



THE HOOT OWL

STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 22 #2

Calendar



Mar-Apr '84

Tue. Mar 13 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Joe Medieros, Director of the Great Valley Museum, Modesto, will present a program about the birds, reptiles, unique plants, and the natural history of the Galapagos Islands. The meeting will be held in the Fireside Room of Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave, Stockton. 7:30.

Sun, Mar 11 Field Trip to Lake Merritt, Berkeley Marina, and Alameda South Shore. (David Yee, 951-1526, 466-3337.)
SEE PAGE THREE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ALL FIELD TRIPS

Sat, Mar 24 Field Trip to Durham Ferry County Park area. 8:00 am.
(Kurt Mize, 957-0676 for more information)

Sunday Mar 25, April 1 and April 8. Oak Grove Park docent training, Learn more about area natural history. Call Kathy Schick.

Sat. Apl 7 San Joaquin County Land Use Planning Conference. For further information call Kirby McClellan at 477-3965.

Sun. Apl 8 Field Trip to Brovelli Woods. 8:00am.
(Mike Salladay, 931-3182 for more information)

Tue. Apl 10 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Doris Beckwith, a Wildlife Rehabilitation group member associated with the San Joaquin County Zoological Society, will explain to us how she raises and cares for WILD, BABY BIRDS. The meeting will be held in the Fireside Room of Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Ave., Stockton at 7:30. Refreshments.

Sat-Tue April 14-17 National Audubon Society, Western Regional Conference 1984. Asilomar Conference Center at Monterey Theme: Water and Wildlife: An Audubon Perspective. These Conferences are a great experience. For further information contact one of your officers.

Sat. Apl 21 Field Trip to Del Puerto Canyon. Meets 8 am there.
(Neil Kerr, 1-599-3222)

Sat-Sun Apl 28-29 Stockton Audubon Society Bird-A-Thon. Participate!
(for further information check page 4....)

Sat. May 5 Farallons Pelagic Field Trip. Meet Rich Tenaza and David Yee at the boat at 5:00am. (see page 3 for more info.)

Sat, May 19 Our Annual Stockton Audubon Picnic at Oak Grove Park.
8:00 am bird walk. (See May-June Hoot Owl for info.)

Board Meeting: Monday 3-19-84 7:30 at David Yees

(2)

Spring is sprung
The grass is ris
Tell me where the birdies is.
The birds is on the wing.
They say, but that's absurd!
The wing is on the bird!!
—Anonymous



FIELD
Sunday
areas
other
dist

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring is my favorite time of year, wildflowers are everywhere, and every tall weed, bush or fenceposts seems to be defended by a male Red-winged Blackbird. I know all of us enjoy the beauties of our natural areas this time of year, but we don't always remember how fragile these beauties are --even of the vacant lots we see around Stockton. A disheartening piece of news I heard recently was that one of my favorite vacant lots, the one adjacent to both Stagg High School and the Calaveras River, is soon to be sold for a housing development.

Other springs I can recall flushing pheasants in that vacant lot, finding a wonderful assortment of wildflowers there, and even hunting rare insects there. We could see and hear the Red-winged Blackbirds in that field a few years ago, but we never did find their nest. But such losses of wild habitat should only galvanize us to protect even more rigorously the few wildlife sanctuaries we do have.

Western Regional Audubon sponsors a biannual conference at Asilomar (near Pacific Grove) and this year's conference will be April 14-17 and will focus on water issues. Anyone interested can get an application form from me or telephone Audubon directly at (916)481-5532.

Have a nice spring.

--- Kathy Schick ---

AUDUBON DONATES BOOKS TO LIBRARIES

Many of our members may not be aware of a Stockton Audubon Society Board tradition that when one of our active members dies we donate a good (usually bird) book to one of the local libraries in that person's name. In the past few months we have donated the following:

To the Public Library

The World of Roger Tory Peterson in memory of D. E. Costa
Pearson's Birds of North America in memory of Ruth Goodenough
National Geographic's Field Guide... in memory of Mrs. H. Snook

To the U.O.P. Library

Peattie's Audubon's America in memory of Dr. Clifford Hand

OAK GROVE NEWS

Thank you to all the hard workers who came out to plant and weed at the Oak Grove on the two Saturdays in February (the 4th and 25th). The "natural" landscaping at the Nature Center should be quite impressive in a few years.

We feel very lucky that the Parks Department has agreed to set aside two strips (either side of the entryway to the park) for wildflower displays. There will be a sprinkler system to keep these through much of the summer and, while there may be quite a bit of "weeding" required to keep our poppies, etc., in good shape, the resulting flower border to the park should be spectacular. We're hoping to start planting seeds in the fall.

FIELD TRIP AND BIRDING INFORMATION

Sunday Mar 11, Lake Merritt, Berkeley Marina, Alameda South Shore. These areas are the best in the east bay to observe ducks, loons, gulls and other waterbirds. Barrow's goldeneye, red-necked grebe and oldsquaw are distinct possibilities. Meet David Yee at Burn's Tower, UOP at 7:30 am to carpool on over. 951-1526, 466-3337.

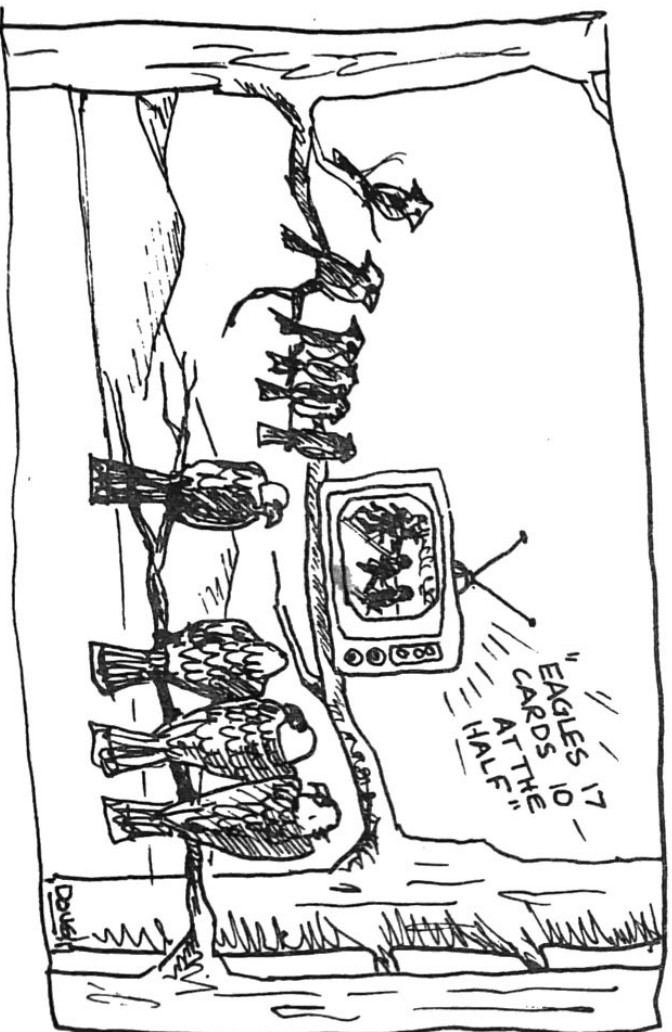
Saturday Mar 24, Durham Ferry Park Area. Join Kurt Mize on a morning excursion to this wonderful area along the San Joaquin River. The varied habitats of open ponds, fields and riparian areas should allow one to witness the wintering birds that will be present and the nesting procedures of our resident birds that should be well on its way. Gather at Burns Tower, UOP at 8:00. 957-0676.

Sunday, April 8, Brovelli Woods. An early spring trip to this rich area can be very rewarding. Mike Saliaday knows the area well and will take us to the best spots to see the many woodland birds that live there. Early migrant should be passing through and there is open water present which attracts many egrets and herons. It is suspected that they nest in the area. Meet Mike at the N.E. corner of the Bruener's parking lot at 8:00 a.m. 931-3182.

Saturday April 21, Del Puerto Canyon. What better way to spend a day during the height of spring migration than with Neil Kerr and his beloved Del Puerto Canyon in Stanislaus County. This is one of the premier areas of the inner coast ranges due to its combination of riparian, chaparral and rugged cliffs habitats. Our ultimate destination will be Frank Rains Park which affords wonderful looks at Costa's Hummer, Rufous-crowned sparrow, canyon wren and Lawrence's Goldfinches. Along the way we should see Prairie Falcons, Roadrunner and the like. Meet Neil at the intersection of I-5 and Del Puerto Canyon Road at 8:00 A.M. Allow at least one hour driving time to get there from

Stockton. (Ripon, 599-3222)
Saturday May 5, FARALLONS PELAGIC TRIP. Rich Tenaza and David Yee will be leading this eventful trip to the Farallon Islands just outside the Golden Gate. The islands hold colonies of nesting Puffins, Cormorants, Murres, Storm Petrels, and others. Other pelagics should be encountered along with numerous marine mammals. Cost is \$30.00 per person and the group is limited to 30 persons. Leave from Emeryville at 5:00 am.

For more information call David at 466-3337 or 951-1526.
(See next page for more birding information.)



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE.....David Yee

As the California Christmas Bird Counts can attest, winter birding within our fair state is often very exciting. The combination of latitude, geography and mild weather must create a very desirable resting spot for many birds, especially rare ones. This past winter has been dramatic proof of this as no less than 3 very unusual birds with Siberian origins have found themselves in Northern California during the past two months. First it was a Rustic Bunting near Arcata in Humboldt Co., then a Whooper Swan near Colusa, and now a Brambling wintering at a feeder in Crescent City. While the bunting and the swan were present at their initially found locations for very short periods, the Brambling has allowed many a birder a peak as to what it may be like on the otherside of the Pacific when one steps out to do some bird-watching.

San Joaquin County even got into the act when a Tufted Duck was found on a pond near Clements in January. There is uncertainty as to the purity of the bird as some Scaup features were present indicating a possible hybrid. However, the bird definitely was of the "Tufted Duck" stock. Also a bird from Asia, Tufted Ducks annually occur along the California coast in very small numbers but are extremely rare inland. Those that saw it were witness to a rare sighting indeed.

BIRD-A-THON

The annual Audubon Society Bird-A-Thon is set for April 28-29. All are encouraged to participate either by gathering up sponsors and going out birding the weekend of the bird-a-thon, or by sponsoring someone who is counting. To sponsor someone you merely pledge a certain amount of money per bird species that will be seen in a 24 hour period of April 28-29. For example if you pledge 10¢ a bird to someone who will be counting and that person observes 110 birds, your total donations will be \$11.00. Your donation to Audubon will go toward projects in our region such as Mono Lake and the California Condor. If you wish to be a counter call David Yee at 466-3337 or 951-1526 for additional information. If you are in need of someone to sponsor, David Yee will be going out as the official representative of the Stockton Chapter. He anticipates seeing around 130 birds so plan accordingly. Call him at the above number if you wish to sponsor him.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS Jan/Feb 1984

(All are by David Yee unless otherwise noted.)

1/16 a male tufted Duck, Clements. 1/17 a Hutton' Vireo, Camanche Fish Hatchery and a Purple Finch at the same location. This is a Varied Thrush year as David reported 10 from U.O.P. on the 21st, and your editor saw 2 at home on the 20th while Linda S. saw one in the Back Yard on 2-14 and Mrs Harper of Murpheys reported one there on January 25. The Stockings also had a Screech Owl in a Deodar behind their home on both 1-21 and 2-15.

The participants on the 1/21 field trip to the Bay Area reported; Smew, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Clapper Rail, Sora, Virginia Rail etc. David reports the Little Gull & a Thayer's Gull at the Stockton Sewage ponds 1-22 and 2 lesser Golden Plover at the Lodi ponds on the same day. 1-23 a female Greater Scaup & a male Hooded Merganser at Clements Pond. 1-25 2 Burrowing Owl at L.S.P., 2-6 Horned Grebe & 150 Mew Gull, SSP. 2-9 a Black-Headed Gull & a Glaucous-winged Gull SSP. 2-10 a Bald Eagle at Camanche and on 2-18 2 Cliff Swallows at SSP. A Green Heron at I-5 ponds 2-18 S Socking. 2-19 Stockings observed Canvasbacks, Lesser Scaup etc, but no Tufted Duck at the Clements pond.

Ethic I: Thoughtfulness of Birds

- Be stealthy, quiet. Try to observe birds so they are unaware of your presence, thus providing an opportunity to learn their normal habits. Avoid quick movements, discordant noises, running, continuous chasing of the same birds, throwing things, and "thrashing about". The quiet observer sees more.
- Approaching a nest too closely or repeated flushing may cause abandonment of the eggs and young by the parents and expose the nest to predation. Do not handle eggs or young.
- When phot graphing a nest or parents at the nest, don't keep it unduly exposed to sun, cold or rain, causing destruction of eggs or young or desertion by parents. Instead of cutting branches or grass near the nest, tie them back. Leave the habitat as you found it.
- Use tape recorders with discretion to prevent driving birds from their territories. Never play recorders in heavily birded areas.
- Divide larger groups of people; individuals or small groups cause less disturbance.
- Avoid "tree-whacking" to arouse cavity dwellers. Undue disturbance may lead to abandonment.

Ethic II: Thoughtfulness of Habitat

- Avoid trampling fragile habitats, especially marshes, grasslands, wildflowers and tangles. Stay on established pathways. Damage to the habitat affects all species in the ecosystem.
- When practical, pool transportation to birding areas to save energy and reduce environmental impact.
- Keep motor vehicles on established roads and parking areas. One set of tracks invites others. In fragile ecosystems tracks may last for decades and severely degrade the habitat value.
- Obtain permission for entry to private lands and when necessary on government lands. Respect the occupant's privacy and property. Don't block rights-of-way; leave gates as you found them.
- Walk single file in fragile areas. Small groups reduce adverse impact on the habitat and require narrower paths and roads, and smaller parking areas.
- Leave no litter.
- Plan restroom stops to avoid pollution of the habitat.
- Be extremely careful with fire. Avoid smoking while walking; press out cigarettes on rocks or mineral soil. Carry butts with you.
- Use discretion in divulging information on nests and rare and endangered birds, especially in fragile habitats.

Ethic III: Thoughtfulness of Birders

- Keep down unnecessary talk, noise and disturbance so that all birders in a group have the opportunity to exercise their full facilities of sight and hearing.
 - Put the interests of the group before your own. Keep the birding group together so that interesting and rare or unusual sightings can be shared until all interests are addressed.
 - When with a group of mixed birding abilities the leader or better birders should assist others in identification and should point out field marks, habits and ecological relationships.
 - Avoid excessive use of squeakers and "pishing"; it may reduce their effectiveness and may annoy other birders.
 - Drive lawfully and use common sense and consideration for other drivers.
 - Be sensitive to the efforts and energies of fellow birders. In identifying and reporting the rare and unusual, always err on the side of "over-identification" so there is less chance of wrong identity. Be prepared to justify identifications adequately with good descriptions or photographs to minimize perpetuation of errors in the literature.
- Do not put undue weight on published geographic distributions in making identifications, but consider all similar species. When possible take notes in the field, including not only diagnostic markings, but voice and habits to validate identification. When possible prior to reporting a rare or unusual sighting, have another birder or better or equal ability locate and verify your identification.
- When birding at a private home be considerate of your host's time and property.