



The Sequoia



BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Volume 29, No. 3

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
November, 1979

MEETINGS:

BOARD MEETING, NOVEMBER 1, THURSDAY, 7:30p.m. in the conference room of Allstate Savings & Loan office, 1820 So. Grant Street, San Mateo. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, NOVEMBER 8, THURSDAY, 7:30p.m. at the San Mateo Garden Center. The Garden Center is located on Parkside Way--between 26th and 27th Avenues--just west of Alameda de las Pulgas in San Mateo.

Ron Storro-Patterson, a biologist familiar with the plight of the Bowhead Whale will present a slide program about one of the ocean's most fascinating and probably the least known cetaceans. This northern whale is on the brink of extinction and currently is being studied as to the maximum subsistence harvesting by the Eskimos. This native whaling controversy and its effects will be discussed by Mr. Storro-Patterson as he presents this timely and interesting program.

Frank Allen and Charles Newman will present another chapter in their "See and Hear" Bird of the Month Series.

FIELD TRIPS: Public invited

NOVEMBER 3, SATURDAY -- S.F. BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Meet at 8:00a.m. in the Refuge parking lot at the east end of the Dumbarton Bridge. Pass through the toll plaza and take the first right turn. We will carpool here for a guided tour of the levees surrounding salt ponds north of Coyote Hills. Migrating waterfowl and shore birds should be coming through.

--Leader: Wilma Rockman 366-3434

NOVEMBER 17, SATURDAY -- LAKE MERRITT and HEGENBERGER ROAD

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the duck feeding station on Lakeside Drive in Oakland. From the Nimitz Freeway (#17) take the Oak Street exit and proceed east to the vicinity of the nature center. We will bird in this area for about an hour. Bring some stale bread to feed the ducks if you like. After lunch we will visit the west end of Hegenberger Road for shore birds. Bring lunch, binoculars, scopes.

Leaders: John Silliman 692-2070
Jerry Perkins 583-7815

NOVEMBER 20 TUESDAY -- TUESDAY BIRDERS TO COYOTE HILLS

Since this will be our only midweek trip this month, we'll stretch it out until 2:00 or 3:00p.m. We may even be able to visit the San

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Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge on the way over. Call the Allens, 344-9339 for meeting places for carpooling.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

September 8 - Burlingame Shore Bird Sanctuary Cleanup

Go by and see how nice the Clapper Rails' Marsh looks! Fifteen dedicated workers piled eight loads of debris into McElhany's and Allen's wagons. It really looks pretty now. And don't forget to watch SUNSET MAGAZINE for a photo of our distinguished secretary in the mud.

-- Jean, Frank Allen, Leaders

September 15 -- Pescadero Marsh

Approximately 15 birders arrived early in the morning, in a very heavy fog, to explore and appreciate the beautiful Pescadero Marsh area. Our walk started promptly at 8:30a.m. and we did the Pescadero Creek area finding many shore birds doing their usual thing, feeding on the many food sources found in the area.

As so often happens, after a three-month layoff of bird watching, there were the usual arguments concerning the identity of what we had seen. However, good fellowship prevailed and we all agreed on the species sighted. This is the fun of the field trips and we always enjoy the competitive camaraderie. The special challenge that morning was to identify birds in the fog--we had to depend on the bird's actions and body configuration. Among the special sightings were several hundred Northern Phalaropes, a Wandering Tattler, Greater Yellowlegs, Pectorial Sandpiper, Surf-bird, American Bittern, Whimbrel. The whole group was able to view closely a pair of Yellowthroat and the ever busy Longbilled Marsh Wren. A few Pintail and Mallards were sighted on the other side of the Marsh but their numbers were not significant. The total species sighted was 44. As always, Pescadero Marsh provided us with a rewarding and satisfying morning.

-- Hal and Barbara Lucas, Leaders

September 22 -- Palo Alto Flood Control Basin

It is always a thrill to see the White and Brown Pelicans bring so many young back to our shores. Their different feeding techniques were interesting to watch. One Redhead was our only unusual bird. We observed 42 species as we leisurely walked the levee to the Bay and back.

CONSERVATION NEWS: by Ruth Smith

A mid-October vacation will make this "News," sent from New York, even earlier than usual. The one item that can be really counted on is the November Sixth election of a County Supervisor to finish the term vacated by Congressman Royer. Five candidates are running: former State Senator Arlen Gregorio, Redwood City Councilman Mario Biagi, Probe Community Center Director Clifford Boxley, hospital nurse Phyllis Burton and Nancy Jewell Cross who calls herself a "People's advocate." The position is politically important. The outcome of local environmental issues will be influenced by the choice of candidate. It is therefore vital that we all cast our votes since a very few votes may influence the outcome.

Congress is rushing toward early adjournment and much ill-considered legislation could be pushed through in their haste to get home. The focus is now on energy. Senator Jackson's S.1308 is sponsoring the proposed Energy Mobilization Board with power to preempt both old and future laws--federal, state and local--which affect "priority energy projects." Such a term applies to the proposed program of synfuel plants whose toxic emissions could be potentially damaging to air and water and thus to both

plant and animal life including man himself.

A substitute bill, S1806, introduced by Senators Ribicoff and Muskie, would require the projects to meet environmental laws and would protect the rights of public participation and court review. Neither of the two House versions is very environmentally acceptable, but the one from the Interior Committee contains more limits on the powers of the Energy Mobilization Board. SAS members can call the Audubon Hotline in Washington--(202) 783-1920--to obtain the latest developments and learn what citizen input is needed.

The House at the time of this writing was also considering reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act which will end in March, 1980. The Senate reauthorization left the Act intact, but Congressman Breaux has offered an amendment to the bill, HR2218, which would seriously impair the independent advisory capacity of the Endangered Species Scientific Authority (ESSA). It is hoped that he can be prevailed on to modify his amendment and give his needed support to a strong endangered species program.

On the state level, strong support was voiced by a large audience at the Palo Alto hearing in September for the excellent program to preserve Mono Lake and its wildlife proposed by the Mono Lake Task Force. Both NAS Director George Peyton and representatives from several Bay Area Audubon Societies (including SAS) expressed support of the program. The difficult part lies ahead--getting the reduction in water use by the City of Los Angeles accepted.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SAN MATEO COUNTY--

Gaggles of geese, scolds of jays, parliaments of owls, congregations of plovers, charms of finches, casts of hawks, hosts of sparrows, and more of those lovely collective nouns!

A discord of experts...Calvo, Garcia, Naylor and McCloskey gave highlights on Energy...it's a major problem...don't be hasty...we need fast-track energy legislature...de-control oil...remove procedural features of environmental laws...support mobilization board...don't support it...use wind...use water...special interests will dominate legislature...money, money...later than you think...need more public hearings...

McCloskey warned environmentalists (does that include birders?) to participate in mitigation (def: to become less harsh or painful. SYN: relax)...

San Mateo County Coastal Plan...Piecemeal presentations... Montara, Pescadero...farmers concerned about restrictions...bayside presentation canceled...when will we hear about the plan?...

Watchdogs for San Francisco Bay...Army Corps of Engineers face possible reorganization and relocation...Sacto to handle regulations for the Bay...L.A. to "do" the coast side...a case of "out-of-sight-out-of-mind"?...

San Mateo City Plans...new bridge...widen road to four lanes, add 14' garden strip in center...add 10' shoulders...bike lanes...all at East Third and Norfolk to Mariner's Blvd...Great for new shopping center...alleviate Foster City traffic...will they save the tidy little marshes in the area?...S.M. City to be congratulated on its Open Space and Park plans from Coyote Park to the S.M. Bridge...

Redwood City...expands into the Bay...121 boat houses to be built in the sloughs near the yacht harbor

San Bruno...Plan'g Com. recommends 47 town houses on fringe of Saddle area of S.B.Mt...what's happening to the rest of it?

Foster City...What construction is being planned along the Belmont Slough?...

Pescadero...Pity the farmer...layer upon layer of regulations

over their land...and that isn't manure...Bd of Supervisors to spend \$22,500 on erosion...a study on the watershed...will that freshen the marsh?...

--WR

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 3 through July 4. The Ranch is sponsored by Golden Gate, Madrone, 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

The 1979 nesting period was perhaps the most successful nesting season for the Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets at Audubon Canyon Ranch since records have been kept. This is the 12th year that Helen Pratt has faithfully continued her observations. The 35 pairs of nesting Herons raised 69 young and the 91 pairs of Great Egrets raised 221 young. This is of particular interest inasmuch as there were 7 fewer pairs of nesting Herons but there were three more young than last year. The pairs of Egrets nesting, however, were increased by three and the proportion of chicks raised shows an increase of 82. The increase in the number of chicks raised in both cases is due to half of the successful Heron nests and almost half of the Egret nests raising three chicks per nest - a banner year.**

The Board of Audubon Canyon Ranch wishes to express its appreciation and say thank you to the volunteers from Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies who so willingly gave up weekend days and assisted the Staff in caring for the 18,000 or so visitors who came on public days from near and far.

** Please note that the above figures are preliminary to Helen Pratt's final report.

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING:

Last May Vice-President John Silliman and three Sequoia Audubon members joined a group in Florida for a week's birding. In the June issue of THE SEQUOIA John described the trip and the many species seen. At this meeting the outing came to life when he showed slides of bird and animal life of the southern Florida area, as well as of the members of the group and points of interest.

One "bird" unknown to any of us (although we tried hard) was revealed by John as the lesser of two Weevils -- or was it Evils??

The October Bird of the Month was the House Wren seen and heard at Alum Rock Park last February as compared with the House Wren of Costa Rica, both by courtesy of Frank Allen. (C.G.)

CLIPPERS WANTED:

We need "clippers" for clipping news items from your local newspaper. There are approximately 14 newspapers covering the county that print items of environmental news. Our conservation committee will review the items and decide which are to be followed, studied, present testimony based on Audubon Goals or write letters as needed.

If you are interested, contact Carmen Gales, 349-6927.

DECEMBER MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Mr. Doug Cheeseman, an instructor at DeAnza College will bring to our December 13 meeting his program entitled "Behavior of Birds in Kenya" a fascinating program about the way birds perform in their social niches and while feeding. See the "pecking order" of the carrion eaters and the

and the group nesting of the weaver birds. With over a thousand species in east Africa alone, this is truly a photographer's delight. Mr. Cheesema leads a group to Kenya and Tanzania each year for Nature Expeditions International and is well informed about the entire ecology of the region. Please make plans to come to the December's Potluck at 6:30 to share the delights of the table and then settle back at 8:00p.m. to enjoy the spectacular array of bird life in East Africa.

FUNGUS FAIR

The Fungus Fair on December 9th from 10 to 5 at Fort Mason, Building 312, provides an unusual opportunity to see and learn about the mushrooms of this area: displays by habitat, species, how to cook. A special display of those to be avoided. Sponsored by the San Francisco Mycological Society. Admission \$1.50 adults, 50¢ children.

NECKBANDED LESSER SNOW GEESE

A declining population of Snow Geese which summer on Wrangel Island, Russia, spend their winters along the Pacific Coast of North America. Russian, Canadian and U.S. scientists are cooperating in banding and resighting study of these birds so that their international life history and management requirements become better understood. Several hundred "Snows" have been trapped on Wrangel Island and banded with orange, coded neck-collars. Over half of these marked birds have been resighted in North America. Several hundred Snows received green neckcollars at wildlife refuges in California and Utah, where Wrangel Snows are known to visit. Birds wearing these green neckcollars have been resighted on Wrangel Island. Efforts to band Russian geese during their stay in North America are being increased. A similar increase in resighting activity is encouraged.

The Pilchuck Chapter in Washington State, is coordinating the Audubon resighting-reporting efforts. The Chapter distributes a promotional brochure, a Project Information and Resighting Booklet, summarizes resighting data for the U.S. Project Office in Baltimore and will send resighters banding and resighting information on the birds they report.

Chapters and individuals interested in Project materials and/or more information should contact Pilchuck Audubon, Martha Jordan, 527 212th St., S.W., Bothell, WA 98011, (206) 775-0137.

SUNBEAM ECOLOGY EXPLORATIONS--WINTERING BIRDS (Some by the thousands)

There are still a few places left for some lucky birdwatchers in the four part series sponsored by Sunbeam Ecology Explorations (S.E.E.). A pre-trip slide show lecture on January 11 will be followed by field trips to the San Francisco Bay Refuge, the Delta and an overnight trip to Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area and Panoche Valley. The class fee of \$45 covers bus transportation and overnight accommodations. For further details, call Maryann Danielson at 342-6919.

WANTED--FOUR DRAWER FILE CABINET:

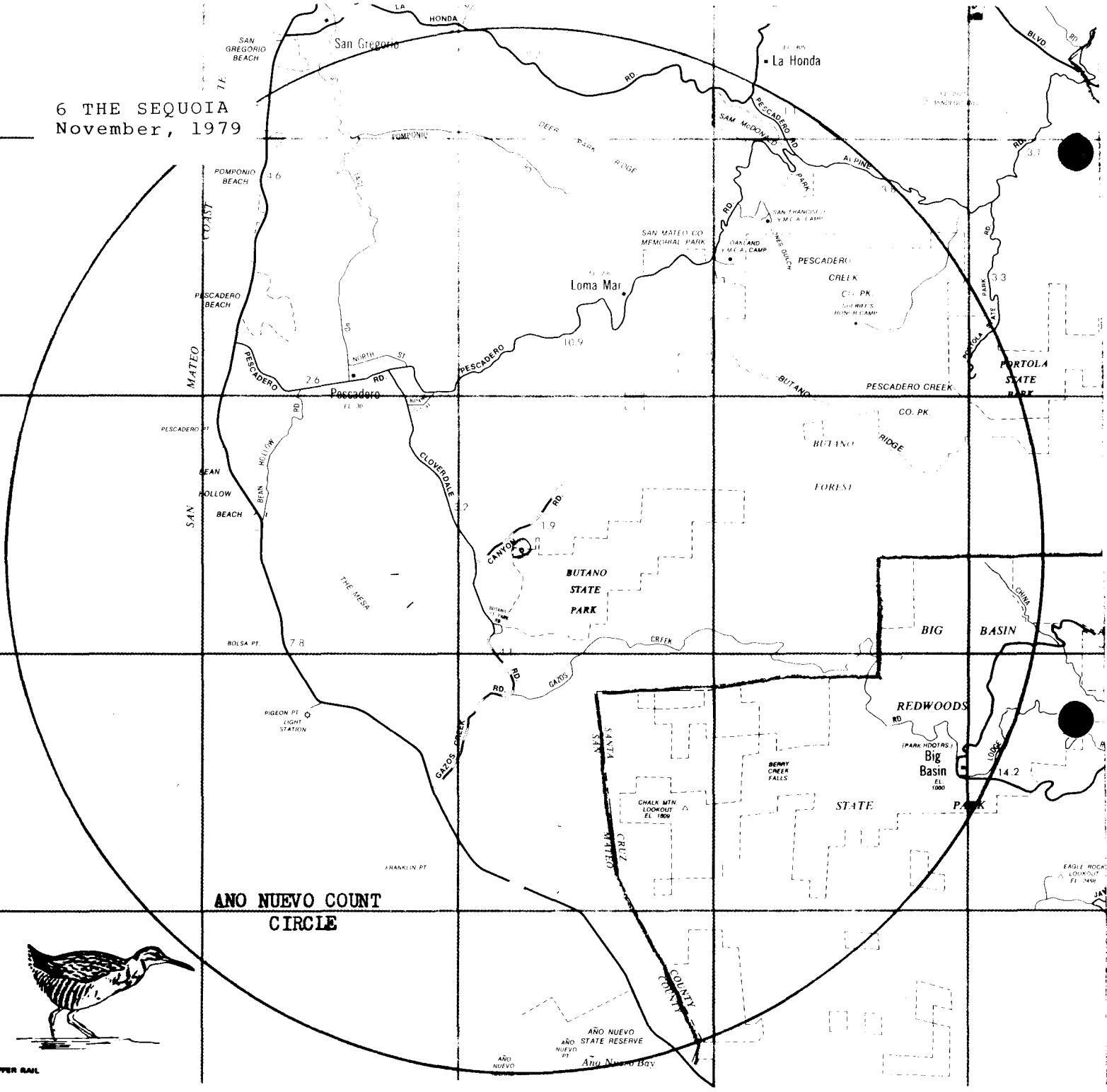
The Chairman of the Pescadero Marsh Committee has stacks of useful environmental information, if she could only find it. A file cabinet would help solve the problem. If you have a sturdy file cabinet or know where to find one at little cost, please call Maryann Danielson at 342-6919.

QUOTE:

The Nature Conservancy News quoting an anonymous Londoner's description of wilderness as:

"...a large damp place where wild birds fly about--
uncooked."

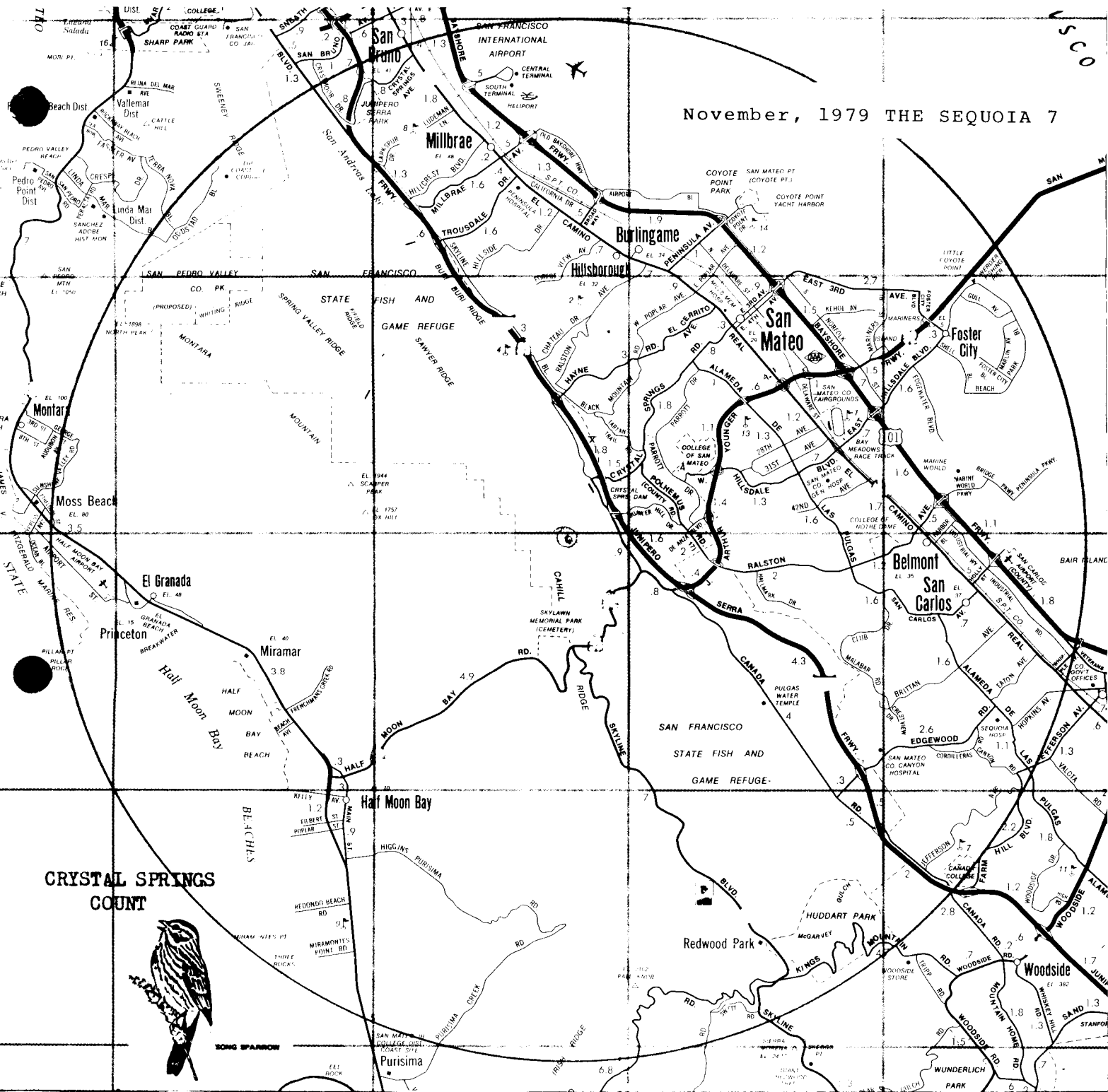
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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS — 1979

ANO NUEVO: Mark Zumsteg is our compiler, and the Count Day is December 15th. Please send in the attached form or call Frank Allen, 344-9339, as soon as possible. Your help is needed on this count, as well as the Crystal Springs count.

CRYSTAL SPRINGS: Peter Metropulos will be the compiler for this count on December 30th. He hopes to make assignments by Dec. 1. If you prefer counting in town rather than in the field, practice counting the various species at your feeders or around your neighborhood. This will help with identification on count day. Our compilers want to have people counting in every area of these two maps, so send in the form or call and tell us what area you will cover.



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CRYSTAL SPRINGS
COUNT



PARTICIPATION FORM FOR CBC -- Detach and mail or call information to H.F.A. 344-9339,
 I will participate in Sequoia Audubon's Christmas Bird Counts: (after Nov. 15.)
 Ano Nuevo, December 15 _____ Crystal Springs, December 30 _____
 I would like to count: In the City of _____
 At my feeders and in my neighborhood in the City of _____
 One of the bay shore areas _____ An ocean area _____
 One of the local parks _____ Any area assigned _____
 I expect to come to the Compilation Potluck Dinner (details to follow) _____
 Name _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Address _____ Phone _____

SEQUOIA CALENDAR

- November 1 - Thursday -- Board Meeting
" 3 - Saturday -- Field Trip S.F. Bay N.W.R.
" 8 - Thursday -- Monthly Meeting at Garden Center
" 17 - Saturday -- Field Trip Lk. Merrit & Hegenberger Rd.
" 20 - Tuesday -- Tuesday Birders to Coyote Hills
December 1 - Saturday -- Field Trip Foster City

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Sequoia Audubon Society
P.O. BOX 1131
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