



sequoia needles

Bulletin of the
SEPTEMBER 1987

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

San Mateo County, Ca.
Vol. 36, #1

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

"SHOW AND TELL" NIGHT has become a tradition for our first meeting of the new Audubon year. It has also become one of our most popular programs. Our members bring their own slides and narrate their summer adventures.

Everyone is welcome to bring their slides (up to a maximum of 20) and share their experiences with the rest of the membership.

Just make sure that your slides are in the order you want them and properly oriented. It can be very embarrassing when that one very special slide that you were so proud of is the one that makes everyone tilt their head and start whispering "what is it?".

Meetings are held at the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside on the second Thursday of every month. The Social Mixer begins at 7:30 P.M. with the General Meeting and Program at 8:00. The public is invited.

PENINSULA BIRDING CLASSES

Two classes for persons interested in learning more about birds are being offered through Sequoia Adult School. Maryann Danielson is the instructor.

BIRDING BASICS -- For beginning & intermediate birders. The fall quarter will concentrate on waterbirds, their identification, biology and natural history. Ten slide lectures and five Sunday field trips starting Wednesday, September 16. Classes will be held at the San Carlos Senior Center, 7:30 to 9:30 PM. A fee of \$40. is required.

A BIRDING CHALLENGE --- For intermediate and more advanced birders. The major challenge of the fall quarter will deal with the fall migration patterns and the identification of immatures and vagrants of both water and land birds. Ten slide lectures and five Saturday field trips starting Monday, September 14. Classes will be held from 7:30 to 9:30 PM at Little House, Menlo Park. Fee: \$45.

Registration will take place at the first class session. For additional information, call Maryann at 369-6809.

FROM NATIONAL AUDUBON

The Last Condor

National Audubon President Peter Berle, in his late April letter to the Chapter presidents, confirmed that National Audubon, had grudgingly accepted the inevitability of the capture of the last remaining wild condor. In order to avoid any injury to the bird, Audubon biologists participated in this effort and actually made the final capture. With only 26 birds left - all in captivity - Audubon remains committed to the objectives of habitat preservation, scientific research, captive breeding and return of the birds to the wild.

Acid Rain

National Audubon is working to establish a CITIZENS' ACID RAIN MONITORING NETWORK to scientifically monitor the pH level of each rain storm and relay the results to a special 800 phone number in New York. This will provide a continual accurate flow of current data to environmental lobbyists, the media and to Congress. The project is expected to last one year.

Volunteer observers will be the key to the success of this network. Participants will be expected to make a commitment for a full year of diligent and accurate scientific reporting. It is especially important to maintain scientific objectivity so as to avoid any criticism of the results. The cost to maintain this network is estimated at approximately \$150. per reporter. National will pay the overhead costs of maintaining the hotline, a newsletter, data entry and laboratory fees. The individual reporters will be asked to help out by paying \$20 for the testing equipment which they will use. National will be mailing out more information this month.

Platte River

NAS's Spring River Conference on the Platte River was a great success, especially in publicizing the campaign to preserve this major staging area along the Central Flyway.

Brewing Rebellion

Last year National Audubon stayed within its budget on expenses but failed to raise the projected revenue. The result was a deficit of \$1.6 million. This has made a number of budget cuts necessary. Several cuts have been made in National headquarters staffing and others are planned. Plans are underway to purchase a headquarters building, rather than to rent space and other expense savings are being proposed. The Wilderness Camp in Wisconsin has been closed and other camps, sanctuaries, refuges and educational centers have been placed on a pay-as-you-go basis. The remaining camps have been self-sustaining for several years and the sanctuaries and refuges are supported by their own endowments, but the future of the educational centers is doubtful.

(Continued on Page Three)

CALENDAR

September 1987

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

SEP. 3 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Sears Savings THURSDAY Bank, Carlmont Shopping Center, at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and the Alameda de la Pulgas in Belmont. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

SEP. 10 SAS GENERAL MEETING. "SHOW AND TELL" NIGHT in THURSDAY which our members bring their own slides and narrate their summer adventures. Always one of our most popular meetings. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social Mixer at 7:30 PM, General Meeting begins at 8:00.

SEP. 13 FIELD TRIP TO THE SALINAS SEWAGE PONDS, one of the SUNDAY prime spots for rare and vagrant shorebirds. These shallow evaporation and dispersal ponds are a magnet for migrating and wintering shorebirds. Each year a few rare visitors are found among the more common species. An ideal trip for the intermediate and advanced birder (or the dedicated beginner) to brush up on identification of these "little brown jobs". There should be some easy walking on level - but sometimes broken - areas. Boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. We will meet at 9:00 AM at the intersection of Jetty Road and Highway One at Moss Landing. To get there take Hwy. 101 or I-280 south to Hwy. 17, take 17 to Santa Cruz, and Hwy. One from Santa Cruz to Moss Landing. From the coast, simply follow Hwy. One south. The trip should last until noon or shortly thereafter but there will be some informal birding in the area after lunch.

LEADER PETER METROPULOS 592-2417

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: FIELD TRIPS AND GENERAL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS :  
: AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. BEGINNERS ARE WELCOME ON ALL OF :  
: OUR FIELD TRIPS. SOME TRIPS ARE DESIGNATED AS BEGINNER'S :  
: TRIPS BECAUSE THEY ARE USUALLY NEARBY AND MAY BE ENJOYED :  
: WITHOUT SPECIAL CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT OR PRIOR EXPERIENCE. :  
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SEP. 17 FIELD TRIP PLANNING SESSION. Any and all members THURSDAY interested in field trips are encouraged to attend this meeting to create this year's field trip schedule. Steve Schafer will preside. At the office at 720 El Camino Real in Belmont. Come to Suite 403 at 7:30 PM.

SEP. 26 POINT REYES FIELD TRIP. A search through the SATURDAY "warbler traps" of Point Reyes can yield almost anything at this time of year. We'll be looking for inland and eastern vagrants but can expect migrants and some early arriving winter residents as well. Walking will be minimal but sturdy shoes are recommended. Clothing should be layered since the weather on Point Reyes is extremely changeable. Fall is normally the most pleasant time of year on Point Reyes but remember that it has the coolest average summer temperature in the continental US. We will meet at the new Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters building at 9:00 AM. To get there take Hwy 101 or I-280 north to Hwy 1. Take Hwy 1 across the Golden Gate Bridge where it once again joins 101. Follow 101 north to the San Anselmo-San Quentin exit and take a left at the bottom of the ramp. You will now be on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Follow this all the way to Olema. At Olema, take a right at the stop sign and within a hundred yards take a left. In about half a mile, you will come to the Headquarters complex. The trip will take place rain or shine. Bring lunch. The trip normally lasts until 2 PM. Anyone interested in car-pooling should call the Audubon office (593-7368) or the leader.

LEADER; CLIFF RICHER 355-4058
(Continued on Page Three)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

JEANNE PRICE

The gates at Bolinas Preserve closed mid-July on another season of nesting the heronry and another season of spectacular viewing for visitors. The Bouverie Preserve also closed for a much needed summer rest. It is time to acknowledge some recent bequests and pass out a few bouquets.

From the estates of Edward Smiedel and Melba Smiedel major bequests were made to ACR which have been added to the endowment fund, according to the policy that all bequests and memorials go into endowment.

These gifts keep on giving because only the interest they earn is spent to support ACR's programs and maintain its facilities. Endowment income insures a future for ACR.

Bequests from the estate of Mary Keohane and Anne Margaret Smith and a gift of stock from Sue Hossfeld have also been received as well as a contribution from the Winifred and Harry B. Allen Foundation. Gifts for the Bouverie Preserve have been received from the L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, the Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, the Howard Gilman Foundation of New York, Dorothy Kidder and the Otto Tellers of Sonoma.

However it takes more than money to operate ACR's three preserves. This past spring 94 classes came to Bolinas Preserve and 81 to the Bouverie Preserve for educational field trips according to Ranch Manager Skip Schwartz. These programs are run by volunteers. At Bouverie the 1986-87 tally was 2110 children and 1062 adults instructed or lead by 68 docents who contributed 2415 hours of volunteer time.

These hours are included in the 14,500 docent hours donated to the ranch annually at all preserves. In addition, the newly formed Ranch Guides gave 1000 hours, weekend chapter hosts gave another 1500 hours and ACR board members contributed 2000 hours. "The total of 20,000 hours is equal to approximately 10 full time positions," Schwartz said.

Although volunteers receive no pay they are rewarded by many thank you's and notes of appreciation. Some recent ones to Bouverie docents from teachers:

"Your group of docents were knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very personable. The program is extremely well organized, a worthwhile experience."

"Of all our trips this was the best! I have never seen the children so interested and excited on a trip."

"The pre-visit information was invaluable. The trip itself was excellent. Docents are well-prepared and wonderful with kids."

INITIATIVE UNDERWAY

The California Wildlife, Coastal and Parkland Initiative Campaign is underway. During the next three months the sponsors must collect 600,000 signatures to put this bond act on the ballot. The sponsors, led by the Planning and Conservation League, include Sequoia Audubon Society, other Audubon chapters throughout the state, the California Native Plant Society, the California Waterfowl Association, Defenders of Wildlife, the Sierra Club and many other conservation groups. Endorsements of support have come from the California League of Women Voters, the San Diego Building Industry Association, the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce.

As drafted the proposed bond act would provide \$776 million for the acquisition of riparian habitat, greenbelts, shorelines, mountain canyons, wetlands and coastal areas throughout the state. In a unique approach, the PCL surveyed the sponsoring organizations to determine the most critical areas and specifically included these areas and the estimated acquisition costs in the body of the act. In San Mateo County funds are provided for lands buffering Pescadero Marsh and for property acquisition to protect the watershed. Funds are also provided to complete Big Basins State Park and unify the presently scattered and outlying Santa Cruz Mountains' Parks into a single park system by buying intervening lands or creating connecting corridors. Other funds are specifically earmarked for preservation of our unique San Mateo County coast.

This campaign is unique in one other aspect. The gathering of signatures is to be done entirely by volunteers - not by paid workers. Sequoia Audubon has committed itself to obtaining at least 5000 signatures. Volunteers are needed to complete this effort. We need people who are willing to talk to their neighbors and their co-workers about this vital issue and get them to sign up. Please call Gail Smithson (363-2725) for a petition form. And - at the very least - be sure to sign up yourself!

CALENDAR
(Continued from Page Two)

October 1987						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

OCT. 1 SAS BOARD MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Sears Savings THURSDAY Bank, Carlmont Shopping Center, at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and the Alameda de la Pulgas in Belmont. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

OCT. 8 SAS GENERAL MEETING. The Program will be THURSDAY announced in the October *NEEDLES*. At the San Mateo Garden Center on the Alameda at Parkside. Social Mixer at 7:30 PM, General Meeting begins at 8:00.

GROWING REBELLION
(Continued from Page One)

These moves are cause for concern, but many chapters have gone beyond concern to alarm. The immediate cause for this alarm has been the elimination of many of Audubon's regional offices and their consolidation into nine "super-regions". The panic has been further fueled by reports and rumors coming from the recent meetings in New York. One of the more drastic proposals being considered by National was to convert all memberships to National memberships only and offer chapter membership as an option - at additional cost.

Some chapters - notably in Illinois, Texas and Washington - have suggested secession from the National and have already undertaken steps to loosen their ties. In Texas, which has a strong chapter network, preliminary steps have been taken to form a separate and independent Texas Audubon Society. The Chicago chapter has openly advocated that chapters throughout the country make their views known to National in the strongest possible terms. And a stream of correspondence has come from Washington, where several chapters are still upset over *Audubon* magazine's use of a plastic wrapper.

In an effort to counter this movement, the National recently formed a special committee from their Board of Directors and invited chapter representatives from throughout the country to meet with them. In this meeting, President Berle reaffirmed Audubon's commitment to remaining an organization of chapters and it was agreed to expand the Board's membership to include nine new directors - one from each region - to be nominated and elected by the chapters. The Committee also agreed to withdraw consideration of the National membership concept until after the new members were elected and installed in December. Most of the chapter members attending this meeting felt that a victory had been gained but some were still concerned that there seems to be a strong movement among National Audubon's staff to cut loose from the chapter organization. Reportedly, many of these staffers feel that Audubon could be far more effective if it concentrated on publishing its magazine and using the profits in its lobbying and promotional efforts.

There are also lingering doubts from non-attendees. None of the most seriously dissenting chapters was represented at this meeting. California with 54 chapters had only one representative. Louisiana with 4 chapters had two representatives. There are built-in inequities in the election of directors by region. Three regions have a total of 263 chapters (53%) while three others have a total of 79 chapters (16%). A chapter in Alaska has the same representation as 18 chapters in California or 19 in Florida.

It is unlikely that we have heard the last of this furor.

BIRDING HOTLINES

- LOS ANGELES (213) 874-1318
- MODESTO (209) 571-0246
- MONTEREY (408) 449-6100
- SACRAMENTO (916) 481-0118
- SAN BERNADINO (714) 793-5599
- SAN DIEGO (619) 435-6761
- SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY/SOUTHERN SIERRA (209) 782-1237
- SAN FRANCISCO
- Weekly (415) 528-0288
- Daily Updates (415) 524-5592
- SANTA BARBARA (805) 964-8240
- VANCOUVER, B.C. (604) 876-9690

THE BLM STRIKES BACK

CLIFF RICHER

In its latest newsletter, *Newsbeat*, the Bureau of Land Management continues its efforts to build opposition to Senator Cranston's Desert Parklands Bill (Senate Bill 7).

A short article tells of the 200 people that had to be turned away from the BLM's first of a series of "Round Table" discussions, claiming that "a high level of opposition to the proposed Senate Bill 7 sparked the large turnout from miners, OHV recreationists, rockhounds and others." No mention is made of the any opposition to the BLM policies on grazing and environmental protection.

No other specific note is made of Senate Bill 7, but the bulk of the newsletter is made up of a four page special insert on the recently released draft East Mojave Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. The Plan addresses - to some extent - the same issues that are addressed by Senator Cranston. This is not surprising since the Senator's bill is a reaction to the continued degradation of the fragile desert environment now under BLM's management.

The draft East Mojave Plan has five major goals:

1. Increasing management presence in the area;
2. Expanding interpretive and public education programs;
3. Enhancing protection of special values;
4. Maintaining and improving the diversity and quality of recreation opportunities;
5. Continuing to allow other uses, such as live-stock grazing and mining, under careful management to assure their compatibility with the area's special natural values.

BLM REVISING ADOPTION PROGRAM

Because adoptions of captured feral burros and wild horses have declined the Bureau of Land Management has found it necessary to change its basic policies. The adoption plan will continue and may be supplemented from time to time with special adoptions at altered fees.

To make the animals more attractive for adoption the BLM is investigating a program wherein the horses can be domesticated by prison inmates. The BLM will also encourage the creation of special private sanctuaries for placement of animals. However, should all adoption methods fail, after 90 days any "excess" animal would be humanely destroyed.

As repugnant as this may be to many of us, it may well be the only way - under existing laws - to protect the environment and our native endangered species.

In 1971, there were an estimated 30,000 mustangs and wild burros. Their numbers were held under control by professional hunters who would capture or kill the animals for dog food or hides. The cruel treatment which many of these beasts received from these mustangers led to passage of Public Law 92-195 requiring the BLM and the Forest Service to manage these animals as "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the west."

Since then the BLM has removed 90,000 animals from the wild. Despite this the population has grown. In 1980, the population of feral equines peaked at

When the article is carefully analyzed however we find that the first goal consists of a plea for more enforcement officers - a need that has been known and a plea that has been made for most of the last 10 years. (At this time there are only 18 enforcement officers to patrol all of the California desert areas!)

Further on, the "interpretive and public education programs" are defined as providing maps, upgrading visitor facilities at one fire station and improving signing and interpretive displays. Laudable, but hardly earth-shaking.

Protection of special values is described at some length, but consists mainly of a continuation of present projects. The BLM also intends to reclassify some lands from Moderate to Limited use. The reclassified land would consist of 120,000 acres out of the total 25,000,000 desert acres managed by BLM - less than one-half of one percent! (The Senate bill would place almost all of the acreage in some kind of protected status and would include other federal lands - such as Death Valley National Monument - as well. 4,500,000 acres would be classified as wilderness area.)

Under recreation opportunities the description is vague except where "development of additional interpretive vehicle trails" is concerned. Mention is made of "increasing demand...for non-motorized recreational access, like hiking, bicycling and horseback riding." But, if a picture is worth a 1000 words, both photos in this section feature motorcycles.

(Continued on Page Six)

64,000 in areas where no more than 30,000 can be supported without damaging the environment. The BLM estimates today's total population at 44,800.

It may be significant that the BLM has avoided a breakdown in the numbers of horses versus burros. Some private estimates place the current total population at between 55,000 and 65,000. These private sources - including early studies by the National Academy of Sciences - indicate that there has been an overall reduction of wild horses, but that the population of wild burros may have doubled since 1971.

These estimates and projections may be more accurate than those of the Federal Government. The BLM relies heavily on aircraft surveys. Herds of wild horses are easy to identify and count from the air where the smaller, more solitary and more inconspicuous burro is apt to be overlooked.

The same problems occur in capturing the animals. Horses are trapped by teams of horsemen assisted by helicopters. Linked by radio, the pilots and wranglers drive the herds into corrals where they can be culled for diseased and surplus animals. While the cost of a drive is high, the cost per animal is low. Burros, on the other hand, rarely congregate in herds, hide rather than run and are usually captured singly. Further, burros thrive in deserts and on arid mountainsides where they are nearly impossible to pursue and capture.

(Continued on Page Six)

SAS BIRD SEED SALE

Here is your chance to order your supply of seed for the season.
All prices include sales tax.

YOU MUST ORDER AND PRE-PAY BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 5
THE PICKUP DATE IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

- VOLKMAN WILD BIRD SEED -- Premium mix composed of white and red millet and sudan grass screenings.
20 lbs. \$9.50 50 lbs. \$20.25
 - SAS SPECIAL WILD BIRD SEED MIX -- Top quality mix especially blended for Bay Area birds; composed of
white and red millet, black oil sunflower seed, milo and rape seed.
20 lbs. \$7.50 50 lbs. \$15.00
 - BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED -- High oil content and nutritive value, but smaller than the striped variety.
10 lbs. \$9.50 25 lbs. \$22.50
 - NIGER (THISTLE SEED) -- This minute seed is rich in nourishing oil and will attract goldfinches, but not
larger birds or squirrels, nor will it sprout in your yard.
5 lbs. \$9.50
- BIRDFEEDERS ALSO AVAILABLE - 16" DROLL YANKEE FEEDERS--26.75 - 30 OZ. PERKY-PET HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER--\$15.00

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____
TELEPHONE (DAY _____ (EVENING) _____

SEED	WEIGHT	QUANTITY	COST	TOTAL
Volkman	20 lbs.	.....	\$9.50	.....
	50 lbs.	.....	20.25	.....
SAS Special	20 lbs.	.....	7.50	.....
	50 lbs.	.....	15.00	.....
Black Oil Sunflower	10 lbs.	.....	9.50	.....
	25 lbs.	.....	22.50	.....
Niger	5 lbs.	.....	9.50	.....
Yankee Feeder	Each	.....	26.75	.....
Hummingbird Feeder	Each	.....	15.00	.....
			Contribution to SAS	-----
			Total	-----

Be sure to include your check and
a stamped self-addressed envelope

* BIRDING VIDEOTAPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL FROM THE SAS OFFICE. *
* TECHNIQUES OF BIRDING BY Arnold Small \$2.00 per week (5 days) *
* National Audubon Society's VIDEO GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA \$5.00 per week (5 days) *

San Francisco Peninsula Birdwatching is Sequoia Audubon Society's guide to birding sites in San Francisco and San Mateo County. More than 30 different spots are described and accompanied by maps, directions and helpful notes about each spot. A species index directs you to habitats for the birds you want to see. Order one for yourself and several as gifts! Use this form to order your copy today. AT A NEW LOW PRICE!! Only \$6.00! (Taxes, shipping and handling included).

Also available by mail - including postage and tax
National Geographic Field Guides-NEW EDITION SOON!
Birding Northern California - Jean Richmond 12.00
Birding at the Bottom of the Bay 8.25
Mono Lake Guidebooks 7.60
Birds of the Sacramento Area 4.50

Send checks to: Sequoia Audubon Society
720 El Camino Real #403
Belmont, Ca. 94002
Allow 14-18 days for delivery

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP
ALSO AVAILABLE AT MEETINGS AND SOME FIELD TRIPS



**San Francisco
Peninsula
Birdwatching**

THE BLM STRIKES BACK

(Continued from Page Four)

To achieve its fifth goal "BLM's plan clearly recognizes the *traditional* activities of livestock grazing by *long-time* ranchers in the area and small scale mining that has been occurring in the East Mojave since the late 1800's. Many of these uses have become part of the scenery and recreational experience in the East Mojave...the new proposals will help ensure the *ongoing* careful management of these uses. With careful monitoring and control as well as the *ongoing* cooperation from the miners and ranchers involved, (BLM) sees *no problem* in allowing these uses to *continue*." The words are from the Bureau of Land Management. The italics are mine. Note the repetition of words and phrases like "traditional", "long-time", "ongoing" and "continue" and the references to historic, scenic and recreational values. Especially note the words "no problem". I can't imagine ranchers or miners doing anything but rejoicing at the reassurance of "business as usual." I haven't seen the actual document but if this Plan follows the usual pattern it is likely to be even less inspiring than this publicity release. I also can't avoid the cynical view that this East Mojave Plan is nothing more than a hurriedly assembled patchwork of existing programs with an occasional (and not very meaty) bone to throw out to the environmental wolves at the door. It has the look and feel of an effort to offer a "moderate" alternative to the "radical" changes required under Senate Bill 7. Unfortunately, it also has the smell of an over-ripe red herring.

(The above represents the personal view of the author but has been reviewed by the Conservation Committee and approved for publication. At its August meeting the Board of Sequoia Audubon voted to send letters of support for Senate Bill 7.)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

ATHERTON
WSE E. HILLS, JR.

BELMONT
FLORENCE CARF MRS. SHIRLEY WALLER

BRISBANE
R. SPENCER

BURLINGAME
MR. M. C. BEARD X. CHEVEUX MRS. ABBEY N. MANNING

DALY CITY
GORDON REINHART MARIA RILEY

FOSTER CITY
LAUNA BYERS JEFFREY W. STINE

HILLSBOROUGH
BETH DUNBAR

MENLO PARK
MR. AND MRS. JAMES OLD

MOSS BEACH
MS. JANET CONKLIN GARY WESSELS

PALO ALTO
MR. H. A. WEIDNER

PACIFICA
TYLER AHLGREN DANA D. DENHAM D. MURRAY MRS. E. M. PACHECO M. ZEILINGER

REDWOOD CITY
KYLE M. ANDERSON B. BRYAN ALYCE COLEMAN ALEXIS CZARNECKI N.R. DEAN
GARY GINOCCHIO CLAY GREENE LYNN HIMEL ARLYS M. GUESTWELING
RANDOLPH RHODES FRANKLIN RUMNEY HADLEY WILKINS

SAN BRUNO
EDWIN YORK

SAN CARLOS
JAMES B. STEVEN, DOM AMI WADA

SAN MATEO
TOM BESSLER TSUI H. CHEN NONA COMFORT D. T. COOKS, JR.
STEVIE HEBSHAM JUNE L. JOHNSON AUDREYLEE KENTFIELD ELAINE LYMAN
AVIS E. RODRIGUEZ L. STEWART DR. WILLIAM R. TATOMER, M.D.

S. SAN FRANCISCO
R. S. GRENCI

BLM ADOPTION PROGRAM

(Continued from Page Four)

In fact, the BLM's adoption program may have contributed to the spread of the burro into new areas. The BLM's adoptions are not final until one year after the new owner takes possession. At that time the sponsor is expected to file an application to officially transfer ownership. Less than 5% of the burro adoptions are finalized!

Even if a high percentage of sponsors simply dislike filling out government forms, this means that there may be a high incidence of animal mortality, many animals treated so badly that a veterinarian will not provide the required clean bill of health or large numbers being returned to the wild.

Unfortunately the BLM lacks the personnel to do a proper follow-up and the actual fate of these animals is a matter for conjecture. What is known is that burros have become a problem in some areas where they were previously absent and a number of animals have been identified as "repeaters" by BLM wranglers.

Part of the BLM's new program is an initiative to enlist private humane organizations into doing this follow-up work. If successful, this initiative should contribute to a more realistic approach to the burro problem. Another key item that will help is the completion of the National Academy's studies in 1989. In the meantime, it would appear that the BLM is toning down its glowing publicity about the adoption program and is moving toward solutions to the problems created by these sentimentally attractive but environmentally destructive non-native species.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Although I am not an active member of the Sequoia Chapter (hiking, birding, etc.), I do enjoy reading your bulletin, *Sequoia NEEDLES*. The June 1987 issue, in lovely blue-green paper, was particularly interesting as well as beautifully arranged. I would like to donate...to assure the continuance of this publication.

The article "Look, But Don't Touch" should be available to all school teachers. I'm passing mine on to a teacher friend. Peter J. Metropulos' article on Birding is so much more meaningful than a mere listing of birds, his brief comments and descriptions making it very enjoyable reading.

Yours very truly,

Mrs. Gladys M. Haff
San Bruno

The kind words, and donation, are appreciated. We pride ourselves on producing the NEEDLES at a lower cost than most chapter newsletters - but it is still one of our biggest budget items.)

"Look, But Don't Touch" may be reproduced without prior permission for classroom use. Our article was a condensation. The complete article may be obtained by writing to Dave Dick, Editor, *Outdoor California*, PO Box 15087, Sacramento, CA 95851.

And we couldn't agree more with you on Peter's column, which returns next month as a regular feature.

BIRDING CLASSES - SAN FRANCISCO

Evening birding classes will be offered through the San Francisco Community College. For the first time since Golden Gate first sponsored these classes, a fee will be required.

All classes will be held in Room 227, Marina Middle School, Bay and Fillmore Streets in San Francisco. Free parking is available in the school lot off Bay Street.

Each class stresses identification, status and habits of North American birds in a 2 1/2 hour slide lecture. The text for all classes is the Nat'l Geographic *Field Guide to Birds of North America*. The instructor is Joe Morlan, co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and the voice of the Northern California Rare Bird Alert. All classes begin at 7 PM and end at 9:30.

Ornithology I is an introduction to the concepts of modern ornithology, and stresses avian systematics, evolution, behavior and population ecology illustrated by examples from common birds of California. It meets every Tuesday starting September 8.

Ornithology II is an in-depth study of identification and status of landbirds including longspurs, buntings, blackbirds and tanagers. It meets every Wednesday starting September 9.

Ornithology III will cover waterbirds including gulls and terns. It meets Thursdays starting September 10.

BIRDING HOTSPOT

Muriel Lochner reports that there was excellent birding at the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary in British Columbia.

Located six miles west of Ladner on Westham Island, the 850 acres of the refuge are operated by the B.C. Waterfowl Society, a non-government, self-supporting, non-profit organization. The refuge provides good birding at any time of the year but is best in early November and most quiet in July and August.

Most of the common birds listed in the Sanctuary's brochure are the same as those in our own Central Valley refuges, except that the trumpeter swan is shown as commonly occurring. The vagrant list includes spotted redshank, reeve, smew and brambling.

(If, in your travels, any of you should come across a good and relatively unknown birding spot - or a new wrinkle on an old one - let us know so we can pass it on. ---Ed.)

FERAL PIGS

TERRY MANSFIELD

What's the most prolific large mammal in North America?

If you guessed the wild pig, you're correct. In California they originated from breeds imported by Spanish settlers. The European wild pig was added in the mid-1920's when animals escaped from a domesticated game breeder in Monterey County. Since then, the two races have interbred with characteristics of both now found throughout their range.

Mature females can produce two litters each year with an average litter size of about six. In good quality habitat, the survival rate is often high and young animals become sexually mature in six months. Populations can easily double in size annually. In addition, wild pigs are very adaptable. They are omnivorous. That is, they eat a wide variety of both plant and animal items. In combination, these factors result in a non-native species which can survive despite removal of 50-70% of the population each year.

Hunting statistics suggest roughly a tenfold increase in both the occupied range and population size in the last 25 years. The statewide wild pig population is probably at least 70,000-80,000.

At a recent conference which focused attention on California native plants it was obvious that public agencies charged with protecting and managing natural areas had serious concerns related to the impact of wild pigs and other non-native species. Graphic evidence of damage to plants, soil erosion and other problems was presented. They also compete with native wildlife and prey on native snakes, salamanders and even small mammals. Pigs are also well known for their ability to damage or destroy agricultural crops.

It appears that not only are pigs spreading on their own, but they are being assisted by humans. Some evidence suggests that individuals interested in expanding sport hunting opportunities are capturing young wild pigs and moving them into new areas.

The State Department of Fish and Game has recognized the problem and is working to identify its options. As a first step however they are attempting to educate hunters as to the serious nature of the feral pig management problem.

(Terry Mansfield is a biologist at the Department of Fish and Game headquarters in Sacramento. This article is condensed from the November-December 1986 issue of *Outdoor California*, the magazine of the DFG.)

BU-REC DUMPING PLAN STILL ALIVE

Last winter the Bureau of Reclamation sent up a trial balloon concerning the disposal of irrigation waste water from the San Joaquin Valley. The preferred alternative was to dump the wastewater off the San Mateo coast!

Apparently the uproar at that time was insufficient to kill the plan. It remained the preferred alternative in the Bureau's preliminary study.

In an immediate response the northern California Congressional delegation introduced a bill (HR 2415) to ban the dumping. The bill not only forbids coastal dumping but puts the Bay and the Delta off-limits as well.

Although all of the county's representatives have signed up as co-sponsors, a letter of support for their position may help remind them to "keep the pressure on" and may prevent HR 2415's being lost in committee.

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