main highway and on to a fairly wide dirt track. A few large trees and cut-over vegetation were near the road. We stood alongside as one belching truck after another drove on by, with us gazing at the trees and shrubs while the truck drivers and local kids gazed at us. Apparently this was the main entrance to a road materials quarry. Despite the noise and smell, there were some good birds even here. A STRIPED CUCKOO was easy to see in the middle of the road. A LITTLE CUCKOO just eluded our view—it shot into a nearby tree, never to reappear. A RUFOUS MOTMOT showed itself well close to the road, as did a RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR. In the trees close alongside the road we found a very good flock, with highlights including WESTERN SLATY-ANTSHRIKE, SLATY ANT-WREN, GOLDEN-FACED TYRANNULET, SLATE-THROATED GNATCATCHER, PURPLE HONEYCREEPER, GREEN HONEYCREEPER, YELLOW-TUFTED DACNIS (a good candidate for prettiest bird of the day, if not the entire trip), GUIRA TANAGER, YELLOW-TAILED ORIOLE and YELLOW-BELLIED SISKIN, not to mention a number of the tanagers and other passerines we had enjoyed yesterday at an-

(Continued from page 5)
other location.

Despite the good birds, it was a relief to continue on the track beyond the quarry. The road then made a long right hand bend up a hill, with very rich forest in the canyon below. This was the best birding of the day, and in fact we spent most of the rest of the day in this spot, walking back and forth along a 1-2 kilometer stretch of the road. Even in the middle of the day there was SOME bird activity, although it was best, as expected, in the early morning. By the middle of the afternoon it was only partly cloudy and very, very hot.

One sad and poignant moment was when we walked around a corner to a location where just two weeks prior Mark had shown another guest a White-bearded Manakin lek. This day there were only the broken fragments of a cut and bulldozed forest. A few epiphytes were still growing pathetically from the tangled remains. The people at Tandayapa Lodge and others in Ecuador are fighting valiantly to preserve as much forest as possible, but it is not an easy

struggle and there are so many losses along the way. Looking at that cut fragment, wondering how much of this forest will still be there by the time I return or anyone reading this gets there, put us all into a somber mood. True, our birding zeal slowly revived over the next hour, but with this horrible image deeply etched into our memories. I can't imagine that any lover of tropical birding—or any birding, for that matter—needs to be reminded of the importance of preserving habitat and giving assistance to those on the front lines of this effort.

Disappearing as it is, this fragment still has an astonishing array of spectacular bird species. Here is a list of the highlights only, with some parenthetical annotations. LITTLE TINAMOU (heard only—what is a trip to the neotropics without hearing the quivering whistle of a tinamou coming from deep within the forest!), SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (including one pair right overhead, with a male doing what appeared to be elaborate courtship behavior), PLUMBEOUS

(Continued on page 7)



Spring 2005 BIRDSEED SALE ORDER FORM

All Orders, with Payment, Must Be Received by Thursday, February 10, 2005

Pick up between February 24th and 27th

Check Preferred pickup location below:

Half Moon Bay ☐ Burlingame ☐ San Carlos ☐ Pacifica ☐ San Mateo ☐ Atherton ☐



Number of Bags

Cost in \$

AUDUBON WILD BIRD MIX *red & white millet plus black oil sunflower*

20 lb @ \$14.00/bag

Black Oil Sunflower

25 lb @ \$12.50/bag

White Proso Millet

25 lb @ \$13.00/bag

Thistle

20 lb @ \$30.00/bag

Sunflower Chips

25 lb @ \$28.00/bag

Total birdseed purchases (sales tax is included in all prices above)

Tax-deductible contribution to Sequoia Audubon Society (Thank You!)

Amount of enclosed check (payable to Sequoia Audubon Society)

Proceeds support local Audubon conservation programs

Mail check and order form to:

Sequoia Audubon Society

c/o J. Scharetg, 315 Shad Court, Foster City, CA 94404

E-mail: jscharetg@earthlink.net

(650) 349-1555 (Iona Luke)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

BY CAROL MASTERSON

Want to help the birds? Get involved? Sequoia Audubon is an **all-volunteer** organization and we need your help. Here are some great opportunities to support conservation in San Mateo County. Many jobs are ones that you can do at home and that take only a few hours a month.

Bird Surveyor

One of the ways SAS protects birds and habitats is the Edgewood Park & Preserve Bird Conservation Program. It's like practicing for the Christmas Bird Count all year round!

Requirements: A good pair of binoculars and a "morning" mentality.

Location: Edgewood Park & Preserve, San Carlos.

Time: Conduct one 3.5-hour bird survey a week/month, hiking over moderately hilly trails sectioned into nine monitored zones. Report the findings to BCP coordinator, Lee Franks, for compilation in the annual report.

Contact: Lee Franks, funseekers2@juno.com (650) 592 - 7733

Field Trip Leader

Do you have a favorite birding spot you want to share with others? Enjoy teaching people about birds and birding?

Requirements: Love of birds and birding, and a willingness to share your birding knowledge.

Location: In the field

Time: 3-4 hours each walk

Contact: Carol Masterson (650) 347-1769

Armchair Activist

Provide content on local and national environmental issues and sample letters for posting on the Sequoia Audubon website to assist SAS members who want to write to government representatives on environmental issues.

Requirements: Interest in environmental issues

Location: Your home.

Time: Flexible

Contact: Cynthia McLaughlin (650) 299-9469 for more information

Bluebird Box Monitor

Help restore bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds in San Mateo County by volunteering to monitor bluebird nest boxes. Be part of the California Bluebird Recovery Program.

Requirements: An interest in helping the recovery of Bluebird populations in San Mateo County. A willingness to learn about care of nest boxes.

Location: At nest box sites. At your house or locations in San Mateo County

Time: Monitor nest boxes one day a week on your schedule. (15 minutes to 1 hour +)

Contact: Howard Rathlesberger (650) 561-9532

Exhibit/Display Designer

Create and design an exhibit for public libraries and schools to teach the public about birds and birding.

Requirements: Artistic ability.

Time: 1-8 hours per month at your convenience

Location: Work at your home and delivery of exhibit to local libraries and schools.

Contact: Carol Masterson (650) 347 - 1769

Plover Watch

Help to watch and protect this threatened species at Half Moon Bay State Beach

Requirements: Able to attend training class.

Location: On the beach at Half Moon Bay State Park

Time: Minimum 2 hours per week during nesting season.

Contact: Park Ranger Nelle Lyons (650) 726-8819

Webmaster

Maintain and update our web site at <http://www.sequoia-audubon.org>.

Requirements: Experience with website design, HTML, and simple photo files.

Location: Work at your home and update site files via FTP.

Time: 30 minutes to 2 hours per month at your convenience

Contact: Carol Masterson (650) 347 - 1769

Community Outreach/Education Coordinator

Help teach the community and share your knowledge of birds and birding by representing the SAS at various community events and schools.

Requirements: Enthusiasm for sharing your love and knowledge of birding and SAS.

Location: Various community locations

Time: 3 - 4 Hours per month.

Contact: Carol Masterson (650) 347-1769

(Quality or Quantity, part 2, continued from page 6)

KITE, LAUGHING FALCON (two perched in plain view right near the highway turnoff in the late afternoon), BAT FALCON (perched on a snag right overhead), DUSKY PIGEON, ROSE-FACED PARROT (frustratingly, a guide-only bird, seen while we were deep in the forest searching for a calling Trogon; I saw only some movement in the leaves made by the departing bird), BLUE-HEADED PARROT (including a nice scope view of a perched bird), GREEN THORNTAIL (various sightings, including a female sitting inside her tidy, lichen-plated nest under a large leaf by the roadside), PURPLE-CHESTED HUMMINGBIRD (it took a while for me to get a convincing view of this species as they whizzed about the roadside, always seeming to perch in terrible light), PURPLE-CROWNED FAIRY, WESTERN WHITE-TAILED TROGON, COLLARED TROGON, WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD (a stunning scope view of this bird, not at all to be expected in this location), PALE-MANDIBLED TOUCAN, CHOCO TOUCAN, CHESTNUT-MANDIBLED TOUCAN (we saw and heard both this and the prior species, but rarely at the same time; Mark explained that the identification is much more difficult than it would appear from the field guide, with the coloration of the bill and ocular area quite variable and light-dependent), GOLDEN-OLIVE, BLACK-CHEEKED,

(Continued on page 8)

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(Quality or Quantity, part 2, continued from page 7)

SMOKY-BROWN and RED-RUMPED WOODPECKERS, STREAKED XENOPS, PLAIN-BROWN, WEDGE-BILLED, SPOTTED AND STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPERS, GRISCOM'S ANTWREN (another "thanks to Mark" bird, first heard than tracked as it raced from tree to tree until we finally had excellent looks close by), PACIFIC ANTWREN (a very handsome bird that obligingly worked a small tree by the immediate roadside), WHITE-FLANKED ANTWREN, DUSKY ANTIBIRD (actually came out into the open without any taping or other action on our part), CHESTNUT-BACKED ANTIBIRD (Only a couple of plays of the call was enough to make this handsome bird pop out), STUB-TAILED ANTIBIRD (a bird singing endlessly and appearing and disappearing in a thick tangle allowed only a brief glimpse—how can they move about so much without making any apparent motion?), GRAY ELAENIA, BLACK-HEADED TODY-TYRANT, YELLOW-MARGINED FLATBILL (FLYCATCHER), SOCIAL FLYCATCHER, RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER (these last two are another pair that is more difficult to distinguish than most give them credit for), CINNAMON BECARD, PURPLE-THROATED FRUITCROW (much more satisfying than the scraggly single bird I saw in the rain years ago in Costa Rica!), WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN (the lek may have been destroyed but they are still in the area, perhaps on other lek sites), SOUTHERN NIGHTINGALE-WREN (heard on several occasions, but we couldn't bring it out into view; the song isn't as haunting as that of the Northern Nightingale Wren, one of my all-time favorite bird songs), CHOCO WARBLER, GRAY-AND-GOLD TANAGER, DUSKY-FACED TANAGER (very Bush-Tanager-like in its behavior), TAWNY-CRESTED TANAGER, SLATE-COLORED GROSBEAK, LESSER SEED-FINCH (in the disturbed area on the entrance road), SCARLET-RUMPED CACIQUE (not very common there).

We returned for dinner at the lodge, did the bird notes and retired early. This was the point in a trip like this when sleep deprivation starts to catch up with me and overwhelm my pure enthusiasm. On a longer trip it would be a good time to schedule an off

day, but with only two days of birding left on this trip I wasn't going to let mere fatigue slow me down if I could help it! The day's total was 109 species, and many life birds for me in that total.

*Part 3 will appear in the next issue of Needles
(April-May, 2005)*

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Screech Owl



Mission Statement

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.