



BULLETIN OF SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
volume 29, No. 5

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
January, 1980

MEETINGS

BOARD MEETING, January 3, Thursday, 7:30 PM in the conference room of Allstate Savings & Loan office, 1820 S. Grant Street, San Mateo. Board members and committee chairmen should attend. Other members are welcome.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING, January 10, Thursday, 7:30 PM 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.

Our program will feature the photographic artistry of Mr. Wim deWitt, a long-time Sierra Clubber who spent several weeks in Alaska in 1973. Mr. deWitt was the leader of a Sierra Club field trip to the North Central area that included the "Gates of the Arctic." He will show us pristine Alaska before the infamous pipeline spoiled so much of the area. Bring coats to ward off the chill as we climb up fog enshrouded hills to view the next canyon. Get your feet wet as the group fords the necklace streams. Pull your feet out of the muskeg bogs. Wildflowers and wildlife will receive their share of the allotted time. Start out the New Year by bringing your friends to see our 49th State. Refreshments at 7:30. Meeting commences at 8:00. The public is welcome.

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

FIELD TRIPS

(For Field Trip information phone 344-4577)

JANUARY 8 -- TUESDAY BIRDERS TO GOLDEN GATE PARK

Wood Ducks will be our goal for this trip, though we should see many other duck species. Carpool will leave at 9:00 AM SHARP. Call 344-9339 for meeting place.

JANUARY 12 and 13, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY POINT LOBOS AND CARMEL RIVER

This trip will be an optional overniter. Those wishing to stay overnight must make their own lodging arrangements. We will meet at the entrance to Point Lobos State Reserve at 10:00 Saturday morning. Please pack a lunch for each day. The first day will include Point Lobos with an owling trip at night. The second day will include Carmel River and part of Carmel Valley. Bring warm clothes. Allow about two and one half hours driving time from San Mateo area to Point Lobos State Reserve. The following is a list of motels in the Pacific Grove area:

Sea Breeze Motel (408) 372-7775

Butterfly Trees Lodge (408) 372-0503

PRESIDENT: Wilma Rockman
1166 Grand Street
Redwood City, CA 94061
Phone: 366-3434

EDITORS: Ed and Amy McElhany
1009 Laguna Avenue
Burlingame, CA 94010
Phone: 343-3219

SEQUOIA AUDUBON PHONE 344-4577

Pacific Grove Motel (408) 372-3218
Lighthouse Lodge " 375-6288
Milar Motel " 373-4921

Leaders: Jerry and Georgia Perkins

JANUARY 22 -- TUESDAY BIRDERS TO WUNDERLICH PARK

Wear warm clothing and boots for this morning walk through one of our newer San Mateo County parks. Varied Thrushes should be wintering in this woodland area. Call the Allens (344-9339) for meeting place and any carpooling information.

JANUARY 26, SATURDAY -- PILLAR POINT AND PRINCETON

Meet in the parking lot of the Sandpiper Restaurant at 9:00 AM. Dress warmly and wear some good walking shoes. We may encounter mud. Bring a lunch.

Leader: David Patch

FEBRUARY 9 AND 10, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY -- LOS BANOS AREA

On February 9 we will meet in the parking lot at the Los Banos State Refuge, 3 miles north of Los Banos on Henry Miller Road at 9:00 AM.

There are several motels at Los Banos. Among them are the Islander, 1021 E. Pacheco Blvd. (209-826-3045), La Casa Motel, 528 Pacheco Blvd. (209-826-0682) and Canal Farm Inn (209-826-5121). It is advisable to make reservations.

Allow approximately 2½ hours driving time (125 miles).

A map of the area will appear in the February SEQUOIA.

Please phone the leaders if you plan to attend.

Leaders: Barbara and Hal Lucas 344-4577

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

November 17 - Lake Merritt and Hegenberger Rd.

Eleven hardy birders from Sequoia plus a local expert joined forces to feed the resident gulls, coots, pigeons and blackbirds at the Lake Merritt staging area on a bright sunlit day. (President Rockman take note!) After a white bread breakfast for the local beggars, the group slowly headed east along the north shore of Oakland's SEWER (Lake). It was appalling to see this gem so desecrated by the filth and scum that the rains flush into the storm drains and empty into the lake. It was difficult to get into the birding frenzy that often overwhelms Sequoia Participants. Most of the northern migrants had not arrived yet anyhow, so the resident population of birds held our attention until it was diverted by a movie being filmed. Hegenberger Road area was so windy that we stayed only momentarily.

-- John Silliman and Jerry Perkins - leaders.

December 8 - Foster City

Warm weather, sunny skies and ideal viewing conditions greeted twenty birders in Foster City. Birding from the Fishing Pier to the Shell Bar was very productive and yielded fifty species. Some of the more interesting birds observed were: Arctic Loon, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Snowy Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and Red Knot. The Red Knots appeared in very large numbers for the species and locality. The same can be said for the Willets one of which appeared to be much much darker than all the other Willets, but, alas, it was still only a Willet.

--- Frank Collins, leader.

December 15 - Ano Nuevo Christmas Count

Many thanks to all who participated on December 15th. It was a beautiful day and Mark Zumsteg, our compiler, reports a preliminary count of 180 species! When we have the final figures I'll give you the details.

--- Frank Allen

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMP OF THE WEST

This two-week workshop is conducted in the beautiful Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. The purpose of the Camp is to promote a new appreciation of nature and all of its processes. Two units of college credit are available from the University of Wyoming. Anyone 18 years of age or older is eligible to attend and Audubon membership is not a prerequisite.

Sequoia Audubon is offering a scholarship to cover the cost of the workshop--as it has done for many years. For a brochure describing the Camp and Workshop or for a scholarship application, call Louise Fletcher at 592-4032 or the Sequoia phone, 344-4577. Completed scholarship applications must be received by February 15, 1980. Although the Camp offers 4 sessions, they fill quickly so reservations must be made promptly.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Congress will start its second session on January 22. It is possible that the House-Senate Conference Committee considering the Energy Mobilization Board bill will have sent the final version to the President by the time of the December adjournment. It is to be hoped that only the best features of each of the two bills will have been retained. The other two energy bills--the windfall profits tax and the omnibus bill including synthetic fuels demonstration, solar and other renewable energy incentives and energy conservation will probably not get out of their conference committees until the second session. At the time of writing the House had not passed bills on solar energy and conservation which the Senate version contained. The Senate bill passed was only a slightly improved version of the original Energy Committee bill which was unacceptable to conservationists. A better bill offered by the Banking Committee was rejected. Senator Cranston voted for this latter bill and Senator Hayakawa voted against it.

In early December the House passed HR 4084 making Suisun Marsh the largest remaining coastal wetland in California, a Wildlife refuge. The bill will now go to the Senate and letters urging its passage should be sent to Senators Alan Cranston and S. I. Hayakawa. Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Senator Cranston should also be thanked for his sponsorship of the Tsongas-Roth substitute Alaska bill.

The California Legislature will be starting its second session this month with a good many bills of environmental importance to be watched. SB 664 which exempts thousands of acres of wetlands from the protection of the public trust doctrine, (the right of all people to use the waters of the state for all types of recreation including their enjoyment in a natural state) will again be brought up in the Assembly Resources Committee. It would mean opening these wetland areas to possible development and should be opposed in letters to our Assemblymen, Robert Naylor and Louis J. Papan, State Capitol, Sacramento 95814.

Assemblyman Papan's bill, AB 13, is also in the same committee. It would exclude some 5,000 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains from Coastal Commission jurisdiction, thus opening it to development. This bill also should be opposed.

The \$250,000 authorized by the Legislature last fall to protect and maintain the Mono Lake gull rookery may prove insufficient for the task.

National Audubon's suit to stop diversion of streams flowing into Mono Lake will go to trial in March. Support for Mono Lake is urged through contributions made out to National Audubon Society-Mono Lake Fund, Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

County Planning Commission hearings still continue on the Local Coastal Plan, the next two to be held on January 9 at 7:30 PM in Montara and on January 23 at 7:30 PM in Pescadero. Bill Johnson presented excellent detailed comments for SAS on the Sensitive Habitats section of the Plan at the hearing on November 28.

It was recently discovered by the Committee to Save San Bruno Mountain that the quarry on the northern flank has been graded and excavated illegally hundreds of feet higher than is authorized by the quarry permit. This is causing continual dust emissions and is destroying the habitat of the endangered Elfin Butterfly. This illegal operation was presented to the Planning Commission on October 10, but the quarry is still operating, under the name of Quarry Products Inc., a statewide ownership. Another hearing is to be held in February. In the meantime it will help if SAS members who did not sign the petition at the December meeting will write a letter or postcard protesting the strip mining of San Bruno Mountain to San Mateo County Planning Department, County Government Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL --

Ruth Smith, Conservation Chmn.

KINGFISHER RESCUE

A male kingfisher slammed into my neighbors' window and lay seemingly dead for some twenty minutes. When the bird recovered consciousness, he flopped about in a decidedly lopsided manner and was unable to fly. A near-by female chattered her concern as Alan, my neighbor, caged the kingfisher, removed it to indoor warmth and began telephoning for help. Wildlife Rescue, Inc. and others advised him. He then took the bird to a Palo Alto woman who was experienced in caring for water birds. After four days of TLC which included a diet of frozen fresh fish, the kingfisher was ready for freedom. Alan brought him from his hospital home to my deck for release.

It was a thrill to see him fly unerringly toward the small lake on the shore of which we live. During captivity the kingfisher never missed an opportunity to grasp firmly any human finger that came within range. Was the bird seeking security? Inflicting punishment? Testing for edibility? At any rate, he is now working over his old fishing grounds and has rejoined his mate.

-- Genevieve Miller

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SAN MATEO COUNTY?

Have you looked at your PG&E bill with its "truth-in-paying" approach to collecting for services rendered? It is a concise document appraising one of a conservative or wasteful "life"! Instead of turning over a new leaf which does not contain the warmth I need, I shall pull on a pair of longjohns! (From that decision, you can sense my wasteful ways.) Assembly Resources, Land Use and Energy Committee (touching on Audubon oriented goals) had utility spokesmen and environmentalists agreeing at a hearing held recently in the county that the state's energy picture is bleak and the state's regulation of such a company as the PG&E needs some major changes. Other than that, utility companies opted for less government "red tape" and more nuclear plants. The environmentalists opted for conservation efforts and more efficient use of present generating plants.

Any way you look at the energy problem in our county, we'd better find a resource for energy that is recyclable, doesn't make any holes or spills, smell or poison, requires no change in present structures, is free and will solve unemployment.

After reading numerous articles, pro and con, on environmental issues within this county, I offer this quote from Henry Brooks Adams: "Practical politics consists of ignoring the facts." --W.R.

JANUARY BIRDING IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

One implication of the gasoline shortage encourages us to share the "Birding Hot Spots" of San Mateo with one another. A potential of 250 species of birds can be seen within a given year, with approximately 132 nesting here regularly and 20 more or less periodically. For a January visit, you might make a morning trip to Princeton Harbor (this places the sun behind you which makes it easier to identify birds) taking with you a 'scope or your 'nocs plus a good field guide.

Within the bay look for: Common, Arctic and Red-throated Loons; Horned, Western, Pied-billed, Eared and--a special this year--Red-necked Grebes; Common Murre, Black Brant and all of the Scoters. The Black-legged Kittiwake, Thayer's Gull and the Glaucous Gull show up occasionally. The following "bay" ducks can usually be seen: Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ruddy, Old Squaw, and the Red-breasted Merganser. Landwise, watch for the Barn Owl at dusk and listen for the raucous sounds in the marsh of the Sora and the Virginia Rail. Say's Phoebe and the Loggerhead Shrike can be seen on the wires going up toward the bluff. Occasionally you can spot a rare hawk sailing overhead. On the breakwaters of both sides of the bay look for the rare Rock Sandpiper, at high tide found on the rocks of the jetty and as the tide goes out, watch for it to feed on the exposed lower areas. Surfbirds, Tattlers, Snow-plovers, Black Turnstones are a few of the many shorebirds seen on the beaches. The Red Phalaropes were seen there on the beach this December, evidently troubled by the lack of food elsewhere. Might still be around.

To locate the Marsh and the north jetty, turn left at the signals on Highway 1 to Capistrano Road, left on Prospect, left on Broadway, right on Princeton, three blocks to the left on West Point Avenue, then park and WALK! Or, go right on West Point, drive the paved road thru the Marsh and then good luck with parking. (Thanks to Danielson, Spoelman, Allens & Metropulos for bird info.) -- W.R.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING--FEBRUARY 14

Mr. William Burns of the Oceanic Aerial Surveillance Team will present a program describing that organization's efforts to locate and correct air and water polluters.

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

"Potluck" doesn't seem an adequate word to describe the super cooking brought to Sequoia's annual Christmas buffet which was ably planned and managed by Nancy Horn and Rick Baird. Over 100 members and friends came, not only to bring food, but to sample as many dishes as Mother Nature would allow. A big THANK YOU to our members and to you, Nancy and Rick, for a truly festive gourmet affair.

Annually, biologist Doug Cheeseman takes a group to Africa for Nature Expeditions International. In and around Kenya alone there are approximately 600 species of birds. He explained that the richness of species Africa is greatly due to that continent not having been touched by the Ice Age which on our continent destroyed huge numbers of original species. Doug and Gail showed many birds which are "larger than life" so spectacular are

they. Almost no serious study of birds has been done there, hence very little literature is available. Included in the rich array of slides were three kinds of starlings all unusually beautiful. Doug remarked that we were short-changed when our "sturnus vulgaris" was introduced into North America!

Frank Allen showed a series of the more common local backyard birds as an aid to those Christmas birders who will be counting from their home territory. (C.G.)

HISTORICAL RECOLLECTIONS - B. N. (NEIL) DICKINSON
PART V - Christmas Counts (Continued)

Please refer to Table II which appeared in the October SEQUOIA
From this table one can chart the frequency with which species

occur for the period 1955-71:

Number of species counted for

17 yrs. = 75	11 yrs. = 5	5 yrs. = 7
16 yrs. = 23	10 yrs. = 5	4 yrs. = 5
15 yrs. = 16	9 yrs. = 4	3 yrs. = 8
14 yrs. = 5	8 yrs. = 8	2 yrs. = 16
13 yrs. = 8	7 yrs. = 2	1 yrs. = <u>22</u>
12 yrs. = 7	6 yrs. = 3	219

The sum for the number of species present in the counts for 17, 16 and 15 years is 114 - a nice nest egg. Actually, the base figure is somewhat greater since some species were missing from early counts due to our lack of expertise. Notable examples are the Pigmy Nuthatch which consistently appeared on the count after I had commented to Paul Lechich in 1964 concerning its rarity - "Why I see them every day among the stubs of dead Monterey pines," - and Burrowing Owls which became a fixture soon after Monty Montgomery and the late Florence Richardson reported one near Seal Slough in 1963.

Had I not goofed we would have counted consistently both Short and Long-billed Dowitchers once the latter became a respectable "statistical" species. The only need was to observe until two markedly different bill lengths were seen together.

Since 1971, Christmas counts have been mostly above 170 species with the peak so far of 182 being attained in 1975, so probably other species have been added to the base list. Post-1971 records, however, are history for someone else to author.

Trends: Such trends as may be discerned in Table II reflect mostly our growing expertise and coverage, I think. The arrival and establishment of the Starling is clearly charted. From 1955 when the late Les Sleeper noted a single in the Half Moon Bay area until Jed and his party reported a pair off Pillar Point in 1967, the Peregrine Falcon hung on in our area.

Notable Counts: 1959 was an exciting year. Early inclement weather drove in the vanguard of winter migrants--succeeding mildness, prolonged late into winter, caused summer residents to linger; our count jumped from 133 in 1958 to 163 in 1959 remaining thereafter in the elite 150 or more species circle except for a couple of years.

The first of the series of Common Gallinules I noted in the Upper and/or Lower Emerald Lake, showed up in the upper lake along with a single male Blue-winged Teal which lingered for a week or so including the Count day. I alerted no one concerning this rarity because I didn't know it was such. Winona Sears had a Hooded Oriole in her yard.

Mike Stockridge and I frightened a Green Heron out of a pool by Sawyer Creek Road, noted stray Snow and White-fronted Geese on Crystal Springs Reservoir, observed a Wandering Tattler off Pillar Point and located a Long-tailed Chat when Mike recognized its chatter from the willows

and cottonwoods of a riverine cove on Half Moon Bay. Alone I would have missed much of this - but Mike was sharp, had formerly worked with some Canadian agency concerned with wildlife.

1966 was the year of the birds - a peak of 57,000 plus individuals registered, due mainly to heavy counts of Glaucous-winged and California Gulls.

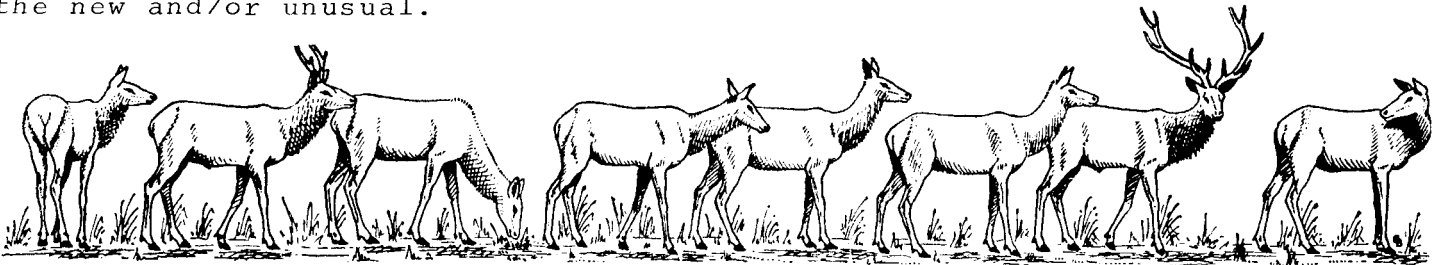
1968 was the year of the Robins - 21,447 reported! Lillian Montgomery wrote Oleta, "You can credit all these (Robins) to Adelaide Fichtner for her outstanding job. She stood on a corner while counting 6,247 Robins in about an hour! This was 4:15 to 5:05 PM - so were not the same 5,000 Charles Newman and Jim Vargo found in the watershed. They think they saw twice the 5,000! But they gave up counting finally just as Paul Lechich did." Santa Clara and Palo Alto experienced good but not similar spectacular counts.

Also unusually numerous were Double-crested Cormorants, Least Sandpipers, Band-tailed Pigeons, Varied Thrushes, Cedar Waxwings, Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds.

Al Bergeron saw 1,000 of that rather erratic species, the Knot, on the shore at Foster City.

1969 was the year of the species - 170 published!

1971 was the year of no Shovelers! Not a one. When Oleta reported us still skunked late in the day, I hurried out to check the spots where I always found a few of these ducks. Nil! So from some 17,000 in 1956 to zero in 1971! The capriciousness of birds and/or weather can easily render the Christmas Count in any 15-mile circle devoid of scientific content even though expertise remains constant. To me the counting game still follows its original design, namely, replacement of the "sport of killing" with the joy of seeing. And the key thrill of the chase comes from the discovery of the new and/or unusual.



GET IN LINE WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE -- January 1 through June 30, 1980! Jean Allen, Membership Chairman, announced at our December meeting that the member who sends in the most new memberships (with his name on them) to P.O. Box 1131 will be presented a Roger T. Peterson painting. Bring back someone whose membership has lapsed for 6 months or more--that counts, too.

_____	(Name)	Check one:	
_____	(Address)	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20
_____	(City State	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25
_____	Zip)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$30
		<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50
		<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$100
		<input type="checkbox"/> Donor	\$250
		<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$1000
		<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Life	\$1500

(Make checks payable to National Audubon Society)
 Send to: Sequoia Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 1131
 Burlingame, CA 94010

BIRD AND PLANT NATURAL HISTORY CLASSES BY S.E.E.

Sunbeam Ecology Explorations (S.E.E.) will offer two courses this Spring in cooperation with the Burlingame Recreation Department. Registration will take place at the Burlingame Recreation Center at 850 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame (Phone 344-6386) on January 19 for Burlingame residents. Non-residents may register on January 21 starting at 1:00 PM.

Natural History of Bay Area Birds and Plants It is possible to take only the plant or bird sessions for half of the listed fee. The instructors are Leonora Main (plants) and Maryann Danielson (birds).

Part I Early Spring Wildflowers and Birds of the Marsh and Open Waters

Thursdays 9:00 - Noon Plants: Feb. 21, Mar. 6, 20
Fee: \$18 Residents Birds: Feb. 28, Mar. 13, 27
\$21.50 Non-residents

Six field trips plus some lecture/discussions.

Part II Wildflowers in Special Places and Land Birds

Thursdays 9:00 AM - Noon Birds: April 10, 24, May 8, 22
Plants: April 17, May 1, 15, 29
Fee: \$22.50 Resident \$27.00 Non-resident

Birding by Sound

Thursday, April 10, 7:30 - 9:30 PM
Saturdays, April 21, 19 and 26 9:00 AM - Noon Fee: \$15 Resident, \$18
Non-resident. Instructors: Jean-Marie Spoelman and Maryann Danielson.

SEQUOIA CALENDAR

January 3	Board Meeting	February 7	Board Meeting
8	Tuesday Birders to Golden Gate Park	9, 10	Field
10	Monthly Meeting at Garden Center		Trip Los Banos
12, 13	Field Trip Pt. Lobos & Carmel River	14	Monthly
22	Tuesday Birders to Wunderlich Park		Meeting
26	Field Trip Pillar Pt. & Princeton		

THE SEQUOIA, January, 1980
Sequoia Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1131
Burlingame, CA 94010

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