



The Sequoia

BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Volume 27, No. 3

November, 1977

MEETINGS:

BOARD MEETING, NOVEMBER 3, THURSDAY, 7:30 PM in the conference room of Northern California Savings & Loan office, 1430 Chapin Avenue in Burlingame. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, November 10, Thursday, 8:00 PM at the San Mateo Garden Center, located on Parkside Way--between 26th and 27th Avenues--just west of Alameda de las Pulgas in San Mateo.

"Amphibians and Reptiles of California and Elsewhere," will be presented by Dr. Nathan Cohen, Director of Curriculum Development at University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Cohen did his undergraduate work at Berkeley, his masters at U.C.L.A. and received his Ph.D. at Oregon in Herpetology. At Berkeley he studied under Robert Stebbens, an eminent authority and author in the field of herpetology. Dr. Cohen has a collection of beautiful slides which he commenced during his high school teaching days to supplement the faded specimens preserved in jars of formaldehyde. Some months ago his presentation was featured on the KPIX TV "Evening Show." Paleontologists tell us that present day birds evolved from ancient reptiles. Come and learn how evolution treated another branch of this family tree.

Charles Newman will have another "Bird of the Month"--taped call and slides--for us. He will be hard pressed to equal the excellent pictures and recording of the Pileated Woodpecker which was his outstanding contribution at the October meeting.

FIELD TRIPS:

SAVE GAS--AND--MAKE BIRDING PALS BY CAR-POOLING. Call Pearl Morgenstern, 341-2510, and tell her where a rider or two can meet you. Split the cost of fifteen cents a mile equitably.

NOVEMBER 5, SATURDAY, PILLAR POINT

Meet at 8:30 AM in the large dirt parking lot at the east end of the jetty at Princeton. This is just off Highway 1, 3½ miles north of its intersection with Highway 92 in Half Moon Bay. Lunch is optional. Dress

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warmly. Be prepared for a two-mile walk.

LEADER: Peter Metropulos 591-9898

NOVEMBER 19, SATURDAY, PALO ALTO YACHT HARBOR

Meet at 8:30 AM at the duck pond where we will spend about half an hour. Take Embarcadero Road east from Bayshore Freeway. If it is raining hard the trip will be cancelled. Lunch optional.

LEADER: John Silliman 593-5323

DECEMBER 10, SATURDAY, FOSTER CITY

Meet at 8:30 AM. Other details in December SEQUOIA. There will be a high tide at 11:10 AM so this should be a good opportunity to see Clapper Rails.

LEADERS John Silliman 593-5323
and Ron White

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

Point Reyes, September 24

It was a beautiful day and everyone enjoyed the trip. Although a wave wasn't passing through on that day, a few vagrants were seen. The best, and a lifer for most, was an Ovenbird. Other good finds included Rough-legged and Ferruginous hawks, a male Harlequin duck and a Palm warbler. All of these were seen by most everyone. A Blackpoll warbler was also seen by a few birders. Also, Barn and Great-horned owls and a Pectoral sandpiper were seen with about 75 other species. A Lapland longspur was heard.

-- Andy Kratter, Leader

Pescadero Marsh, October 8

On Saturday, October 8, 1977 during cold low-overcast weather 26 earlybirders in winter plumage were sighted working the marsh starting at 8:00 AM. Many birds were seen by these earlybirders but none that could be called unusual for the marsh.

The following species were observed: eared and western grebe, brown pelicans in abundance, great blue heron, snowy egret, mallard, shoveler, ruddy duck, marsh hawk, American kestrel, black oystercatcher, killdeer, black-bellied plover, ruddy turnstone, black turnstone, wandering tattler, willet, greater yellowlegs, dunlin, long-billed dowitcher, marbled god-wit, sanderling, northern phalarope, herring gull, California gull, Heermann's gull, black phoebe, long-billed marsh wren, Brewer's black-bird, song sparrow.

An interesting and very common observation was that of a herring gull with sea star arms protruding from his mouth as he tenaciously tried to swallow the sea star. What these birds can swallow must be seen to be believed.

-- John Hart, State Park Ranger/Leader

CHRISTMAS COUNTS:

In a very short time the annual bird census will be upon us, and it is not too early to begin thinking about what your particular role will

be in the Christmas counts this year. The success of the Crystal Springs count and the Año Nuevo count depends upon the number of people participating. This is a very important factor. In the past sixty to seventy members have participated in the Crystal Springs count but I'm sure we could get more members out there on count day. The Oakland count for example, has had 200 or more people involved on count day. Out of that total an amazing 51 individual counts came from backyard feeders. I'm almost embarrassed to say that last year only three individuals took the time to call in their feeder and backyard tallies. This is the weakest area in our annual census, and I'm sure more of you could help us out in that category. For the many of you who are new to birding or those of you who feel your birding ability is not sharp enough to be in the field on count day, here is an area where you can help us tremendously. All the residential areas from northern Burlingame down to San Carlos are in the census circle and I'm sure there must be more than three people who have hummingbird feeders or ordinary bird feeders. If you want to do a backyard, a neighborhood or an even larger residential area on count day, why don't you help us out and call one of the numbers listed below.

Another point I must stress is that the Christmas count is a dawn to dusk undertaking. It is not like a field trip that ends in the early afternoon. Too many people in the past have counted until the early afternoon and gone home. This leaves at least four hours of daylight that their particular sectors were not covered. If you don't plan to stay out all day then a residential count is suggested or an area of lower bird density will be assigned.

Those of you who plan to be in the field on count day contact one of the numbers listed below as soon as possible. Please don't wait to the last minute! This year the Crystal Springs count is on December 26 and the Año Nuevo count is on December 31. Let's all help out and make this year's counts the best ever.

-- Barry Sauppe -- Compiler

Call one of the numbers listed below and discover the gratifying feeling of contributing to a valuable natural science research and enjoying a full day of birding as well (dog-tired though you may be):

Georgia and Jerry Perkins	Daly City	583-7815	(after 4:00)
Wanda Belland	Pacifica	355-4584	
Kate and Paul Potyen	Pacifica	355-6050	
Liz McTighe	Burlingame	697-1390	
Liv Gurevitz	Hillsborough	347-0912	
The McElhanys	Burlingame	343-3219	
Fran Nelson	Belmont	593-7941	
Aveline Butler	San Carlos	593-4489	
Genevieve Miller	Redwood City	368-7169	
Wilma Rockman	Redwood City	366-3434	
Lynne Aldrich	Menlo Park	497-5983	- Business
		325-9349	- Home

The Rathlesbergers	Woodside	364-7629
Harry and Ildiko Oyler	La Honda	948-8131

CONSERVATION NEWS:

A correction is needed of the statement in last month's Conservation News that all five of the alternatives suggested for development of the Port of Redwood City included massive development. I have since been able to get a copy of the EIR at the Redwood City Library and find that Alternative 5 is one that SAS members can approve. This was already done at the last SAS Directors' meeting, and a letter was sent to the Redwood City Planning Commission for its October meeting expressing their approval of Alternative 5.

Briefly, Alternative 5 would reclaim the Leslie Salt evaporation ponds and put altogether 1,835 acres in marsh (including 60 acres for shellfish culture) and another 10 acres in park, leaving 200 acres for Port facilities and 80 acres for an expanded marina. The first two alternatives would involve such intensive industrial development that the EIR does not consider them feasible because of the excessive traffic generated. However, the Planning Commission at its September meeting still apparently favored the second, its own plan, which would besides move a combined San Carlos-Palo Alto Airport to some of the Leslie salt ponds south of the present Port development. The third alternative lowers the one-way peak traffic load of the first two by combining a residential community of 1,040 acres with 490 acres for port facilities and light industry, leaving 155 acres for park and 230 acres in marsh. The fourth alternative, proposed by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) would leave 1,340 acres in marsh and allow 775 acres for Port and light industrial development. This last, as well as the first three alternatives, would impact wildlife habitat on Bair Island by developing that part of Inner Bair Island lying on the northwest side of Redwood Creek.

Among other proposed developments in the county is a list of marinas suggested for development by the Harbor District. It includes enlargement of the Oyster Point and Coyote Point marinas, already pretty much a foregone conclusion, as is the new marina for Foster City. This will be built close to the mouth of Belmont Slough and will not entail the same environmental degradation that the original location farther up the Slough (opposed by SAS) would have done. Other Bayside marinas, some of which are about out of the planning stage, include one proposed by Mobil Oil farther inland on the Redwood Shores side of Belmont Slough, one slightly north of the Foster City marina on land awarded by recent court decision to Westbay Associates, the enlargement of the Redwood City marina proposed in the Port plans, as well as a new one in Redwood City northwest of it near Pete's Harbor, and one in East Palo Alto at Cooley Landing, once the site of a thriving 19th century port.

By mid-October, when this was written, Congress was still unadjourned and had not settled several bills important to conservation, including HR 39/S 1500, the Alaskan Lands bills strongly supported by NAS in their original form without amendments already being introduced to reduce the amount of land protected. The President's energy plan had been at least

partly rejected by the Senate, though the House passed a fairly good bill, and it is possible a House-Senate conference could reinstate some of the energy taxes killed by the Senate.

Though the Legislature has been adjourned for well over a month (happily after passage of AB 1717 protecting Suisun Marsh) the so-called Bottle Bill to require deposits on beverage containers, which lacked two votes for passage by the Senate Finance Committee, is still receiving consideration. Senator Omer Rains, who introduced the bill, SB 4, believes its success in the Legislature is likely to be too remote and he is advocating an initiative campaign. This has much support, not only from civic, public interest and conservation groups, but also from farm, consumer and sportsmen's groups as well as some labor unions and a good number of counties and city councils. Supporters have formed a group called "Californians Against Waste" and are asking for public contributions to underwrite the cost of the campaign. Opponents can be counted on to spend large amounts of money as they did in Massachusetts to the amount of \$2 million, defeating the initiative there by a majority of less than 1%. Those wishing to help can send contributions in any amount to: Californians Against Waste, P.O. Box 289, Sacramento, CA 95802. To comply with campaign reform laws, occupation, employer's name, and both home and business addresses are required with such donations.

-- Ruth Smith, Conservation Chairman

BIRDING THROUGH MY KITCHEN WINDOW: By Fran Nelson

PART III

It is almost daylight when I resume my check--too dark to see much of anything but--what do I hear? Incredible! That gravelly little call! The parents are already on deck with beaksful of insects! My vigil continues.

Later in the morning, I walk across the street and look back to see if I can see where the fledgling is. I can hear but not see him. Hopefully, he is at least in a shrub.

Having been home all week, it is necessary that I embark upon a few errands. After an absence of a couple of hours, the anxious mother greets me and I hurry out with raisins. With unbelieving eyes I watch her fly to a large pine behind the back fence! But, is this the grounded bird or one of the others she is feeding? I listen for calls where the grounded bird had been. Hearing nothing, I cautiously check the area for signs of foul play. My hopes rise, when I see no evidence, that it is indeed that bird who has moved to a safer place!

The next day, early again, I am out in the yard and the first sounds to greet my ears are the welcomed burry calls coming from that pine! The mother makes three lightning-swift trips to her little charge! All day, she is a very busy Robin.

The next morning, she comes with the first rays of light and leaves with a beakful of raisins but this time she is calling softly from first one place, then another. There is no little burry answer. Sick at heart, I can watch no more. At 8:00 a.m., the mother looks me up and she is obviously in a big hurry! I hasten to put out a raisin supply and this time she knows just where she is going!

Meanwhile, the male Robin is going off sometimes to the east and sometimes to the west! Can it be that three of those fledglings have made it through this most critical of times? Or, does he have a very active youngster?

I hear a young Robin and locate it hopping around in the junipers. Our female has just flown off in the usual direction with food. When she returns, she feeds the one in the junipers! This, I feel, is most likely the oldest one. According to A. C. Bent, Robins begin incubation after the second egg is laid. I figure one of the two oldest was the one taken by the cat and so the three that are left are one day apart. It is probably the middle one that is being fed by the father and it is somewhere to the east of us. They have done well after that hair-raising start.

The youngster that is here has been drinking copious quantities of water. I can't help but wonder if he really wants that much or if it gives him a feeling of independence to be able to do something for himself--and so well! Next, he finds another use for the water--a bath! That one feels so good, he takes another! He does this so well, too, one would never guess he hadn't had a lot of experience. Next, he's hopping around looking at the raisins. Looks easy enough! Why wait? He chooses a nice big golden one. He holds it in the tip of his beak and swallows, but nothing happens. Then he figures out how to get the raisin back in his throat and again he swallows. This time the raisin shoots out of his mouth with the speed of a watermelon seed shot from between thumb and forefinger! Three times this happens--then success! What an enterprising little fellow! All on his own he has been drinking, bathing and eating on only his third day out of the nest!

Later in the day, the mother is feeding two young ones here and is no longer having to make trips out of the yard! She is looking much more relaxed now that she has them together. Our TV antenna affords her a good vantage point for watching over both of them. It is from here, I discover, that she seems to appear out of nowhere should a jay land too close to one of her young ones and she places herself between them. She is much more aggressive than the male. He allows other Robins the use of the facilities here usually--even doesn't object strenuously to sharing raisins. But she does her best to run them all off!

Now the day is drawing to a close. The mother has just fed her two little ones and they are all together in the pyracantha. Suddenly, the youngest takes off for the big pine back of the fence and the mother is after him like a shot! The oldest is quick to follow.

Eleven days have passed since fledging day and now all three big-eyed little ones have assembled in our back yard. Their parents are here, too, of course, and what joy it gives me to see the family together again!

As the youngsters grow older, the parents are able to hunt farther afield. On one occasion, the mother returns with a long gray caterpillar with black bands, a smaller green one and a winged insect and she searches for a gullet to poke them into.

Another week elapses and August is two-thirds over. The youngsters are partially on their own. Fewer parental duties must be welcomed because moulting season is upon them and they have their own personal problems with which to cope. They need a lot of baths as do most of the other birds who are coming. The water goes down rapidly but when the female Robin comes and finds the water low, she knows just what to do. She

stands on the edge of a saucer, looks it over, looks in at me, stands on the edge of another saucer, looks it over and looks in at me. And out I go--on the run! She has me trained!

The month is drawing to a close and the young ones are becoming more self-sufficient with each passing day. Their mother finds it necessary at times to tell me they need some raisins and this she does by opening her beak and snapping it closed. When I have replenished the supply, she calls in any missing offspring and watches as they begin to feed themselves before she partakes.

Our parent Robins, along with all the other adults, are moulting very heavily now, looking scruffy and feeling obviously drained. I, too, am drained and in full sympathy. I am hoping never to have another nest so handy to watch that I'm tempted. I know now for sure that I just can't handle it!

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH:

Audubon Canyon Ranch is a 1000-acre wildlife sanctuary and education center located on Bolinas Lagoon three miles north of Stinson Beach on State Highway 1. It is open to the public on weekends and holidays from March 1 through July 4 each year. Special visits may be arranged by phoning the Ranch, 383-1644. The Ranch is sponsored by Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies. In 1969 the Ranch was designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a Registered Natural Landmark.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH - by Betty Boyd

Audubon Canyon Ranch is now in its 18th year. Lands acquired over this period far exceed its original boundaries. The appreciation and use of them are now focal points of the Ranch's activities. To this end, the Volunteer Council of Audubon Canyon Ranch, funded by a grant from the Junior League of San Francisco some eight years ago, has made and is making a very valuable contribution.

The Council is composed of men and women, who after an in-depth training in an education program, give their time in the Fall and Spring months four days a week teaching. Teams of three visit the inner-city schools of the San Francisco Bay area. The first three days are spent in the classroom. On the fourth day an open space area near the school becomes a field Laboratory. A similar program follows in the Spring, but at this time the Ranch proper becomes the field Laboratory. The Ranch applauds the Volunteer Council and expresses its appreciation for its dedication and the effective work it is doing.

OCTOBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

The board of directors of Sequoia Audubon held their regular meeting on October 6.

President Prime announced that our Christmas Count dates had been established as December 26 for the Crystal Springs Count and December 31 for the Año Nuevo Count.

The terms of Al Bergeron and Maryann Danielson on the Audubon Canyon Ranch board of directors expire this month. The board reappointed Maryann Danielson. Al Bergeron had suggested that he would prefer not to be reappointed so Steve Aldrich was appointed. Terms are for three years.

Jean Jones reported that she, Maryann Danielson and Barry Sauppe visited Pescadero Marsh on Sunday, October 2, and consulted with John Hart and Bill Anderson as to plans for the marsh. It was felt that Sequoia should again become more actively involved at Pescadero Marsh. President Prime asked Jean Jones to act as temporary chairman and to organize our efforts in this area.

Al Bergeron had asked to be relieved of his duties in connection with our scholarship program for Audubon Workshop of the West. President Prime appointed Dr. Norman Fox to fill this position, assisted by Jean Jones.

OCTOBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: - by Amy McElhany

As Ed and I started for the Garden Center and the October General Meeting, I picked up pen and paper "just in case" Shiela Davies wouldn't be there and it would fall to me to "cover" the meeting so those who could not attend could know a little about what's happening. And, you missed another wonderful program.

I was tired and I have a most embarrassing habit of falling asleep when the lights are turned out to show slides. I couldn't sleep. The "Bird of the Month" pictures by Charles Newman were excellent and woodpeckers are, well, noisy. (The tape was exceptionally good.)

Then Bruce Sorrie, a biologist from Point Reyes Bird Observatory, strode up the front and Barbara Fearis, also from PRBO worked the slide projector for one of the most beautiful and informative slide/lectures I have ever seen. Sleep? Impossible. Bruce, who graduated from Cornell in Vertebrate Zoology, spent two years of his Navy duty in the Carribean as a Navy photographer. Therefore, his pictures of the four habitats on Puerto Rico were superb and his explanations authenticated by familiarity with the islands, knowledge of the animals inhabiting them and an inherent interest in natural science.

It seems the red mangroves grow well out into the ocean in mucky water and are held stable by an intricate jumble of roots. The black mangroves grow further inland and send up pneumatophores which can be walked upon. The Yellow-shouldered blackbird found in the mangrove swamps is well on its way to the endangered species list partially at least due to the dwindling of the swamps.

One of the most appealing pictures was that of the Puerto Rican Tody a bright green, short, pudgy-looking bird with an oversized bill and scarlet throat--and a charming personality evident even in a picture.

In the dense growth of the fascinating Rain Forest live birds which are endemic to that region. Among them is the Puerto Rican Parrot pictured at its nest hole. There are only about 20 of these birds left. They have enemies in other birds, rats, etc., but their disappearance seems mostly due to a faulty biology, just what is wrong has not yet been discovered.

In 1971 a new species of warbler, the Elfin Woods Warbler was discovered on an island which receives thousands of visitors yearly. There are 700 or 800 pairs on the island. They do not migrate.

At the end of a peninsula on Isla Culebra thousands of pairs of

sooty terns nest. The birds do not nest until they are six years old. What they do from the time they leave home until they return to nest at age six is a mystery. They do not go into the water except for food and then apparently eat only surface food. They preen and scratch while flying. Do they spend all of that time just flying? Don't they rest?

At the conclusion of Bruce Sorrie's talk we adjourned for coffee and cookies then returned to our seats for a VERY brief business meeting, a format that seems to be meeting with approval.

See you next month?

COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY:

The Northern California Chapter of Cooper Ornithological Society will conduct a meeting on Thursday, December 1, in Room 2503, National Sciences Building, University of California, Berkeley at 8:00 PM. The speaker will be Dr. Miklos Udvardy of Sacramento State University on, "Beharorial Thermoregulation in Hummingbirds," which will include a 20-minute film.

RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

The George Whittell Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road in Tiburon will present the following programs commencing at 3:00 PM each Sunday in November:

- November 6 - Birds of the Galapagos Islands, slide lecture by Steve Bobzein who recently returned from a 14-month stay in the Galapagos Islands.
- November 13 - The California Condor. Slide lecture by Jerry McIlwain of the U.S. Forest Service.
- November 20 - The Incredible Birds of New Zealand. Rebecca Rodden, Audubon student Naturalist and native of New Zealand, will discuss animals, plants and birds and will show two color films on New Zealand birds. There will also be an art exhibit of New Zealand birds on display.
- November 27 - Private Life of the Kingfisher. A color film showing some hard to observe daily routines in the life of this interesting bird including a look into the bird's nest chamber in a stream bank.

THE SEQUOIA is the newsletter of Sequoia Audubon Society of San Mateo County and is published monthly, September through June. Membership in National Audubon Society includes a SEQUOIA subscription and membership in Sequoia Audubon Society if you live in our area. Subscription for non-members is \$2.00 per year.

If you are moving, remember to send the SEQUOIA editors your change of address. If you are moving away from San Mateo County and want to transfer your membership to your new Audubon Chapter, include your request with your change of address to National Audubon Society as this transfer is made only upon specific direction from the subscriber.

C A L E N D A R

- November 3 - Board Meeting at Northern California Savings
and Loan
5 - Field Trip - Pillar Point
10 - November Monthly Membership Meeting at Garden Center
19 - Field Trip - Palo Alto Yacht Harbor
- DECEMBER 1 - Board Meeting
8 - December Membership Meeting
10 - Field Trip - Foster City

SIGN UP FOR THE CHRISTMAS COUNTS NOW (See Pages 2, 3, & 4)

THE SEQUOIA November, 1977
Sequoia Audubon Society
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