



# THE HOOT OWL

San JOAQUIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

JULY-AUG 1993

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**Sat. July 24th. FIELD TRIP TO HETCH HETCHY RESERVOIR.** Located near the north entrance to Yosemite NP, the road to Hetch Hetchy will allow us to observe many of the Yosemite specialties without the crowds. We will travel through a delightful series of meadows that should produce the best of the Sierra: Pileated and White-headed woodpeckers, Blue Grouse, Hammond's and Dusky flycatchers, and, if we're lucky- Great Gray Owl. One at Hetch Hetchy we'll take in the beauty of an area that rivaled Yosemite Valley before this valley was dammed. Meet leader Jim Roweth at Burn's Tower, UOP at 6:00am. Pack a lunch and be prepared for cool weather. 462-7512.

**Thur. August 5 BROYELLI-WOODS/BUCKEYE RANCH.** Hearing before the County Planning Commission on this proposal to locate a golf course and an exclusive 26 home subdivision within this last remaining riparian forest in the County. The area was slated to be protected and purchased by money set aside for wildlife areas when Prop 70 passed in 1988. But the developers made a slightly greater offer and beat out the Wildlife Conservation Board. Come early if you want to support the forest and get a seat. The proponents propose a "natural area" which includes a vineyard, a narrow strip along the river, a haul road to remove dirt excavated to deepen the lakes, and coverings for the indian grave sites. Planning Department Auditorium. 1601 E. Hazelton, 7:30pm

**Sat. August 21. FIELD TRIP TO LODI LAKE AND LODI SEWER PONDS.** Join Waldo Holt at two of the best places to witness fall migration at its best. In addition to its wide variety of residents, Lodi Lake should be teeming with returning land-birds including warblers, vireos, and flycatchers or many kinds. The Lodi Sewer Ponds can be loaded with water and shorebirds this time of year. Rarities are common here including Baird's and Semipalmated sandpipers, Golden-Plovers, and Franklin's Gull. Meet Waldo at the end of Laurel St. at the east end of Lodi Lake at 7:30. 462-4438.

**Sat-Sun. August 28-29. MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP.** Our traditional end of the summer weekend in Monterey is one of the best and most popular fieldtrips we conduct. We start off with a pelagic boat trip onto Monterey Bay on Sat. The cost is \$44.00. Past trips during this time of year have been amazing! The 7 hour trip has produced 2 species of storm-petrel, 3 species of jaeger, 8 species of alcids, and 4 species of whale. On Sunday we'll bird by land taking in landbirds at the Carmel River and shorebirds at Pt Pinos and Elkhorn Slough. Camping will be available. Call David Yee for more info. 466-3337, 951-1526.

**THE THIRD ANNUAL BURROWING OWL SURVEY; BETWEEN May 15 and July 31**  
1992 data now being analyzed indicates that a rapidly declining small population may recommend a "Threatened" status for the Burrowing Owl in our State.  
If the recent Stockton Record article which stated the colony at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds is "STANDING IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS" and should be moved is any indication, the owls are in a heap of trouble here. Now the City of Stockton finds that they are in the way of expansion plans at the Stockton Sewage Treatment Plant and wants to destroy their nest holes...at the end of this breeding season, but where are they to go next season? Progress?

Call Co-ordinator David Yee at 951-1526 or 466-3337 or Asst. Co-ordinator Waldo Holt at 462-4438 if you would like to help to census a block of our area.

**FIRST FALL MEETING; Tuesday September 14 Call David Wagner 943-6997 for info.**



## WILL GNATCATCHER FINALLY BE PROTECTED?

The recent decision by the federal government to list the California gnatcatcher as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act hopefully brings to an end the Wilson Administration's halfhearted attempts to protect habitat for this bird.

Under the guise of protecting habitat while aiding developers, the Wilson Administration has bungled implementation of a new program dubbed, Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP). The intent of NCCP is cooperative planning and protection process for an entire habitat type rather than the reactive "species by species" approach. So far the results have been less than promising. The NCCP approach has been flawed in several ways:

- (1) After nearly two years, the effort is a disorganized jumble of many different planning activities that have failed to produce real protection for the coastal scrub habitat.
- (2) Many of the activities of the program have centered around escaping short term development restrictions instead of permanent solutions.
- (3) The voluntary nature of the program limits the scope of possible success. Without a state or federal listing the protection of gnatcatcher habitat is based on the willingness of the developers to enroll in the program. Agreements by landowners are revocable at any time and commit them to forego development only until Nov. 1993 and only on lands which they choose.
- (4) There has been no moratorium during the planning phase. Thousands of acres of prime habitat have disappeared as planning plods on.
- (5) The program suffers from too much influence by developers who have overwhelmed and outflanked an understaffed and underfunded program.

You would have no trouble understanding the basic problem in ANY approach to the protection of endangered species which has to be agreed to by developers if you had sat in on local attempts to arrange some protection for wildlife habitat.

The federal listing of the gnatcatcher sets in motion a series of protections that the NCCP process has so far been unable to achieve. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt's embracing of the principles behind NCCP hopefully will lead to a more effective and meaningful protection of wildlife habitat.

Local officials must seem to believe that they must approve any action which would increase property and sales taxes so that they can fund county services. They have not factored all of the costs, including long term costs, into this equation so they have difficulty even thinking about the environmental implications of projects. Until this is changed, there must be environmental protection from the State and Federal level.

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Last week I was fortunate enough to enjoy a week on the Big Island, Hawaii, with family. As the only "birder" my birding was limited to what I could see from the Condo and on drives to various island sights.

Although I saw only 2 endemic species (the Hawaiian Goose or Nene and Hawaiian Hawk or Io) it was still fun to see the colorful introduced species that have become established (eg Saffron Finch from South America and Java Sparrow). I was able to add 6 new birds to my rather anemic life list. A special thank you to Waldo Holt for his untiring efforts in behalf of local conservation causes. The defeat of the ill-advised Stockton General Plan Amendment is a great example of the power of individual citizens who take the trouble to attend public meetings and speak out. We owe a great deal to those individuals who participate. In order to improve the future planning process, opportunities for earlier public input is essential.

Dave Wagner, Pres. 943-6997



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## CAL PAW 1994

What is it? CalPAW—not a new form of wildlife—but the **California Parks and Wildlife Bond Initiative**. It will generate \$1.99 billion for parks and open space with \$9.1 million designated for local land protection in San Joaquin County. The projects are:

**\$2,800,000** Mokelumne River Protection

**\$2,500,000** San Joaquin Farmland Protection

**\$2,500,000** Woodbridge Ecological Preserve

**\$1,300,000** Swainson's Hawk Habitat Protection

Petitions are available NOW and 25,000 signatures need to be gathered in this county before September. Your help in joining a team to gather signatures would be greatly appreciated. Give Barbara Bowers (369-5910) a call or be on the lookout for a petition to sign at the local grocery store. Let's counteract the tendency to cover the land with asphalt and cement!

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### **COSUMNE RIVER PRESERVE WOOD DUCK BOX PROGRAM**

Volunteers interested in committing time on a long-term basis to the care and monitoring of wood duck boxes on the preserve are being sought. The number of boxes under each individual's or group's care can be negotiated with the Preserve Manager. The crucial need is for someone to check the boxes at the end of each nesting season, clean them and fill them with wood shavings. During nesting season, boxes should be monitored for occupancy and nests of introduced species such as starlings must be removed...

Simple records of nesting and birds fledged will be kept as part of the ongoing biological inventory program. Monitoring involves use of a ladder, so we require a minimum age of 16 for volunteers plus adult supervision. Necessary training for volunteers will be provided. Call Greg Elliott, Preserve Manager at 916-684-2816 for more information on volunteering.

### **TRIP REPORTS 7 SIGHTINGS**

On a warm, clear May 23, an enthusiastic group of about 20 birders from Stockton, Lodi, Tracy and Modesto gathered for a pleasant bird stroll along Mt. Diablo's Mitchell Canyon. The weather was nearly perfect. All the expected birds were on hand, including Ash-throated, Pacific Slope and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Huttons and Solitary Vireo and many others. Wrentits song echoed throughout the canyon. We were captivated by a male Warbling Vireo, singing on its nest and the virtuoso performance of a male Lazuli Bunting. Also observed was a great variety of colorful wildflowers, lots of fence lizards and even one snake. Many remarked on the unusual number and variety of butterflies. (Jim Rowth)

Sightings by Jim Rowth at Pinnacles Natl. Monument May 29-31. Violet-Gr swallows, White-throated Swifts (mating in midair), Canyon and Rock Wrens, Calif Thrashers singing foraging, feeding and fledgling. Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, Say's Phoebe and 3 fledgling Peregrine Falcons. Also an incredible number of Western Lizards, Western Whiptails, and one Horned Lizard. Three family groups of wild pigs were present.

The June 26 Calaveras Big Trees field trip was enjoyed by 22 members and guests. We all appreciated Snow Plants, Harlequin Lupine, and the unusual ghost orchid. Our lunch spot was adjacent to a fragrant stand of Western Azalea in full bloom. Bird sightings included the Winter wren which we heard, but was seen only by Neil Kerr. Downy Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Bl-headed Grosbeak, Mac Gillivray's Warbler, Wh-headed Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet and the usual supporting cast was observed in the mixed coniferous forest. When it was over 100 in the valley it was a pleasure to be in the shade of the Giant Sequoias and near beautiful Beaver Creek. Several of us stopped in Arnold or Murphys for ice cream before we hurried back to "real life".

# CALIFORNIA PARKS & WILDLIFE INITIATIVE/CALPAW 1994

## What is the Parks & Wildlife Initiative?

It is a citizen initiative bond measure which would provide nearly \$2 billion to acquire, protect, and enhance parkland, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, coastal area, river habitat, and other resources. Volunteers are collecting signatures necessary to get it on the June 1994 ballot.

## Why do we need new parks and wildlife areas?

California continues to grow at a rate of more than 500,000 people per year. This is putting a great strain on our remaining open space, parkland, and wildlife habitat. We must preserve the best of these undeveloped lands for future generations. An initiative is now necessary because the Legislature failed to place a park bond on either of the last two statewide ballots.

## What types of places would be protected?

CalPAW '94 would protect specific important natural areas throughout the state. It features wildlife areas, open space that harbors rare and endangered species, urban parks, greenbelts, prime agricultural land, old growth forests including redwoods, rivers and streams, wetlands, and virtually all other important types of lands treasured by Californians.

## How will the state pay for this, what will it cost the taxpayer?

The bonds will be sold by the state with the approval of the Governor and the Treasurer, and only if their sale will not impair the financial stability of the state. Based on the current population, paying off the bonds over a 20 year period would cost each taxpayer less than 50 cents a month, paid out of existing general funds. Given today's favorable interest rates and lower land prices, this is an opportune time to make an investment for California's future quality of life.

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