



The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 53

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053

(510) AUD-UBON

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January 1995

Vol. 41 No. 5

Next Deadline: January 12

January Program:

Birds of South San Francisco Bay

For our **January 5** general meeting, Janet Hanson, Research Director, and Valerie Layne, Staff Biologist, from San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, will update us on SFBBO's current activities. Researchers and volunteers at SFBBO, located in Alviso, have been studying the birds of South San Francisco Bay since 1978. Janet will present results from the 1992-1993 study on high tide roosts of shorebirds. Valerie will tell us about the colonial waterbird monitoring project, a thirteen-year study of colonially nesting birds such as gulls, terns, herons, egrets, stilts and avocets which utilize the South Bay.

For January's Bird Information, Bob Richmond will give us tips on how to identify gulls. Winter is a great time to go out and study this often neglected and often confusing group of birds. Bob's talk will be a good place to start.

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, January 12, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Elizabeth Dickey, 113 Hillcrest Dr., Orinda, 254-0486. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center at 233 Gregory Lane in Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open

7:00 Birding Information

7:30 Business Meeting

8:00 Social Time

8:30 Program

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip for January will be a visit to Howe Homestead Park in Walnut Creek on Sunday, January 15. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Trip leader will be Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732. Meet in the Eckley Lane parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to Walnut Blvd. (Note: Walnut Blvd., not Walnut Ave.) The parking lot is off Walnut Blvd. on Eckley Lane.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

A TRIP TO THE MOON, or WHAT'S OUR FUTURE?

Noted astronomer Carl Sagan urges more space flight, more space exploration, and creation of space stations on asteroids. The cost? It's minimal, says Sagan. Less than a couple of B-1 bombers, so why worry? I explain. Sagan argues our chances of being hit by a wayward, out-of-control space object are somewhat "round one in a thousand." (By the way, those are pretty important odds, some say odds of being involved in a fatal airplane crash are about one in a million.) Sagan also argues being hit by such a wayward space object would probably destroy the earth and incidentally US. If that were to happen now, humanity as we know it would cease to exist. Not a pretty picture! Sagan argues we can ensure a continuation of the human species if we man space stations, asteroids and such. If we so do and there is a major catastrophe, someone will be around to carry on. Suppose he's right? Should we give up our battle to prevent "we, the people" from destroying much of the earth and its creatures? Should we take his advice seriously? My response. Right now the earth, its flora and fauna are all we have. If the flora and fauna were money in the bank and we saw such was being spent in profligate ways, we'd undoubtedly ACT to insure expenditures would be brought in line. We'd want to be certain our resources were managed prudently. Why can't we do that with the resources of our planet? I'm not urging, just arguing.

CITES

You wonder what those letters mean? I explain. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES). Representatives from organizations around the world meet at these conventions every two years. I spent two weeks in November attending and/or participating in the current meeting. Of course the fact that the convention was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, was "some" inducement to attend the meeting. However the appearance and actualities of Hurricane Gordon "somewhat" diminished the image of Florida as the Sunshine State. A visit to the Florida Everglades, on the other hand, was to be remembered. 'Gators, herons, and park rangers who KNOW their jobs and the Everglades and who talk well added to the enjoyment of the trip.

As for CITES, some 125 nations were represented by from two to forty delegates. More than 100 Non Government Organizations (NGO's), some with but one or two representatives and others with up to ten, brought total attendance to 2000 people. The BIG issues considered included tigers, elephants, rhinos, and certain species of whales. Brazilian mahogany trees used up several hours of debate. (Interestingly, while the debate continued hundreds of trees were turned into lumber for tables and chairs, mostly for use in the United States.) "What was the debate about?" you ask. The question that took the most time, "Is mahogany a plant?" was never decided. The debate lasted half a day and was resolved by BOLD action. HA! The issue was referred to a committee to be looked at again in 1997. That's when the next Convention is to take place. The issue of habitat loss and the effect such loss has

on wildlife, people and the environment was never a serious part of the discussion. Aside from such fol-de-rol the impacts we humans have on the planet are in many ways destructive when considering the ecological make-up of our planet. Essentially every nation is having similar environmental problems. CITES is an "attempt" to soften adverse impacts particular when "species" are used for some purpose. More on the matter at another time.

DESC

Today, I seem to be dealing with lettered issues. NO, not in the sense of educational study and becoming a man of letters, but rather shorthand for something of importance. DESC, of course, stands for the Delta Environment Science Center. That's the to-be-**MAJOR** center that will deal with wetlands, education, and birds, to name a few of the important environmental areas to be included in the project. A consulting firm is now on board. The consultants will develop information on which future decisions can be based that will ensure DESC will be all that it can and should be. An important first step on the road to completion.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR BRUCE BABBITT

Secretary Bruce Babbitt appeared at the CITES Convention to greet delegates (the U.S.A. was hosting the convention) and to express the U.S.A.'s views on protection of the world's flora and fauna. Babbitt told the delegates the United States supports the idea of "sustainable use." You decide whether or not that is a position YOU would like to support. I had the pleasure of once again speaking with the Secretary about environmental issues.

CREEKS, RIPARIAN HABITAT, AND WHAT'S TO DO

Some months ago MDAS suggested a county (and city) policy be developed that would give attention to maintenance of riparian corridors along the creeks. There are two important reasons for trying to create such a policy. First, flooding. Someday rain will again come (as it used to). With rain will come flooding, property losses, and possibly worse. Attention must be given to leaving flood space along creeks. Second, as the county develops, the wildlife habitat along creeks can be destroyed. Wildlife can be adversely affected, even to the point of extinction. Meetings on the issue have produced a basis for developing data. Ultimately data will be provided to decision makers together with a request that a rational policy be created. Keep your eyes on this one.

BIRDS IN THE BALANCE

NO! We're not writing about some avian species trying to stay upright on a swing. We're writing about Audubon's Birds in the Balance program. Every year thousands of our migrating birds head for some area in Mexico or Central or South America for their winter vacation. After understanding migration, one MUST think about habitat. Deforestation on a massive scale represents habitat loss. Little pockets of forest, small groves of trees, and isolated bunches of bushes, that's what is left for birds. Travelers tell of the phenomenon of seeing literally thousands of birds in tiny wooded areas. The indigenous people are attempting to save remaining habitat and the birds. From everything "I" hear, the local folks aren't having much better luck in saving trees than we did with the 10,000 oaks in Rossmoor. Audubon's Birds in the Balance will lend important assistance. Here's something in which you can participate. You can make a difference.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

NOTE: Because of problems this winter due to bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have doubts, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Saturday, January 7, **Putah Creek.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:15 a.m. at intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasants Valley Rds., approximately 1 mile north from I-80 Park on Cherry Glen. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Possible Osprey, Phainopepla, Canyon and Rock Wrens, and Hooded Merganser.

Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106

Category 1

Thursday, January 12, **Lake Merritt** Carpool 8:00 a.m. at El Nido at St. Stephens, off SR 24. Meet 8:45 a.m. at aviary at Lake Merritt. From SR 24, take Grand Ave. exit. Straight ahead at 1st light; at 2nd light, go left onto Grand Ave. Turn right into park at Fairyland. Park in lot between boat house and the large aviary. We will see ducks and other waterbirds. This is a good opportunity for new birders to see ducks at close range.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 1

Saturday, January 21, **Sunol Regional Park.** Carpool 7:30 a.m. El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Sunol Park. Go south on I-680 to Calaveras Rd. Go left under I-680 and 4 miles south on Calaveras Rd.; turn left on Geary Rd. 2 miles to park. Watch and listen for Turkey along Geary Rd. Golden Eagles, raptors; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Dipper, and Canyon and Rock Wrens possible.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 2

Wednesday, January 25, **Grizzly Island Refuge.** Carpool 7:00 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:15 a.m. at Refuge headquarters. Take I-680 north, I-80 east to SR12. Follow SR12 through Fairfield; watch for sign to Grizzly Island Refuge on right and follow the road to headquarters. Watch for raptors and Short-eared Owls. This is an outstanding raptor area. Mostly car birding.

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980

Category 1

NOTE: Information on the January Weekend Birding Break is given on page 1.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

MT. VIEW SANITARY PLANT, November 3.

It was a beautiful, clear and sunny fall day for this adventure. Accompanied by Dick Bogaert, Wetlands Biologist, the group of eighteen birders saw or heard a total of 61 species of birds. Other marsh residents, river otters and beavers, left evidence of their presence. The Sanitary District plant is undergoing massive changes in appearance and operation. Birding highlights included sightings of American Bittern, colorful Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, and several Soras. It was a great day to be alive and own a pair of binoculars.

Shirley Ellis

LIMANTOUR, November 5.

The field trip was cancelled because of rain.

CHARLESTON SLOUGH, November 9.

The field trip was cancelled because of rain.

ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE, November 16.

The incoming high tide at Alameda prevented much in the way of shorebird viewing, and, although rails were heard, none were seen. A great variety of ducks were at Arrowhead Marsh. However, the highlight of the morning -- seen perhaps only by the leader on the drive out -- was a lone Burrowing Owl twenty feet from the road. 53 species were seen.

Barbara Vaughn

ALVISO, November 20.

This was a clear, rather cold day with little wind. Nine birders saw 66 species, although nothing unusual was seen. The best bird of the day was a Sora bathing in a tide channel.

Elizabeth Dickey



Original
Sketch
by Carol Lutz

BEHEMOTHS OF THE DEEP

January is the best month of the year to see the whales of Monterey Bay. Join Shearwater Journeys for one or more of several trips for a chance to see Gray Whales, Blue Whales, Humpback Whales, Killer Whales and winter pelagic birds. Call Debi Shearwater at (408) 688-1960 for dates, times, and more information.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,

3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.

Please include your telephone number with your observations:

Red-necked Grebe: 1 on 11/12 at Ford and Bunting Ponds near Niles (BR, SG); 1 on 11/28 at the Richmond Marina (SG, RL)

Cattle Egret 10 on 11/11 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County (SG); on 11/16, 1 at Holland Tract and 3 near Bethel Island (SG); 1 on 11/22 at Lake Merritt, Oakland (JR).

White-faced Ibis: 7 on 12/7 and 1 on 12/9 flying northwest over Holland Tract Rd. (SG, RL) Only the third and fourth county records.

Tundra Swan: 1000 on 11/16 north of the marina at the end of Orwood Rd., East Contra Costa County (SG, RL), 500 on 11/22 on Staten Island, San Joaquin Co. (FB, MJC, BG); 1000 on 11/27 along Staten Island Rd. (H&NB).

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 on 12/7 at Heather Farms Park, Walnut Creek. (RL, SG)

Snow Goose. 1 still present on 11/28 (SG, RL) and 11/29 (JL, KH, JR) at George Miller Jr. Regional Shoreline, Richmond

Canada Goose 2 of the race "minima" or "cacklers" on 11/28 (SG, RL) and 3 on 11/29 (KH, JL, JR) at George Miller Jr. RS.

Eurasian Wigeon: 1 male on 11/29 at the end of Marina Bay Pkwy., Richmond (JL, KH, JR); 1 male on 12/2 to the south of the end of Marina Bay Pkwy. (SG).

Redhead. 49 on 11/8 at Berkeley Aquatic Park. (JR)

Tufted Duck 1 male on 11/22 at Lake Merritt (JR), 1 male on 12/6 at Spreckles Lake, Golden Gate Park (JR).

Harlequin Duck: 2 on 10/30 at Sea Ranch, Sonoma Co. (LG); a pair still present on 11/28 swimming from off the end of Marina Bay Pkwy into Richmond Marina (SG, RL).

Barrow's Goldeneye 2 males on 11/8 at Berkeley Aquatic Park (JR)

Hooded Merganser 1 female on 12/7 at 7 Hills School, Walnut Creek. (SG, RL)

Common Merganser 21 on 12/7 at Antioch Municipal Reservoir (SG, RL)

Swanson's Hawk 3 on 11/18 and 2 on 11/27 on Staten Island (H&NB) Only known wintering site in the entire state.

Black Rail 1 heard well on 11/11 at Piper Slough, Bethel Island (SG)

Sandhill Crane several thousand on 11/18 (H&NB) and 1500 on 11/22 (FB, MJC, BG) on Staten Island

Mountain Plover 8 on 11/21 along Little Panoche Rd (GF, MP)

Black Oystercatcher 1 on 11/28 at East Brothers Lighthouse, Richmond. (SG, RL)

Franklin's Gull 1 on 11/22 at the Lodi Sewage Ponds (MJC, FB, BG)

Greater Roadrunner 6 on 11/21 along Little Panoche Rd. (GF, MP), on 11/29, 1 with no tail along Del Puerto Canyon Rd and 2 along Mines Rd. (FB, MJC, BG)

Burrowing Owl: 1 on 11/29 on the breakwater at the end of Marina Bay Pkwy. (KH, JL, JR) This is a most unusual location.

Short-eared Owl: 1 on 11/11 along Mountain House Rd. (SG)
Lewis' Woodpecker: 12 on 11/29 along San Antonio Valley Rd., Santa Clara Co. (BG, MJC, FB)

Eastern Phoebe: 1 on 11/22 at U. C. Davis. (BG, FB, MJC)

Yellow-billed Magpie: 1 on 11/11 near Bethel Island Golf Course. (SG)

Phainopepla: 1 on 12/7 along Black Diamond Mines Regional Park entrance road. (SG, RL)

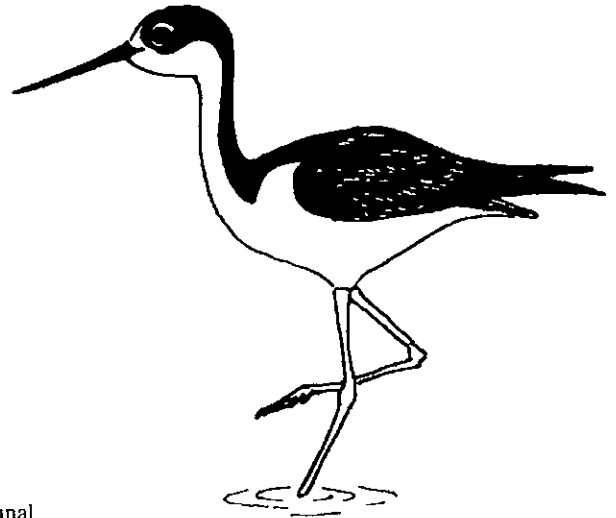
Lucy's Warbler: 1 on 12/6 at Lake Merced, San Francisco. (JR)

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 1 male on 11/16 at Holland Tract. (SG)

Pine Siskin: 100+ from 12/3 to 12/5 in her Alamo yard (JR)

Observers: Hugh and Norah Barn, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Lorraine Grant, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, and Jean Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on the sightings of rare birds by local observers. The system has been revamped so that callers no longer need to know the number of loon species seen in California.



Original
Sketch
by Carol Lutz

SHOREBIRD CENSUS

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory will conduct a shorebird census on the morning of January 28, 1995. They need lots of volunteers at all levels of experience. To volunteer or for more information, call the Observatory at (408) 9446-6548 or talk to our January MDAS general program speakers, Janet Hanson and Valerie Layne

CLASSES AND SYMPOSIA

SPRING BIRDING CLASSES

Evening bird classes in San Francisco taught by Joe Morlan will be starting on January 31 and February 1 and 2. All classes meet 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in Room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street, San Francisco. Joe Morlan is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and coordinator of the Northern California Birders BirdBox Field Ornithology I meets Tuesdays and is an introduction to birds and birding. Part A starts January 31 and ends March 14, Part B starts March 27 and ends May 9. Field Ornithology II meets Wednesdays and continues the study of alcids, hawks, and gamebirds. Part A starts February 1 and ends March 15. Part B starts March 22 and ends May 10. Field Ornithology III meets Thursdays and is an in-depth study of the identification and status of North American land birds. Part A starts February 2 and ends March 16, Part B starts March 23 and ends May 11. These classes are endorsed by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Optional weekend field trips may be arranged by the instructor. The fee is \$70 for each seven-week course. Students need not take Part A classes to enroll in Part B classes. Pre-registration is recommended. For information, call the San Francisco Community College, Community Services Office at (415) 561-1840.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATIVE SYMPOSIUM

The Planning and Conservation League Foundation announces its 12th Annual Environmental Legislative Symposium, Saturday and Sunday, January 7 and 8, 1995, at Sacramento City College in Sacramento. This year's theme, "Back to the Grass Roots," will afford participants the chance to discuss the many challenges we all face, hear success stories, and strategize on increasing the environmental community's effectiveness in Sacramento. The invited keynote speakers include Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner. Panel discussion topics include Endangered Species, Energy Deregulation: What it Means for California, Forestry and Fire Protection, Land Use and CEQA, Park and Wildlife Funding, Reviving California's Environmental Grass Roots, Media and the Environment, and other topics. The registration fee for PLC members is \$80 for two days including meals, \$50 for Saturday only, \$40 for Sunday only, or \$30 for two days without meals. Non-PLC members should add \$10. For more information, please contact Jamie Phillips, PCL, 926 J St., Suite 612, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 444-8726, ext. 86.

SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

The Napa-Solano Audubon Society and the Rand Corporation are hosting a Scientific Symposium on February 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the closure of Mare Island. "From Top Secret to Top Attraction" will discuss the status of the endangered Clapper Rail, the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse, and other wildlife species at Mare Island. For more information, please call Arthur Feinstein of Golden Gate Audubon Society at (510) 843-2222.

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS '95

National Audubon Society is co-sponsoring "California Duck Days '95 - A Wetlands Festival in the Heart of the Pacific Flyway." The Festival will be held February 16-20, 1995, in and around Davis, Yolo County. The Festival will include four days of films, kids' programs, evening walks, habitat restoration, decoy carving, and workshops. Quality field trips, averaging 15 to 25 participants, to private and public wetlands and uplands, including the Sacramento River/San Joaquin River Delta, Gray Lodge, Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, and Bobelaine Sanctuary, will be offered through the run of the Festival. Avifaunal species present in spectacular numbers at this time of year include Whistling Swans, Snow and Ross' Geese, dabbling and diving ducks, and Sandhill Cranes. Also present are 16 species of hawks, eagles, and falcons, including up to 35 wintering Swainson's Hawks. Although entertainment, speakers, special events, and workshops will be concentrated on the Presidents' Day weekend, Friday night through Monday, the Yolo Audubon Society will kick off Duck Days '95 with a special program Thursday evening, February 16, "Yolo Basin Wetlands and Waterfowl," given by noted ornithologist, Dr. Ted Beedy. A \$15.00 donation per person is requested for a Festival pass which allows the holder to participate in most Festival events, although some events may have a surcharge. Children 16 years and under are free. For more information, please write or call California Duck Days '95, P.O. Box 5000-141, Davis CA 95617, (800) 425-5001, or call Bob Barnes at Audubon's Western Regional Office, (916) 481-6228.

BIRDS IN THE BALANCE

BINOCULAR OPTIONS

Binoculars are still needed for MDAS's Birds in the Balance Project. The binoculars donated to this project will be used by researchers studying birds of the tropical rainforests. If you want to contribute but don't have a spare pair of binoculars to give, a \$35 donation will purchase a new pair of binoculars. For more information on how to donate binoculars or to give a donation, please call Jill Hedgecock at 256-8270.

BIRD COUNTERS NEEDED

Last year, 3436 Mountain Plovers were counted in California on Saturday, January 29, and nearly 400,000 Tricolored Blackbirds were counted on Saturday, April 23. Both counts were the first, single-date, statewide counts for either species. Last year's counts yielded such valuable data that follow-up counts are being planned for the first half of 1995. If you are interested in participating in either of these important data gathering counts, please call Bob Barnes, Birds in the Balance Program Coordinator for Audubon's Western Regional Office, (916) 481-5332, FAX (916) 481-6228.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend warm greetings to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Robert Arrol, Ellen Boyd, Michael Browne, Larry Buckley, Joanne Capling, Fred Caproicci, Adrienne Cherry, Darlene Cioffi, Bonnie Couch, James J. Craib, Arthur Danzig, Richard Dewath, Patricia E. Duran, Ruth Dyrness, Sharyn Fernandez, Judith Fewster, Dale Fleming, Matsumi Goodell, Harriett Gore, Nancy Heath, Marion Hixson, Kathy Howard, Barbara Leinart, C. Marglon, Marian Mason, Jean Mattkemper, Jeffrey McVane, Robert Means, Linda Montijo, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Morehouse, Cheryl Moslowitz, Lorraine Nienaber, Lois Olmstead, Rose Marie Perry, Patricia Phillips, Paul Rankin, Sergio Raya, Daniel Rogers, Patricia Ryan, George Shurtz, Diana Smith, Robert Starbird, P. Tanner, Ramsay Thomas, Gwen Vergeer, Clifford Wheat, Norma Williams and Diane Williamson.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These gifts and donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for donations from S Hayashi and L Fujii of El Cerrito and for a donation from Mike and Cecil Williams of Moraga given in memory of the mother of Chuck Groff of El Sobrante, who passed away on November 1. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but Quail subscription is available separately from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Exchange bulletins for MDAS to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053, please.*

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February 1995

Vol. 41 No. 6

Next Deadline: February 9

February Program

The Marin Island National Wildlife Refuge

Our January program introduced us to the birds of South San Francisco Bay and the activities of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. On **February 2** we move north up the Bay to the Marin Island National Wildlife Refuge in San Rafael Bay. Philip Loring Greene will share his slides of breeding herons and egrets on these islands with us.

Philip Loring Greene is a nature photographer who has had exhibits in the British Museum of Natural History, the Zoological Museum of the University of Helsinki and the California Academy of Sciences. He also teaches wildlife and nature photography and printing for the Pt. Reyes Field Seminars, Audubon Canyon Ranch, and the California Academy of Sciences. A Marin resident, Greene gave congressional testimony in support of the formation of Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Join us for this visit to another part of the Bay.

Jim Lomax will entertain us with another bird quiz for Bird Information. Sharpen your identification skills and come enjoy Jim's slides

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

- 6:30 Doors open
- 7:00 Birding Information
- 7:30 Business Meeting
- 8:00 Social Time
- 8:30 Program

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip for February will be a return to Hidden Lakes Park on Sunday, February 12. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Trip leader will be Denise Wight, 370-7342. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the end of Glacier Dr. in Martinez. From Contra Costa Blvd., turn west on Center and continue west to Glacier. Turn left to end.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Denise Wight, 370-7342, at the home of Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK

Audubon folks with memories and "some" idea as to what's been going on with the "water wars" will understand. Remember, MDAS banded together with a number of other organizations interested in the fate of the Bay/Delta, fish, other wildlife, AND we humans. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency was told that the State's water regulatory board was NOT doing its job. As a result, salmon, striped bass, and other fish either were or would soon be ENDANGERED. Federal law gives the STATE primary responsibility for protection of the Bay and its resources. IF the STATE fails to meet its obligation, EPA is REQUIRED to step in. So, once evidence of state failure was presented, EPA HAD to act and ensure that the Bay/Delta and its resources were protected from the damage due to water being sent to the southland. Environmental people said, "If the state doesn't ACT, EPA MUST." In later days of the Bush Administration there wasn't much enthusiasm among EPA officers to DO anything. However, the determination to file suit if nothing was done made a BIG difference. EPA was clearly concerned about difficulties involved in trying to defend against such a law suit. In the end EPA agreed, with the legal people looking on, that "a Save the Bay/Delta Policy would be issued by December 15, 1994." Why that date? YOU conjecture. Time passed. On December 15 EPA DID issue a plan to save the Bay/Delta and the Governor, as the highest officer of the state, signed on. Has the Bay/Delta, its fish, wildlife, AND important resources like sport fishing and commercial fishing which are multi-million dollar businesses now been SAVED? Things are looking good. Negotiations between various interested people have (almost) produced agreement.

Now comes "The Contract with America." This comment by one Bill Thomas, Congressman from Bakersfield, was reported in the December 19 edition of the *Visalia Valley Times*. "Congressman Bill Thomas, R-Bakersfield, was quoted on November 30 as describing a federal government study designed to assess the options for restoring parts of the San Joaquin River ecosystem as 'just an attempt to try and alter current California environment for the benefit of a fish at the expense of people and agriculture; it's outrageous.'" Bill Alevison, Ph.D., (writer, Bay Institute), commented in the *Visalia Valley Times* thusly, "What is outrageous is the apparent degree of ignorance of this elected official as to the nature of the San Joaquin restoration study, the rational and possible benefits to residents of the San Joaquin Valley as well as the rest of the people of the State of California." You will be interested to know that the Congressman is going to introduce legislation to amend the Miller/Bradley water legislation (which is what this is really all about) to do away with the objectionable portions of the law. It took 18 years of hard, dedicated work to enact Miller/Bradley. Is the real fuss the fact that the HUGE water subsidies for agri-business will be done in? I suggest you watch this issue closely over the coming weeks.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

The next scheduled meeting of the Delta Environment Science Center Coordinating Committee is scheduled for January 18 at Los Medanos Community College. At that time an initial report will be presented by the consultants who have been employed to dig into all elements of the proposed Center. It is anticipated a report will also be received about substantial, additional funding for the Center.

SHELL MARSH

You haven't heard much (of late) about activity involving Shell Marsh, where MDAS has spent countless hours to bring about a worthwhile wetland. A study, funded by the Shell Oil Spill Litigation Settlement Trustee Committee (how is that for a name?) has been completed. The study provides guidance and will be an important factor in determining how to ensure the optimal hydrology for the area. A specific plan will now be developed to upgrade the marsh. The East Bay Regional Park District is in charge of the property. The property has been posted to prevent poaching and human damage to the wetland and to protect the wildlife that make use of this very important wetland. Cattle are no longer allowed to graze in the wetland and one result is a return to pristine conditions. For the first time in years, at the suggestion of MDAS, the mosquito district didn't drain the marsh. As a result, habitat for birds and various creatures and critters was maintained as an operating wetland throughout 1994. The next time you go to Shell Marsh for a bit of twitching, make a list of the birds and creatures seen. Send a copy of your list to MDAS Conservation, P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94696. Note the time and date, along with species seen. The data will be helpful in assessing the future of Shell Marsh.

NEW HOUSE COMMITTEES

Interested? If you really want to see birds on the wing in the future... If you truly want to hike and nature walk in pristine territory... If you want to have clean water, clean air, protection of our environment, you HAVE to be interested. The Chair of the Natural Resources Committee is Republican Don Young, Alaska. The ranking member is George Miller, Democrat, Martinez. NO doubt it'll be "interesting." Whether or not the bugs, bees, birds and creatures will fare well remains to be seen. A goodly part of the future really depends on "we, the people" and what WE want to happen. We have to decide on what we consider important and how we are going to live, particularly in an era when we are finding limits and where our ways of life are "doing in" hundreds of species (of some sort) each year. Can WE have it ALL with but limited concern about Mom Nature? Or do we have to figure our HOW to share our world and our environment? As night follows day, the decisions of today will determine what our world will be like tomorrow. Do we want a world that has but little idea as to how OUR quality of life should be maintained? Will we be thoughtful about "doing in" elements that contribute to high quality living? If we want such elements, the alternatives to thoughtful decision-making about land use may be few to none.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Ashy Storm-Petrel: 1 on 12/29 at the Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR)

Pelagic Cormorant: 1 on 12/29 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Cattle Egret: 1 on 12/23 at Hayward RS (BR); 1 on 1/3 still at Lake Merritt (FB, MJC, Bo&BG).

Tundra Swan: an estimated 9,000 on 12/27 in Contra Costa County between Discovery Bay and Holland Tract. (SG, RL)

Greater White-fronted Goose: 48 on 12/21 over San Antonio Valley, Santa Clara County, on the Mt. Hamilton Christmas Bird Count. (BR)

Snow Goose: 1 on 12/6 at the George Miller Jr. Regional Shoreline. (FB, MJC)

Emperor Goose: 1 on 1/2 (EL, FB, BG) and 1/3 (JR) along Salmon Creek Rd., near Bodega.

Canada Goose: 1 albino on 12/20 and 12/27 at south end of Shell Marsh (MJC, FB); 1 albino on 1/1 flying into Heather Farms with a group of Canada Geese (FB).

Blue-winged Teal: 2 pair on 12/17 and 12/20 at the south end of Shell Marsh (FB, MJC); a pair on 12/20 at Arrowhead Marsh (JR).

Eurasian Wigeon: a male on 12/17 at the south end of Shell Marsh (FB, MJC); a male on 12/20 and 12/27 at Arrowhead Marsh (JR).

Redhead: 2 males and 1 female on 12/27 in flooded field just east of Discovery Bay along Hwy. 4 (SG, RL); 20 on 1/3 at Berkeley Aquatic Park (FB, MJC, Bo&BG).

Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 female on 12/20 at Arrowhead Marsh (JR); 3 females on 12/27 at Clifton Court Forebay (SG, RL); 1 female on 12/31 at Hayward RS (SG, BR, RL); 50 on 1/3 at Lake Merritt (FB, MJC, Bo&BG).

Hooded Merganser: at least 5 and possibly 8 on 12/17 along Waterfront Rd. (BR, SG, BL); a pair on 1/1 at 7 Hills School, Walnut Creek (FB).

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 12/13 at mile 1.0 along Mines Rd. (JR)

Merlin: 1 on 12/13 along Mines Rd. (JR)

Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 12/17 along Waterfront Rd. (SG, BR, BL); 3 on 12/20 over Arrowhead Marsh (JR); 3 on 12/31 at Hayward RS (BR, SG).

Wild Turkey: 49 on 1/3 along Salmon Creek Rd., Sonoma County. (JR)

Black Rail: 1 on 12/30 at Palo Alto Baylands. (JR)

Mountain Plover: 8 on 11/21 in Panoche Valley. (GF, MP)

Lesser Yellowlegs: 3 on 12/17 along Waterfront Rd. (SG, BR, BL); 1 on 12/20 at Shell Marsh (FB, MJC); 1 on 12/20 at Arrowhead Marsh (JR).

Marbled Godwit: 2 on 12/17 and 12/20 at the south end of Shell Marsh. (FB, MJC)

Marbled Murrelet: 10 on 1/3 off Bodega Head. (JR)

Ancient Murrelet: 3 on 1/3 off Bodega Head. (JR)

Cassin's Auklet: 2 on 1/3 off Bodega Head. (JR)

Greater Roadrunner: 6 on 11/21 in the Panoche Valley area (GF, MP); 1 on 12/5 in Del Puerto Canyon (GF, MP); 1 on 12/13 at mile 4.0 and 1 at mile 11.01 along Mines Rd. (JR).

Northern Pygmy-Owl: 1 on 12/17 in Pine Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park (BR, SG); 1 on 12/21 along Mines Rd. at Alameda-Santa Clara County line (BR).

Burrowing Owl: 1 on 12/17 between Macedo Ranch and Pine Canyon, MDSP (SG, BR); 1 on 12/20 (JR) and 1/3 (LF, GB, FB, MJC, Bo&BG) at Arrowhead Marsh.

Lewis' Woodpecker: 6 on 12/5 (GF, MP) and 10 on 12/13 in San Antonio Valley, Santa Clara County (JR).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 male on 12/20 at Davis, Yolo County. (FB, MJC)

Mountain Bluebird: 100+ on 11/21 in the Panoche Valley area. (GF, MP)

Northern Shrike: 1 juvenile on 12/31 in the Niles Canyon Gravel Pits. (JE) Second Alameda County record.

Nashville Warbler: 1 on 1/2 (FB, EL, BG) and 1/3 (JR) at Diekmann's Bay Store, Bodega Bay.

Northern Waterthrush: 1 on 1/2 at Diekmann's Bay Store. (FB, EL, BG)

Vesper Sparrow: 7 on 11/21 in the Panoche Valley area. (GF, MP)

Sharp-tailed Sparrow: 1 on 12/30 at Palo Alto Baylands. (JR)

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 1 male on 12/17 at Pacheco Slough (BL, BR, SG); 1 on 12/17 just east of Avon (BR).

Observers: Gen Baird, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jimm Edgar, George Finger, Lois Foster, Bob Gallagher, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Bob Landfear, Ron Lindeman, Eugenia Larson, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, and Jean Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

UNIQUE PANAMA BIRDS THREATENED

A proposed ocean to ocean highway that would cut through two national parks created to protect the Panama Canal watershed could threaten survival of numerous rare animals. The proposed four-lane highway will also pass next to the eastern bank of the Panama Canal which could increase the amount of silt filling the waterway. Several bird species, whose populations were decimated on Barro Colorado, a small island which was stranded when the Canal was filled with water from the Chagres River, could be threatened by this roadway. These birds, including the Great Curacao, the Royal Flycatcher, and several wren species, currently survive in Soberania Park, which could be adversely impacted by fragmentation caused by the roadway.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

NOTE: Because of problems this winter due to bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have doubts, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Saturday, February 4, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool at 7:15 a.m., at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides Restaurant is on left, opposite a Union station. Can be cold and windy.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703 Category 1

Thursday, February 9, **Thornton**. Carpool at 7:30 a.m., at the southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:45 a.m. in park at end of Glascock Rd. Take SR 4 to Antioch Bridge (toll), go north on SR 160 along the river to Rio Vista. Turn right on SR 12 for 11.5 miles, then turn left onto Glascock Rd. Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes, hawks and grassland birds. Trip will go in light rain. If questions, call the leader.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

Thursday, February 16, **Berkeley shoreline**. Carpool at 8:00 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the north end of the Emeryville Marina. Take Hwy. 24, turn north onto I-80. Take the first exit, Powell St., turn left under the freeway to the end of the road. Park in parking lot. May be cold and windy. Loons, grebes, and bay ducks.

Leader: Denise Wight, 370-7342 Category 1

The **Honey Lake Sage Grouse trip** has been cancelled for this year because of weather conditions. Instead, the Putah Creek trip, which was cancelled in January because of rain, has been rescheduled as given below.

Saturday, February 18, **Putah Creek**. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at the intersection of Cherry Glen and Pleasants Valley Rds., approximately 1 mile north from I-80. Park on Cherry Glen. Dress warmly; this is a cold, windy area. Possible Osprey, Phainopepla, Canyon and Rock Wrens, Hooded Merganser.

Leader: Florence Bennett, 689-3106 Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

SACRAMENTO VALLEY REFUGES, December 3-4.

As forecast, rain never let up Saturday as we birded Grey Lodge and areas west. Fortunately, the birds seemed unimpressed with the display, allowing us looks at American Bittern, Snow and Ross's Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, Peregrine Falcon, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Sunday arrived with clear skies and an adult Bald Eagle, Sandhill Cranes, and White-faced Ibis. Four birders saw 104 species.

Steve Glover

ALTAMONT, December 7.

Four birders got together on this beautiful winter day and birded Dougherty Road and the Altamont Pass area, seeing 70 species of birds. Highlights included 9 Golden Eagles, 107 Red-tailed Hawks, 10 Ferruginous Hawks, 3 Prairie Falcons, and the "Bird of the Day," an adult Bald Eagle.

Jim Lomax

NILES CANYON GRAVEL PITTS, December 15.

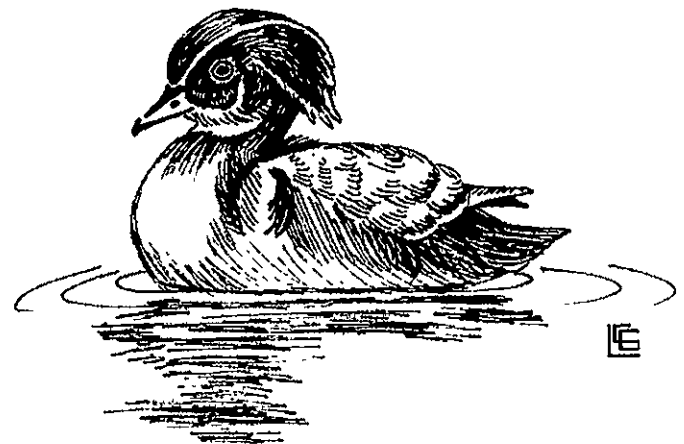
Because of the potentially gray and threatening skies, only four members and guests showed up for our trip. The day turned out beautiful with lots of sun, no wind, and many good birds. We saw the target species for the area, Ring-necked duck, Spotted Sandpiper, and Green Heron, plus many unexpected treats. Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher rounded out the 71 species seen during the day.

Jimm Edgar

PALO ALTO BAYLANDS, December 31.

Five members and a guest braved the drizzle in the hopes that the high tides would drive out rails. A Black Rail was first spotted under a ranger's truck and was carefully studied by a crowd of birders. Two Short-tailed Sparrows were also flushed by high water and several Clapper Rails were seen. 64 species seen or heard.

Elizabeth Dickey



Original
Sketch
by Carol Lutz

THE 1994 CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

The 1994 Mt. Diablo Audubon Christmas Count yielded 158 species on count day plus three additional species seen during the count period (cp). Highlights included Grasshopper Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird, which are extremely rare on our Christmas Counts, as well as Rough-legged Hawk, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Canyon Wren, which are all good birds to get. The most unusual birds on the count, however, probably were the **two** Northern Pygmy-Owls. Perhaps because of the bad weather, which was cold and foggy all day, numbers were significantly down again this year. Two years ago we counted over 80,000 individuals, this year 33,471. I want to thank the 63 volunteers who went out on December 17, as well as the five feeder-watchers, for making this a great day as well as a fun day. Finally, once again, special thanks go to Gloria Lotten for organizing the preparations and Winnie and Gifford Young for overseeing the marvelous count dinner.

Jimm Edgar, Compiler

Pied-billed Grebe	Red-tailed Hawk	Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush
Horned Grebe	Ferruginous Hawk	Barn Owl	American Robin
Eared Grebe	<u>Rough-legged Hawk</u>	Western Screech-Owl	Varied Thrush
Western Grebe	Golden Eagle	Great Horned Owl	Wrentit
Clark's Grebe	American Kestrel	<u>Northern Pygmy-Owl</u>	Northern Mockingbird
<u>American White Pelican</u> cp	Merlin	Burrowing Owl	California Thrasher
Double-crested Cormorant	Peregrine Falcon	Short-eared Owl	American Pipit
American Bittern	Prairie Falcon	White-throated Swift	Cedar Waxwing
Great Blue Heron	Ring-necked Pheasant cp	Anna's Hummingbird	Phainopepla
Great Egret	California Quail	Belted Kingfisher	Loggerhead Shrike
Snowy Egret	Black Rail	Acorn Woodpecker	European Starling
Green Heron	Virginia Rail	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Hutton's Vireo
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Sora	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Tundra Swan	Common Moorhen	Downy Woodpecker	Townsend's Warbler
Greater White-fronted Goose	American Coot	Hairy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Canada Goose	Killdeer	Northern Flicker	Rufous-sided Towhee
Wood Duck	Black-necked Stilt	Black Phoebe	California Towhee
Green-winged Teal	American Avocet	Say's Phoebe	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Mallard	Greater Yellowlegs	Horned Lark	Lark Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Lesser Yellowlegs	Tree Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Willet	Steller's Jay	<u>Grasshopper Sparrow</u>
Cinnamon Teal	Spotted Sandpiper	Scrub Jay	Fox Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Long-billed Curlew	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Gadwall	Marbled Godwit	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Eurasian Wigeon	Western Sandpiper	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	White-throated Sparrow
American Wigeon	Least Sandpiper	Plain Titmouse	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Canvasback	Dunlin	Bushtit	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Long-billed Dowitcher	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Scaup	Common Snipe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Bonaparte's Gull	Brown Creeper	Tricolored Blackbird
Surf Scoter	Mew Gull	Rock Wren	Western Meadowlark
Common Goldeneye	Ring-billed Gull	<u>Canyon Wren</u>	<u>Yellow-headed Blackbird</u>
Bufflehead	California Gull	Bewick's Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
Hooded Merganser	Herring Gull	House Wren cp	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Merganser	Thayer's Gull	Marsh Wren	Purple Finch
Ruddy Duck	Western Gull	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Finch
Turkey Vulture	Glaucous-winged Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Pine siskin
Northern Harrier	Forster's Tern	<u>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</u>	Lesser Goldfinch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Rock Dove	Western Bluebird	American Goldfinch
Cooper's Hawk	Band-tailed Pigeon	<u>Townsend's Solitaire</u>	House Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk			

NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to greet these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and trips: Clifford Addleman, Pat Ahern, Donna Anderson, Diane Beaudet, James Bloom, Ed and Susan Burns, Jennifer Case, Virginia Chambers, Shorty Clugston, Rose Cramblet, Vivien Demarest, April Dorman, S. Ellis, Allan Frandsen, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Frost, Greg Gaskin, Robert Hale, David Hermelin, Marion Hermens, Marion Hixon, Hockenberry, Barbara Jones, G. Lafortune, Karen Landers, Rosa Loving, Claire Mailhiot, Barbara Marks, Tom Matson, Dwight Meadows, Rachel Frankel Meek, Michael Merriman, Melinda Moreno, Richard Ostic, Connie Peak, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Peeters, Colleen Pepper, William Porter, Karen Posthauen, Geneva Robinson, Rose Schneider, Peg Schoenfelder, William Scroggins, Jim Smith, Loree Swenson, Norman Weil, Linda Wheeler, Milo Zarakov, and Crystal Zwiebach.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

720 Contra Costa Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

WINTER SUPER SALE

BIRDSEED SALE

All 25 lb. and 50 lb. bags on sale

SUET SALE

\$0.30 off all suet cakes & \$0.60 off all suet tubs
(Sale ends 2/19/95)

15%-30% OFF

All Feeders	Squirrel Baffles
Bird Baths	Squirrel Toys
Bird Houses	Hanging Hardware
Other In-store Specials	
(Sale ends 2/19/95)	

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Exchange bulletins for MDAS to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053, please.

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 53

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053

(510) AUD-UBON

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Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Gloria Lotten, 866-1619
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Sheree Lomax, 825-1513

March 1995

Vol. 41 No. 7

Next Deadline: March 9

March Program

The Importance of Oaks

For our **March 2** meeting, Ralph Kraetsch, founder and coordinator of the Oak Habitat Restoration Project, will speak on the importance of oaks in our area. In many places in California, the future of oaks is uncertain. This program will include comments on oaks and their growth, the value of oaks to wildlife and people, and the equally great value of wildlife to oaks. Ralph will also speak about the Oak Habitat Restoration Project.

Ralph Kraetsch is currently president of the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Ralph has an M.S. in geology and is a retired Chevron petroleum geologist. He is also currently a member of the Walnut Creek Park, Recreation and Open Space Commission.

Mike Williams will host the board meeting Thursday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m., at the Wild Birds Unlimited store, 720 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, 798-0303. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local March field trip will explore the Orinda Connector Trail on Sunday, March 19. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us. Call trip leader Denise Wight, 370-7342, to reserve a place as the access permit limits the number of participants. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the corner of San Pablo Dam and Bear Creek Roads in Orinda.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WELL, FOLKS, HERE WE GO AGAIN

The election's over. NO promises were made and few people even asked any questions. We were too busy with crime and punishment (ah, but that's another story). However, you are now on notice. The Governor's budget calls for elimination of BCDC (San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission). You may ask, "So what?" You should, instead, be up in arms, writing, calling, and letting the Governor KNOW (as a famous earlier American said) THIS SHALL NOT PASS.

Query: What is this all about? Well, in years past, the PEOPLE through the initiative process voted for the creation of BCDC. It is the watchdog for the Bay and what happens all around the Bay. Most people agree BCDC is well-run, has a comparatively low budget, and is as effective as possible, considering the funds being provided for its activities.

"So," you ask, "what's all the fuss?" Among other things, BCDC has responsibilities to ensure that development of one sort or another does not do harm to the Bay. That charge means BCDC has to say NO to powerful, influential individuals. It also means BCDC crosses swords with other state agencies, one of which is called (when speaking of it kindly) CalTrans.

It is asserted that CalTrans has convinced the Governor that BCDC should GO! So, instead of having to deal with an agency that knows its job and has some good, dedicated people working for it, the Governor proposes to turn BCDC's work over to the Coastal Commission. If you haven't been following the Coastal Commission's trials and tribulations, that once-important and effective agency has been reduced to an almost impotent entity which has of late, according to many reports, done little to carry out its mandate.

Give your State Senator and your Assembly person a call. Tell them what YOU think should be done. It's YOUR Bay, your coast, your environment. If we permit it to be destroyed, all of us will be the losers.

NAS AND THE FUTURE

If you've not heard, National Audubon's Board of Directors is currently busy looking at environmental needs, birds and birding, and the many programs now sponsored in one way or another by the National Audubon Society. A major think-tank has agreed to assist in the process. People from various levels of Audubon are meeting all around the USA to "say what they think," listen, and propose ideas. I had an opportunity (?) on a VERY rainy afternoon to participate in such a session. Of course my views weren't assisted much by my arriving at the meeting a full day ahead of time. (Remember, it was raining and windy and an altogether nasty day.) The group did meet the next day for more than four hours discussing the good, bad, and the ugly of NAS. Will things be better? I think so. It'll take a little time, but I sense a seriousness to the project that bodes well for the future.

REMEMBER THE BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP?

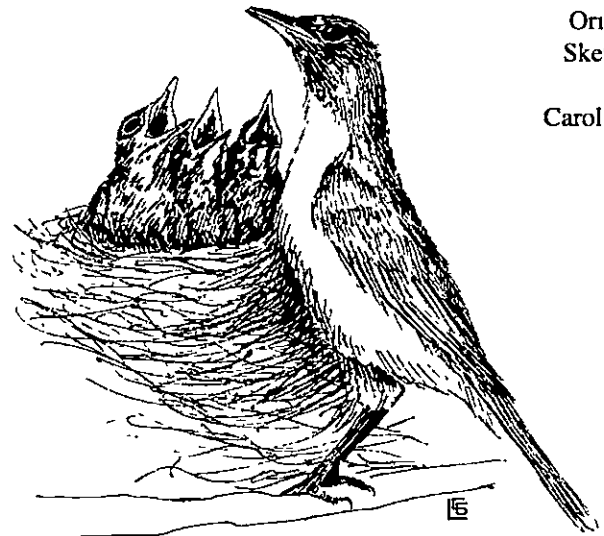
Probably not. I don't much blame you. The subject is usually NOT at the top of one's everyday conversation. Even I haven't mentioned it for some time. (The trip to Ft. Lauderdale for CITES and various other odds and ends took precedent.) There's good news. The first meeting of 1995 will take place February 23 in offices of EBMUD. The challenges will be "somewhat" eased due to the fact some money has been made available to assist in the effort. If we had "in hand" the data necessary to establish a biodiversity profile for Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, the determinations could be made as to what has to be done to ensure a future for people, birds and bees, and other "stuff." Such data are NOT in hand but with continued perseverance, the Biodiversity Group will initiate the ACTION that will eventually produce the data everyone has to have if we are to maintain a SUSTAINABLE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY.

DESC

NO, NO! That's NOT a misspelling for DESK. It's the acronym for Delta Environment Science Center. Yes, folks, it is moving. Regular monthly planning meetings are held by the Coordinating Committee. Consultants are at work. Funds are being collected and the Ironhouse Sanitation District is even making some office space available for the project. East Bay Regional Park District has a ranger assigned to the area and he is conducting tours of the wetlands. Audubon people are WELCOME. Just be certain to obtain advance approval from the District. Then GO and enjoy the multiplicity of birdlife. You'll even see other critters if you keep a watchful eye out.

IS IT SPRING?

Did you happen to notice what a beautiful day nature presented to us on Thursday, February 2? If we have many more days like that, the birds will be courtin', the trees will be buddin', and the grasses will be getting greener all the time. So, 'til next month, good birding.



Original
Sketches
by
Carol Lutz

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

NOTE: Because of problems this winter due to bad weather or road conditions, field trips may be cancelled by the leader the day of the trip at the carpool location. If you have doubts, call the leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Wednesday, March 1, **Hayward Regional Shoreline**. Carpool 7.45 a.m. at El Nido at St. Stephens, off SR 24. Meet at 8:30 in front of Visitor's Center. Take I-880 to SR 92 west. From the Clawiter exit, turn on Breakwater to Visitor's Center. Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732 Category 2

Saturday, March 11, **Tomales Bay State Park**. Carpool 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Heart's Desire Beach at Tomales SP (\$5 entrance fee). Cross San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left onto Sir Frances Drake Blvd. Follow Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Inverness. Just over the ridge, turn right onto Pierce Point Rd. The park entrance is on the right. Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 2

Thursday, March 16, **San Mateo Coast**. Carpool 7:15 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in beach parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd., turn right into parking lot. Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843 Category 2

Saturday, March 25, **Black Diamond Mines Regional Park**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., north of Hwy. 24. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot at park. Go east on Ygnacio Valley and Kirker Pass Roads to Hwy. 4. Go east on Hwy. 4 to the Somersville Rd exit and turn right. Follow the road to the parking lot at the end. Woodland, chaparral, and some grassland birds. Leader: Pat MacEachern, 934-3041 Category 3

Wednesday, March 29, **Briones Park**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the north entrance. Take Briones Road off of Alhambra Valley Road. Wildflowers, spring birds. Poison oak along shaded trails. Leader: John Davis, 228-9516 Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

PUTAH CREEK, January 7.
Field trip was cancelled due to rain.

LAKE MERRITT, January 12.
Field trip was cancelled due to rain.

SUNOL REGIONAL PARK, January 21.
A timely break in the rains enabled twelve birders to spend a profitable morning along the road past Little Yosemite. Varied Thrushes were abundant and everyone had excellent views of Rufous-crowned Sparrows. Prairie Falcons and Golden Eagles were seen at a distance. A total of 49 species were seen or heard in the park and the day ended with views of an immature and an adult Bald Eagle at the south end of Calaveras Reservoir.

Elizabeth Dickey

GRIZZLY ISLAND WILDLIFE REFUGE, January 25.
Twelve members braved potential storms to visit Grizzly Island and had a day of fair weather with 60° temperatures. Highlights of the day were the three owl species: Short-eared Owl in the field near the Joice Island entrance gate, Barn Owl near Grizzly Island headquarters, and Burrowing Owl on Cordelia Road at O'Rehr. Other birds of interest were a large flock of American White Pelicans, an American Bittern, a flock of 25 Cattle Egret near the beginning of Grizzly Island Road, Snow Geese, and four Blue-winged Teal at the Fairfield Oxidation Ponds.

Maury Stern

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF BIRDING ETIQUETTE

by Victor Emanuel
(Victor Emanuel Nature Tours)

1. Do not approach nesting birds too closely.
2. Obey all posted rules when visiting sanctuaries or preserves.
3. Do not enter private property without permission.
4. Do not use tape recorders in heavily birded areas during the nesting season. In other areas, use tape-recorded bird vocalizations or imitations with discretion.
5. Be careful not to obstruct the view of fellow birders by stepping in front of them.
6. When the leader gets a bird in the scope, take a quick look when it is your turn, then come back for a second view after everyone has seen the bird.
7. Don't smoke in vehicles or near your fellow birders.
8. Be careful not to spray on insect repellent while standing near or upwind of other birders or while in vehicles.
9. Alternate positions in the vehicles and on trails so that everyone has a chance to have the best position.
10. In general keep conversation to a minimum while on forest trails. Bird vocalizations are the best way to locate forest birds and are difficult to hear above conversation.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,

3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.

Please include your telephone number with your observations.

American Bittern: 1 on 1/25 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG, RL)

Cattle Egret: 1 on 1/9 on Delta Road near Knightsen (KH); 19 on 1/18 (JL, KH), and 18 on 1/20 (SG) on Jersey Island.

White-faced Ibis: 20-25 over Webb Tract, seen from Piper Slough. (SG, RL) Only two Contra Costa County records before this winter. 1/25

Tundra Swan: 3000 on 1/25 (SG, RL) and 5-6000 on 2/2 (SG, RL, BR) north of Orwood Road, near Knightsen.

Whooper Swan: 1 on 1/24 along Grimes-Arbuckle Road, Colusa County. (KH, JR, GF, FB, BG, MJC) Sixth state record.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 2-3000 on 1/20 and 1/25 (SG, RL) and 1500 on 2/2 (SG, RL, BR) north of Orwood Road.

Snow Goose: 140 on 1/20 (SG), 5000 on 1/25 (SG, RL) and 1000 on 2/2 (SG, RL, BR) north of Orwood Road; 75 on 2/2 over Jersey Island and 40 on 2/2 over Piper Slough (SG, RL, BR); 1 of the "Blue" morph (with 500 "Whites") on 1/25 over Webb Tract (RL, SG); 2 "Blues" on 2/2 over Jersey Island (SG, RL, BR). First county records for the "Blue" morph.

Ross' Goose: 3 on 1/25 north of Orwood Road (SG, RL); 1 on 1/25 over Webb Tract (SG, RL).

Emperor Goose: 1 on 1/5 (FB, MJC) and 2/4 (H&NB) along Salmon Creek Road, Bodega.

Brant: 1 on 2/7 at Brooks Island, seen from the end of Marina Way in Richmond. (SG)

Wood Duck: 7 on 1/19 along Bear Creek Road. (DW, JL)

Redhead: 46 on 1/14 at Berkeley Aquatic Park. (JR, RR)

Tufted Duck: male on 1/31 at Spreckels Lake, Golden Gate Park. (JR)

Harlequin Duck: male still present on 1/9 (JL, KH) and 2/7 (SG) at Marina Bay Harbor.

Black Scoter: 2 males on 2/7 at Marina Bay Harbor. (SG)

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 males on 2/2 at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG, RL, BR)

Osprey: 3 on 1/18 at Pt. Isabel in Richmond (JL, KH); 4 on 2/2 at San Pablo Reservoir (H&NB); 1 on 1/30 at Lafayette Reservoir (H&NB).

Bald Eagle: 1 male on 1/17 (JL) and 1/19 (JL, DW) along Vasco Road, Contra Costa County; 1 immature on 2/2 at San Pablo Reservoir (H&NB); 1 adult on 2/3 along Panoche Road (JR, RR).

Black Rail: 1 on 1/24 (JR) and 1/30 (BG, FB) at Palo Alto Baylands.

Sandhill Crane: 3 on 1/20 (SG) and 28 on 2/2 (RL, SG, BR) along Holland Tract; 20 on 1/25 north of Orwood Road (SG, RL).

Mountain Plover: 100 on 1/17 (FB, MJC, BG), 40 on 1/24 (KH, JR, GF) along Road 102 near Knights Landing, Yolo County.

Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 on 1/9 along Delta Road (KH); 15 on 2/2 near the end of Jersey Island Road (SG, RL, BR).

Common Snipe: 81 on 1/7 along Morello Avenue, Martinez. (DW)

Northern Saw-whet Owl: 1 on 1/18 (DW) and 1/19 (DW, JL) near the parking lot of Briones Regional Park on Bear Creek Road.

Common Poorwill: 2 on 2/1 near Rock City, Mt. Diablo State Park. (KH)

Allen's Hummingbird: 1 on 1/12 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Richmond. (DW)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 adult male on 1/17 (FB, MJC, BG) and 1/24 (KH, JR, GF) in Davis.

Eastern Phoebe: 1 on 1/17 (FB, MJC, BG) and 1/24 (JR, GF, KH) in Davis.

Townsend's Solitaire: 1 on 1/17 at Monticello Dam, Putah Creek. (JR)

Sage Thrasher: 1 on 2/3 along the BLM access road off of Little Panoche Road. (JR, RR)

Bohemian Waxwing: 12 on 2/4 at Mono Lake Visitor Center. (KH, JL)

Orange-crowned warbler: 3 on 1/25 at Piper Slough. (SG, RL)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 1/22 at Martinez RS (DW); 1 throughout January in their Orinda garden (H&NB).

Northern "Bullock's" Oriole: 1 male on 1/31 at the northwest end of Lake Merced, San Francisco. (JR)

Observers: Hugh and Norah Bain, Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Bob Richmond, Jean and Rich Richmond, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers.

OBSERVATIONS POLICIES

Due to recent questions about why some observations submitted to the *Quail* are published and others are not, these criteria for observations established by Steve Glover when he became the Observations Editor are repeated:

"Birds which are seen after being reported on the Rare Bird Alert will continue to be included here because this column is many people's connection to the rare birds of the area and they can be helpful in gaining an understanding of bird distribution (For birds not seen via the Rare Bird Alert), emphasis will be placed on early arrivals and late departures, on unusual concentrations, and on unusual birds in a given area, particularly in the East Bay because this is where we can and should contribute the most."

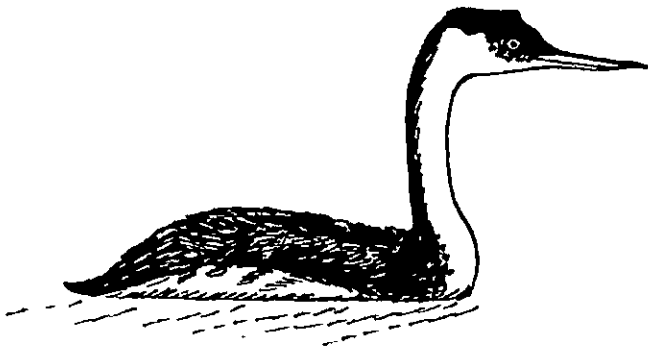
SPRING CLASS AND LOON LECTURE

SPRING CLASS

Norah Bain's field classes for beginning and intermediate birders will start April 25. The Tuesday classes will meet from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on April 18, April 25, and May 2, and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on May 9. For class details, please call Norah at (510) 254-4516. For registration details, please call the Orinda Community Center at (510) 254-2445 in early March. The fee for Orinda residents is \$44, for others \$46.

LOON LECTURE

The Common Loon's haunting cry, Olympic-gold diving ability and sharply contrasting black and white feathers have captivated residents of northern wilderness for years. The appeal of this mysterious waterfowl has been enough to reverse the loon's slide toward extinction. Thanks to the efforts in part by the North American Loon Fund (NALF), the story of the Common Loon is an example of how to preserve a species before it reaches the critical point. Dr. Judith McIntyre, a trustee of NALF, has spent more than 20 years studying the Common Loon. In her lecture, "The Common Loon: Spirit of Northern Lakes," McIntyre uses her observations to present an account of loon biology, behavior and ecology, paying special attention to loon communication. This lecture, co-sponsored by the California Academy of Sciences and the North American Loon Fund, will be on March 28 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. Admission is \$6 for members, \$8 for non-members. The lecture is presented in conjunction with the photo exhibit "Witness: Endangered Species of North America," currently at the California Academy of Sciences.



BLUEBIRD PROJECT

Issue 1 of the newsletter of the California Bluebird Recovery Program is now out. This non-profit project is sponsored by the Western Regional Office of National Audubon Society and the North American Bluebird Society. The program seeks to encourage and preserve cavity nesters, especially bluebirds, anywhere in the West. If you are interested in this project and would like to receive the newsletter, send a minimum donation of \$5.00 made out to MDAS-Bluebirds to Don Yoder, 2021 Ptarmigan Drive #1, Walnut Creek CA 94595.

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!

Each month MDAS receives a chapter change report from the company which has contracted with National Audubon Society to maintain the NAS membership data. These chapter change reports contain the lists of new members (given in the *Quail* on page 6 each month), the transfers into and out of the chapter, the membership renewals, name or address changes, the expired memberships, and cancelled memberships. This information is used to update the chapter data base from which *Quail* mailing labels are generated.

Within the last three months, a number of problems with the chapter change reports have been found. Several of our MDAS members - including a board member! - who renewed their Audubon memberships discovered they had been transferred to the Golden Gate Audubon chapter. New members in Orinda, Moraga, and parts of Lafayette are automatically assigned to Golden Gate upon first joining Audubon unless they specifically request to be MDAS members. In the past, such renewals have remained in our chapter, but at least in these known cases, the members were moved without notification to a different chapter when renewing. If you renew your membership, particularly if you live in Orinda or Moraga, and you start receiving the *Gull* or any other chapter's newsletter, your membership has been transferred out of MDAS. Normally this will also result in your name being taken off the *Quail* mailing list and you will no longer receive our chapter newsletter. There have not been any reports of this kind of transfer happening with any of our members in Benicia, but they should also be aware that it could happen there.

A second type of problem that has been observed recently is the appearance on the expired membership lists in the chapter change reports of members (including some MDAS board members) known to have sent in their membership renewals. Again, the normal procedure is to remove expired members from the *Quail* mailing list. In some cases, some of these members have shown up one or more months later as "new" members. Whether this is a temporary problem with the membership renewals not being processed in a timely fashion or whether this is due to renewals going astray is not known at this time. Members should plan to renew early to avoid being listed as expired and having a break in receiving the *Quail*.

While these are not the only problems that have been found with the chapter change reports, it is impossible for the chapter to correct these particular problems unless you let us know about them. If you have these problems or any others with your *Quail* subscription in the future, please contact MDAS membership chair Mike Williams at 798-0303. At the least, he can help make sure you continue to receive the *Quail* while problems are straightened out with National.

Note to *Quail* subscribers: Those of you who are not members of Audubon but subscribe to the *Quail* should not be affected by these problems with the chapter change reports. If you have any problems with your *Quail* subscription, please contact MDAS treasurer Pam Keiser at 838-8840.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at meetings and trips: Lynn Axelson, Maxine Baker, Vickie Bays, Linda Bouchard, J. Dean, M. Dixon, Warren and Lauri English, Marian Eymann, Pat Heagy, Barbara Helmkamp, Marilyn Holloway, Foster Huffman, Danny Hurley, Robert Ingham, Mitzi Jarvis, John Laird, Harley Lowe, John Lund, Earl McConnell, Andy Mechling, Claire O'Brien, Peggy O'Farrell, Brian Pedrotti, Manuel Sanchez, Phil Sapunor, Franklin Shoffner, Melissa Ann Smith, Kim Vogley, Robin Wasson and Marie Whitlock.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These gifts and donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for a donation from Scott Lorenz of Oakland and for a donation for wetlands conservation from Don and Mary Maxfield of Eugene, Oregon, given in memory of James Mitchell of Orinda. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Exchange bulletins for MDAS to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, P O Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053, please.*

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The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 53

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053

(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Gloria Lotten, 866-1619
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Sheree Lomax, 825-1513

April 1995

Vol. 41 No.8

Next Deadline: April 13

April Program:

Hummingbirds!

Dazzling jewels of the avian world! From the Anna's Hummingbird who keeps us constant company from the feeder outside our kitchen window to the smallest bird in the world, the Bee Hummingbird of Cuba, these priceless gems are one of nature's most intense and fascinating creatures. At our **April 6** general meeting, Meryl Sundove, naturalist and education co-ordinator for Richardson Bay Audubon Center will give a slide presentation on hummingbirds. She will speak on the life histories and biology of hummingbirds and give us tips on attracting our local species.

Meryl Sundove has been with Richardson Bay Audubon Center since 1981. She heads the summer program for children at the Center and is a naturalist for tours and cruises provided by Audubon Travel.

Are you interested in improving your birding skills? How have some people managed to become excellent birders in just a few years? This will be the topic of discussion for April Birding Information. The panel discussion will be moderated by Shirley Ellis. Guests will be prominent members of our chapter.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

The next board meeting will be Thursday, April 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Barbara Vaughn, 59 Donna Maria Way, Orinda, 376-8732. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

New Yuba Pass Field Trip date - page 3

BIRDATHON! - page 5

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trips will resume in May. Members are encouraged to join the Birdathon outings on April 29. See page 5.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WE CONTINUE THE SAGA OF BCDC

Last month our hero (??) Governor Wilson had rather quietly announced there would be NO money in his 1996 budget for the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Regardless of how THAT decision came to be, the fact is that today we face the same problem. Of course there are basic procedures that MUST be followed even in this day and age. A recent public hearing brought some 100 people together, ALL of whom were OPPOSED to the proposal to defund BCDC. The record shows 43 people spoke AGAINST the Governor's proposal and not ONE spoke for it. A keen observer said, "In a revealing display of political chicanery, two of Governor Wilson's appointees to BCDC left the hearing room to avoid voting on authorizing a letter of opposition to the Governor's proposal. Their departure caused a quorum to be lost, delaying the vote. Another Governor's appointee was so disturbed by their behavior that he herded them back to the room for the vote."

Another VERY disturbing matter: After the hearing, the Governor's official hearing representative told a Save the Bay board member, "**Regardless of public opinion, the Governor has no intention of reinstating BCDC's budget.**" (emphasis supplied.)

INANE, ANTI-ENVIRONMENT, ANTI-PUBLIC. You can say all that but unless the Governor understands the PUBLIC, i.e., YOU, care, he will do nothing to maintain this important entity. The Governor asserts defunding BCDC will save money. The facts are BCDC's budget is about \$2.4 million a year. The *San Francisco Chronicle* commented in an editorial on January 12 that this is about what "... the state spends to test the urine of race horses each year." The actual savings are estimated to be \$25,000 a year. Let the Governor KNOW YOUR views either by letter or telephone, or in person.

A few important facts. With the advent of BCDC:

1. Filling of the Bay has been reduced from an average of 2500 acres per year to near zero.
2. Public access to the Bay's 276 mile shoreline has increased from 4 miles to 110 miles
3. The Bay surface area has been increased by 800 acres.
4. 99,000 acres of wetlands have been permanently protected.
5. 10,000 acres of North Bay wetlands have been purchased for wildlife habitat

IT'S OUR BAY IT'S OUR SHORELINE. LET'S MAKE CERTAIN THAT BCDC REMAINS AS AN ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENTAL WATCHDOG.

DO YOU WATCH C-SPAN???????

Maybe you should. Arguments for and against so-call "takings" legislation have been fascinating and scary and portend great peril for the future of our nation's wetlands, zoning and wildlife. I predict IF the legislation now wending its way through the House ever becomes the law of the land, we will see the law of the jungle take over. Our complex society and mass of people must have reasonable rules if we are to save ourselves, let alone our wildlife and the best of our natural environment. Even proponents admit that the impacts on clean water, clean air, wetlands, and zoning legislation and regulations will be so severe the current laws would be rendered toothless.

SHELL MARSH, NOW AN IMPORTANT WETLANDS IN OUR MIDST

Gary Bogue, the noted writer and naturalist, wrote a long article for a recent column, extolling Shell Marsh and an interpretive program that will soon be in action. Shell Marsh has now been saved through the determination of MDAS and many others. In the end, a unanimous vote by the Martinez City Council AGAINST developing Shell Marsh, plus a disastrous oil spill, ensured the area will NEVER BE DEVELOPED. Shell Marsh is now a major natural area to be observed by people and used by birds and other wildlife for all time. If legislation now being considered by the Congress had been in effect when all the battles over the future of Shell Marsh were going on, Shell Marsh would NOW be a business park, with a BIG lake in its center. The point: If our birds and other wildlife are to have a future, they must have habitat.

FAX: IT IS A PART OF YOUR FUTURE

MDAS is now participating in a national fax network, thanks in part to a generous donation obtained by Sheree Lomax. This fax network, put together by National Audubon Society, enables us to participate in understanding important environmental issues of the day. In these times of instant action, the fax machine has become an essential element in the transmission of information and data.

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Folks, have you taken a little time to marvel at the wonders of nature? Look at Mt. Diablo, now an Irish green. Flowering trees and shrubs abound. Wattle (acacia to you) is that lovely yellow flower we see around this time of year. Of course, because birds are a mainstay of Audubon activity, we also delight in the bird sounds and activities such as watching Mom and Pop gathering twigs, string, and other "stuff" for the nest in which eggs will soon be laid. It's a great time of year. Enjoy it. Remember also the proposals now being debated in the Congress and the State legislature can change all this!!!!

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Red-throated Loon: 1 on 2/14 at Piper Slough, Bethel Island. (SG)
Yellow-billed Loon: 1 on 2/21 at Tomales Bay in Marin County. (JR, FB, MJC, BG)
Horned Grebe: 1 on 2/14 under the bridge on Jersey Island and 1 on 2/26 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Red-necked Grebe: 2 on 2/14 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
American Bittern: 2 on 2/24 at Mt. View Sanitary District. (B&SW)
Great Blue Heron: at least 30 nests under construction on 2/26 on Eucalyptus Island near Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Cattle Egret: 19 on 2/14 on Jersey Island. (SG)
Black-crowned Night-Heron: 31 on 2/24 at Mt. View Sanitary District. (B&SW)
Snow Goose: an estimated 40,000 on 2/14 flying southwest over Webb Tract, northeast Contra Costa County, all between 6:45 and 7:45 a.m. (SG)
Emperor Goose: 1 still present on 2/14 near Bodega, Sonoma County. (JR)
Brant: 1 still present on 3/1 at Brooks Island (SG, BR); 248 on 2/14 at Bodega Harbor (JR).
Wood Duck: a pair on 2/7 (JR) and 2/9 (FB, MJC) at Mt. View Cemetery, Oakland.
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 male on 2/14 (FB, MJC, BG) and 2 males on 3/1 (SG, BR) at the end of Marina Bay Pkwy. in Richmond.
Tufted Duck: 1 on 2/14 (FB, MJC, BG) and 2/18 (B&FB) at Spreckels Lake, Golden Gate Park; seen on 2/28 on Middle Lake (FB, MJC, BG).
Harlequin Duck: male still present on 2/8 (JR, RR) and 2/14 (FB, MJC, BG) at the Richmond Marina.
Oldsquaw: 1 on 2/21 at Tomales Bay (FB, MJC, BG, JR); 1 on 2/14 at the end of Bolina Drive, Alameda (DW)
Black Scoter: 1 male on 2/8 at Richmond Marina. (JR)
Hooded Merganser: 3 on 2/9 at Mt. View Cemetery. (FB, MJC)
Red-breasted Merganser: 2 males, 1 female on 2/14 and 1 male, 1 female on 2/26 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Bald Eagle: 1 adult on 2/7 along Santa Fe Grade Road, Merced County. (FB, MJC)
Swainson's Hawk: 1 dark-phase adult on 2/14 at Palm Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG) Too early to be a migrant so it is likely to be one of the small wintering group from nearby San Joaquin County. First East Bay winter record.
Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 2/14 at Piper Slough. (SG)
Sandhill Crane: 3 on 2/14 at Holland Tract. (SG)
Black Oystercatcher: a flock of 7 on 3/1 flying from the Old Albany Dump in Alameda County to Brooks Island in Contra Costa County. (SG, BR) Largest flock seen yet in the East Bay.
Western Sandpiper: 1 on 2/26 on Jersey Island. (SG)

Glaucous Gull: 1 first-year bird on 2/14 at the mouth of the Russian River, Sonoma County. (JR)
Black-legged Kittiwake: 2 on 2/17 on the rocks at Pt. Piños, Monterey Co. (B&FB)
Caspian Tern: 1 on 3/1 at Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline. (SG, BR)
Ancient Murrelet: 6 on 2/14 at Bodega Head. (JR)
Burrowing Owl: 3 on 2/20 at Arrowhead Marsh (B&FB); 1 on 2/15 and 3/3 along North Gate Road, Mt. Diablo State Park (KH).
Common Poorwill: 2 on 2/10 near Toyon picnic area, MDSP. (KH)
Rufous Hummingbird: 2 males on 2/9 at the U. C. Berkeley Botanical Gardens. (FB, MJC)
Williamson's Sapsucker: 1 male on 2/28 near the tennis courts at Golden Gate Park. (FB, MJC) Also on RBA
Yellow-billed Magpie: 1 on 2/26 flying north past Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Townsend's Solitaire: 1 on 2/6 near Monticello Dam, Putah Creek. (FB, MJC)
Solitary Vireo: 1 singing on 2/22 along Pinehurst Rd., Contra Costa County. (SG, RL) Very rare in winter.
Great-tailed Grackle: 1 male on 2/28 in downtown Tiburon. (FB, MJC) Also on RBA.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Barbara and Florence Burek, Mary Jane Culver, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Rich Richmond, Denise Wight, and Bob and Shirley Wisecarver.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

BAD NEWS FOR MAHOGANY TREES

The recent initiative to put mahogany trees on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which regulates the trade of endangered species, has failed. For every mahogany tree cut in a rainforest, at least twenty other trees are damaged. Some of our backyard birds are likely to be adversely affected by this decision as many species of birds that breed in the United State (warblers, vireos, and hummingbirds) migrate to the tropics in winter.

ANTI-ENVIRONMENTALISM DOWN UNDER

A Spectacled Flying Fox was recently killed and hung on a fence with a threat to do likewise to the endangered cassowary in the Daintree area of Australia. The cassowary, an elusive bird that can reach heights of up to six feet, may become a victim of a property rights battle. Recent studies have shown the Daintree River area contains unique botanical species found nowhere else in the world, much of it on private property. Some landowners, reacting in fear, have gone so far as to bulldoze sensitive areas of ecological importance.

1995 MDAS BIRDATHON

by *Barbara Burek*
and *Denise Wight*

Don't know what a Birdathon is? Multiple choice quiz A Birdathon is:

- Four people in one car from dawn to dusk, driving over 400 miles around the Bay Area in pursuit of fame, riches, and the identification of as many species of birds as possible.
- An all-day quest by a lonely but dedicated birder relentlessly searching out every bird from grebe to sparrow to be found in the county.
- A ten-hour time period in which one is allowed to eat only cookies, drink only Diet Coke, and look only at birds.
- A special spring rite in which birders ask friends to help raise funds for important causes: conservation and education

The answer last year was: all of the above! The four MDAS chapter teams spent April 30 last year chasing birds from one end of Contra Costa County to the other and all over the Bay area. This year, due to schedule conflicts, MDAS will have **Birdathon Week**, April 23-29. Four chapter teams will take to the field, the mountain, and the shore. The early handicapping indicates the following:

Denise Wight and her Wight-crowned Spare-'O's are defending their MDAS Best Bay Area List of 149 species last year. Can they break 150 this year? Inside sources say yes, with a little luck and an even earlier start.

Glover's Plover Lovers, led by MDAS Observation Editor Steve Glover, are hoping for better weather to help them break last year's MDAS Best Contra Costa County List of 142 species. Steve will be starting earlier than Denise - a full week earlier, hoping an early spring brings lots of early migrants.

Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern, the Road Runners, had over 110 species last year but, more importantly from some view points, raised the most money for the chapter. Let's hope they continue their winning ways. Can they catch Denise for the MDAS Best Bay Area List? Stay tuned.

Jim Lomax last year led the official chapter participant's team. This year he plans to run and shoot (photographs only) alone and see if he can give Steve a real race for the MDAS Best Contra Costa County List. We'll see if a day of only Diet Coke and cookies can lead to a winning list.

Last year MDAS also had two independent teams in the field. This year we hope to have more. We will also have birding on Saturday, April 29, led by MDAS trip leaders in which chapter members can participate.

What do we plan to do with money we raise this year? Our chapter has been moving in zig-zag fashion into the computer age. If you read Al McNabney's column this month, you will know the chapter has been given a fax machine which now helps Al communicate in a more timely fashion with others around the county, the state, and the country. (Knowing Al, it's possible he's sending faxes to Australia, too.) MDAS has also purchased a new laser printer which allow us to print the *Quail* entirely in house (specifically Barb Burek's and Dan Van Zile's house). This is allowing us to produce the *Quail* for less than we receive from National each month, which means MDAS will be running in the black instead of the red. Unfortunately, the software for the new printer cannot be run on the ten-year-old chapter computer so part of the funds raised this year will go toward a new chapter computer to run the chapter printer. Other uses may include upgrading other old computers to run software for Christmas Count records, to help rewrite Jean Richmond's site guide, and to further our other chapter interests and activities.

Can you help? YES! You can: 1. Pledge a dollar amount for one of the chapter teams or make a Birdathon donation to the chapter. 2. Pledge a given amount for each bird seen by one of the chapter teams. 3. Bird with the chapter group on April 29. 4. Form your own team and go out and bird during Birdathon Week. 5. Do any combination of the above. Birders going out with the birding groups on April 29 or birding with their own team are encouraged to pledge to the chapter. Send the form below to Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez. CA 94553 with your pledge of support.

1995 MDAS Birdathon Pledge

_____ I want to pledge _____ (amount)

or _____ per bird

for the team _____

_____ I want to join the birding group on April 29.

_____ I want to form an independent team.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

NEW MEMBERS

It is with great pleasure that we greet these new members and hope to meet them in person soon: Willy Adam, Wayne Ansley, Janis Arendt, G Asazawa, Kevin Attwood, Mrs. F W Ayers, Gerald Baggett, Alice Bartle, M. Kalimos Caddel, James Carroll, Ginger Chadwick, Norm Constantine, Kathleen Cray, B. DeLaOssa, Leonard Dieden, Donald Dubienny, Carol Eckert, Edward Free, Ellen Frentzel, David Fry, Joseph Gaeta, Janet Garner, Debbie Golden, Evelyn Griffith, Mr. and Mrs. Griffith, A. Hardstone, Head, Nancy Heagy, Bob Henderson, Ross Ingraham, Sean Keef, Sandra Kelly, J. and N. Lafferty, Bill Lockwood, L. Martin, Hugh McArdle, Jeri Osterhout, Ven Pai, Michelle Post, Mabel Powell, Natalie Presa, Mitch Randall, Patricia Reeves, David Robinson, Hilda Rogers, Lorraine Ryor, Andrew Sabey, Marie Sutton, D. Trout, George Turn, Frank Virgadamo, Ann Walquist, Chester Wershila, and Eva Winters.

PURPLE MARTIN STUDY

Brian Williams is continuing his multi-year study of nesting Purple Martins in California. Send information including date(s), location with a detailed map (preferably topographic) so that the site may be found, number of birds, and any other additional information to Brian at P. O. Box 605, Loomis, CA 95650. These records are being used to complete a statewide database of Purple Martin nest sites for conservation uses.

Brian would also like to encourage our members to search for Purple Martins when traveling. Purple Martins are usually found in areas with large snags along ridges and mountaintops or near large bodies of water. However, they may also nest in hollow concrete bridges over river canyons and even in urban areas. Send him a self-addressed stamped envelope with travel plans for current information about possible martins in your travel area.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION. Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Exchange bulletins for MDAS to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, P. O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053, please.*

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The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 53

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053

(510) AUD-UBON

President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Gloria Lotten, 866-1619
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary Sheree Lomax, 825-1513

May 1995

Vol. 41 No.9

Next Deadline: May 11

May Program:

The Sights and Sounds of Africa

At our **May 4** General Meeting, Alan Hopkins will take us on a visual and audio tour of Kenya. Alan led a group of eleven Golden Gate Audubon members on a dream adventure trip in August, 1994, to experience the breath-taking wildlife. Some of the bird species encountered included the Pennant-winged Nightjar, the Bare-faced Go-Away-Bird, the Paradise Flycatcher, and the Amethyst Sunbird. Please join us for this great presentation and get a taste of what Alan will again be offering this coming August.

Alan Hopkins has led field trips in the Bay Area for seventeen years. He currently serves on the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors, the Board of Directors of the Native Species Network, and the West Bay Conservation Committee. He is also co-compiler for the San Francisco Christmas Bird Count.

At our May meeting we will also vote on the elected officials for next year. Current candidates include:

President: Jim Lomax
Vice-President, Conservation: Al McNabney
Treasurer: Pam Keiser
Secretary: Karen Enstrom

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

The next board meeting will be Thursday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, 947-0479. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip this month will take us to Briones Regional Park on Sunday, May 21. Beginning birders and members new to our area are encouraged to join us for this weekend get-away. Meet trip leader Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732, at 8:30 a.m. at the western entrance parking lot, off Bear Creek Rd. (entrance fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

"SAN LUIS DRAIN"

These infamous words bring back thoughts of the disaster that befell the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge. The San Luis Drain, a terrible project, was originally proposed and passed by the Congress in the San Luis Act of 1960. This was before things like selenium in water was thought much about. Construction work was started in 1963 and water was actually turned into the Drain in 1968. The actual Drain upon completion was to have been a 188-mile-long, concrete-lined canal. Water was to have been delivered to some point in the Bay/Delta. Construction was halted in 1975 after 88 miles of the canal had been completed. Opposition to the project and lack of funding stopped work on the San Luis Drain at that time.

In January, 1981, the first undiluted subsurface water drainage was discharged into Kesterson Wildlife Refuge. In June of that year, the Bureau of Reclamation discovered high concentrations of selenium in the refuge waters. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the highest selenium levels in mosquitofish ever recorded in living fish. By 1983, high incidences of death and mutation among waterfowl embryo were observed and selenium was identified as the likely cause. By 1984, the U. S. Geological Service found selenium levels at Kesterson significantly higher than those previously reported. Other studies showed an almost complete absence of waterfowl nesting. Deaths of adult birds were recorded with the cause attributed to selenium draining from the irrigated lands in the San Joaquin Valley which had no place to go but into the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge. With those findings, work and activity on continuance of the San Luis Drain almost ceased.

HAH, but trouble was being formented. The Westlands Water District continued to press for completion of the San Luis Drain, with alternative proposals including dumping selenium-tainted water at some other location in the Delta or creating a pipeline to carry the contaminated water to the Pacific Ocean. Some other alternatives also considered were NO PROJECT, development of a new drainage system and evaporation ponds, taking the worst lands out of production, source control and permitting "some" drainage into the San Joaquin River, or, lastly, new techniques too complicated to describe here.

The suit has been reactivated by those who hope to gain from completion of the San Luis Drain and Judge Wenger has agreed in a legal opinion delivered late last year. It appears the Bureau of Reclamation will appeal. It is argued by some that if the House of Representatives' proposed Clean Water Act revisions are ever enacted into law, the Drain would HAVE to be completed. Pretty interesting stuff.

BAAC HAS REQUESTED A MEETING WITH SENATORS FEINSTEIN AND BOXER

An unusual request by the members of the Bay Area Audubon Chapters. Probably never before have so many come together on the need to meet with the key political figures about pending legislation. Liz Raisbeck, Audubon's Senior Vice-President, Legislation, recently commented on the Washington doings, "These are indeed tough times in Washington," and an analysis of the Republican Contract with America shows "it is a very clever document because it does not mention the environment but effectively dismantles environmental laws "

Among the actions taking place in the House are the following:

Takings legislation (HR 925), as passed by the House with a vote of 277-148, would require the TAXPAYERS to pay for even the most minor impacts on property values that result from enforcement of federal legislation. The House also passed the so-called Rescission Bill, wiped out research on Florida Bay and the Everglades, and cut \$2.1 billion from sewage treatment plant construction.

Proposals now in the House would permit timber companies to shortcut most federal forest management regulations to remove (salvage) dead and dying trees. The U.S. Forest Service and BLM would be required to prepare for sale of 6.2 billion board feet of timber over the next two years, which is double existing cut allowances. To achieve these results, timber would have to be sold in presently roadless areas.

On February 28, the House passed legislation that would put a moratorium on ANY new regulations for the entire year 1995 or until comprehensive regulatory reform legislation is passed. Also on February 28, the House approved a revolutionary "risk assessment" bill that changes the basis on how the government determines health risks from one based on health impacts to one based on weighing costs vs. benefits of a regulatory action. If the costs outweigh known benefits, no matter how difficult to determine the actual health impacts, the government cannot go forward with protective measures.

And it goes on. Finally, while all this "stuff" spells trouble, letters by the thousands are arriving on the legislators' desks objecting. Think about it. The Senate has yet to act on these measures. Whatever your thoughts are on these issues, write them down and send them to your Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, as well as your particular congressperson.

SHELL MARSH SAVED FROM DEVELOPMENT

MDAS and others fought hard over many years to SAVE Shell Marsh from development. Today that important wetland is still functioning. Birds still visit, feed, nest, and rest there. Now Tina Batt of the Martinez Regional Land Trust is heading an effort to bring students and others to view the area. Docents are needed. If you are interested, call Tina at the Martinez Regional Land Trust. Martinez. 228-5460.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

Category 1. Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category 2. Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Wednesday, May 3, **Mt. Diablo**. Meet at 8.00 a.m. on Northgate Rd at Trail's End Lane. Carpooling is important for birding before the junction \$5.00 entrance fee. Sage and maybe Black-chinned Sparrows.

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2330

Category 2

Saturday, May 6, **Mines Road**. Call for reservations and carpool instructions. Because of limited turn-out space along Mines Road, we must limit to 6 cars, with at least 4 people per car. Can be hot, bring lunch and liquids. Roadrunner, Wild Turkey, Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Lewis' Woodpecker all possible.

Leader: Hugh Harvey, 932-4715

Category 1

Saturday, May 13, **Mitchell Canyon**. Meet 9 00 a.m. in Mitchell Canyon parking lot. There is a \$5.00 parking fee. From I-680 in Walnut Creek, take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to Clayton Rd. Turn right on Clayton and right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. to the end. Morning emphasis on wild flowers, bird in afternoon for gnatcatchers, summer sparrows, etc. Hot!

Leader: Mary Jane Culver, 682-0509

Category 3

Thursday, May 18, **Napa River**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. This is a **new trip** and will be an exploration of the area.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486

Category 2

Wednesday, May 24, **Caswell State Park**. Carpool 6:30 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet 8:00 a.m. at Caswell State Park. Take I-680 south, I-580 East, and I-205 east. Turn east on SR 20 to US 99. Go south on US 99 to Austin Rd. and follow to park entrance. \$5.00 fee Swainson's Hawks, riparian species. Mosquitos, poison oak; may be hot. Call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486, for more information.

Category 2

Saturday, May 27, **East Contra Costa County**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 7:00 a.m. on Cypress Rd. just beyond the Shortstop Market. Go north on I-680, east on SR 4 through Oakley, left onto Cypress Rd. Possible Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Hot.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906

Category 2

Future trips: It's not too early to make reservations for Yuba Pass, June 24-25. Motels include Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110, and Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. More information in the June *Quail*. The Lassen Volcanic National Park trip, July 8-9, will begin from Manzanita Lake at the northwest entrance. Those not camping should make reservations as soon as possible either at the Hot Creek Resort, (916) 335-7121, in Old Station on SR 44/89, or at Padilla's Rim Rock Ranch, (916) 335-7114. More information in the July *Quail*.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE, March 1.

Four MDAS members started out from the Visitor Center on a day which had promised to be showery but early on delivered only fluffy clouds and sunshine. An unusually large variety of ducks was seen, plus opportunities to study breeding plumage and courting behavior. A pair of Western Grebes put on a fine courtship display, including a couple of "rushes." 52 species were seen.

Barbara Vaughn

TOMALES BAY, March 11.

Eleven birders had a great birding day! We saw a total of 68 species. The highlights were two Spotted Owls who probably watched us search for them for about an hour. A pair of Osprey were seen, one nesting on a platform, one fishing nearby. We had good views of the Eastern Phoebe at Tomasine Creek, a life bird for many of us

Pat MacEachern

SAN MATEO COAST, March 16

Only five members went on the trip on a mostly clear day, cool and somewhat windy. Heavy swells made it difficult to see birds sitting on the ocean. Among the 92 species seen were a few Marbled and Ancient Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklets off Pigeon Point, an immature Glaucous Gull at the Gazos Creek mouth, many ducks and swallows in Pescadero Marsh, a male Oldsquaw at close range in Pillar Point Harbor, and five Red Phalaropes, including one in partial breeding plumage, at Princeton Marsh.

Jean Richmond

BLACK DIAMOND MINES REGIONAL PARK, March 25.

Fifteen birdwatchers saw 49 species on a beautiful, clear day. A Golden Eagle circled over us, an Osprey flew over, and White-throated Swifts were flying everywhere. At least five to six Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and a Canyon Wren were seen and heard (Sommersville side). This is the first time that we have seen a Canyon Wren at this location. The views from the Ridge Trail were spectacular - we could see snow on the Sierras in the distance.

Pat MacEachern

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Red-throated Loon: 1 on 3/29 on Jersey Island. (SG)

Yellow-billed Loon: 1 on 3/4 at Tomales Bay, Marin County. (GF, MP)

American Bittern: 2 on 4/6 at Ironhouse Sanitary District, Oakley (MDAS); 2 on 4/11 on Jersey Island (SG, RL).

Cattle Egret: 30 on 3/21 (SG), 2 on 4/4 (SG, RL) on Jersey Island.

White-faced Ibis: 70 on 3/25 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG)

Greater White-fronted Goose: 500 on 3/21 on Jersey Island. (SG)

Ross' Goose: 1 on 4/9 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR, SG)

Brant: 3 on 3/12 at Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline. (SG)

Wood Duck: a pair on 3/16 at Mt. View Cemetery, Oakland. (FB)

Blue-winged Teal: 2 males on 3/21 on Jersey Island (with 207 Cinnamon Teal). (SG)

Ring-necked Duck: 2 on 3/28 at Pine Pond, Mt. Diablo State Park. (BR, KH) Extremely rare in the park.

Oldsquaw: 1 on 4/9 at Hayward RS. (BR, SG) Also on RBA.

Black Scoter: 1 female on 3/12 at Pt. Isabel RS. (SG)

Bufflehead: 13 on 3/28 at Pine Pond. (BR, KH) Extremely rare in the park.

Hooded Merganser: 1 male on 4/6 at Ironhouse SD. (MDAS)

Red-breasted Merganser: 2 males on 3/29 still at Clifton Court Forebay near Byron. (SG)

Bald Eagle: 3 on 3/7 along the Santa Fe Grade Rd., Merced County. (FB, MJC, HH)

Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 3/15 along Woodbridge Rd. in San Joaquin County (GF, MP); on 3/29, 8-10 over Webb Tract, 1 over Bethel Island, and 2 just south of Brentwood (SG); 8-10 on 4/4 over Mt. House Rd., Alameda County (SG, RL).

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 3/27 at Sunol Regional Park. (KH)

Merlin: 1 on 3/29 at Piper Slough, Bethel Island (SG)

Snowy Plover: 1 on 3/21 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) Very rare inland.

Red-necked Phalarope: 6 on 3/14 at Hayward RS (BR) and 1 on 3/18 at Princeton Marsh, San Mateo County (SG, RL, FB, MJC), both observations beating the previous early dates for Northern California by almost two weeks, 5 on 4/11 at Jersey Island. (SG, RL)

Red Phalarope: 1 on 3/28 at Pt. Emery, Emeryville (FB); 1 on 3/25 at Hayward RS (BR).

Common Black-headed Gull: 1 on 4/11 flying south past Hayward RS. (BR) Probably second county and third East Bay records.

Short-eared Owl: 2 on 3/4 at Tomales Bay (GF, MP); 1 on 3/21 on Jersey Island (SG).

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 1 male on 4/4 in Mitchell Canyon, MDSP. (MP)

Costa's Hummingbird: 1 male on 4/10 at Del Puerto Canyon, Stanislaus County. (GF, MP)

Calliope Hummingbird: 1 on 4/8 at Garin Regional Park (BR); 2 on 4/13 in White Canyon, MDSP (SG).

Rufous Hummingbird: 1 in his Concord yard from 3/13 through 3/27 (MR); at least 12 males on 4/13 in Mitchell and White Canyons (SG).

Red-naped Sapsucker: 1 adult female found on 3/21 (JG), seen 3/22 and 3/24 (MJC, FB) and 3/27 (GF) near Bayberry Drive, Walnut Creek. Approximately six county records. 3/23-3/27

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 1 on 3/30 at Garin RP. (BR) Early

Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 on 3/23 in Pine Canyon (BR), may be first March record for the East Bay; 19 on 4/13 in Mitchell Canyon (SG).

Pacific-slope Flycatcher: at least 27 on 4/1 along a 2.7 mile stretch of Pinehurst Rd., west of Moraga. (SG)

Yellow-billed Magpie: a pair back on 3/29 at last year's nest site along Delta Rd., Knightsen. (SG)

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 1 on 3/29 at Piper Slough (SG)

Warbling Vireo: 20 singing males on 4/1 along a 2.7 mile stretch of Pinehurst Rd., west of Moraga. (SG)

Nashville Warbler: 1 on 4/5 (MP) and 10 on 4/13 (SG) in Mitchell Canyon.

Yellow Warbler: 1 on 3/31 in Mitchell Canyon. (SG) Early.

MacGillivray's Warbler: 1 on 4/11 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Wilson's Warbler: 26 on 4/13 in Mitchell Canyon. (SG)

Chipping Sparrow: 1 on 3/14 in her Alamo yard. (JR, GF) Very early.

Vesper Sparrow: 15 on 3/7 along Little Panoche Rd (FB, MJC, HH)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 from 2/1 thru 3/19 in his Concord yard (BC)

Cassin's Finch: 1 on 4/5 at the summit of Mt. Diablo. (KH) Approximately the fifth county record.

Lawrence's Goldfinch: 2 on 4/3 in Pine Canyon. (KH)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Bill Chilson, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Steve Glover, Janet Goodman, Hugh Harvey, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, members on the MDAS field trip to Ironhouse Sanitary District, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, and Mike Robertson.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is now also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

CLASSES, EXCURSIONS, ETC.

KIDS IN CREEKS

This interdisciplinary Creek Exploration Program for educators of grades K-12 is conducting workshops on May 5, 6, and 13. The participants will be able to engage in a variety of activities including conducting local creek clean-ups and sampling water quality, receive creek-specific information and maps of local creeks, and have access to a lending library of videos, stream inventory kits, and more. To register for a workshop or for more information, call Julia Crawford at the San Francisco Estuary Institute, (510) 231-9539, ext. 655.

LEARN THE RAPTORS

If you are interested in learning to identify the hawks, falcons, and eagles of California and becoming part of a long-term wildlife conservation project, the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory is seeking volunteers for their 1995 class who can commit one day every two weeks from August through December, 1995. Attend one of the Orientation Meetings on Thursday, May 11, from 7 00 p m. to 9 00 p m., or on Saturday, May 13, from 10 00 a m. to 12 00 noon. Both programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter at Franklin and Bay. For more information, call the GGRO at (415) 331-0730

WILDFOWL ART SHOW

The Pacific Flyway Decoy Association is hosting its Twenty-fifth Annual Wildfowl Art Show at the Red Lion Hotel off Arden Way in Sacramento on Saturday, June 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 25, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The show includes displays of antique and contemporary decoys as well as decorative carvings of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, seabirds, and more. For more information, call Show Chairman Fritz Zanker, (408) 629-7897.

MT. DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION EXHIBIT

The Spring Show of Summit Gallery on Mt. Diablo features "Wings and Wonders," exploring creatures of flight, their hosts and habitats. Mt. Diablo's birds and butterflies will be the focus for painters and photographers through June 18. The Gallery is open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call the Summit Museum at (510) 837-6119.

ECO NATION: PATRIOTS OF THE EARTH

The Bedford Gallery Guild is hosting a series of performances, exhibits, and workshops at the Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, through May 21. Programs feature artists who are forging new roles for themselves in order to address critical environmental issues of our times. As the artists explore the relationship between art and environmental responsibility, their points of view range from tender reverence for the earth's beauty, to concern for the interdependence of all plant and animal life, and to alarm at visions of environmental degradation. All are working to heighten our awareness of the natural world and of our impact upon it through the ordinary habits of our daily lives

HELP!

by *Barbara Burek*

Earth Day is one week away and will have come and gone by the time you read this. Did you do anything to celebrate? Did you stop to think this may be the last year there will be anything to celebrate? If the Republican majority in Congress and in California continue in the same direction they have been going since last fall's election, by the next Earth Day there may be no Endangered Species Act, no Clean Water Act, virtually no environmental safeguards at all. Do you trust our President to veto such legislation? Would Congress sustain or override such a veto?

"Think global, act local" has almost become a cliché but you did the first when you joined the National Audubon Society. As Al McNabney, our Vice-president, Conservation, said at the last board meeting, whatever disagreements one may have with National on various points, National Audubon Society is still the largest and most effective group working to protect the environment in Washington, D. C. Now, what have you done at the local level?

Unlike PBS and many other organizations, Mt. Diablo Audubon has only one fund-raising drive each year, the Birdathon. For fiscal year July, 1993, through June, 1994, we received \$7864 from National as our share of the dues you pay each year for your membership. That's \$5.50 per member. Our expenses for that year to print and mail the *Quail* were \$7054. Other major chapter expenses included rent for our general meeting place (\$798), fees for our speakers (\$900), insurance (\$514), and support for the Audubon lobbyist in Sacramento (\$650). The total operating expenses for the year were almost \$11,000. The principle reason MDAS did not end the last fiscal year in the red was because of donations to the chapter and money raised by the Birdathon. This year, because of increasing expenses and because to this point the projected donations from the Birdathon are so small, we very well may be back in the red as we had been the previous three years.

Our Birdathon last year was one of our most successful in years. Over 40 members donated almost \$1600. Most donations were less than \$50, but because of the number of people participating and contributing, we had a financially successful Birdathon. To date this year we have only had 13 members pledge or donate just under \$500. **We desperately need more support from you!**

Why contribute to MDAS when you already contribute to National? Because the money you donate to the chapter stays in the chapter and is used to benefit the chapter - YOU - directly. If you have been reading the Conservation Corner recently, and the member survey taken two years ago indicated most of you do, you will know MDAS has played and continues to play an important role in projects like saving Shell Marsh and establishing the Delta Environment Science Center. If you think such efforts are worthwhile, then we need your support. If you enjoy MDAS chapter meetings, field trips, or the *Quail*, we need your support. Send your check made out to MDAS, Birdathon to Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. The birds and bees and bugs who continue to survive in our area won't thank you (except by being there) but we will!

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities. Lin Ashlock, L. Bachman, John Balb, Claude Baum, Diane Bent, Roberto Bracamontes, Sue Brown, Mori Brunner, Jeannie Buckley, K. R. L. Civitello, James Conlin, Sherry Cox-Chiero, Trish Crabaugh, Mary Demarais, Sandra Eno, Rochelle Fortier, J. Griffin, Michael Haley, Hallam, Carol Anne Hammond, Karen Hammonds, Mary Anne Johnson, Roger Johnson, Bernice Krome, Eleanor Laney, Elliott Lee, Fred Lindeman, Dwight Lord, Rosalie Majka, George Mason, L. McDonald, Gita Modi, William Muraoka, Carl Muto, Frank Nieman, Carolyn Noack, Bea Nyborg, Claire O'Brien, L. Opwen, Harold Peel, Dick Powell, Harnet Rands, Patricia Rogan, Billie Saltnes, Charlene Scarborough, Robert Schaefer, David Scholz, James Shaw, T. Sherbourne, Mr. and Mrs. William Smith, John Snow, Jr., Barbara Stedman, Marleen Stratton, Joyce Sutay, Thomas Switzer, George Telpel, Peter Terry, Sandra Tibbles, Mr. and Mrs. L. Uhlenberg, Myrth Van Vliet, Nancy Walker, Carter Wells, Steve West, Ida Whitten, Nona Willoughby, Norman Wong, and Joe Zehring.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

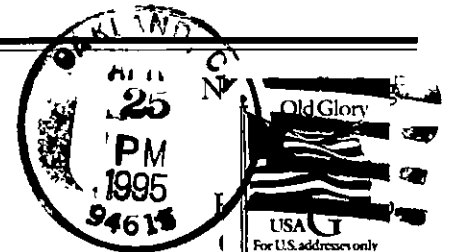
This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for a gift from Leah Dietz of Walnut Creek given in memory of Chester Dietz of Walnut Creek, a lifelong bird watcher who was always interested in their welfare, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Edward Burman of Greenbrae given in memory of Ruth Throp Seely, and donations by Mike Williams of Wild Birds Unlimited and Shirley Ellis from groups to whom they gave presentations. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
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Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053



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M F AUD

JEAN RICHMOND
125 VIA SERENA
ALAMO CA
94507

TIME VALUE MAIL

The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
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Hospitality: Gloria Lotten, 866-1619
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Sheree Lomax, 825-1513

June 1995

Vol. 41 No.10

Next Deadline: June 8

June Program:

End of the Year Potluck

The next meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will be on Thursday, **June 1**, at 6:30 p.m., at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. This will be our regular end-of-the-year potluck. Please bring a salad, casserole, or dessert for ten, your own table service, and any serving utensils you may need. Coffee and punch will be provided.

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Dinner

The program will be provided by the members. Members are urged to bring pictures, old bird nests, unusual feeders or bird houses, or up to ten slides to share with the group. Anything that relates to natural history can be shown at the meeting. Everyone is encouraged to participate and make this a varied and interesting evening.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, June 8, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Al McNabney, 1161 Leisure lane, #7, Walnut Creek, 945-1785. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

The four MDAS elected officers for the 1995-1996 term were chosen at the May meeting. Jim Lomax will again serve as President. Al McNabney will stay as Vice-President, Conservation, and Pam Keiser will continue as Treasurer. Karen Enstrom will serve as our new Secretary. We offer all our congratulations.

Summertime Travel Note: Summer is nearly here and many of you will be planning trips to places near and far. As you travel, remember to ask for any extra copy of any facility maps and bird lists or checklists when you visit refuges, sanctuaries, or parks. Please pass these extras along to Jean Richmond to place in the chapter file. Also, when planning a trip, contact Jean at 837-2843. She may have information on the area you plan to visit and the birds to expect there.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trips will again be suspended for the summer. Look for the Weekend Birding Breaks again next fall.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WHITHER? YON.

All one has to do in a talk about conservation is mention the name James Watt, former Secretary of Interior. Hackles rise, faces turn red, and images of oil rigs along coast lines bring the audience to attention. Today James Watt's antics appear piker-like when compared with actions ALREADY taken and soon to be taken by the new majority in the House of Representatives.

An item in a local paper implied the environmental movement is but a hollow shell, which means that opposition to the radical changes (Speaker Gingrich's words, not mine) being proposed is yet to take off. Cometh next the question, "Will it ever take off?" In a tiny little letter to the editor of said paper, I likened the present environmental situation to a "sleeping tiger," with the comment that when the tiger found out what was being proposed for our environment, the sleeping tiger would become a pretty big kitty.

What's it to be? I KNOW if so-called environmental folks were to propose changes in law as radical (their word, not mine) as now being proposed and passed, we would see headlines and hear talk-show hosts berating the environmental folks as being radical, not in the main stream, etc. If we really are concerned about the future, if we are really concerned about the plight of the (now) 1000 avian species already considered endangered, if we really do want to leave "something" for the young, then NOW is the time to express YOUR views to your senators and congresspeople. If you don't, some of the possible consequences include thousands of acres of valuable wetlands being lost, clean drinking water not being mandated with cost being the major consideration, and a clean air program that by anyone's view has HAD success again being in question. Our environmental world doesn't have to be the way the present congressional majority appears to want it to be. But it may in fact NOT be the world we've known or worked to achieve unless the citizenry raise a hand and say ENOUGH.

DESC

The Delta Environment Science Center took another tiny step toward the future when, on May 5, the Coordinating Council hosted a recognition event. MDAS President Jim Lomax and longtime active member Jean Richmond received (on behalf of MDAS) a framed picture of the wetlands and Big Break area which will be part of the future Science Center. Among others recognized were Los Medanos Community College, California State University, Hayward, Contra Costa Campus, the East Bay Regional Park District, Ironhouse Sanitation District, and the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors. The event, chaired by Elayne Azivido of the Contra Costa Mosquito Abatement District, gave a preview of what the Science Center will be when completed.

WATER

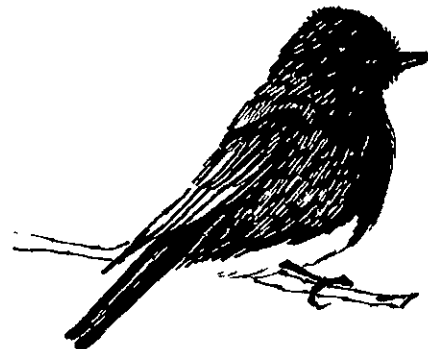
Last year we celebrated the passage by the U. S. Congress of the Miller/Bradley water legislation. The act set aside sizable amounts of water for use in refuges and wetlands for the benefit of the wildlife. At the same time corporate farms were to be required to ACTUALLY pay full price for the water they use. Today, what a difference! Agri-business leaders are trying not only to overturn Miller/Bradley but to turn the clock back to ensure that never again will there be a challenge to their rights to cheap water. Congressman George Miller, who has asserted he worked for 18 years trying to get the legislation passed, may now see all of his work go down the drain (no pun intended) in less than a year. To wildlife, migratory birds, and the refuge system, such a setback would undoubtedly have an adverse impact on bird populations. It would also continue the subsidization by "we, the people" of agri-business water use.

KESTERSON

The dramatic findings of only a few years ago about the effects of selenium on wildlife in the Kesterson Wildlife Refuge should have ended for all time efforts to dispose further of polluted waters into refuges, etc. NOT SO. The water users in the San Joaquin Valley have returned to court and obtained a favorable opinion indicating the Kesterson Drain has to be completed. If that does happen, the likely outfall for polluted water would be somewhere along the San Francisco Bay/Delta. Under the existing Clean Water Act, companies that have been discharging selenium into the Bay have paid large fines, so one is certainly entitled to ask the question, "What sense would there be to permit agricultural discharge of selenium into the Bay when others cannot so do?"

AUDUBON'S NEW LOOK

Oh, you hadn't noticed? Just wait a minute. Audubon leaders have heard the adverse comments about "the magazine" and "the direction" along with other pointed criticisms. For months Audubon has had a task force visiting chapters and holding focus meetings and conference phone calls in an effort to develop thoughts as to what Audubon should be doing. All that work is coming to an end. On May 13, a regional get-together was to be held in Sacramento. Glenn Olson, N. A. S. Vice-President, who has spent most of his time for the past couple of months in New York working on the project, will host the meeting. Yes, it is certain change is coming to Audubon.



Original
Sketch by
Carol Lutz

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Thursday, June 1, **Partrick Road, Napa County**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. This is a **new trip** and will be an exploration of the area. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 2

Saturday, June 3, **Outer Point Reyes**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. Acalanes Ave. off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of Hwy 24. Meet at Drake's Beach, 8:30 a.m. Cross San Rafael Bridge. From I-101 north, take San Rafael exit. Go 2 blocks, turn left and continue west to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake. At SR 1, turn right 1/2 mile, left onto Bear Valley Rd. about 3 miles, and onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. again. Continue about 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left. Spring vagrants. Be prepared for variable weather.

Leader: Jean Richmond, 837-2843

Category 2

Wednesday, June 7, **Annadel State Park**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:00 a.m. parking lot of Annadel Park. Go north on I-680, turn west on I-780, go through Vallejo, and west on SR 37 to SR 121. Turn left onto SR 12 for about 17 miles past Sonoma. Turn left onto Los Alamos Rd., right on Melite Rd., then left on Montgomery Rd. for 0.6 mi. Turn left on Channel Dr., 2 mi. to road end. Yellow-breasted Chats, Pileated Woodpeckers.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732

Category 2

Saturday and Sunday, June 24-25, **Yuba Pass**. Saturday at Yuba Pass for mountain birds. Sunday in the Sierra Valley for basin birds. Motels in Sierra City: Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110; Shannon's Cabins, (916) 862-1287. Campgrounds at Chapman Creek, Yuba Pass. For further information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

GARIN REGIONAL PARK, April 1.
No report received.

IRONHOUSE SANITARY, April 6.

On the site of a Science Center for the future, eleven birders saw or heard 62 species. The sky was overcast but temperatures were comfortable as the predicted rain did not arrive. Among the various sightings, the highlights included a male Hooded Merganser, a Ruddy Duck in breeding colors, several Cinnamon Teal, and numerous Bonaparte's Gulls in breeding plumage. Two American Bitterns were seen in flight.

Shirley Ellis

LAKE LAGUNITAS, April 12.

Nine birders enjoyed a sunny spring day in Marin County. The wind kept perching birds in trees, making a great day to practice ear birding. 15 of the 50 reported species were heard only. Black-throated Gray Warblers were especially abundant around Lake Lagunitas. The day ended on a high note with a Pileated Woodpecker flying along the shore of Bon Tempe Lake.

Elizabeth Dickey

IDA CLAYTON ROAD, April 20.

The day was sunny and windy. Twelve birders had a good day in the Sonoma and Lake County hills. Wildflowers along Butts Road were magnificent. Bird highlights included Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, five species of swallows, an excellent look at a Nashville Warbler, and two pairs of Wood Ducks. 75 species total.

Elizabeth Dickey

DEL PUERTO CANYON, April 26.

The highlight of the trip for the 21 birders was the male Costa's Hummer with its violet-hued elongated gorget and crown. Also seen were three Lewis' Woodpeckers, four species of swallows, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Northern "Bullock's" Orioles and ten Lawrence's Goldfinches including one sitting on a nest. Total species: 61.

Florence Bennett

HEATHER FARM BIRDS

Br. John O'Neill, F. S. C. of St. Mary's College, is collecting observations of birds seen at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek. So far 48 species have been recorded during field trips in early spring, 1995, by Brother John and the St. Marys' Avian Adventurers, Dee Mitchell, Vida Dawson, and Susan Parr. The summary of their observations to date are available without charge in a brochure, *The Birds of Heather Farm Park*, available at the office of the Heather Farm Garden Center Association, 2540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek.

Brother John is interested in getting additional reports of birds sighted at Heather Farm Park. If you have recently birded or are going to bird Heather Farm Park, please send observations to the Heather Farm Garden Center Office or call 947-1678. The office is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Arctic Loon: 1 on 5/9 at Bodega Harbor. (JR) Also on RBA. Third state record.

Pelagic Cormorant: 21 birds including 3 nests on 4/19 and 9 nests on 5/9 on West Brothers Island, Richmond. (SG) The first confirmed nesting for the East Bay and possibly for San Francisco Bay.

American Bittern: 2 present through 5/4 near the north end of Jersey Island. (SG, RL, JL, KH, FB, MJC, HH)

Black-crowned Night-Heron: nesting colony of at least 50 birds on 4/22 at Red Rock near Richmond (SG)

White-faced Ibis: 12 flying northeast on 4/21 over Marsh Creek Reservoir. (SG, RL)

Brant: 2 on 4/29 (SG, MLM), 1 on 5/9 (SG, RL), and 2 on 5/10 (JL) on Brooks Island.

Canada Goose: 1 mostly albino bird in late April at Shell Marsh. (DE)

Ring-necked Duck 4 on 4/29 at Shell Marsh. (SG, MLM) Late.

Harlequin Duck: 1 male on 4/22 (SG) and a pair on 5/9 (SG, RL) on Brooks Island

Oldsquaw: a male on 4/4 (JR) and 4/10 (FB, MJC, HH) at Hayward Regional Shoreline. Also on RBA.

Common Goldeneye: 1 immature male on 4/29 on the pond at the end of South 51st Street, Richmond. (SG, MLM) Late.

Cooper's Hawk. a pair on a nest on 5/10 on Mt. Diablo. (JL)

Red-shouldered Hawk: a pair on a nest in late April near Knightsen. (JL) Probably the first confirmed nesting for the Central Valley portion of the county.

Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 4/21 along Cypress Road near Jersey Island (RL, SG); 1 on 5/2 (JR) and 5/4 (SG, RL) at Piper Slough.

Prairie Falcon: on 5/4, 2 at Holland Tract and one on Jersey Island. (SG, RL)

Semipalmated Plover: 12 on 4/27 on Jersey Island. (SG)

Lesser Yellowlegs: 4 on 4/8 on Jersey Island. (FB, MJC, RH)

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 on 5/5 along Disk Drive, Alviso. (GF, JR)

Spotted Sandpiper: 1 on 4/28 at Heather Farms. (HH, FB)

Western Sandpiper: ~450 on 4/27 on Jersey Island. (SG)

Red-necked Phalarope: on 4/29, 1 along Marina Bay Parkway, Richmond, and 5 at Shell Marsh. (SG, MLM)

Little Gull: 1 on 5/5 along Nortech Parkway, Alviso. (JR, GF)

Heermann's Gull: 2 on 5/9 harassing Brown Pelicans near Brooks Island. (SG, RL)

Caspian Tern: ~300 at Brooks Island, many carrying fish to birds apparently on nests. (SG, RL) Only known nest site in the county.

Black Skimmer: 1 on 5/9 (SG, RL) and 5/10 (JL) on Brooks Island. First county record.

Cassin's Auklet: 1 on 5/1 at Hayward RS. (BR) Third record for Alameda County and the East Bay.

Greater Roadrunner: 2 on 4/12 along Mines Road. (GF, MP)

Spotted Owl: 2 on 4/3 (FB, MJC, HH) and 4/11 (JR) on a nest at Tomales Bay State Park.

Black Swift: 1 on 4/26 over her Alamo home. (JR)

Vaux's Swift: 1 on 4/25 at Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park, (JR); 30 on 5/2 at Piper Slough (FB, MJC, HH).

Black-chinned Hummingbird: up to 5 through 5/4 at Piper Slough. (FB, MJC, HH, SG, RL, JR)

Calliope Hummingbird: 1 male on 4/22 (GF) and 1 female on 4/25 (JR) in White Canyon, MDSP.

Lewis' Woodpecker: 3 on 4/12 along Mines Road, Santa Clara County. (GF, MP) Usually not found north of the Junction.

Willow Flycatcher: 1 on 4/24 at Piper Slough. (GF, MP) Early.

Gray Flycatcher: 1 on 5/8 in her Martinez yard. (KH, SG, DK)

Yellow-billed Magpie: a second nesting pair found on 4/27 along Delta Road near Knightsen. (SG)

Common Raven: on 5/9, a flock of 17 and a total of 24 in five minutes flying east past Pt. San Pablo. (SG, RL)

Winter Wren: 1 singing on 4/29 near the Botanical Gardens, Tilden Park. (SG, MLM)

Phainopepla: 1 on 4/22 along Mitchell Canyon Road. (GF)

Hermit Warbler: 10 on 4/25 at Junction Picnic Area, MDSP. (FB, MJC, HH)

Worm-eating Warbler: 1 on 5/7 described from her Martinez yard. (DK) If correct, this represents the second county record and the second earliest record for Northern California.

Yellow-breasted Chat: up to 4 through 5/4 at Piper Slough. (SG, RL, JR, GF, MP, FB, MJC, HH)

Black-chinned Sparrow: 1 singing on 4/25 in White Canyon, MDSP. (JR)

Grasshopper Sparrow: 1 singing on 4/22 along Marsh Creek Road. (SG)

Chestnut-collared Longspur: 1 male on 4/10 along Sierra Road, Santa Clara County. (FB, MJC, HH)

Great-tailed Grackle: 1 male on 4/29 along Grand Blvd., Alviso. (GF, JR) Also on RBA.

Hooded Oriole: 4 males on 5/2 on Bethel Island. (FB, MJC, HH)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Doug Elliott, George Finger, Steve Glover, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Kevin Hints, Deborah Kirshen, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Mary Lou Martin, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is now also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

FALLOUT ON THE DRY TORTUGAS

by *Barbara Burek*

Thirty-seven of us just returned from a birding trip to the Dry Tortugas with Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. The morning we arrived at Garden Key, the site of Ft. Jefferson, we were lucky to experience one of those rare occurrences of which birders dream - a fallout. The night before, while sailing from Key West to Garden Key, there was a storm in the Gulf. As a result, hundreds of birds were blown off course and forced down on Garden Key. The first sign of this came early in the morning, before we even arrived at Garden Key, in the form of a Barn Swallow who was discovered resting on the railing of the ferry. It finally recovered enough to finish the flight to Garden Key on its own. Until one actually sails from one point in the Gulf to another, the magnitude of the feat accomplished by trans-Gulf migrants can be understood intellectually but not emotionally. After one sails for hours without sight of land, the thought of braving that expanse on a small pair of wings is humbling and awe-inspiring.

When we finally docked and went ashore, we barely got off the dock when the first of the twenty-plus species of warblers was discovered in a tree between the two wings of the dock. By the time we entered Ft. Jefferson, some of us had seen five or six species. Inside the fort, the place was hopping. At one point I had five different warbler species in my binoculars at the same time - and none of them Yellow-rumped! In fact, that was one of the few warbler species we didn't see during our three days there. The most common species that first morning seemed to be Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, and Northern Waterthrush. As we worked our way around the inside of Ft. Jefferson, we discovered treats such as Blue-winged, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Hooded Warblers. In trees and bushes outside the fort we added Chestnut-sided, Cape May, Black-throated Green, and Prothonotary Warblers. Most of the birds seemed to be in good shape, but one Black-throated Blue Warbler lay on the ground by the boat dock, totally exhausted.

Lest you think that we were totally occupied with warblers, let me mention some of the other birds found that first morning. For me the most surprising was the dozen plus Soras wandering around in the center of the fort. I wouldn't have thought they were strong enough flyers to make such a trip. We also found many Gray Catbirds, a Gray Kingbird, several Dickcissels, a small flock of Bobolinks, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, a Blue Grosbeak, and one very bedraggled American Kestrel. Several Veerys and Swainson Thrushes provided a good comparison to the Gray-cheeked Thrush which was a lifer for me. This was also the peak of hummingbird migration and a number of Ruby-throated Hummers were examining every bush and flower in sight. Finally, in almost every tree we found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, often "hiding" in plain sight. All in all, an incredible experience.

BIRDATHON SUMMARY

Braving wind, rain, and stormy weather, chapter teams took to the field between April 22 and April 29. The following are reports or summaries from the team leaders.

Steve Glover of "Glover's Plover Lovers" had a very successful day on April 22, seeing or hearing 164 species in Contra Costa. An early start, good weather and cooperative birds contributed to his success. His highlights included a Harlequin Duck, three vireo species, and eight warblers species. Steve also heard three owl species and saw a fourth. Congratulations for the best list of the Birdathon!

Denise Wight and "The Wight-crowned Spare-Os" again birded the full Bay Area, driving 312 miles on April 29, but she and her team were handicapped by heavy rain and by fog at the coast. They started at 5:00 a.m. at Los Banos and ended the day at 9:10 p.m. at Olema Marsh, tallying 150 species along the way. Their list included a Roadrunner along Mines Road, a lovely Blue Grosbeak on Bethel Island, and a pair of Fulvous Whistling-ducks at White's Slough in Vallejo which unfortunately turned out to be probable escapees. Her summary: "In closing let me say that we had fun. Congratulations to Steve Glover for seeing 160 species in Contra Costa alone! Maybe 1996 will be better!"

Jim Lomax also birded only Contra Costa County. His comments: "Inspired by Steve Glover who had earlier in the week tallied over 160 species, my group which included only myself, covered Pt. Isabel, Brickyard Cove, Pt. Molate, Tilden Park, Mitchell Canyon, Jersey Island, Delta Road, and Piper Slough, finishing at almost 8 p.m. to get only 117 species. Best bird of the day was a pair of Ruddy Turnstones, rare for Contra Costa County, which were with a group of Black Turnstones in Brickyard Cove. It is not possible to catch Steve Glover." Maybe next year for Jim, too.

Steve also led the chapter birding group on April 29. His report is as follows: "Only two birders ventured out into the wind and rain which is unfortunate since the birding was excellent all day. Of our 154 species, all in Contra Costa, highlights included Winter Wren, Brant, Black Oystercatcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Ring-necked Duck, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Yellow-billed Magpie." This report may encourage more members to join the chapter birding group next year.

At this time we have received pledges or donations from 23 couples or individuals. The chapter would like to thank the following for their generosity: Hugh and Norah Bain, Florence Burek, Britta Cascio, Carolyn Cogan, Carol Crites, Helen Deman, Elizabeth Dickey, Shirley Ellis, Oscar and Joann Enstrom, Janet Goodman, Jean Holden, Barbara Holway, Pam Keiser, Ethel Lazaroff, Jim Lomax, Mary Lou Martin, Julie Martilla, Morris Snelling, Patricia Thunen, Wild Birds Unlimited, Betty Ann Williams, Donald Yoder, and Winifred and Gifford Young. Your support is appreciated.

Finally, we would encourage any other members who have not yet contributed to the Birdathon to do so. Send your check made out to MDAS to Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

BINOCULAR COLLECTION A SUCCESS

The binocular program resulted in a collection of a total of 30 binoculars (18 new and 12 used). Ten pairs of binoculars each went to Panama Audubon Society, Venezuela Audubon Society, and Ecotonia and Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda, two nonprofit organizations in Mexico. The binoculars will be used to support research efforts on migratory birds ("our" breeding birds) and to promote education and environmental protection (national park guards). Congratulations!! We have truly made an international impact.

Thanks to all of you who donated used binoculars or money for the purchase of new binoculars. A special thanks also to Mike Williams and Wild Birds Unlimited for arranging for the special discount for new binoculars and serving as a drop-off point for binoculars, to Broja Mila for hand-delivering the binoculars to Panama and Mexico, and to Jean Richmond for donating ten new binoculars from the conservation fund.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS is pleased to announce the receipt of an award of \$1000 from Dames and Moore, Inc., of Los Angeles. This award was an employee involvement donation obtained through Jill Hedgecock, our International Conservation Chair. Part of the award will be used to purchase additional binoculars for the international binocular program. Other funds will be donated to the Bluebird Recovery Program and a land acquisition fund for Pinnacles National Monument. Our special thanks to Dames and Moore, Inc., and to Jill Hedgecock.

MDAS would also like to express its appreciation for a donation from Diane Malucelli (formerly Diane Macario) and a gift from Denise Wight given in loving memory of MDAS member Alfred Maffly, 1897-1995. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr, Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

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The QUAIL

BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON



President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Gloria Lotten, 866-1619
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Sheree Lomax, 825-1513

July/August 1995

Vol. 41 No. 11

Next Deadline: August 10

Upcoming Events:

Again this year, there will be no general meeting of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society in July or August. The first fall general meeting will be in September. Information about the meeting time, place, birding information, and program will be in the September issue of the *Quail*.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, July 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, 838-8840. The board meeting in August will be at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 10, at the home of Jim and Sheree Lomax, 3642 Granzotto Drive, Concord, 825-1513. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

The yearly Field Trip planning meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on July 27 at the home of Elizabeth Dickey, 113 Hillcrest Drive, Orinda, 254-0486. Please call Elizabeth before the meeting day if you need directions, if you have requests, suggestions, or special birds you are interested in, or if you would be willing to lead a field trip. Anyone who is interested in helping plan next year's field trips is welcome to attend.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trips will again be suspended for the summer. Look for the Weekend Birding Breaks again next fall.

Have a good summer!

Notice from Wild Birds Unlimited

We have migrated NORTH! [125 yards]. Wild Birds Unlimited's new home is the former Old Stone Bank, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. It is located between the Chevron Station and Thomasville Furnishings. Come enjoy:

Free-standing, beautiful brick building
Plenty of parking
Indoor aviary
Three times the space
Many new products

Look for the Chickadee!
Happy birding, Mike & Cecil Williams

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday-Sunday, July 8-9, **Lassen National Park**. The trip will start on the north side of the park. See housing information in the *May Quail*. Camping at Manzanita Lake is first come, first served, with no reservations. There is also a forest service camp on SR 44 north of the park. Meet Saturday at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on Manzanita Lake. Please call the leader if you are going.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Wednesday, July 19, **Berkeley Botanical Gardens**. Carpool at 8:30 a.m. at Acalances Ave. off SR 24. Meet at U. C. Botanical Gardens on Centennial Drive back of the U. C. Stadium at 9:00 a.m. A **new field trip**. Last year hummingbirds were abundant here. Other migrants have also turned up. A very interesting plant collection even without birds.

Leader: Mary Jane Culver, 682-0509 Category 1

Saturday, July 29, **San Mateo Coast**. Carpool 7:00 a.m. at El Nido at St. Stephens, off SR 24. Meet at 8:15 a.m. in parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd., turn right into the parking lot. Early shorebirds, Black Swift, Bank Swallow, Marbled Murrelet.

Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382 Category 2

Saturday, August 12, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool 6:30 a.m. at the southwest corner of the Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 8:30 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides is on left, opposite a Union station. Early shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703 Category 1

Saturday, August 26, **San Francisco Bay Refuge, Coyote Hills**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680 Meet 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at the refuge visitor's center off Thornton Rd. Take I-680 south to Fremont. Exit at Washington Ave. and continue to end. Go right at Fremont Blvd., and turn left onto Stevenson to I-880. Go north on the freeway to Thornton Ave. and go west (left) to refuge entrance.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

MT. DIABLO, May 3.

Five members and guests met on a cool morning for the annual trip to Mt. Diablo State Park. It turned out to be a glorious day after lots of rainy ones in the last few weeks. The mountain was rich in foliage and we saw lots of wildflowers as well as birds. 63 species of birds were on the list when we finished about 2:00 p.m. We had good looks at Sage Sparrow, but it was a little early for Black-chinned Sparrow. The six species of warblers were a treat with Hermit and Black-throated Gray being particularly abundant. We also saw lots of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers everywhere in the park including a pair building a nest. It was an enjoyable day.

Jimm Edgar

MINES ROAD, May 6.

Eleven members and guests enjoyed this day-long trip on which 71 species were seen or heard by most members of the group. Among the highlights were Roadrunner, Lewis' Woodpecker, Rock Wren, Phainopepla, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Wildflowers were numerous as well as spectacular, especially the meadow at MP 17.5 which was heavily carpeted with Tidy Tips and Linanthus. The sun shining on this scene would, all by itself, have made this day worthwhile.

Hugh Harvey

MITCHELL CANYON, May 13.

Despite the dichotomy of botanizing and birding together, nine birders enjoyed a damp day in beautiful Mitchell Canyon. The abundant rains insured wildflowers unequalled in recent years. The birding was similarly rewarding with many first of the year observations of returning birds. Olive-sided Flycatcher, a colorful Western Tanager, and all three vireos were recorded among the 50 species.

Mary Jane Culver

NAPA RIVER WILDLIFE AREA, May 18.

The Wildlife Area was a disappointment due to levee repair being done by two very noisy earthmovers. We saw 10 to 15 of the usual riparian birds but the east bank of the river was inaccessible due to high water. Lake Hennessy was much more rewarding with five Great Blue Heron nests in a pine tree, an Osprey nest with a chick visible, and a male Hooded Merganser and several Ruddy Ducks in breeding plumage on the lake. There were also 25 to 30 Western Grebes and at least one Clark's Grebe (well-seen with spotting scope) calling and bowing. One pair fairly close to shore performed the mating dance. Weather was foggy in the morning, clearing and beautiful by noon. The eleven birders saw or heard 41 species.

Elizabeth Dickey

CASWELL STATE PARK, May 24.

Twelve members spent a lovely day in the original riparian area of the Stanislaus River at Caswell State Park and the very full and wet area of the San Joaquin River at Durham Ferry. Weather was perfect, in the high 60's with white, puffy clouds.

(Continued on page 3)

Field Trip Reports, continued

We had many views of several different Swainson's Hawks. Other highlights included an immature male Blue Grosbeak and a large flock of Tricolored Blackbirds with very prominent white and red markings. No Bank Swallows were seen although we saw many nesting Rough-winged Swallows in the river banks. 70 species were seen for the day.

Maury Stern

EAST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, May 27.

Twelve birders gathered just beyond the Shortstop in Oakley on a windy day that started with dramatic clouds and cold but ended up warm and sunny. The wind kept the number of individuals seen down somewhat, but the group still enjoyed good looks at Blue Grosbeaks, Black-chinned Hummingbirds, a pair of Hooded Orioles, and a Yellow-breasted Chat who posed and sang most cooperatively. After lunch those of us remaining ended the trip on a high note as we watched three Burrowing Owls on their home field. 51 species were seen.

Fred Safier

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

*Invested Auklet
6/24 - Jim Linnex*

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Arctic Loon: 1 on 5/10 at Bodega Harbor. (FB, MJC, HH) Also on RBA. Third state record.

Common Loon: 1 on 5/14 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Eared Grebe: 2 on 5/14 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)

Northern Fulmar: 1 light-phase bird on 5/14 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) Almost unknown inland in California. Details are being forwarded to Audubon Field Notes for their judgment. This would be the first county record.

Pelagic Cormorant: 13 nests on 5/21 on West Brothers Island near Richmond. (SG)

American Bittern: 2 on 6/2 circling high over Holland Tract for at least 5 minutes. (SG)

White-faced Ibis: 19 on 5/14 flying southeast and low over Piper Slough. (SG)

Emperor Goose: 1 on 5/10 still near the town of Bodega. (HH, MJC, FB)

Brant: 1 on 5/21 on Brooks Island (SG); 1 on 5/23 at San Gregorio State Beach, San Mateo County (JR).

Blue-winged Teal: a pair on 5/11 at the south end of Shell Marsh. (SG)

Harlequin Duck: 1 male on 5/21 on Brooks Island. (SG)

Common Goldeneye: a pair on 5/14 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) Late.

Osprey: 1 on 5/14 flying north over Piper Slough. (SG)

Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 5/30 over Piper Slough. (R&HH, EL, MJC, FB, BG)

Red Phalarope: 1 on 5/16 and 5/17 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR)

Little Gull: 1 first winter bird on 5/16 (BR) and 5/17 (JR) at Hayward RS. Probably fourth county record.

Caspian Tern: 575 on 5/21 on the beach on Brooks Island. (SG) As many birds are off feeding at any one time, there could be 400 nests here.

Common Tern: 1 on 5/23 at Pescadero Marsh. (JR)

Arctic Tern: 1 returned on 6/1 to Hayward RS. (BR) Last year a Arctic Tern arrived on 6/3 and stayed until 8/4. Accidental in California in summer.

Least Tern: ~110 on 5/11 flying north past Hayward RS. (BR) Highest number ever recorded there.

Black Tern: 2 on 5/15 at Clifton Court Forebay (SG), fourth county record, all from East County; 1 on 5/23 and 6/3 at Hayward RS (BR).

Black Skimmer: 1 on 5/13 (J&RR), last seen on 5/14 (RBA) at Brooks Island; 1 on 5/17, 2 pairs on 5/26, and 1 of the pairs on eggs by 6/3, all at Hayward RS (BR).

Rhinoceros Auklet: 3 on 5/23 at Pigeon Point, San Mateo County. (JR)

Black Swift: 6 on 5/12 at Camp Ohlone, southeastern Alameda County. (BR)

Vaux's Swift: 4 on 5/14 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: 1 from 5/18 thru at least 5/23 in their Concord yard. (Bo&BG)

Willow Flycatcher: 1 on 5/12 at Camp Ohlone (BR); 2-3 on 6/2 at Piper Slough (SG).

Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 on 5/15 and 5/16 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Common Raven: a pair nesting on the catwalk of a smokestack on the west side of Solano Avenue in Avon. (SG)

American Dipper: 1 nest with young on 5/12 along Alameda Creek near Rose Peak, southern Alameda County. (BR)

Swainson's Thrush: 15 on 5/14 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Solitary Vireo: 1 on 5/16 at Hayward RS. (BR) Only second ever found there.

Hooded Warbler: 1 male on 5/15 at Hayward RS. (RL, BR) First Alameda County record.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 1 on 5/15 and 5/16 at Hayward RS. (RL, BR)

Black-chinned Sparrow: 1-2 singing on 5/29 along South Gate Rd., MDSP. (SG)

Tricolored Blackbird: 2-4 on 5/31 at Heather Farms, Walnut Creek. (HH)

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 8 on 5/11 (BR), 7 on 5/16 (BR), 2 on 5/17 (JR) and 1 on 6/3 (BR), all at Hayward RS.

Great-tailed Grackle: 1 on 5/14 and 5/26 at Hayward RS. (BR) Second Alameda County record.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Bob and Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Rosita and Hugh Harvey, Eugenia Larsen, Ron Lindeman, Bob Richmond, Jean and Rich Richmond.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is now also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Thomas Antoon, Eugenie Baranoff, Philip Beckhelm, Walter Brown, Patricia Brown, Sharon Carpenter, Alan Chesterman, Richard Curry, Ann Dole, Eunice Friend, Perry Fusselman, Lidio Garello, Donald Garrett, Bingham Gibbs, R. Goetzinger, Robert Goetzinger, Ed Hennessey, Cammie Howard, Ken Hubbard, Patricia Jang, Sidney Johnson, Joan Lewis, Jenny Lively, Virbinia Luchetti, Jeanne McCartney, Robert McNamee, R. G. McNitt, Julie Mrasek, John Nejedly, Stacey Nelson, Mark Newman, Madelin Palmieri, Lynne Preslo, Kevin Roche, Eddy Scheinpelog, Beverley Scogland, Mariana Smith, Geoffrey Spencer, Austen Stranahan, Glenn Thomas, S. Weitzner, Dick Willey and Pearl Wilson.

THE LAST WORD

At the end of my eighth year as editor, I want to make a special acknowledgment of the contribution made by the people who do the work getting the *Quail* ready to mail. For the last six years, Betty Gallagher and her husband Bob have graciously managed the organization of the mailing and provided their home as the meeting place for assembly of the *Quail*. Crew members include Florence Bennett, Maxine Clason, Mary Jane Culver, Lois Foster, Norma Harrison, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Jean Richmond, Sally Steller, Ruth Steward, and Winnie and Gifford Young. The chapter owes them a sincere vote of thanks for all their work and I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank them all publicly. Next year we will need a new crew. Anyone who would like to participate is encouraged to get in touch with a board member. I also want to say thank you to my husband Dan Van Zile. Not only has he taken over the thankless and frustrating job of maintaining the data base of members for the *Quail* mailing labels, for the last six months he has also been responsible for the actual printing of the newsletter as we have gone to complete in-house production on MDAS's new laser printer. On behalf of the chapter and the board, thank you. And a final thanks to all my "regulars." You know who you are and I hope you know I appreciate all your work. Thank you all!

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

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The QUAIL

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Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: ?
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

September 1995

Vol. 42 No. 1

Next Deadline: September 7

September Program:

The Galapagos Islands

Welcome back! We start our season on **September 7** with a look at the Galapagos Islands from the inside. When he was twenty years old, Steven Bobzien began work in the Galapagos with Julian Fitter, becoming one of the first licensed Naturalist Guides. Most people are familiar with the Galapagos Islands and their unique wildlife from tours or television specials. Steve spent two years in the Galapagos conducting research and photographing wildlife and has since then spent twenty years leading natural history trips to the Galapagos. His talk will emphasize the birds of the Galapagos Islands.

Steve Bobzien began watching birds at the age of five in Marin County. By age 12 he had become a falconer and in high school started a wildlife photography and raptor research project for Point Reyes Bird Observatory and the California Academy of Sciences. Steve currently works for East Bay Regional Park District as a wildlife biologist.

September birding information will be given by MDAS president Jim Lomax on raptor identification.

MDAS still needs a Hospitality Chair. If interested or willing to serve, please call any board member.

General meetings of MDAS are held on the first Thursday of every month, September to June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

The next meeting of the board will be on Thursday, September 14, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Elizabeth Dickey, 113 Hillcrest Dr., Orinda, CA, 254-0486. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

Weekend Birding Breaks return. Our short, local field trips will start on Sunday, September 24, with a trip to Lafayette Reservoir. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. Trip leader for our first Birding Break will be Denise Wight, 370-7342. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the top of the dam (\$4.00 fee).

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

WHERE DID SUMMER GO & WHAT DID YOU DO?

By the time you, dear reader, cast your peepers on these words of wisdom (or otherwise), school will be starting (again) and ducks will be seeking winter quarters (if ducks are the worrying type). The garden you worked so hard to cultivate from early spring 'til now is looking a bit tired. The veggies you've grown, canned, eaten, and GIVEN AWAY are about done for the year.

Mom Nature in Trouble

So, you ask, what's all that got to do with anything? I suggest that Mom Nature is once again demonstrating the wonders we look on every day. We often fail to realize just how strange and wonderful they are. Today's market arrangements don't provide much opportunity to review nature's activities in the garden, field or elsewhere. Think for a moment, if you will, of inner-city kids whose experience with nature is almost nil. How about us grown-ups who work every day? Our major observation of open space often consists of seeking an open space on a freeway so we can get to or from work faster. Once again, we've struggled through a winter, spring, and summer with autumn now staring us in the face. Have we thought about our world? Once, eons ago, Mom Nature provided clear air and water. Species became extinct in more or less natural ways. We then went through a period when our air became unbreathable (remember the L.A. SMOG?). Our rivers, lakes and streams became polluted. Species were and ARE becoming extinct NOT because of nature but due to the impacts WE create. To protect against maltreatment of nature, we have caused laws to be enacted, laws requiring the clean-up of air and water as well as protecting creatures that can't speak for themselves. Former Secretary of Interior James Watt wreaked havoc with our environment and our environmental laws, but he was a piker compared with the assault on the environment that's underway today.

What's Going On

Have we thought about and do we truly understand the current threats to our flora and fauna? What about the protections for endangered species, wetlands and basic elements of Mom Nature's world? Today, many a human wants to "get away from it all" and has the money and time to make the dream a reality with the purchase of land in an isolated area. Never mind that the land represents habitat (a home) for plants, animals, and/or birds. We now have an entire culture saying, "I care not whether the use of my land causes death of an eagle, MY interests are greater than any other so 'I don't have to comply with stupid zoning laws or regulations protecting endangered species." Foolish rules are just that and should NOT exist. Most protective rules, laws, and regulations are NOT foolish. They have been developed as a result of bitter experience and are designed to ensure species (yes, they even apply to us humans) can survive. Experts assert we ignore at our peril the plight of birds and other creatures put at

risk by human activity. Right now we are watching political people with ideological agendas who seemingly have little to no regard for either people or wildlife acting to kill the funding for enforcing rules, regulations, and laws. When the argument is made that NO data collected by non-scientists can be used in ANY federal report and money for scientific study is cut, one HAS to question the intentions of such political agendas.

Do YOUR Thing

YOU, as a citizen, should study and learn what your political representatives are doing in Congress, in the state, and locally on environmental issues. It's YOUR world, not theirs. Tell them about it. The crucial decisions are being made TODAY, and the final passage of some VERY damaging environmental laws may occur. Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer will be key players in such matters. Tell them what YOU think. You can call or write to their local offices or to their Washington offices. Whatever you do, do it NOW!

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

GOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!! That will quite likely be the decision by the time YOU read this. In the interim, the FIRST Science Center Project has been ongoing. Professor Chris Kitting heads up the very successful environmental/educational series of boat runs in shallow waters of the Bay/Delta in the vicinity of Oakley. Using highly sophisticated equipment as well as "stuff" that's pretty basic, scientific experiments produce data that are carefully recorded. Educators from Los Medanos College, CSU Hayward, Contra Costa County, and K-12 schools are learning about wetlands, the Bay, and the Delta. How to study, teach and interest students are all part of the program.

Bob Barnes of National Audubon Society's Western Regional Office has arranged for a number of state and federal decision-makers to visit Ironhouse Sanitary District. The first meeting was August 3. The purpose? Developing funding for proposed projects that will be beneficial to DESC as well as the Sanitary District. Later in the month, NAS Vice-president Glenn Olson will join many others to hear the DESC consultant's report about feasibility of the project. Yep! August will be an important month for the budding Delta Environment Science Center.

STAN CHIN

Stan Chin was President of Los Medanos College. Interested, with a mind that grasped for the great and a willingness to "DO," Stan was an early supporter of the Delta Environment Science Center. Stan had battled serious health problems and his will, determination, and ability helped "stave off" full effects of his failing health. Everyone mourned Stan Chin's death. A huge group of well-wishers attended a memorial held in the music hall at Los Medanos College.

BIODIVERSITY

It's going to happen! After over a year's work, the Diversity Working Group is going to undertake a major biodiversity study of areas in eastern Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. Results of this study will demonstrate the value of good biodiversity data to environmentalists, developers, and land use planners.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT, FY 94-95

	Operating <u>Account</u>	Conservation <u>Account</u>
BEGINNING BALANCE, 6/30/94	\$3,709.34	\$14,797.53
RECEIPTS:		
Advertising	300.00	
Bird-a-Thon donations	1,361.00	
California Bluebird Recovery Program	1,002.50	
Donations	2,500.16	
Fundraising	2,449.00	
Interest earned	159.13	365.14
National Audubon Society dues share	9,286.50	
Subscriptions to the <i>Quail</i>	872.00	
Sales, <i>Birding Northern California</i>		3,880.86
Other sales	270.57	
TOTAL RECEIPTS:	18,200.86	4,246.00
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Administration	425.77	
Audubon lobbyist	750.00	
California Bluebird Recovery Expenses	404.72	
Christmas Bird Count	397.05	
Conservation		
Planning and Conservation League, Share the Water, Greenbelt Alliance	400.00	(50.00)
Education	89.82	
Equipment (Fax Machine, <i>Quail</i> Printer)	3,484.07	
Fund-raising expenses	1,272.00	
Hospitality	22.39	
Insurance	490.00	
Membership	127.90	
Programs	900.00	
Production and distribution of the <i>Quail</i>	6,605.38	
Rent, general meeting	830.00	
Sales expenses	59.01	1,796.20
Telephone (AUD-UBON)	177.27	
CONTRIBUTIONS:		
Santa Cruz Museum Association's Breeding Bird Atlas, Delta Environment Science Center, Binoculars for Birds in the Balance Program	668.23	1,964.26
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS + CONTRIBUTIONS:	17,103.61	3,710.46
EXCESS RECEIPTS OVER DISBURSEMENTS:	1,097.25	535.54
Loan to Operating Account for <i>Quail</i> Printer	2,200.00	(2,200.00)
ENDING BALANCE, 6/30/95	\$7,006.59	\$13,133.07

1995-96 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

IMPORTANT: This is a **tentative** schedule. Weather or availability of leaders may require changes. **READ THE QUAIL** or call the Audubon tape at 283-8266. Weekday trips are often switched between Wednesday and Thursday to take advantage of tides or other opportunities. Two-day weekend trips may be done either day alone.

Thank you to Barbara Vaughn and Barb Burek who helped put together this interesting schedule of trips for the coming year. Also thank you to those who will be leaders.

Elizabeth Dickey, Field Trip Chairman

Sept.	6	Wed.	Hayward Regional Shoreline	Mar.	9	Sat.	Tomales Bay
	16	Sat.	Moss Landing - Elkhorn Slough		13	Wed.	San Mateo Coast
	21	Thur.	Bolinas Lagoon		23	Sat.	Black Diamond Mines Reg. Park
	30	Sat.	Outer Point Reyes		28	Thur.	Briones wildflower walk
Oct.	5	Thur.	Bodega Bay	Apr.	6	Sat.	Garin Regional Park
	18	Wed.	San Mateo Coast		10	Wed.	Lagunitas
	21	Sat.	Point Diablo (Hawk Hill)		18	Thur.	Ida Clayton Road, Napa Co.
	26	Thur.	Ironhouse Sanitary Plant		24	Wed.	Del Puerto Canyon
	28	Sat.	Abbott's Lagoon		27	Sat.	BIRDATHON
Nov.	4	Sat.	Limantour	May	4	Sat.	Mines Road
	9	Thur.	South Bay		8	Wed.	Mt. Diablo State Park
	25	Sat.	Alameda South Shore		11	Sat.	Mitchell Canyon - Wildflowers
	29	Wed.	Mt. View Sanitary		16	Thur.	Napa River
Dec.	7	Thur.	Altamont		22	Wed.	Caswell State Park
	13	Wed.	Niles Canyon	Jun.	1	Sat.	East Contra Costa County
	16	Sat.	CHRISTMAS COUNT		6	Thur.	Partrick Road, Napa Co.
	30	Sat.	Palo Alto Baylands		8	Sat.	Outer Point Reyes
Jan.	6	Sat.	Putah Creek - Lake Solano		22-23	S-S	Yuba Pass - Sierra Valley
	11	Thur.	Lake Merritt	Jul.	13-14	S-S	Lassen National Park
	20	Sat.	Sunol Regional Park		17	Wed.	Berkeley botanical gardens
	31	Wed.	Grizzly Island Wildlife Refuge		27	Sat.	San Mateo Coast
Feb.	3-4	S-S	Los Banos	Aug.	10	Sat.	Bodega Bay
	7	Wed.	Thornton		28	Wed.	Coyote Hills Regional Park
	15	Thur.	Berkeley/Richmond Shoreline				
	24	Sat.	Bodega Bay				
	29	Thur.	Hayward Regional Shoreline				

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Wednesday, September 6, Hayward Regional Shoreline. Carpool 7:15 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Please call the trip leader for information on the meeting place and time. Water and shore birds.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732 Category 2

Saturday, September 16, Moss Landing - Elkhorn Slough. Carpool 6:45 a.m. El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet 7:45 a.m. in Moss Landing at the big turnout opposite Dolan Rd., just south of the PG&E plant on SR 1. Water, shore birds, possible vagrants.

Leader: Steve Glover, 846-7382 Category 3

Thursday, September 21, Bolinas Lagoon and Sewer Ponds. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9:00 a.m. in front of Audubon Canyon Ranch. Go west through Vallejo and continue west on SR 37 to Atherton Blvd. On crossing US 101, Atherton becomes San Marin Drive. At the junction with Novato Blvd, turn right and continue to the end at Pt. Reyes - Petaluma Rd. Turn left and go to SR 1; left again on SR 1 to Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Leader: Denise Wight, 370-7342 Category 2

Saturday, September 30, Outer Point Reyes. Carpool 6:30 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet at Drake's Beach at 8:30 a.m. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, turn left onto 3rd St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. for about 3 miles, then onto Sir Francis Drake again. Continue 14 miles to Drake's Beach Rd. on left. Coast birds, migrants, and possible eastern vagrants.

Leader: Fred Safier, 937-2906 Category 2

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

PARTRICK ROAD, NAPA COUNTY, June 1.

This was a pleasant day with enough high clouds and wind to temper the sun. The west Napa Valley hills give a variety of habitat - grassland, savannah and woodland. Hugh Harvey and

Denise Wight led us to the good birding spots. Grasshopper Sparrow was the first good sighting, followed by Lazuli Bunting, California Thrasher, a Solitary Vireo on her nest and two sightings of Pileated Woodpecker as highlights of the 59 species seen or heard by our party of nine.

Elizabeth Dickey

OUTER POINT REYES, June 3.

Fifteen birders saw 74 species, although 22 of these birds were seen after leaving Outer Point Reyes and seeking warmer weather. The Yellow-throated Warbler was the highlight of the day and was clearly seen and heard, singing loudly. This was a life bird for most of us.

Pat MacEachern

ANNADEL STATE PARK, June 7.

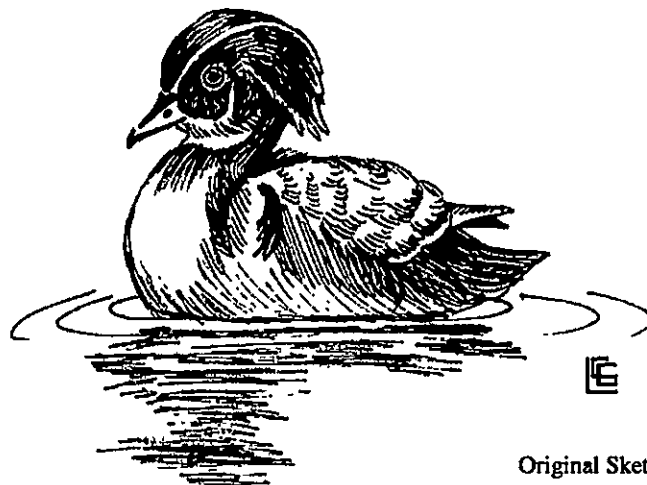
The five MDAS members who rode up to Santa Rosa were *muuy simpatico*, and that was the high point of the trip. Neither target bird, the Pileated Woodpecker nor the Yellow-breasted Chat, were seen or heard. 34 species were observed.

Barbara Vaughn

YUBA PASS, June 24-25.

Yuba Pass and the Sierra Valley were enjoyed by 23 members and guests over the weekend, during which time more than 105 species were identified. Saturday found snow still covering most of the Yuba Pass campground with the meadow just turning green, and our Sunday lunch site was heavily damaged by the Loyalton fire of last year. We birded the Pass area Saturday morning and visited Madora Lake after lunch. Some of us visited Frazier Falls, a 250-foot cascade, and a number of us visited Chapman Saddle Road at dusk. Sunday morning we circled Sierra Valley before arriving in Loyalton for lunch. Highlights were Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Swainson's Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Western Wood-pewee, and American Dipper, all found nesting. We also saw White-faced Ibis, Common Poorwill, Blue Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Wood Duck and Bufflehead, both with young, Green-tailed Towhee, and Evening Grosbeak.

Hugh and Rosita Harvey



Original Sketch
by Carol Lutz

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

- Eared Grebe: 2 on 7/23 at Arrowhead Marsh. (SG)
Snowy Egret: 270 on 7/28 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR)
White-faced Ibis: 4 on 6/23 at Shell Marsh. (DB) Very late.
Trumpeter Swan: 2 banded individuals on 7/18 along Hwy. 161 in Siskiyou County. (FB) These are offspring from a nearby introduced population.
Blue-winged Teal: 1 male on 6/30 at Shell Marsh. (SG)
Northern Shoveler: pair with 9 tiny young on 6/30 at Shell Marsh. (SG) First county nest record.
Gadwall: 2 females on nests on 6/30 at Shell Marsh. (SG) First county nest record.
Lesser Scaup: Pair with 3 downy chicks on 5/17 at Hayward RS. (JR) Very rare nester in Alameda County.
Harlequin Duck: 1 female on 8/6 at Brooks Island. (SG)
Osprey: 1 female on 7/2 at Del Valle Regional Park. (BR)
Prairie Falcon: 1 on 7/11 at Hayward RS. (JR, GF) Very early for shores of San Francisco Bay.
Virginia Rail: 1 on 7/12 at the Livermore Golf Course. (C&LA)
Sandhill Crane: 1 on 6/20 at the Tides Restaurant, Bodega Bay. (JR)
Black Oystercatcher: 1 on 8/3 at Hayward RS (BR), first for Hayward and furthest south found along east S.F. Bay; on 8/6, 4 at Brooks Island and 3 at Pt. San Pablo (SG).
Baird's Sandpiper: 1 on 8/6 at the Richmond Sewer Ponds. (SG) Fifth county record.
Wilson's Phalarope: 2 on 6/29 at Sindhich Lagoons, Briones Regional Park (DW); 7 on 6/30 at Shell Marsh (SG); 3 on 7/1 at Shell Marsh (JR, FB, MJC).
Red-necked Phalarope: 1 on 8/6 at Richmond Sewer Ponds. (SG)
Caspian Tern: ~3500 on 7/11 at Brooks Island. (SG)
Arctic Tern: 1 still present through at least 8/1 at Hayward RS. (BR)
Black Skimmer: 2 on 6/10 (BR), 4 on 7/6 (MJC, FB), 2 adults, 1 chick on 7/9 (BR), 3 chicks on 7/11 and 7/17 (JR, GF), 4 chicks on 7/21 (BR), and 3 chicks on 7/26 (BR), all at Hayward RS.
Greater Roadrunner: 1 adult and 2 fledglings on 7/1 at mile 12.19 along Mines Rd. (BR); a pair on 7/8 (1 carrying food) at mile 5.99 along Mines Rd. (JR).
Long-eared Owl: 1 on 6/24 at Sunol Regional Park (BR), first park record; 1 adult with 2 young on 8/6 at mile 17.25 along Mines Rd. (BR), first Alameda County nest record in ~70 years.
Northern Saw-whet Owl: 1 on 8/5 at mile 17.25 along Mines Rd. (BR)
Lesser Nighthawk: 2 at noon on 7/7 (SG), 9-10 that same evening (BR, KH), and 7 on 7/9 (JR), all at Clifton Court Forebay. Only third county record; very early, usually appear in mid-August.
Vaux's Swift: 1 on 7/29 over Alamo. (JR) Only East Bay record for July.
Costa's Hummingbird: female with 2 young on 6/19 on private property near Mines Rd. (BR, MR) First Alameda County nest record.

- Willow Flycatcher: 1 on 6/9 at Piper Slough. (SG)
Dusky Flycatcher: 1 on 6/10 at Hayward RS. (BR) Second Hayward RS record.
Western Kingbird: 1 on 6/30 at south end of Shell Marsh. (SG)
Purple Martin: 1 female on 6/13 at mile 14 along Mines Rd. (BR)
Black-and-white Warbler: 1 singing male on 6/9 at Piper Slough. (SG)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 adult male from 7/9 to 7/13 in his El Cerrito yard. (AP, SG)
Indigo Bunting: 1 male on 6/22 at Ohlone Regional Wilderness (BR), later paired with a female Lazuli and seen feeding young on 7/4; 1 male on 6/27 at Monument Peak near Fremont (BR); 1 first-year hybrid Indigo x Lazuli male on 7/27 at Mission Peak (BR).
Black-chinned Sparrow: found nesting on 6/19 in 2 locations above Mines Rd. (BR)
Hooded Oriole: 3 immatures on 6/10 at Hayward RS. (RL, BR)

Observers: Charles & Laura Anglen, Florence Bennett, Dick Bogaert, Mary Jane Culver, George Finger, Steve Glover, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Armando Picciotto, Mike Rogers, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

School is fast approaching and it is time to think about the Audubon Adventures program. The program is a bi-monthly newspaper for each student, plus a teacher's guide, for third through sixth graders. The newspaper covers different areas of environmental education.

Won't you think about sponsoring a class? Help our young people appreciate their world. The fee is \$35.00 per class. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

SPONSOR: Name: _____
 Address: _____
 New: _____ Renewal: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____
 Grade: _____
 Number of students: _____
 Teacher's name: _____
 School address: _____

CLASSES, TRIPS, AND MORE

FALL FIELD CLASS

Norah Bain's field class for beginning and intermediate birders will meet Tuesdays from September 19 through October 10 and December 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Registration will be September 12 at the Orinda Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563. Cost is \$55 for Orinda residents, \$57 for non-residents. For class details, call Norah at 254-4516. For more information on registration, call the Orinda Community Center at 254-2445.

FALL BIRD CLASSES

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon Society will be starting September 6, 7, and 12. All classes meet in Room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St., San Francisco. Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays and is an introduction to birds and birding. Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays and is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American land birds. Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays and is a continuing study of water birds. Each class is composed of two seven-week sessions. The fees are \$75 for each seven-week course. Pre-registration is recommended. For information, call the San Francisco City College Continuing Education office at (415) 561-1840 or (415) 267-6545.

BAY SHORE STUDIES TRAINING PROGRAM

Volunteers are needed to lead children on field trips to the edge of the Bay. Get your feet wet learning facts about marine life in San Francisco Bay at the Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary in their series of 14 training classes. The first session is Friday, September 15, from 9:00 to noon. Then lead small groups of 4th to 8th grade children to the edge of the Bay and share what you have learned. No previous experience necessary. For further information, call Meryl Sundove at (415) 388-2525 or stop by the Richardson Bay Center at 376 Greenwood Road, Tiburon.

EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE ON WATERSHEDS

San Francisco Estuary Institute (formerly the Aquatic Habitat Institute) and the Department of Biological Sciences/School of Science at CSU Hayward present "Teaching About Watersheds." The conference will be held Saturday, November 4, with optional field trips on Sunday, November 5, and Saturday and Sunday, November 11 and 12. The event for educators of grades K through college features symposia, workshops, and a curriculum fair to increase understanding of these sensitive aquatic ecosystems which are often the first indicators of an environmental problem within a community. The approximate costs will be \$30 for the conference, \$10 for lunch, \$60 for CSU Hayward academic credit, and \$20-\$25 for field trips. For information or a registration form, send your name and address to the San Francisco Estuary Institute, 1325 S. 46th St., Richmond, CA 94804-4603, or call (510) 231-9539.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON PANAMA TOUR

Golden Gate Audubon is arranging a nine-day Partners in Flight tour to Panama from November 18 through 26 that will include meeting with Panama Audubon members, surveying the best birding destinations, and learning about the people and natural history. Accompanying the tour will be Wilberto Martinez, an internationally recognized expert on the birds of Panama. An eight-day extension to Cana and Cerro Pirre, Darien National Park, will also be available. Cost of the land tour will be \$1248, with a single room supplement of \$170. Cost of the extension will be \$1255 with a single room supplement of \$50. The tour arrangements are being made NOW so anyone interested should call Miles McKey at (510) 652-5854 immediately for further information or to make reservations.

GALAPAGOS AND ECUADOR TRIP

Pintlar Audubon Society of southwestern Montana is organizing a trip to the Galapagos Islands and key natural areas of Ecuador from December 16 to January 3. Dr. Jack Kirkley, ornithologist at Western Montana College, will lead the tour along with local naturalist guides and will teach about increasing threats to the Galapagos and the neotropical rainforests as well as view birds and other wildlife. For more information, write Dr. Kirkley at Western Montana College, 710 S. Atlantic St., Dillon, MT 59725 or call (406) 683-7321.

AUSTRALIA AUDUBON TOUR

Portland Audubon Society, under the auspices of Aussie Tours, is having a 27-day tour of Australia starting October 3. The tour will travel from Darwin in the far north through central Australia to the more populated coastal areas of New South Wales and Victoria. Focus will include both the exotic bird life of Australia and its varied and unusual animals and reptiles. The tour price will be \$4600 per person double occupancy and includes airfare from Portland or LAX, all ground transportation and transfers, breakfast each morning, a welcome dinner and a farewell dinner. For more information, call Aussie Tours, (800) 685-6252.

OF MARSH AND MUD

Ohlone Audubon Society is proud to announce the publication of the shoreline guide, *Of Marsh and Mud*. This easily readable and scientifically accurate paperback describes 8 plants, 12 birds, 9 mammals, 10 fish, 9 larger arthropods, and 10 mollusks found in the salt marsh and mudflat environment. All the plants and animals are identified and their ecological niches are described. The 48-page, 8.5" x 5.5" size makes it easy to carry and use on a walk along the seashore. Also included is a map locating 24 viewing and study areas around San Francisco Bay. *Of Marsh and Mud* is written by Dave Riensche, a naturalist at Coyote Hills Regional Park. Drawings are all original work by Kevin Meek, the illustrator. *Of Marsh and Mud* is available from the Mt. Diablo Sales Manager. It can also be ordered directly from Ohlone Audubon, 1608 Walden Court, Fremont, CA 94539, for \$8.50 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend warm greetings to these new MDAS members and hope to meet them at our activities: Susan Abbott, Laurie Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Alio, Stephanie Andrews, Vincent Angell, Larry Arcias, Phyllis Bailey, Roy Bailey, Eugene Ballock, Erik Beer, Darrell Bittle, Jon Blytt, Mrs. Thomas J. Boltz, Rise Bradfield, Josephine Carroll, Alice Castellanos, Ginny Chin, Don Chorley, Wayne Clifton, Judi Cooper, Carol Crites, Lisa Dalander, Nora Daniel, Hazel Davis, James Davis, Mark Davis, Frederica Delamain, Ms. Devor, Christina Diaz, Thomas Dozier, Bert Durst, Paul Edstrom, Paul Eilers, Carleen Ernest, Louise Fisher, Susan Foster, Mrs. J. Gallo, Shirley Gard, Robert P. Gardella, Virginia George, Dave Gerry, David Gifford, Nancy Goreth, Francis Hamilton, Nancy Hart, Ann Hawkins, Lydia Holmes, Mona Jain, S. Jeffries, Trudi Jensen, Anthony Johns, Luann Johnson, Sheldon Jones, Peter Keim, Roland Kennedy, Jean Kimball, Donna Klein, Julie Kruse, Paul Lafollette, Arline Lawrence, Susan Leighton, Dawna Lemmons, Linda Long, Frederick Lopez, Jean Low, Nemesino Mariano, Anne Mason, Linda Matkin, Phil McGarry, Mary McGrath, Warren McMahan, Mrs. Arch McPherson, Sheryl Means, Mildred Meigs, Anne Meyer, Kenneth Meyer, David Miner, Mrs. Theo M. Mitchell,

Ann Moriarty, Deborah Mullica, Anna Munoz, Yosh Nakano, Deborah Neft, S. L. Neilsen, Serena Nelson, Bev Glasson Nidick, Mary Jean Odmak, Carol Lee Olney, Margaret Page, Don Pendleton, Alfred Peretti, Ralph Pickard, Marilyn Riddle, Irene Rodriguez, Leonard Rosenthal, Glen Russell, Jacqueline Sarfati, Harvey Schneiber, Michael Sharrar, Linda Simmons, Jenny Simonson, I. M. Singleton, Amy Soares, Susan Steele, Bill Sullenberger, Joan Sullivan, Robert Suryan, Joyce Sutay, Edythe Taylor, Myrtle Tavares, Pat Thompson, Helen Tyrrell, John Van Liew, Carter Wells, Michael Wesson, Jan Westmopend, Don White, Barb & Steve Williams, Joanne Woerner, and Eric Zierke.

IN MEMORIUM

We are sad to announce the death, on June 4, of Bette Wentzel, a long-time friend of Mt. Diablo Audubon and president of Ohlone Audubon. She had returned to her favorite campground near Yosemite and apparently slipped and fell into the swollen creek waters. Her family requests that memorial donations be made to a conservation organization of your choice or to the Ohlone Audubon Society, c/o Bette Wentzel Conservation Fund, 1608 Walden Court, Fremont, CA 94539.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the *Quail* and *Audubon* magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the *Quail* is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the *Quail* to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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(510) AUD-UBON



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VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
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Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
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Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

October 1995

Vol. 42 No.2

Next Deadline: October 12

October Program:

The New Stuff from Arizona and Texas

At our **October 5** program, MDAS President Jim Lomax will present an updated show of birds from Arizona and Texas. These will include specialties from his trip last May, the Flame-colored Tanager and the Rufous-capped Warbler. Other highlights are Grace's, Red-faced, and Golden-cheeked Warblers, Elf Owl, Strickland's Woodpecker, and the southern subspecies of Solitary Vireo (soon to be promoted to a species of its own?). To round the program out, there will also be pictures of assorted sparrows, raptors, and other birds. A special extra will be Jim's pictures of the Crested Auklet, a very rare visitor from Alaska.

Jim Lomax is now serving his sixth term as MDAS President and, he says, his last. Since 1990, Jim has delighted us with his visual tours of the birdlife of not only Arizona and Texas but also Florida, the Marianas Islands, and the Northern Midwest. Join us for an evening of Jim's excellent photography and humorous commentary.

New Hospitality Chair. At our September meeting, Carol Frischmann volunteered to become the new MDAS Hospitality Chair for the 1995-1996 year. All of us should say thank you to her in October for taking over this job that makes our meetings so pleasant.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

The next board meeting will be on Thursday, October 12, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Al McNabney, 1161 Leisure Lane, #7, Walnut Creek, 945-1785. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our October short, local field trip will visit the Martinez Regional Shoreline. Trip leader John Davis, 228-9516, will be joined by co-leaders Bess Smyth and Betty Smith. Meet on Sunday, October 8, at 8:30 a.m., at the fishing pier parking lot. Take the Marina Vista exit from I-680 west to downtown Martinez. Go north on Ferry Street past the Amtrack station, cross the tracks, and bear right on N. Court Street into the park, then left to the parking lot at the end of the road.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

SUMMER'S OVER

Soon autumn leaves will be the norm. Pumpkins will abound. Wandering Albatross will continue to wander, while migrating hawks can be seen in large numbers as they head for their winter quarters. The BIRDS IN THE BALANCE program is one way we humans can DO something effective for our migratory bird population. Remember the binoculars? Long gone and possibly forgotten (so far as we in the U. S. A. are concerned) but to one watching the bird population in Central America, a lifesaver. If you want to participate, visit with Jill Hedgecock.

ENVIRONMENT vs. U.S. POLITICS

Pick up any of the MAJOR newspapers and somewhere among the pages of printer's ink there will be at LEAST one story about some new assault on our nation's environmental rules, policies, and activities. A few years ago the name of one James Watt became a household word. People recognized policies espoused by Watt would be disastrous and the PEOPLE spoke. Policies now propounded in the U. S. House of Representatives threaten just about every environmental law, policy, or regulation that's been put in place in the last 50 years. So far neither the reaction of the PUBLIC nor the outcry of environmentalists has been much of a tidal wave of opposition. Some, on both sides of the issues, argue the environmental movement is really a toothless tiger. Clearly the proponents of some of the worst environmental legislation every dreamed up believe that's the case. "What are the issues?" you ask. My response: Pick anything you want and it is NOW an issue. The Clean Water Act, so revised that, if enacted as is, there's NO assurance you will have clean water. Wetlands, everyone knows of the struggle to maintain important wetlands. There's widespread agreement that if the currently proposed legislation is passed, up to 90% of our remaining wetlands will be up for grabs.

"So," you ask, "What can we DO about it?" Well, here's a chance to DEMONSTRATE that our system of government CAN and DOES respond to THE PEOPLE. Contact YOUR Congressional representative. Let him or her KNOW you do not want to see our environmental laws weakened. Contact your Senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. Insist they work in the Senate to SAVE our environmental laws. Lastly, President Clinton should be hearing from you. It's easy to contact them. The names and addresses are carried in many newspapers. Get a phone number and the address for the local office of your representatives. Call, but a short letter may be more effective. There is a real crisis headed our way. YOU CAN HELP.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

An important bit of legislation is wending its way through the California legislature. The proposal calls for establishment of up to nine environmental pilot programs throughout the state in K-12 schools. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the bill will have passed both houses of the legislature. If Governor Wilson signs the bill, we'll be witnessing the beginning of a new era.

AUDUBON'S NEW LEADER

As you may know by now, Peter Berle has left Audubon and John Flicker now heads the organization. A visit by Mr. Flicker with Bay Area Audubon members a few weeks ago left a very favorable impression. Mr. Flicker comes to Audubon at a very critical time. Environmental laws are under the most serious threat since they were enacted. Pressures on parks and wildlife refuges are serious. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, so fought for, is "up for grabs." More importantly, National Audubon's organizational structure is being changed. The local chapters will have MUCH more influence and responsibility. The so-called "grass roots" will be the impetus for Audubon's actions. Chapters and the regional offices will be more involved in developing adequate funding and in membership activities. The conservation programs such as Birds in the Balance will flourish by affording opportunity for more and more members to be active participants. Serious attention is being given to *Audubon*, the magazine that has won so many awards but which has, for some members, failed to carry the Audubon message. These are changing, challenging times.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

David Mogavero produced his major feasibility report at the meeting of the DESC Coordinating Council a few weeks ago. The report indicated bigger is better, which means that a self-sustaining, effective entity HAS to be large enough and has to have exhibits and activities that are unique and interesting enough so visitors will want to come back, if financial success is to be achieved.

A major DESC meeting will be held later this September, chaired by Mark Nickerson, Director, Cal. State Hayward, Contra Costa Campus. Educators from all schools in eastern Contra Costa County and others are invited. The educators will be challenged to assist in developing the education components of DESC to ensure students from the very young ages to graduate school will be exposed to environmental matters dealing particularly with wetlands.

The DESC-sponsored educational/environmental boat trips out into the shallow waters of the Bay/Delta have been extremely successful. The activity has caught the eye of the media and a number of very favorable news stories have eventuated. Also, more than 2200 young people have participated in walks into the wetlands owned by Ironhouse Sanitary District, which will be a major element in the entire DESC activity.

SHELL MARSH AGAIN! WILL IT EVER END?

Sometimes I wonder. My first exposure to the so-called Shell Marsh, that mucky-looking place in Martinez just east of I-680 as one approaches the Benicia Bridge, started about 13 years ago. During that time there have been many players in "saving" the area from development. That goal has been achieved. The marsh is now in the hands of East Bay Regional Park District. Hydrology studies have been underway for over a year. Serious attention is now being given to how to make best use of the area for study and observation and OF COURSE for birds and other wildlife that make so much use of Shell Marsh.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Thursday, October 5, **Bodega Bay**. Carpool 7:30 a.m., southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet 9:30 a.m. at the Tides Restaurant. Go north on US 101. Take the Washington St. exit in Petaluma, go west on Bodega Hwy. to SR 1, turn right to Bodega Bay. The Tides is on left, opposite a Union station. Shorebirds, rails, waterbirds, migrants.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703 Category 1

Wednesday, October 18, **San Mateo Coast**. Carpool 7:15 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in parking lot off SR 1 opposite Pescadero Road. Cross the San Mateo Bridge, continue west on SR 92 to Half Moon Bay, go left on SR 1 for 15 miles to Pescadero Rd., turn right into the parking lot. Ocean and shorebirds, possible migrants.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, October 21, **Point Diablo**. Carpool 8:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet 9:15 a.m. in upper lagoon parking area. Take the San Rafael Bridge and US 101 south to SECOND Sausalito exit. At the stop sign, go left UP the hill. At the intersection, go right downhill. At the next stop sign, turn left and continue on to parking lot at upper lagoon. Migrating hawks, swifts.

Leader: Jim Lomax, 825-1513 Category 2

Thursday, October 26, **Ironhouse Sanitary**. Carpool 7:00 a.m. at southwest corner of Sun Valley parking lot. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the plant office. Take Hwy. 4 to Oakley. In Oakley, turn left on Vintage Pkwy. Take the first right onto Walnut Meadows Dr. Follow this and turn right to the office.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703 Category 2

Saturday, October 28, **Abbott's Lagoon**. Carpool 7:00 a.m., Acalanes Ave., off Pleasant Hill Rd., just north of SR 24. Meet 8:30 a.m. at Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Point Reyes. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, left onto 3rd St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, then left onto Bear Valley Rd. Turn left off Bear Valley into the Visitor's Center. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and possibly hawks or eagles. Carry lunch and liquids. For more information, call Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486.

Category 3

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

LASSEN NATIONAL PARK, July 8-9.

Only a limited area of the park was accessible from the north entrance. However, weather was fine and ten birders enjoyed Manzanita and Hat Lakes on Saturday. Highlights were an adult and a juvenile American Dipper along the creeks into the lake and a quick glimpse of a Northern Goshawk. On Sunday we went to Burney Falls for Bald Eagles, Osprey, and Black Swifts. A total of 51 species was seen during the two days.

Elizabeth Dickey

BERKELEY BOTANICAL GARDENS, July 19.

The eighteen members' opportunity to view the bewildering, various plumages of countless resident hummingbirds in the Mexican and Central American sections of the gardens was the highlight of the trip. A stop in the Tilden Botanical Gardens offered good opportunities to view birds bathing in the small garden stream. Both gardens offered excellent variety of plants and flowers for our enjoyment.

Mary Jane Culver

SAN MATEO COAST, July 29.

Fourteen birders enjoyed beautiful weather during this day at the coast. It was sunny and warm but not too hot. Highlights of the day included Baird's and Semipalmated Sandpipers and Black Swifts. 80+ species were seen.

Steve Glover

BODEGA BAY, August 12.

Twenty-four birders spent a gloriously beautiful day at this wonderful location for birding, boating, fishing, walking, dreaming, etc. The highlights of the day included the two American Black Oystercatcher chicks off Bodega Head, the many Brown and White Pelicans, and a River Otter in the Bay. We also had good looks at four Osprey, some flying and others perched, eating fish. Finally, while attempting to scan the Bay from the Tides pier under foggy conditions, we experienced a weather phenomenon called a Fog Bow - a white rainbow. Seen or heard: 55 bird species.

Shirley Ellis

COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK, August 26.

The weather was sunny but not hot for three chapter members and one guest. We walked briefly along the salt ponds below the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge visitor center and then crossed the road to walk through the marsh area. After a short drive, we visited Hoot Hollow in Coyote Hills Regional Park. Lunch preceded a walk across the boardwalk and around a portion of the hills to where we overlooked the Bay. 48 bird species were identified including Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

Hugh Harvey

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
3986 Stoneridge, #2, Pleasanton, CA 94566, or call 846-7382.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

White-faced Ibis: 1 on 9/4 at Hayward Regional Shoreline.
(RL, KH)

Tundra Swan: 1 on 8/17 at Shell Marsh. (JR) Extremely early.

Brant: 1 on 8/30 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline. (JL)

Northern Pintail: 1 female with 5 young on 8/20 at Iron House Sanitary District, Oakley. (SG) Only other known county nest location is Shell Marsh.

Gadwall: 1 female with 5-6 young on 8/20 at Iron House SD. (SG) Second county nest record.

Harlequin Duck: 1 male on 8/29 at Brooks Island, Richmond. (SG)

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 8/29 flying from Richmond to Brooks Island where it landed on a rock. (SG) Probably the earliest record for the East Bay.

Solitary Sandpiper: 1 on 8/26 at the north end of the Albany Crescent. (KH, JL) Fourth county record.

Surfbird: 3 on 8/29 (SG) and approximately 11 on 8/30 (JL) on the breakwater north of Brooks Island, seen from Sandpiper Spit; 2 on 8/23 and 8/24 at the San Leandro Marina (BR).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 on 8/21 (JL) and 1 on 8/22 (SG, RL, JR) at the Richmond Sewer Ponds, second county record; 1 on 8/20 at Hayward RS (BR).

Baird's Sandpiper: 1 on 8/19 (SG) and 1 on 8/22 (SG, RL, JR) at the Richmond Sewer Ponds. Fifth county record.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 on 8/20 at Hayward RS. (BR) Earliest Hayward record by 2 1/2 weeks.

Common Snipe: 4 on 8/20 at Iron House SD. (SG) Early?

Red-necked Phalarope: 28 on 8/20 at Iron House SD. (SG)

Least Tern: 1 on 8/3 at Jetty Rd., Moss Landing. (ED, JH)

Black Tern: 1 on 8/19 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Black Skimmer: 1 with 2 young on 8/19 (MJC, FB, HH, RH), 8/24 (HH, RH, MH), and 9/4 (HH, RH, MJC, VH), all at Mt. View; at least 1 still present through 9/2 at Hayward RS (BR), including 2 adults harassing 3 Peregrine Falcons on 8/8!

Common Murre: 1 on 8/19 at Pt. Isabel (SG); 1 on 8/22 at Pt. Molate (SG, RL); at least 4 on 8/29 at Marina Bay and Pt. Isabel (SG, JR).

Pigeon Guillemot: 1 on 8/28 near the end of Marina Bay Pkwy. (JL) Fourth county record.

Marbled Murrelet: 1 on 8/12 (KD, CW), 8/13 (BR), and 8/19 (BR) at Hayward RS. Second or third county record.

Vaux's Swift: approximately 30 on 9/5 at Tilden Regional Park. (JL)

Purple Martin: 6 on 8/15 at the Pt. Reyes National Seashore Headquarters. (JR)

Bank Swallow: 1 on 8/24 at Hayward RS. (BR)

American Redstart: 1 immature male on 8/5 (JL) and 8/8 (SG) at Jewel Lake, Tilden RP; 1 on 8/29 at Hayward RS (BR).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 male from 8/21 through 8/28 in her Orinda yard, (RF, JL); 1 male on 8/23 in her Alamo yard (JR); 1 female on 8/26 at Hayward RS (BR).

Blue Grosbeak: 1 female or immature on 8/14 at Hayward RS. (BR) First record for Hayward.

Indigo Bunting: 1 female on 9/6 at Hayward RS. (BR) First Hayward record.

Lark Sparrow: 4 on 9/3 at Heather Farms, Walnut Creek. (HH)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Kelly Davidson, Elizabeth Dickey, Rita Frost, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Marian Harvey, Rosita Harvey, Vickie Harvey, Jan Hilton, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, and Cam Wolfe.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

School has started but it's still not too late to think about the Audubon Adventures program. The program is a bi-monthly newspaper for each student, plus a teacher's guide, for third through sixth graders. The newspaper covers different areas of environmental education.

Won't you think about sponsoring a class? Help our young people appreciate their world. The fee is \$35.00 per class. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to Beverly Hawley, 1509 Skycrest Dr., #4, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

SPONSOR: Name: _____
Address: _____
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SCHOOL NAME: _____
Grade: _____
Number of students: _____
Teacher's name: _____
School address: _____

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd. (New Address)
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

4th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Saturday, October 7, 1995
Live birds from The Lindsay Museum
Free Gifts & Prize Drawings
Bird Seed Sale

Come see our beautiful new store (100 yards north of previous site). We have moved into new quarters that are four times larger and include an indoor aviary. Check out the expanded aviary, the larger bird feeder selection, and more optics and bird art. MDAS T-shirts are available.

Bird Feeding tip: October heralds the arrival of our wintering White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Erratic arrivals can also include Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch, so get out the thistle feeders and please keep us posted of sightings of these two species.

NATIVE PLANT SALE

The 29th Annual Sale of California Native Plants by the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will take place Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Merritt College Landscape Horticulture Department, 12500 Campus Drive, Oakland. For sale will be thousands of native plants, including trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, perennials, groundcovers, grasses, bulbs, and seeds, all ready for planting as the rains come. Featured plants include many varieties of aromatic sages, low-growing and tall manzanitas, California wild lilacs, bush monkey flowers, oaks, Matilija poppies, irises, and California fuchsias. There will also be a large variety of bunch grasses, sedums, penstemons, flowering currants, coffee-berries, and dozens of other species of plants native to California. There will also be posters, botanical art, and books on native plants and native plant gardening. Experts from the CNPS and other experienced volunteers will be on hand to give advice and to answer questions about gardening with native plants in the Bay Area. Payment may be by cash or personal checks but no credit cards. Proceeds go to conservation, field studies, scholarships, education, and other projects designed to protect and educate the public about native plants. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring sturdy boxes to carry home purchases, and enjoy yourself. Take the Redwood Road exit off Highway 13. Drive east up the hill. Follow plant sale signs, turning right on Campus Drive, then drive up the hill to the free parking areas on the Merritt College campus. For further information, call (510) 559-9269 or (510) 376-4095.

CLASSES, EXCURSIONS, ETC.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPTOR TREK

The Central Valley of California is a major wintering area for many species of raptors. During this time, Californians see great increases in the numbers of such species as Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels, the appearance of Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks, the disappearance of Swainson's Hawks, and other changes. In this one-day class, learn to spot and identify these birds, examine why they move into this area, explore the hazards faced by the young, and understand movements of birds of prey along the western parts of North America. The Raptor Trek will take place on Saturday, November 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Davis. Enrollment fee is \$95 for 1 quarter unit academic credit from U.C. Davis University Extension. For information or to enroll, call (800) 752-0881.

RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL

The second annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, "Tropical Birds of the Border," will take place from November 8 through 12. The festival will focus on local field trips, a trade show, and special presentations. Keynote speakers will include June Osborne, Kenn Kaufman, Chandler Robbins, and Bill Clark. The local field trip destinations will include Laguna Atascosa NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park, and Falcon Dam, with a special Parrots of Harlingen Tour. You may register to participate in as many aspects of the program as possible ("all inclusive") or for individual events. Pre-registration must be received by Wednesday, November 1. For more information on the festival and how to register, call the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce at (800) 531-7346 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST, Mondays through Fridays, or write the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, P.O. Box 3162, Harlingen, TX 78551-3162.

SONOMA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Madrone Audubon Society proudly announces the publication of *Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas - detailed maps and accounts for our nesting birds*, Betty Burrige, editor. Six years of intensive volunteer field work were undertaken by members and friends of Madrone Audubon Society and Redwood Region Ornithological Society to survey all of Sonoma County and to gather data on their breeding birds. Maps for and accounts of each of the 159 birds breeding in the county during the study were developed, and much historical and background information was added. Accounts of 22 additional birds, all former, irregular, potential and/or more recent breeders have been included. Even the Blue Grosbeak and the Gray Jay, both found to be breeding for the first time in Sonoma County less than four weeks before the book went to press are included. All of this is available in a 216 page, 8 1/2 x 11 inch volume which is illustrated with 70 charming pen and ink drawings by the great American bird artist Major Allan Brooks. A special, reduced, sale price of \$16.13 per book plus \$3.00 shipping will be in effect through October 16. Send your check payable to Madrone Audubon Society to Betty Burrige, 1653 Arroyo Sierra Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly greet these new MDAS members we hope to meet in person at meetings and trips: Robert Abfalter, Bobbie Adams, Richard L. Areharbault, Gennie A. Barr, David Bay, Michaela Bradley, Lynn Buffington, Jane F. Burnett, Mrs. L. L. Carre, Anthony Cary, Marnie Collin, Buddy Crowe, Harriette Dearmon, Martin DeVenuta, Keith Douglas, Margaret Farrer, P. N. Fleischer, Virginia Foster, Gail Fritschle, Shirlee Furutani, Douglas Gammons, Judith Gordon, Debra Hampton, Nancy Hanna, Beverley Harris, J. Philip Harrison, Jeffrey Harvey, Virginia Hase, S. Hersewoort, Mark and Ruth Holewinski, Mark Janowixz, Dr. Edward Johnson, Helene Johnson, David Johnston, Allen Kflowitz, Jill Kirkwood, Irene Kirwan, Carolyn Lacerra-Vaske, Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Maloch, Jane Mathis, Jane McGourty, Kathy Miles, Helen Mills, Cosette Mitchell, Harriet Mueller, Marjorie Overland, John Parsons, Michael Perreira, D. M. Pinckard, Marya Porter, Paul Pryor, Gloria Rodriguez, Debbie Romani, Stanley Rosch, Gina Rozenski, Aurie Scholar, Catherine Shelton, Peggy Shiral, Frank Skiba, Holly Smith, Suzanne Stadler, L. R. Stevens,

New Members continued

J. Thompson, Gael Treible, Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Van Buskirk, Lesley Wakeman, Koreen Watson, Sheila Williamson, John Wirth, Lois Wise, Robert Witmer, K. A. Voos, Juliana Wyman and Veronica Young.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for a gift from Marjorie Plant of Walnut Creek. Her generosity is greatly appreciated.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 53
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94597-0053
(510) AUD-UBON

President: Jim Lomax, 825-1513
VP Conservation: Al McNabney, 945-1785
Treasurer: Pam Keiser, 838-8840
Sales Manager: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732
Programs: Denise Wight, 370-7342
Field Trips: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486
Membership: Mike Williams, 376-1631
Publicity: Jill Hedgecock, 256-8270
Hospitality: Carol Frischmann, 735-3836
Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

November 1995

Vol. 42 No. 3

Next Deadline: November 9

November Program:

African Birds

For our **November 2** General Meeting, we welcome back Doug and Gail Cheeseman, this time to give us a program on African birds. We will be treated to many of Doug's best African birds slides, including Pel's Fishing-Owl, photographed in Botswana. Doug will explain some of the behavior of African songbirds as well as non-passerines.

Doug Cheeseman teaches at De Anza College and both he and Gail have been going on safari to Africa since 1978. They are active in Santa Clara Audubon and lead many overseas trips to Africa and elsewhere through Cheeseman Ecology Safaris.

For November Bird Information, Jimm Edgar will give a presentation and show a video on accipiters.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, November 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Barbara Burek, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, 229-0394. Board meetings are open to all interested members.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Cups! Our new hospitality chair Carol Frischmann would like to request that members bring their own coffee mugs or tea cups to the general meetings.

Weekend Birding Breaks. Our short, local field trip will visit Heather Farms on Sunday, November 19. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. November trip leader will be Shirley Ellis, 938-3703. From I-680, take the Ygnacio Valley exit east to San Carlos Dr. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot.

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

ENVIRONMENT vs. DEFICIT:

WHO WILL WIN?????

(Comment) If you have any relationship with any form of the media, you KNOW there is a major, fundamental battle going on in the U. S. Congress. The issues, oft masked by arguments about deficit reduction, are basic to maintenance of environmental laws, policies, and regulations that most people in the U. S. have known all their lives. The programs and agencies now being dismantled read like alphabet soup: ESA (Endangered Species Act), CWA (Clean Water Act), CAA (Clean Air Act), EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), and F&WS (Fish and Wildlife Service).

Hearings before the congressional committees produced strong support, backed by reason and science for maintenance of such laws. Rather than continue a frontal attack on these important environmental laws, little innocuous items were slipped into major budgetary bills to eliminate funding for enforcement. If funding legislation is passed as is, the important environmental laws will become toothless tigers. They will mean NOTHING for there will be NO cop on the beat to enforce them.

YOU can do something. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer are or will be very important players in all this activity. You can write and express your thoughts to both senators at the Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D. C. 20510. President Clinton is a MOST powerful player. You can write to the President at The White House, 1400 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500. This is not a matter to put off until tomorrow. Express your thoughts TODAY!!!!

WINDMILLS AND BIRD POWER

1984. Red-tailed Hawks were flying around the Altamont Hills in their usual fashion without much fear of predators or other life-threatening forces with which they had become familiar. But WAIT! 1984 was the year someone decided to install windmills, taking advantage of Mom Nature's Altamont Pass breezes to generate electricity. While wind energy may be producing some "cheap" power, it is a disaster for birds, particularly raptors.

Studies carried on by U. S. government agencies as well as the windpower companies show clearly that hundreds of raptors and other birds are being killed each year following encounters with the whirling blades of the many wind machines now covering the hills. Studies continue. Birds also continue to die from the encounters with whirling blades and electrocution. To the credit of the windpower companies, studies continue to try to develop ways to continue power production without killing birds. On October 10, Kenetch, one of the major companies in the field, brought together a number of experts to explain what continuing studies have produced.

After hearing the presentations from half a dozen experts, one observer said, "Well, they've not done much." In fact, the one major development involves painting blades of new, monster windmachines with alternating black and white stripes. Studies assertedly show such modifications will make it possible for the birds to see the whirling blades and thus avoid them. Will such be the case? You guess! My prognostication: More birds will be killed, more studies will be done, and a year from now, we'll not know much more than we now know.

DELTA ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE CENTER

The DESC project moved a major step forward recently when Ted Radke, speaking for the East Bay Regional Park District, proposed a \$2,000,000 challenge grant to help get the Delta Science Center going. Strong support for the concept continues with more and more interest being demonstrated. Los Medanos College and California State University Hayward, Contra Costa Campus, are strong players with Mark Nickerson, Director of CSU-CCC, being a prominent player in the process. Dwight Meadows, a MDAS Environmentalist of the Year, continues to be a leader in the process with the full support of the Board of Directors of the Ironhouse Sanitation District. Action of the MDAS Board of Directors, urged by Jean Richmond, will result in a major donation from the Conservation Fund to the Center.

1996 AUDUBON CONVENTION

Excerpted from a letter from Audubon President, John Flicker:

"Mark your calendars now for the National Audubon Society's 1996 Convention, June 8-12, on the campus of The American University, Washington, D.C. Our nation's capitol was chosen as the venue for this Convention for many important reasons beyond the museums, monuments, and grand architecture that attract millions of tourists each year. Scenic areas, from the C&O Canal to the Chesapeake Bay, offer many opportunities to experience the natural history of the region. Most importantly, given current political climate in Washington, it is more critical than ever that Audubon be a presence on Capitol Hill and throughout the Halls of Congress. The threats to endangered species, migratory birds, and wildlife habitat are very real and have never been so grave. We intend to fight back and have chosen the theme, "Audubon's America: Charting the Future for Habitat Protection" to capture the spirit and determination that we bring as an organization. We will fight for our natural heritage, from the Florida Everglades to the ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest and everything in between."

In addition to the Convention, Mobile Learning Labs will be held June 12-14 at Chesapeake Bay and important bird areas in Pennsylvania. Members are encouraged to participate in the Convention and Mobile Learning Labs. Registration materials will be available in January, 1996. Write Audubon Convention Office, 4150 Darley Ave., Suite 5, Boulder, CO 80303, or call (303) 499-3622.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Saturday, November 4, **Limantour**. Carpool at 7:00 a.m. at Acalanes Avenue, off Pleasant Hill Rd. just north of SR 24. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Bear Valley Visitor's Center, Pt. Reyes. Cross the San Rafael Bridge. From US 101, take the San Rafael exit, go 2 blocks, and turn left onto 3rd St. In San Anselmo, turn right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd. At SR 1, turn right 0.25 mile, left onto Bear Valley and left again into the Visitor's Center. Shore birds, seabirds, and waterfowl, as well as land birds on the ridge. Trails may be muddy.

Leader: Maury Stern, 284-5980 Category 2

Thursday, November 9, **South Bay**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. El Cerro Blvd., west of I-680. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the end of Terminal Rd., Mountain View. Take Dumbarton Bridge and go south on US 101 to San Antonio Rd. exit. Go north and east on San Antonio and turn right onto Terminal. Shore and water birds.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 2

Saturday, November 25, **Alameda South Shore**. Carpool 7:30 a.m., on El Nido near St. Stephens Drive. Take either St. Stephens or Acalanes exits from SR 24. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Broadway and Shoreline Ave. in Alameda. Take SR 24 to I-880, and go south to Government Island exit. Continue on Kennedy St. to the bridge approach. Alameda side of bridge is Park St. Continue on Park; left on Shoreline. Park at end of Broadway or on Bayview. Close-up views of shorebirds; Clapper Rails possible.

Leader: Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732 Category 1

Wednesday, November 29, **Mt. View Sanitary Plant**. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at parking lot at the plant. Take Pacheco Blvd. exit from I-680, turn right onto Arthur Rd. and go under the freeway. Arthur turns left, then right; at the second turn, turn sharp left onto a non-county maintained road. Follow the road into the sanitary plant. Trails may be muddy. Close-up looks at dabbling ducks; possible bitterns and heron.

Leader: Shirley Ellis, 938-3703 Category 1

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE, September 6.

The leader and one other birder set out from the visitor center near the San Mateo Bridge, and a third joined them later in the morning. The day was fairly hot even near the water, and we saw only 25 species, as practically none of the ducks were back from their summer breeding grounds.

Barbara Vaughn

MOSS LANDING - ELKHORN SLOUGH, September 16.

The eight birders spent a beautiful day at Elkhorn Slough, the Carmel River and Pt. Pinos. Although it was a poor day for migrants, we saw a respectable total of 91 species, including Sooty Shearwater, Pectoral Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs and a Yellow-headed Blackbird in the parking lot at lunchtime.

Steve Glover

BOLINAS LAGOON - 5 BROOKS AREA, September 21.

Five birders saw 76 species in and around the Bolinas area. Overall, the day was rather quiet. We did see Nashville and MacGillivray's Warblers. We missed Wood Ducks at 5 Brooks because there were two men in little rafts on the pond!

Denise Wight

OUTER POINT REYES, September 30.

Sixteen birders gathered at Drake's Beach on a gloriously sunny, warm, but often windy day. We started off in great style with Yellow and Palm Warblers in the willows, plus a *Vermivora* that might have been either a Nashville or a Virginia's, no one was certain. The rest of the trip was less exciting, though the weather was delightful. Other highlights included a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Mendoza and another Palm Warbler at the Fish Docks. 47 species were seen.

Fred Safier

FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES

Among the most awe-inspiring sights in nature is the annual fall migration of tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese to their wintering grounds at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico. Bosque del Apache's eighth annual Festival of the Cranes will be held from November 16 through 19. There are over 100 scheduled activities in the Catalog of Events, including demonstrations, workshops, guided tours, exhibits, and an Artisans Fair. The 1995 Festival features keynote speakers Karen Hollingsworth, Arthur Morris, and Victor Emanuel. Advanced registration for the Festival is highly recommended; most events have limited capacity. Festival information and tickets are available from Festival of the Cranes, P. O. Box 743-NR, Socorro, NM 87801, phone (505) 835-0424.

OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,

333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.

Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Horned Grebe: flock of 7 on 10/13 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG) A large concentration for this location.

Leach's Storm-Petrel: 1 on 9/23 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR) Third Alameda County Record, all from Hayward.

Brandt's Cormorant: 2 on 9/9 at Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline, Richmond. (SG)

Cattle Egret: 10 on 10/12 at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County. (SG) Earliest county record was 11/12.

White-faced Ibis: 1 on 9/4 (RL, KH) and 9/12 (BR), both at Hayward RS. Only second and third fall records for the East Bay, the other being 9/4/89 at Hayward RS.

Brant: 1 present from early September through at least 10/9 at Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline. (JL, SG)

Eurasian Wigeon: 1 female on 10/9 at Miller/Knox RS. (SG) The earliest record I have for the East Bay is 10/11.

Osprey: 1 on 9/11 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Broad-winged Hawk: 1 on 9/12 at Hayward RS. (BR) This is the third and earliest fall record for the East Bay.

Swainson's Hawk: 1 on 9/11 and 3 on 9/13 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Ferruginous Hawk: 1 on 9/19 and another on 10/6 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Sandhill Crane: ~50 on 10/12 over Webb Tract, north of Piper Slough. (SG) All previous East Bay records were November or later.

Black Oystercatcher: 2 on 9/23 at Brickyard Cove, Richmond. (JR, GF)

Bar-tailed Godwit: 1 on 10/ 3 at Abbott's Lagoon. (JR, JD)

Stilt Sandpiper: 1 on 9/17 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 2 on 9/26 at the Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (JR, JD, HH, FB, BG)

Pomarine Jaeger: 1 on 9/21 (SG), on 9/22 (BR, JL, KH) and on 9/23 (JR, GF) north of Brooks Island, seen from Brickyard Cove. This is a long overdue first county record.

Parasitic Jaeger: at least 3 on 9/21 (SG) and 9/22 (BR, KH, JL) and 1 on 9/23 (JR, GF) north of Brooks Island. Possibly only 1 previous county record.

Common Tern: 1 juvenile on 9/11 at Piper Slough. (SG, JL)

Arctic Tern: 1 juvenile on 9/21 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Least Tern: 150-200 at Baumberg Salt Ponds south of the San Mateo Bridge. (BR)

Black Skimmer: 2 adults on 9/22 at Brooks Island. (BR, KH, JL) Second county record. The island caretaker says they were present since mid-August, so they are not one of the two South Bay pairs.

Pigeon Guillemot: 1 on 9/22 at Hayward RS. (BR) First Hayward RS record.

Lewis' Woodpecker: 1 on 9/11 (SG, JL) and on 9/14 (BR) at Piper Slough.

Acorn Woodpecker: 1 on 9/9 at Miller/Knox RS. (SG)

Red-breasted Sapsucker: 1 on 10/1 at Hayward RS. (BR) First Hayward RS record.

Dusky Flycatcher: 1 on 9/14 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Steller's Jay: 1 on 10/5 at Hayward RS. (BR) First Hayward RS record.

Yellow-billed Magpie: 1 on 9/13 at Bethel Island. (JR, GF)

Winter Wren: 1 on 10/12 at Piper Slough. (SG)

Philadelphia Vireo: 1 on 9/28 at El Granada Trailer Park, San Mateo Co. (GF, MP)

Prothonotary Warbler: 1 on 9/28 at El Granada Trailer Park. (GF)

Virginia's Warbler: 1 on 9/28 at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, San Mateo Co. (GF, MP)

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 1 on 9/14 at Hayward RS. (BR) First Hayward RS record.

Magnolia Warbler: 1 on 9/12 at Road Forks Pool, Pt. Reyes. (FB, MJC, HH, EL)

Cape May Warbler: 1 on 9/19 at Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (JR, JD, FB, MJC, HH, EL)

Blackpoll Warbler: 1 on 10/5 and 1, possibly 2, on 10/6 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 on 9/12 at Piper Slough. (JL, DW)

American Redstart: 1 immature male on 9/5 (JL) and 9/8 (SG) at Tilden Regional Park.

Northern Waterthrush: 1 on 9/12 at Spaletta Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (JR, FB, EL, MJC, HH)

Canada Warbler: 1 on 10/1 at Hayward RS. (BR) Third Alameda County record, first for Hayward RS.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 1 on 9/14 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Indigo Bunting: 1 female on 9/6 at Hayward RS. (BR) First record for Hayward RS.

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1 juvenile on 9/30 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Vesper Sparrow: 1 on 9/19 at Hayward RS. (BR)

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 10/2 and 10/7 at Hayward RS. (BR)

Bobolink: 1 with no tail on 10/3 and 10/4 at Hayward RS. (AH, BR)

Orchard Oriole: 1 on 9/12 at the New Willows, Pt. Reyes (FB, MJC, HH, EL, JR); 2 on 10/4 at Hayward RS (BR).

Hooded Oriole: 1 male still present on 10/12 in her Alamo yard. (JR) The latest there by 11 days.

Bullock's Oriole: 1 on 9/18 and 9/20 in her Alamo yard. (JR) Her first there in September.

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, George Finger, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Kevin Hintsa, Alice Hoch, Eugenia Larson, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, Marjorie Plant, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, and Denise Wight.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allow callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

INTERNATIONAL CORNER

by Jill Hedgecock

BIRDS IN THE BALANCE MEETING

Partners in Flight (PIF) is a cooperative initiative launched in 1990 involving public and non-governmental agencies throughout North and Latin America. Birds in the Balance is Audubon's program associated with PIF. A statewide PIF meeting was held on September 8, 9, and 10 in Santa Nella. The meeting was highly informative. Here are some highlights:

A study at the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge found riparian habitat supported the richest bird species diversity, followed by grasslands. Row crops had the least diversity.

A U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service program called Partners for Wildlife in which private landowners work together with Fish and Wildlife to restore habitat has proven hugely successful.

Results of the Tricolored Blackbird census appears to indicate that this species is more prevalent than initially thought and Fish and Wildlife does not intend to pursue listing the Tricolored Blackbird as a sensitive species (rare, threatened, or endangered).

A "new" strain of coffee called sun coffee has been developed that does not require shade trees. This "improved" plant has resulted in the increased clear-cutting of acacia woodlock and gallery forests, which are important migrant bird habitat.

BINOCULAR UPDATE

We have collected 43 binoculars (21 new and 12 used) to date for international use. Good job and thanks to everyone who contributed to make this program a success!

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd. (New Address)
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

Going to Southeastern Arizona? The revisions of the Holt/Lane and Davis/Russell books on birding in Southeastern Arizona are finally available. These books have been expanded with more maps, better directions and spiral bindings for easier use.

Bird Feeding Notes: We have had 15 reports of early arriving American Goldfinches and 2 Pine Siskin sightings. Goldfinch at this time of year are yellowish-green and will begin molting into bright yellow early next year. It's time to put out your thistle seed feeders. Please keep us posted on sightings of these two species.

KIDS IN CREEKS WORKSHOP

Kindergarten through twelfth grade educators, learn practical ways to involve your students in their environment and community at the innovative and award-winning Kids in Creeks Workshop! This two and a half day workshop supplies participants with teaching materials, scholarship information, and instructions for action projects. Above all, the workshop introduces the participants to a network of educators and other professionals who are enthusiastic about involving all students with environmental and neighborhood activities. Enjoy a botanical treasure hunt, aquatic insect sampling, and water quality monitoring, while earning 2 units of academic credit through Cal State Hayward. Join the San Francisco Estuary Institute at workshops on November 9 (4:30 p.m. through 9:00 p.m.) and 10 (8:30 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.) at Highlands Elementary School, and on November 18 (8:30 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.) at Buchanan Park. For further information, call Scott Fetherston at (510) 231-9539, ext. 655.

THE RV CHEF

SPECIAL OFFER FOR AUDUBON MEMBERS

Give yourself a treat and you'll help National Audubon Society at the same time. *The RV Chef*, written by world traveler and gourmet chef Michelle Hall, is a book that you won't want to leave home without. With this special offer, Audubon Society members may order a copy direct from the publisher at a discount price of \$9.95 plus \$1.25 postage and handling. With your order, you'll not only get a great book, you'll be helping support Audubon. From each sale, \$4.00 will be donated in your name to the National Audubon Society.

In *The RV Chef*, Michelle Hall shows how to prepare elegant meals in small spaces. With this book, there's no need to tough it out with canned this and that. Here are 120 pages on how to cook scrumptious meals on the road with easy-to-follow single recipes. The author has taken Cordon bleu, Continental, and her personal recipes and adapted them for cooking in small spaces. Although most recipes are for four, all can be adjusted to serve two. There's a chapter on the essentials: what to take and what not to take and how to stock your galley to make shopping on the road a snap. In addition to the great recipes, the book is entertaining. The author precedes many recipes with a personal and sometimes hilarious comment about its origin or how she managed when improvisation was in order.

To order a copy of *The RV Chef*, including postage and handling, please send your check or money order in the amount of \$11.20 to Pinewood Press, Department A, P. O. Box 25247, Munds Park, AZ 86017. Please allow 15 days for delivery.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome these new MDAS members and we hope to meet them soon: Janan Ali, Donna Arbuckle, Carol Avila, Kristen Baker, Mary Ann Breen, Alfred Courchesne, Diane Ellis, Susie Ellis, Judith Etheridge, Jack Fitzgerald, Mary Grant, V. Gray, Linda Greco, Beverly Gulley, Rosario Gutierrez, Edith Hill, Sydney Howlett, Juel Huseby, Wanda Ivaldi, W. R. Johnson, B. Liston, Marcia Long, Mildred Mico, Bill Nownes, Richard Oglesby, A. J. Pasion, Neville Powers, R. T. Raymond, Celeste Scanlon, Stephanie Seaver, Dorothy Smith, James Sofford, Roby Strupp, Doreen Tull, B. Tymczak, Mary Vega, Denise Wallen, Mr. and Mrs. George White, Marie Wiechmann and Sarah Wood.

1996 ENTERTAINMENT BOOK

The 1996 Entertainment Book is now available and includes a **new 25% discount feature supplement book**. This supplement book is **in addition** to the 50% you save on travel, restaurants, theater events and more.

Help your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at the General Meeting or at Wild Birds Unlimited, 692 Contra Costa Blvd., Pleasant Hill.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631.

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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BULLETIN OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Education: Beverly Hawley, 947-0479
Secretary: Karen Enstrom, 945-8267

December 1995

Vol. 42 No. 4

Next Deadline: December 14

December Program:

European Bird Migration

For our **December 7** General Meeting, Claire Nelson, field representative for Earthwatch, will talk to us about European bird migration and discuss her expedition to Italy and Hungary monitoring migratory birds.

Earthwatch is a non-profit organization founded in 1972 which offers the public a unique opportunity to work side by side with field scientists. Earthwatch's mission is to improve human understanding of the planet, the diversity of its inhabitants and the processes that affect the quality of life on earth. Claire Nelson has participated in eight expeditions to Europe, New Zealand, Mexico, and Costa Rica.

For December Bird Information, Jimm Edgar will talk about the 1995 MDAS Christmas Count (additional information on page 5).

The next board meeting will be Thursday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Mike Williams at the Wild Birds Unlimited store, 692 Contra Costa, Pleasant Hill, 798-0303. Board meetings are open to all interested members. The next *Quail mailing meeting* will be on Friday, December 22, at 9:30 a.m., also at the Wild Birds Unlimited store.

General meetings of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society are held on the first Thursday of every month from September through June. Our meeting place is the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The meeting times are as follows:

6:30 Doors open
7:00 Birding Information
7:30 Business Meeting
8:00 Social Time
8:30 Program

Prizes! Our new hospitality chair Carol Frischmann will hold a contest at the December meeting to select the most interesting cup brought to the meeting by a member and the "birdiest" cup brought by a member. Prizes will be given to the winners.

December **Weekend Birding Break** information can be found on page 3.

Happy Holidays to all!

CONSERVATION NOTES

by Al McNabney

THE RENEWAL OF AUDUBON

Birds will love it, bees will do it, and Audubon members will see it and will really be able to participate in it. Last June, the National Audubon Board of Directors adopted a Strategic Plan for the organization. The recommendation from the Board's Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Task Force was:

Audubon should sharpen its focus on birds, other wildlife and their habitats. Audubon should invest in its distinctive grassroots structure, and use as primary tools education and advocacy, with support from the sanctuaries, science, and communications to achieve its vision.

Ten committees have been created to map out the actions needed for successful implementation of the plan, with each committee focusing on one of the ten major elements of the plan. Some early proposed actions have already been approved, including establishing a prototype field office in California, testing new grassroots communication technologies in Washington and New York states, and developing a new National Audubon campaign/ issues selection process for use prior to the 1996 Convention. Attention is also being given to partnership possibilities with the Student Environmental Action Coalition, the largest network of college students involved in environmental activities.

Some of the officers responsible for the plan implementation have already been selected. David Miller, NAS Vice-President for the Northeast Region, will coordinate the work of various committees. Glen Olson, Western Regional Vice-President, will oversee the selection of field office sites. Liz Raisbeck, NAS Vice-President for Legislative Affairs, will head the campaign/ issues committee. Liz is soliciting suggestions from Audubon people about areas and projects on which National Audubon should focus. If YOU have suggestions, send them to her at National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

As Dan Taylor told Bay Area Audubon people, "Change is not only on the way, it's HERE!" The changes will be good for the birds, bird watching and Audubon's important commitment to conservation. There's much more going on in this important Audubon effort. Watch the magazine and other publications to see what role YOU can play.

FLOODING DELTA ISLANDS—GOOD?

A while back a BIG, mysterious box was delivered to me having been sent first to Jimm Edgar. The name on the box, Jones and Stokes, reminded me that that firm undertakes scientific study of environmental matters for BIG projects. After reviewing the material in the box, I knew the following proposed project IS BIG. The project calls for the flooding of several Delta Islands during periods when the Sacramento River water flow is high

The water flooding the islands would be "held" on the islands behind levees, berms and such until late in the year when run-off in the rivers is low, and when there is a need to deliver water from the Delta to farmlands to the south. Water would be pumped out of the flooded islands and sold to buyers in the San Joaquin Valley, Los Angeles, etc., for agricultural or domestic uses. Good idea? Bad Idea. One part of the plan calls for planting seeds and grasses on which birds can feed, after water is pumped off the island(s). Stay tuned. You WILL hear more about this matter.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

An environmental education bill proposed by Senator Tom Hayden wound up in a State Assembly committee. The bill proposed establishment of nine environmentally-oriented pilot programs around the state. Students in grades K to 12 would be exposed to the study of environmental issues, problems, and possible solutions. Cost to the state's educational system would be essentially nothing. So why didn't the bill become law? Rumor has it one particular Republican's dislike for Senator Hayden is so intense he would NOT vote for the bill because it carried the Hayden name. HMMMMMMMM.

WIND-POWER BIRD KILLS

Did you know there are 6,500 wind turbines in and around the Altamont Pass? There is a substantial population of Golden Eagles in the area and each year about 30 of these magnificent birds become casualties. About 90% of the "kills" result from collisions with wind turbines.

In 1992, researchers reported 142 dead raptors, vultures and ravens. Included in the sample were 16 Golden Eagles, 54 Red-tailed Hawks, 20 American Kestrels, 8 owls and various other avian species. In 1994, researchers tagged 56 Golden Eagles (adult and subadult). Three (11%) subadults died during 1994, one from lead poisoning and two from collisions with wind turbines. One tagged adult bird was killed by another eagle. A report by researchers estimated 39 Golden Eagles would die each year from collisions with wind-power machines. Whether or not the following data has real significance is not known. Researchers found that of 35 dead birds investigated, none were in their first year of life; 5 were in their second year, 11 in their third, 4 in their fourth, 2 were described as "after second year" and 13 were considered adults. The sample included 8 females, 11 males, and 16 eagles of undetermined sex.

So, what does ALL of the research show? Birds, particularly raptors, are being killed with some degree of regularity as a result of collisions with wind-power machines. Studies have demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate that sort of fact. Birds will continue to be killed; wind-power energy will be a source of energy. Wind-power energy is an expanding industry and it can safely be assumed that the adverse effects on avian populations will not only continue to occur but the number of birds killed will increase.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips are open to members and nonmembers alike. Carpool time is departure time. Carpool expense: 10 cents per mile per rider is suggested; tolls and entry fees are shared equally by driver and riders. Bring binoculars, field guide and lunch. Trips go in light rain or drizzle; if in doubt, call leader up to 1/2 hour before departure time.

Difficulty of field trip:

- Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths
- Category 2: Moderate, 1 mile or more, possibly rough
- Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking, rough terrain

Thursday, December 7, **Altamont**. Carpool 7:30 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., Danville, west of I-680. A caravan trip, with mostly car birding. Migratory hawks, Mountain Bluebirds, and grassland species.

Leader: Jim Lomax, 825-1513 Category 1

Wednesday, December 13, **Niles Canyon Gravel Pits**. Carpool 8:00 a.m., El Cerro Blvd., Danville, west of I-680. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at Vallejo Mill Historical Park in Fremont. Take I-680 south through Dublin to SR 84; go west 7 miles to park entrance on left. Varied habitats; Green-backed Heron, Ring-necked Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, often many land birds.

Leader: Jimm Edgar, 658-2330 Category 2

Saturday, December 30, **Palo Alto Baylands**. Carpool 7:00 a.m. at El Cerro Blvd., just west of I-680. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot near Nature Center at Baylands. Take the Dunbarton Bridge to US 101 south. Take Embarcadero exit and go east on Embarcadero to stop sign. Go left toward Yacht Harbor, follow road to end in parking lot on right. This is a high tide day and we should see Clapper Rails and possibly Black Rails. Prepare for mud, cool breezes. There is a lot of waiting for the rails.

Leader: Elizabeth Dickey, 254-0486 Category 1

WEEKEND BIRDING BREAK

Our short, local field trip this month will be a survey of the Contra Costa Canal on Sunday, December 10. Members new to our area and beginning birders are encouraged to join us for these weekend get-aways. The trip leader will be Barbara Vaughn, 376-8732. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot behind the Barnes and Noble Bookstore, 552 Contra Costa Blvd. Note that this is **not** the Barnes and Noble store across Willow Pass Road from Sears but the Barnes and Noble at the far north end of the Toys "R" Us - Target store shopping area just north of Chilpancingo.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

BODEGA BAY, October 5.

It was a lovely, sunny, warm fall day. The five birders saw 70 species with highlights being a Yellow-shafted Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglets foraging low in the willows, thirteen Snowy Plovers, two Red Knots, and a Parasitic Jaeger. The low point of the day was watching the smoke from the Point Reyes fire to the south.

Denise Wight

SAN MATEO COAST, October 18.

Five birders enjoyed a clear fall day along the San Mateo coast. Three species of shearwaters were seen off Pescadero Beach. Snowy Plover and Thayer's Gull were other uncommon birds among the 75 species seen or heard.

Elizabeth Dickey

POINT DIABLO, October 21.

Sixteen people made the trek to Hawk Hill at Marin Headlands, observing birds around Rodeo Lagoon in the early morning and then going on up the "Hill". Once there, ten species of raptors were observed, including a nice adult Merlin which circled three times overhead. Best bird at the Lagoon was a White-throated Sparrow. Total of 55 species seen.

Jim Lomax

IRONHOUSE SANITARY PLANT, October 26.

Eleven birders spent the morning along the levees watching the ducks and gulls. We also spotted a number of land birds as well. Virginia Rail and American Bittern were outstanding among the 57 species seen or heard.

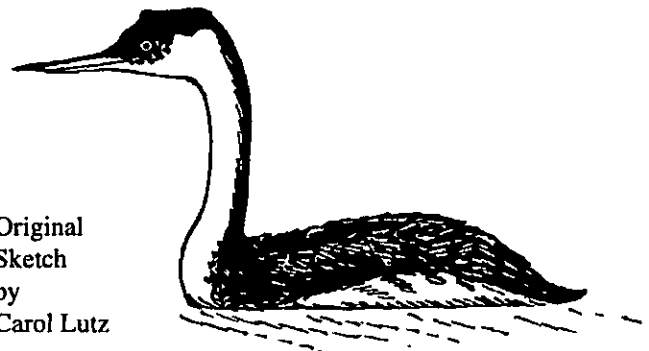
Elizabeth Dickey

ABBOTT'S LAGOON, October 28.

A whopping total of four birders spent the morning at the Bear Valley Headquarters of Pt. Reyes National Seashore and at Abbott's Lagoon. We managed 80 species before the weather forced a hasty retreat. An extension trip to Outer Point Reyes provided superb views of the Smith's Longspur and Snow Bunting that were present all week.

Steve Glover

Original
Sketch
by
Carol Lutz



OBSERVATIONS

by Steve Glover

Please send observations to Steve Glover,
333 Goshen Ct., San Ramon, CA 94583, or call 829-7207.
Please include your telephone number with your observations.

Brandt's Cormorant: 1 on 11/2 at Richmond Marina. (SG, RL)
American Bittern: 4 on 10/31 at Mt. View Sanitary District. (B&SW)
Cattle Egret: 1 on 10/21 (SG, KH) and 11 on 10/31 (SG) at Holland Tract, East Contra Costa County.
Greater White-fronted Goose: 3 from 10/16 (SG) through at least 11/7 (SG, JR, JL, KH, HH) at the Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline.
Brant: 1 still present through at least 11/7 at Miller/Knox RS. (SG, RL, JR, KH, JL)
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 male still present through at least 11/7 at Miller/Knox RS. (SG, RL)
Black Scoter: 1 male on 11/1 at Hayward Regional Shoreline. (BR)
Hooded Merganser: 1 male on 10/31 at Lafayette Reservoir. (GDL)
Common Merganser: 5 on 10/10 at Jewel Lake, Tilden Regional Park (JR); 2 on 10/27 at Clifton Court Forebay (SG).
Merlin: 1 on 10/30 at Horick Ranch, Pt. Reyes. (HH)
Peregrine Falcon: 1 on 10/19 at Palo Alto Baylands (HH); 2 on 11/7 at Pt. Isabel Regional Shoreline (SG, RL).
Sandhill Crane: at least 34 on 10/21 at Holland Tract. (SG, KH)
Pacific Golden-Plover: 1 on 10/20 at Holland Tract. (BR)
Bar-tailed Godwit: 1 on 10/12 at Abbott's Lagoon. (HH)
Black Skimmer: 2 on 10/19 at Mountain View SD. (HH)
Short-eared Owl: 1 on 10/21 at Holland Tract. (SG)
Eastern Phoebe: 1 on 11/1 at Bodega Bay. (FB, MJC)
Tree Swallow: at least 1700 on 10/27 at Clifton Court Forebay. (SG)
Winter Wren: 1 still present through at least 11/7 at Miller/Knox RS (SG); at least 2 on 10/31 at Piper Slough (SG).
Sage Thrasher: 1 on 10/27 (SG), 10/31 (JL), and 11/2 (DW) along Byron Hot Springs Road near Byron. Probably fifth county record.
Phainopepla: 1 on 11/7 at Hidden Lakes Park, Martinez. (DW)
Yellow-green Vireo: 1 on 10/17 at Lake Merced, San Francisco. (FB, MJC, BG, HH)
Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1 on 10/16 (SG) and 10/17 (JR, JL) at Miller/Knox RS, third county record, first since 1974; 1 male on 11/1 (FB, MJC) and 11/2 (HH) at Bodega Bay.
Hermit Warbler: 2 on 10/10 at Tilden RP. (JR)
Blackburnian Warbler: 1 immature female on 10/18 at Hayward RS. (BR)
Palm Warbler: 1 on 11/1 at Hayward RS. (BR)
Painted Bunting: 1 female on 10/7 in residential Santa Cruz. (JR, JD) Extremely rare in Northern California.

Clay-colored Sparrow: 1 on 10/31 at Piper Slough, along with an estimated 900 *Zonotrichia* sparrows, nearly all White-crowned. (SG) Third county record.

Brewer's Sparrow: 1 on 10/16 (DW) and 10/17 (SG) at Hidden Lakes Park. Less than five county records.

Lark Bunting: 1 on 10/17 along Bruns Road, in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. (BR) Fifth record for Alameda County, first for Contra Costa County.

Swamp Sparrow: 1 on 11/2 at the Miller/Knox RS. (SG, RL) Probably fifth county record.

White-throated Sparrow: 1 on 10/29 and 11/5 at Martinez RS (DW); 1 on 10/30 along N. Beach Rd., Pt. Reyes (HH).

Smith's Longspur: 1 on 10/24 (JR), 10/25 (SG, RL), and 10/28 (MDAS) at Pt. Reyes. Third state record.

Snow Bunting: 1 on 10/25 (SG, RL), 10/28 (MDAS), and 10/30 (HH) at Pt. Reyes.

Bobolink: 1 on 10/29 (HH, RH) and 10/31 (FB, MJC, BG) at U. C. Davis Community Garden.

Hooded Oriole: 1 male still present through at least 11/12 in her Alamo yard. (JR)

Observers: Florence Bennett, Mary Jane Culver, Jane Dang, Gail DeLalla, Betty Gallagher, Steve Glover, Hugh Harvey, Rosita Harvey, Kevin Hints, Ron Lindeman, Jim Lomax, MDAS Field Trip to Abbott's Lagoon, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Denise Wight, and Bob & Shirley Wisecarver.

The Northern California Bird Box, (510) 524-5592, is a voice-mail system that allows callers to listen to the most recent 18 messages on sightings of rare birds by local observers. There is also a weekly summary available at (415) 738-1499.

DONATIONS TO MDAS

Our society has from time to time received generous bequests, gifts, and donations given in memory of friends or relatives or as spontaneous contributions to the society's activities. These donations are welcomed as a significant support of our goals of wildlife appreciation and conservation.

This month MDAS would like to express its appreciation for a donation from Bessie Smyth of Martinez, the donation by Jim Lomax of his October program honorarium to our Endowment Fund, and the donation by Mike Williams of his honorarium from a program he gave for the Lafayette Garden Club. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

NEWS FROM WILD BIRDS

692 Contra Costa Blvd. (New Address)
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
798-0303

Put nature under your tree!

Special holiday gift ideas for Bird Lovers:

- Arnold Small's book *California Birds*
- Field guides for your next birding vacation
- A wide variety of nature jewelry
- Many new and different T-shirts and sweatshirts with a nature theme; be sure and see our Bald Eagle sweatshirt designed by Cecil
- Nature music on cassettes and CDs
- Holiday ornaments for your trees
- Peanut and suet feeders for chickadees and woodpeckers
- A new thistle feeder for the Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch

Binocular & Spotting Scope Seminar Saturday, December 9

Mike Williams, co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited and a MDAS member, will give a 30-minute lecture on "How to Buy Birding Optics" on Saturday, December 9 at 8.45 a.m. The presentation will be held at the Wild Birds Unlimited store. There will be many brands of binoculars and spotting scopes on display. Mike will also be in the store all day to answer questions. Coffee and donuts will be served. As seating is limited, please RSVP to 798-0303

Birdfeeding Tip: If it's almost winter, it must be time for Pine Siskins and/or American Goldfinch. Last winter we enjoyed flocks of up to 100 of the beautiful American Goldfinch. In other winters, we have had flocks of 100 to 200 Pine Siskins, which are very erratic migratory birds. So far this fall, we are seeing flocks of up to 15 American Goldfinch.

The favorite food of both these birds is thistle seed, a small seed that comes from India and will not grow here. These birds will be with us through the spring. Put out a thistle feeder and enjoy this winter phenomena.

96th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 1995 MDAS Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday, December 16. All members and interested guests are invited to participate. Every pair of eyes can be helpful in seeing birds; you do not need to be an expert birder to participate. Last year we had 63 field observers and 5 feeder watchers who tallied 158 species. 33,471 individual birds were counted during the day.

Nationally, there are about 1600 counts each year. Valuable bird population knowledge has been learned over the years. Our count area will cover the 15-mile diameter circle centered near Treat and Cowell. This includes most of Mt. Diablo, Black Diamond Mines, the Pittsburg marshes, some of Briones Park, Heather Farms, the suburban creeks of Alamo, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek, and many other green places in Contra Costa County. We also need feeder and home garden watchers.

A pot-luck dinner will follow at the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church, 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo. The church is 1.3 miles south of Stone Valley Road. All members and guests are invited to attend. The doors will be open at 5:30 p.m. and the dinner will start at 6:00 p.m. Please bring your own table service and a salad, main dish, or dessert for 8 to 10 people, plus any serving utensils needed.

Jimm Edgar is this year's compiler. To participate, please sign up at the December meeting, call Jimm at 658-2330, or return this form to Jimm at 4614 Jacobus Ave., Oakland, CA 94618. There is a \$5.00 charge to cover the expense of publishing the annual Christmas Count issue of *American Birds*. Feeder watchers have no charge.

_____ I would prefer to bird with one of the field groups on Christmas Bird Count Day, December 16, 1995.

_____ I would prefer a hiking area

_____ I would prefer a less strenuous area.

_____ I can monitor a feeder or garden.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address _____

NEW MEMBERS

Season's greetings to these new MDAS members whom we hope to meet in person very soon: Arthur, Kathy Barker, Bette Bowlby, J. E. Clinch, the Cooper family, Steven Cox, Lynn Cross, Tim Daniel, Ewing, Mrs. J. Mitchell and family, Wayne Foxworthy, Margo Gambaro, Mac Gill, Karla Holmberg, S. Kawami, J. L. Lepe, Vicki Liviakis, Bruce McManus, J. Murdock, Geraldine Murphy, Andrew Nash, Carolyn Nelson, Susan Nurock, Alan O'Brien, F. Paul Ong, Charlotte Pettey, Michael Prisbylla, Ron Reuter, Mary Taylor, Mary Tipton, John Toldi, Carol Trammell and John Willbrand.

ENTERTAINMENT '96

FOR HOLIDAY GIVING

The most appreciated gift on your Christmast list will be the Entertainment '96 book. Recipients will enjoy a 50% discount on travel, dining, shopping, sports, and more, PLUS the new feature, a 25% discount supplement book.

Support your Audubon chapter by purchasing this great savings book at two Wild Birds Unlimited locations, 692 Contra Costa Blvd. in Pleasant Hill and 7182 Regional Drive in Dublin. The Entertainment '96 book will also be available at the December MDAS general meeting.

The Quail is published monthly except for the combined July/August issue. Audubon membership includes subscriptions to the Quail and Audubon magazine. To join (\$35/year individual, \$38 family; introductory and senior rates available), write a check to National Audubon Society but send it, with letter or subscription card, to the Membership Chairman, Mike Williams, at 1172 Larch Avenue, Moraga, CA 94556. The Chapter benefits financially from the membership applications it processes. Full Audubon membership is encouraged, but subscription to the Quail is available separate from membership at \$10/year. The check should be made out to MDAS and mailed to the MDAS Treasurer, Pam Keiser, 505 Wild Flower Place, Danville, CA 94526. First class mailing of the Quail to member or nonmember is an additional \$3.50/year payable to MDAS & sent to the Treasurer.

ADDRESS CHANGES AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: Consult Mike Williams, (510) 376-1631

*Barbara Burek, Editor, 157 Mt. Kennedy Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 (510) 229-0394
Please send exchange bulletins for MDAS to the editor.*

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