



THE HOOT OWL

STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 26 #5

Calendar



Sept-Oct 1988

COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE; Sat Sept 10. The Nature Conservancy Preserve near Thornton contains about 2000 acres of grassland and riparian woodland. John Schick has been visiting the area monthly this past year to provide data on the existing birdlife. President Victor Wykoff will lead a trip to the area and meet with John. Fall migrants should abound. Meet Vic at Burns Tower UOP, at 8 am. (John will also visit the area Oct 8, Nov 12 & Dec 10, his # is 464-7083)

STOCKTON AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On Tuesday evening, September 13th our first meeting of the Fall season will have Mr Jack Wilburn of Georgetown Ca. presenting a special program on Nature Photography. This widely respected photographer will show his slides and some of the special photography equipment which he has developed. This program will begin at 7:30, BUT before that at 6:00 we will have our traditional POTLUCK. Bring a dish to share with others and your table service (avoid disposables). No alcoholic beverages please as the potluck and program will be held in the Fireside Room of the Central United Methodist Church across from UOP in Stockton at the corner of Pacific and Fulton. Ample free parking, bring a friend. Call George Welch or Victor Wykoff for further information.

STOCKTON AUDUBON BOARD MEETING; Sept 20 at the home of George & Locke Welch, 7:30 pm location...8147 Heather Lane, Stockton.

MARIN HEADLANDS/HAWK MOUNTAIN Sept 24, Saturday

Pt. Diablo in the Marin Headlands is where people go to enjoy one of the most spectacular views of the Golden Gate and San Francisco. Birders gain an extra bonus as it is now considered the best area along the west coast of observe migrating hawks in often enormous numbers. We will be present during the peak period of passage. Plan to gather on the mountain top at 10:00am. Call David Yee if you are interested in going. 951-1526 or 466-3337.

BROVELLI WOODS FIELD TRIP Oct. 1, Saturday

This enchanting locale is one of the areas we are hoping to preserve with the monies from Proposition 70. It has long been a Stockton Audubon favorite. BUT local speculators would like to get it for a private golf course! Join Terri Ronneberg as he takes us through the "woods" looking for the many forms of wildlife which are always present. Meet Terri at the Bruener's parking lot on Hammer Lane at 7:30 for this half-day trip. 853-7847.

STOCKTON AUDUBON MEETING Tuesday October 11

At "press time" we did not have the program topic, for information call Program Chair George Welch at 477-9618. The meeting will be at Central United Methodist Church across from University. of the Pacific in Stockton. 7:30 pm.

MCGURK RANCH FIELD TRIP Saturday Oct. 15

The McGurk Ranch is located along the rich riparian stretch of the Calaveras River just below Jenny Lind. Past visits during this time of year have produced good numbers of warblers, vireos, flycatchers and sparrows. The timing is perfect for an overlap of migrants and returning winterers. Meet George Welch at Burns Tower UOP at 7:00 to carpool. Bring a lunch and water. 477-9618.

(Further field trips and other activities on the following page.)



PRESIDENT'S LETTER SEPTEMBER 1988

We still have the warm days of September and October before us, but the pre-Labor Day summer of 1988 is gone. I hope each of you used this time to renew your commitment to our natural resources and also found time to take a big, low bow: you passed, by a great margin, Proposition 70 The California Wildlife, Coastal and Parks Initiative. Even though other costly initiatives were rejected by the voters- we again showed by our free votes the importance we attach to the natural world- indispensable to our contentment and survival. Do take that bow, each of you deserve it.

Have any of you enjoyed the rewards of birding in a foreign land? It takes some preparatory work, but the effort is worth it. Also, once you arrive you need to spend some time and go out of your way to locate the native birds. An incidental benefit is seeing out-of-the-way swamps, meadows, jungles and forests that the average visitors don't experience. Such places are frequently within a few blocks of the publicized attractions. While in the Yucatan and on Cozumel for two weeks in June I saw 71 bird species. If I had been on an official birding trip with a professional guide, I would have seen at least twice that number. Nevertheless, being with my family and taking in all the major tourist sites to boot, I saw 37 bird "firsts". Among the strong memories probably the best are of the Masked Tityra, Rose Throated Becard, White Crowned Pigeon, Yellow Green Vireo, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Golden Warbler and four different Terns all inhabiting together a long, beautiful, lonely, tropical beach. When you travel, "bird", it adds immensely to the trip.

While camping with three 12 year olds on Cole Creek near Bear River Reservoir up Hwy 88, I saw my first Mountain Quail. While laying down to photograph some dwarf Mimulus, I scared her up. She did the broken wing feint 5 feet to the right then 20 feet to the left--crying loudly all the while. All of a sudden her brood of 8 chicks hopped up and started scurrying into the ground cover Manzanita. 20 minutes later I saw a striking male Western Tanager, 60 feet up a dead, burnt fir, singing and singing, his red head and yellow body contrasting with the blackened wood. I hope each of you had similar rich experiences this summer.

Vic Wykoff Jr. President

STOCKTON SEWAGE PONDS FIELD TRIP; Sun Oct. 30

The "magical ponds" have put Stockton on the national circuit among birders. They continue to attract large numbers of waterfowl and gulls during late fall with Little & Franklin's Gulls being the highlights. Joshua Horner & Kim Platti know the ponds well and will enthusiastically show us the best the place has to offer. Meet them at the entrance to the ponds off Hwy 4 just west of the S.J. River at 8:30 am 465-6188.

WOODBIDGE ROAD FIELD TRIP; Sat. Nov 5

Local birding legends, Arvil & Ellen Parker, will take us to one of their favorite spots which is becoming a legend in itself. Well known as one of the best spots in California to observe Gr. Sandhill Cranes, the entire area is being closely monitored by the State Fish and Game Dept. as an area of special concern. Cranes Waterfowl, and shorebirds will be observed in good numbers. Meet the Parkers at the Mobil station at the intersection of I-5 and Thornton Rd. at 8:00 am. For information call 916 775-1029.



OAK GROVE DOCENTS PLAN TRAINING; November

Mark your calendar for the first three weeks of November. The Oak Grove Docents are planning an informative, fun-filled series of training sessions. Learn about the natural history of oak groves and how to lead walks on the nature trail. These will be held both Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons, so one set of three sessions should fit your schedule. Pre-registration is required. For more information call the Oak Grove Nature Center at 953-8814.

CONSERVATION FAIR TO BE AT OAK GROVE; Oct. 8

The emphasis will be on conserving our natural resources with booths, displays, and demonstrations planned by many local and regional groups. Many of the displays will show people how they can get involved in conservation.

Stockton Audubon plans to participate in this advent to be held at the Oak Grove Regional Park at Eight Mile Road and I-5.

Birds

All sightings are by David Yee unless another observer is mentioned.
LL is Lodi Lake, LSP is Lodi Sewage Ponds, & SSP is Stockton Sewage Ponds.
Please send your observations to the editor of the "Hoot Owl"

5-30, pair Blue-w Teal, 21 Blk-b Plover, LSP. 6-1, 7 Townsend's Warblers & 2 Blue Grosbeak at LL. 6-2, a Gr Yellowlegs at LSP. 6-3, a Whimbrel at Stockton and an Olive-s Flycatcher & a Or-cr Warbler at LL. 6-4 a River Otter at David's residence in W. Stockton 6-8 a Bufflehead & a juv Bank Swallow at LL. 6-14 31 Wilson's Phalarope & a Spotted S. at LSP. 6-23 24 Willet at SSP, 6-27 a Lazuli Bunting at LL. 6-29 a W.W. Pewee, Spotted Sand., H. Thrush, P. Finch, W. Sapsucker, P. Grosbeaks at & near Beebe Lake by S. Stocking and R. Brown. 6-30 a Willow Flycatcher & a West. Flycatcher at LL. In June & July Helen Talbot observed W. Bluebirds on the 15th & 16th holes of the Woodbridge Golf Course. 7-2 a Cooper's Hawk at Caswell S.P. and a Canvasback on S. Airport Way. 7-6, 2 Long-b Curlew, and a Semipalmated Plover at SSP and a Sh-b Dowitcher at LSP. 7-11 a Little Blue Heron X Snowy Egret hybrid & a Semipalmated Sandpiper at SSP. Week of 7-11-15 at Mineral King-Franklin Pass in Sequoia N. P. Rosy Finch, Mt. Blue Bird, Rock Wren, Ruf. Hummer, Mt Chickadee nesting, W. Sapsuckers, Dipper all from 10,000 to 11,100 and some Bl Grouse at 7,200. L and S. Stocking. (A most colorful bird at high elevations when in nesting plumage is the Yellow-rumped Warbler....much more drab when in Stockton.) 7-12 a Red-n Phalarope at SSP. 7-18 a W. Tanager at LL. 7-19 John Schick & associate recorded 38 species and 408 total birds at the Cosumnes Preserve including a Barn Owl, Blk cr Night Heron Hutton's Vireo and Common Yellowthroat. 7-21, 2 juv. Cal. Gull SSP. 7-24, Western Tanager in Stockton backyard, observed by Linda Stocking. 7-27 & 28 S. Stocking, R. Boubelik & L. Brant observed 8 Wh-br Nuthatch, T. Solitaire Cassins Finch and W. Sapsucker in the vicinity of Big 5 Lakes, Sequoia N.P. (10,500). 7-30, 3 Warbling Vireo & a Wilson's Warbler at LL. 8-3 a Solitary Vireo at LL. The 10-13 persons on Stockton Audubon trip to Carson Pass observed Hermit Warbler, Mountain Quail, Warbling Vireo a Goshawk? and an afternoon rain storm, all on 8-6. On 8-9 a M. Godwit and 2 Baird's Sandpiper at LSP. 8-10 a Hermit Warbler at LL. 8-12 a Yellow-h Blkbird near Holt and a Whimbrel at SSP. 8-13 an Indigo Bunting at Laird Slough in Stanislaus Co and 3 Lesser Yellowlegs near Holt. John Schick and 4 associates observed 45 different species and 409 total birds at the Cosumnes Preserve, these included Tree Swallow, Townsend's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. 8-14 found a Solitary Sandpiper at the LSP. 8-16 a Lewis Woodpecker and 15 Bank Swallow on the San Joaquin River in the Delta and 2 Sanderling at SSP. 8-18 found 3 Yellow Warbler and 3 Blk-th Gray Warbler at LL. 8-31 W. Pelicans, Bodega Bay by the Lamms.

It should be noted that our expert observer David G. Yee is a "sub-regional editor" for the Middle Pacific Coast Region in AMERICAN BIRDS. 13 observations which he reported from this area were recorded for the winter '86-87 period. George Welch was also mentioned for his report of a "Bewick's Swan" near Terminous.

NOT ENOUGH GREEN SPACE

It is ironic that in the same year the 1987 President's Commission on American Outdoors recommended substantially increasing federal spending for our nation's parks and wildlife areas, actual money spent in 1987 reached only \$188 million, less than 25% of the \$800 million spent annually ten years ago. This dismal figure represents literally HUNDREDS OF IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS AND SCENIC AREAS LOST TO DEVELOPMENT EACH YEAR because there are no federal dollars to buy them. Key wetlands affecting thousands of threatened bird populations are vanishing and forests are being destroyed with no thought for tomorrow.

Our President wrote the following letter to Senators Cranston and Wilson:
I am writing you this letter on behalf of the Stockton Audubon Society of which I am president.

Personally and on behalf of our Society I am urging you to support wholeheartedly Senator John Chafee's (R. RI) bill, S1338, The Outdoor American Conservation Fund Act of 1987. Our country vitally needs funds to be allocated and spent on a regular basis to buy and maintain parks, refuges, wetland, urban and rural open space. We desperately need the funding that was formerly found via the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Thank you so much for your efforts in this regard and in hearing me out.

Vic Wykoff, President Stockton Audubon.



WHEN CITIZENS SPEAK AT CITY COUNCIL, OAK GROVE BENEFITS

Tuesday morning (August 2nd) had begun before Monday evening's Stockton City Council meeting had finally decided the issue of the Spanos Park Environmental Impact Study (EIR) certification. The rest of the agenda was then continued to Tuesday evening so everyone could go home. Before they voted to certify the final EIR, they amended it to incorporate four written protections for Oak Grove Regional Park.

City Council members heard many very difficult issues on both sides. In the end the Council accomplished a compromise in which everyone benefited: the developer is certified to continue in the planning process and the county's beautiful Oak Grove Regional Park is guaranteed protections.

A number of very important and serious environmental issues were brought before the Council Monday night. From the size of the audience and number of speakers, it would seem that future EIR's coming before this council will face critical opposition in many major impact areas. (See Stockton Record, Aug. 3, page B-1)

For both the audience as well as the City Council, this was an education in many very new ideas, such as establishing a local "superfund" for air quality. And for all of us this was a lesson in true democracy at work, for which I would like to commend the City Council Members and all of the citizen "volunteers" who came to city Hall for a very long meeting. I would also like to thank those representing A.G. Spanos, who had gone to the trouble to perform extra soils testing just before the meeting to help allay fears that the project might kill Oak Grove's trees.

Victor Wykoff, president of Stockton Audubon Society, made a plea not only to save the wildlife of Oak Grove, which includes the threatened Swainson's Hawk, but also to save the oak trees now lining Thornton Road. Wykoff explained that the Audubon Society was not against this development, but opposed to acceptance of this inadequate EIR. He suggested that an appropriate mitigation measure would be for the "Spanos" interests to purchase the (small) oak grove north of Eight Mile Road and donate this to the park.

Other speakers included Dr. J. Waidhofer, Carrie Durham, John Eilers of the "Land Utilization Alliance", Jay Bell, Lynne Terry, Dario Marengo, Richard Harriman, James Ricks, Tom Taylor, Pat Connolly, Linda Lindberg, and Carole Whipple of the local Sierra Club Group.

City Council members listened carefully to these arguments and asked insightful questions about such issues as air quality standards and future water supplies. Councilmembers Catherine Linnerman, Barbara Fass, and Lauralee McGaughy were all courageous enough to vote against certification, asking for an expanded EIR. Council member Enrique Lang asked some thoughtful and searching questions about the air quality issues, and voted "with reservations". Councilman Al Bonner suggested the compromise measure--amending the EIR in those areas which the Oak Grove Docent Council requested to preserve the integrity of Oak Grove Regional Park.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank ALL of you: citizens who showed enough concern to attend the meeting, the developer who had also showed concern, and hard-working City Council members who voted to protect the Oak Grove Regional Park.

Kathy Schick, Conservation Chair

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." Edmund Burke.

BOOK REVIEW: HAWKS IN FLIGHT by Pete Dunne, David Sibley & Clay Sutton

We, who have had serious problems with the field identification of hawks in flight, should study this unique book carefully. David Yee is now looking at it in preparation for his Saturday, Sept. 24 trip to Marin Headlands/Hawk Mountain. Those of you who go on that field trip can ask his opinion of the book (see field trip schedule).

The drawings (50 pgs.) and black & white photos (50 pgs.) make up a large part of this rather short book (250 pgs). These illustrations are excellent as is the text which is not limited to identification but also covers migration, food habits, and other behavioral traits of the 23 common U.S. species.

For \$17.95 you too can learn the....."Holistic approach which focuses on the bird as a living organism, with identifications that are based on behavior, flight style, and relationships to the environment, as well as classic field marks." It is from Houghton-Mifflin and was published this year. We have donated our review copy to the Stockton Public Library in memory of the late Geraldine Hodge who was an officer of the Stockton Audubon Society back in the 1950's.



NOTES ON EXTINCTION: (FROM OUTSIDE MAGAZINE MAY 1988)

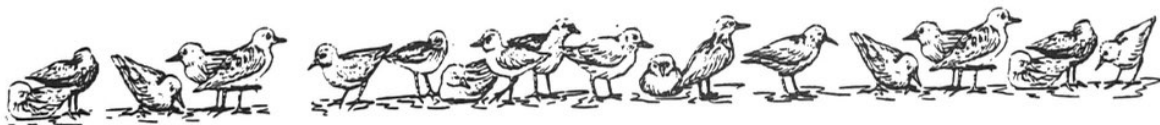
"Gone are the Dodo bird, the Carolina parakeet, and the passenger pigeon. Gone too, is the government agency that tried to prevent other species from disappearing. Last winter, in what could be a crowning moment of bureaucratic irony, the Fish and Wildlife Service officially put to rest the Office of Endangered Species. The duties of that office were divvied up into pockets; people in the know suspect that, under this arrangement, the former agency's clout will be much more susceptible to local political pressures."

"The good news: Michigan's Department of Natural Resources closed 8,000 acres of the National Guard's practice area near Grayling last fall because an endangered species, the Kirtland's warbler, nests there. The bad news: The Guard's tracer bullets and hand grenades set more than 20 forest fires last summer on the remaining 142,000 acres, in the state's prime northern recreation area."

"Since 1972, when DDT was nationally banned, what may be the world's fastest, deadliest raptor has been making a steady comeback. Even a handful of urban areas—such as New York, Chicago, and Baltimore—have reestablished small populations of peregrines, thanks to the Peregrine Fund, a privately backed group based in Ithaca, New York. Generally, the birds have inspired quiet waves of public support. But not in L.A. There have been various problems including attacks on building maintenance workers. But since 1985, it's been an open secret that someone has shot and killed 11 of L.A.'s peregrines. Though no charges have been filed and no arrests made, local pigeon breeders are the prime suspects."

Another interesting discussion in this issue of Outside was by David Quammen and was entitled "The Newmark Warning". He wonders if species are disappearing in National Parks and other areas because of ecosystem decay. Possibly the areas of many Parks are not great enough to support certain species. "What is the nature of the inter-connection between species diversity and area?" "For more than 60 years, ecologists have recognized that the size of an area of wild habitat correlates strongly with the numbers of different plant and animal species to be found in that area."

The editor.



JUNE 18 MOKELUMNE RIVER FIELD TRIP REPORT

An impressive 20 lovers of the outdoors hiked along Electra Road and enjoyed all this lush riparian canyon had to offer. 40 species were observed with the highlight undoubtedly the N. Pygmy Owl that swooped down in front of all of us, caught a lizard, and perched in a tree about 20 ft off the ground so all could enjoy. Nesting Blk. Phoebe, W. Wood-pewee, and W. Tanager were delightful to all while Hutton's Vireo and Yellow Warbler proved to be elusive. While the day eventually hit 100 degrees, it will be most remembered as a hot day birding.

AUG. 20-21 MONTEREY FIELDTRIP REPORT

On Saturday 17 Stockton Auduboners and friends gathered at Moss Landing to begin a most enjoyable weekend in the Monterey area. The weather was most cooperative -- utterly gorgeous on Sunday for our boat-trip. About 50 species of birds were observed on Saturday including a Marbled Murrelet and Common Tern at Moss Landing and Baird's Sandpiper along the Carmel River. The pelagic trip on Sunday was spectacular with 29 species of birds and 8 species of marine mammals observed. Highlights on the bay included: Blk.-footed Albatross; four Wilson's three Fork-tailed, and 15 Least Storm-petrels; all 3 Jaegers; 2 Sabine's Gulls; 3 Blue and 10 Humpback Whales! Don't miss this trip next year!

(Russ Lawson, asst Hoot Owl Editor has a camper shell to fit a full size pickup for sale, contact him at 578-7973)