

# The Stilt

Fall 2006

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## California Fall Challenge

September 16 – October 15, 2006

10TH ANNUAL BIRD-A-THON FUNDRAISER



VICKI JENNINGS

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MONICA LUNDY

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats through research, monitoring and educational activities.



San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory  
P.O. Box 247 1290 Hope Street Alviso, CA 95002

### Go Birding

**BIRD-A-THON:**  
Guided Trips,  
Big Day,  
and more ...

PHOTO CREDITS (left to right):  
Bill Hepburn, Philippe Cohen, Ross Wilming

### Celebrate

**WIN PRIZES!**  
Annual Meeting and  
25th Anniversary Party,  
October 29

### Support

Conservation  
Science at the  
Bird Observatory

Visit [www.sfbbo.org/cfc/](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/) for details  
Registration Form inside

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## In Memory - Howard L. Cogswell



*The Bird Observatory Board in 1996 (left to right): Dick Carlson, Robin Winslow Smith, Mike Spence, David McIntyre, Susan Stout, Anne Moser, Ed Pandolfino, and Howard Cogswell.*

On June 8, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory lost a hero in Howard L. Cogswell, who passed away at the age of 91.

Dr. Cogswell was born in Pennsylvania in 1915. He migrated to California during the Depression and earned his Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley. As a professor at Mills College and later at Cal State Hayward, he infused his students with his own discipline and passion for fieldwork. He helped found Ohlone Audubon Society in 1966 and became involved in the Bird Observatory shortly after its founding in 1981, serving as Board President in the early 1990's. His best-known

scientific contributions is his book "Water Birds of California," first published in 1977.

In his later life, Dr. Cogswell became recognized as an authority on the Bay's waterbirds and their habitats. He served on the Board of East Bay Regional Parks and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Commission. His input on the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Project was always steeped in his deep understanding of the history of the baylands and its birds. His contributions over the years led to the naming of a newly restored marsh in his honor at the Hayward Regional Shoreline.

I had the personal honor and joy of spending many hours with Dr. Cogswell on the salt ponds of the South Bay, absorbing the experience and knowledge he was so willing to share. Once, while conducting a survey at the Baumberg Ponds, we came across a winter flock of over 150 Western Snowy Plovers. I, of course, was beside myself and he grinned at me, as if to say, "At last, she gets it!" A few minutes later, I turned to see him 100 feet down the levee and moving away fast, in pursuit of a fox. Even at 85, he was ahead of me, both literally and figuratively.

Dr. Cogswell was a valued mentor and science advisor to the Bird Observatory for more than 20 years, but most of all, he was a beloved friend. We miss him already.

*I am grateful to Terry Preston for some of the details of this article.*

*A memorial service will be held at the Cogswell Marsh on October 14, 2006 at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. Please check our web site in early October for more details.*

by Janet Hanson,  
Executive Director

### WORKSHOPS WITH ALVARO JARAMILLO FOR THE BIRDER AND NATURALIST

These workshops incorporate ecology, evolutionary biology, behavioral ecology, and natural history to complement bird identification information taught in class. There are two days of instruction and a weekend all-day fieldtrip. Put your birding into an ecological context with Biologist Al Jaramillo!

Workshops limited to 15 students. Registration opens November 2006.

For course descriptions and more information, go to [www.sfbbo.org/birdingworkshops.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/birdingworkshops.htm)

#### WORKSHOPS

##### GULLS

January 9 and 11 (instruction);  
January 13 (fieldtrip)

##### WATERFOWL

February 6 and 8 (instruction);  
February 11 (fieldtrip)

##### SHOREBIRDS AND MIGRATION

April 24 and 26 (instruction);  
April 29 (fieldtrip)



Al Jaramillo

# HATCHING NEW IDEAS

*An Interview with Peg Woodin  
on the Founding of the Bird Observatory*

**P**eg Woodin had no idea what she was getting into the day in the early 1970's when her coworker at San Jose State University, Mike Rigney, pulled her over in the hallway to ask a favor. He was teaching an adult education class in bird identification at Branham High School and needed a few more people or the class would be cancelled. Would she sign up?

Peg, and a few others that Mike roped in, signed up "just to be warm bodies" and the class was a go. From that innocent beginning came Peg's 36-year involvement in what is now known as San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

"The whole thing blossomed our curiosity and interest, our involvement," Peg says. "We started knowing what all those little brown birds were. It wasn't just 'you've seen one, you've seen them all.' You learned the difference between the House Finch and the House Sparrow, and all the other birds."

A core group signed up for a second class and began going on field trips. "We dabbled in all kinds of stuff, things like the Fall Count, the diversity of birds in the Bay Area. From there we decided we wanted the data we were collecting to be used by the Fish and Wildlife Department and the like," Peg recalls. "This was one thing that held on."

The group called themselves the South Bay Institute for Avian Studies and began collecting data on the salt

ponds. In 1981, they formally became a non-profit organization and Mike Rigney served as its first Executive Director. In 1982, the organization changed its name to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Peg is proud that the main goal of the group—to contribute information for management of wildlife areas—continues to be accomplished. Data from the Bird Observatory's long-term studies was used by the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, the first urban refuge in the Bay Area, and it is still being used today in the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

Much has changed since 1970. Land in the Bay Area has filled in with development drastically. The dot-com boom has come and gone. Yet the Bird Observatory still serves as an umbrella for endless amounts of research, graduate student projects, programs for grade school students, and the Coyote Creek Field Station. It actively pursues avian studies in the Bay Area and provides opportunities for people like Peg to explore the environment around them.

Peg encourages others to get involved: "You don't have to go the rainforest. Those people need help, too, but you can get involved here, in your own backyard."

By Dina Scheel.

*Dina Scheel and her daughter Lexie are avid birders. Dina was a volunteer with the Coyote Creek Riparian Station and continues to volunteer with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.*

## Bird-a-thon Steps:

1. Organize your own bird-a-thon trip or join a Guided Trip.
2. Get Sponsors to pledge per bird species or at a flat rate.
3. Go Birding!
4. Collect pledges and return altogether with pledge form by October 25th.
5. Win Prizes and Party!
6. Don't have time to bird?  
Considering sponsoring a birder!

## WIN PRIZES AND PARTY!

**Jasper Ridge  
Biological Preserve  
Sunday, October 29  
9 – 10 a.m.**

Top fundraisers win prizes  
at the Annual Meeting (free)

**10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
25th Anniversary Party:  
Tour and Lunch  
\$14 members; \$18 nonmembers

More details and registration  
information available at:  
[www.sfbbo.org/cfc/celebrate.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/celebrate.htm)  
or call 408 946 6548

**NEW TO BIRD-A-THONS?  
NEED SOME FUNDRAISING TIPS?**

## FALL CHALLENGE WORKSHOP

with Bonnie Bedford-White

**Tuesday, September 12  
7–8 p.m.**

**Bird Observatory office**

RSVP to [jchow@sfbbo.org](mailto:jchow@sfbbo.org)  
or 408 946 6548

# California Fall Challenge



Phil and Pat Gordon are longstanding members of the Bird Observatory and frequently lead trips in Alameda County. They are also involved with the Ohlone Audubon Society.



Kay Partelow has been birding since before she was born, but remarkably she has never seen a Northern Pygmy Owl. Kay has led trips for the Sierra Club and is an MROSD docent. Karen DeMello has been birding for a mere 5 years, and has had good views of Northern Pygmy Owls twice! Karen is a docent at Big Basin Redwoods State Park and MROSD.



Janet Hanson is the Executive Director of the Bird Observatory. She recently went birding in Florida and Latin America.



Francis Toldi

CFC Guided Trips are a great way to participate in the bird-a-thon if you'd like to join a *Y-made* guide on your trip. A variety of trips are available to suit different styles and birding levels. See below one week before the trip. Group sizes are limited to 15 people unless otherwise noted. Registration fee

## **"Cliffsweepers" • led by Phil and Pat Gordon**

Saturday, 9/16, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m., \$50

Cliff viewing will play an important part of our bird-search. This will be a car-and-walk exploration along the Alameda Creek watershed. Participants may want optics to include a scope. Pack lunch and suitable beverage(s) for the day will be needed.

## **"Intrepid A-to-Zers"**

led by Karen DeMello and Kay Partelow

Saturday, 9/16, 4:30 -9:30 a.m., \$35

If you are more interested in a serene birding experience rather than racing around the county, then this is the walk for you! From Accipiters to Zonotrichia, our goal is 26 species (from A to Z) in 5 hours on this unique early morning hike where we will explore Monte Bello Open Space Preserve from twilight to beyond dawn. Be prepared to walk 4 miles on moderate terrain at a leisurely pace. Hiking at a preserve before it is open to the public is a real treat. Directions to the meeting place and details on what to bring will be provided to those who sign up.

Trip Leader contact information: karen.demello@gmail.com

## **"Janet's Gannets"**

led by Janet Hanson and Mike Mammoser

Sunday, 9/24, 7 a.m. - noon, \$35

Join "Janet's Gannets" on a Sunday morning expedition to great birding spots in Santa Clara County. Led by Bird Observatory Executive Director Janet Hanson and birder par excellence Mike Mammoser, we will follow Mike's Santa Clara "Rosetta Stone" on a quest for both the usual and the special among our fall migrants. We will search Bird Observatory study sites, including our Coyote Creek Field Station, bayside habitats and possibly even our new study area on Sierra Road. If there's enough demand, we will start earlier with some owling. Special note: Janet will treat any "Gannet" that fundraises \$250 or more to Sunday Brunch following our morning of birding.

Trip Leader contact information: jthanson@sfbbo.org

## **"Fighting Fledglings" • led by Francis Toldi**

Saturday 9/30, Time (full-day), \$50

Join Francis Toldi for a really full day. No one knows San Mateo County like Francis. So if you have been curious about where the hot spots are in San Mateo County and want to have a fabulous big list of birds by the end of the day, this is the trip for you! Maximum 6 people.

Trip Leader contact information: francismail@dpisf.com or 650 344 1919

You may contact trip leaders for more details if contact information is listed. Once you receive contact you the week before the trip with further details such as exact meeting location and

## Challenge Guided Trips

rather than organize your own or if you're new to birding and would like an experienced leader to guide you, please contact us for trip listings with suggested minimum donation for participation. Please register at least 30 days in advance. For more information available at [www.sfbbo.org/cfcl](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfcl).

### **"Varied Twitchers" • led by Mike Rogers**

Saturday, 9/30, 8 a.m. - 100 species, \$50

Check out what's flying around places like Shoreline Lake, Coyote Creek Field Station, and Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge! We will contour the Bay and nearby wetlands for 100 species. Plan to be out 5 - 6 hours. Maximum 8 - 10 people.

### **Guided Trip • led by Scott Terrill**

Sunday, 10/1, Time (full-day), \$50

At this birding day for "fall migration on the Central California coast," we will see over 100 species of birds (including nonmigrants), with an emphasis on migrants (seabirds, shorebirds, waterbirds, raptors and landbirds). In addition to seeing these birds, we will talk about bird migration in general and discuss where the species we are seeing breed and winter. We will probably also see a number of marine mammals from shore, including possible humpback and blue whales, which are also migrants.

### **"Gallinago Go Go's" • led by Lisa Myers**

Saturday, 10/7, 7 a.m. - 100 species, Price: \$50

We'll bird all parts of Santa Clara County looking for a minimum of 100 species. This will include the several different habitats as we look for the different species. If you're new to the world of birding, or just want to get out and have a great time fundraising for the Bird Observatory this is the perfect trip for you. Lisa will also have binoculars on hand if you don't have your own. Maximum 20 people.

Trip Leader contact information: [lisa@letsgobirding.com](mailto:lisa@letsgobirding.com)

### **"DeDucktions" • led by Matthew Dodder**

Sunday, 10/8, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., \$50

We'll have an all-day experience in a variety of habitats within a roughly 10-mile radius of the Bird Observatory headquarters. We will bird local parks including: Alum Rock Park in San Jose (entrance fee), Ed Levin Park (entrance fee) in Milpitas, and various bay front locations in Alviso, Sunnyvale Control Ponds and Shoreline Park. We will also head into the hills, visiting Stevens Creek Park (entrance fee) and McClellan Ranch if time allows. Beginners are welcome.

Trip Leader contact information: [mdodder@earthlink.net](mailto:mdodder@earthlink.net)

### **"Warblequest" • led by Garth Harwood**

Sunday, 10/15, 8 a.m. (half day), \$35

A slow, careful stroll along Gazos Creek in October often turns up migrating warblers and other songbirds—some well away from their typical ranges. If time permits, we may visit additional favorite patches of coastal riparian habitat along the San Mateo County Coast.



Mike Rogers started birding at the age of 8, thanks to a "How-And-Why" book about birds. Since then he has spent more than 30 years birding extensively in the United States and Europe, amassing an ABA list of well over 700 species.



Scott Terrill is Vice President of the Bird Observatory Board and ornithologist at H.T. Harvey and Associates.



A board member of the Bird Observatory, Lisa is a South Bay native who enjoys being out in nature and introducing people to the world of birds. She owns and runs Let's Go Birding, and teaches birding classes throughout the South Bay. Lisa also works for Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris.



Matthew Dodder has been a birder since 1977, and traveled around the world on self-organized birding trips. He teaches an intermediate-level class on bird watching at the Palo Alto Adult School. He is also on the Board of Directors at the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

When you register, you will receive confirmation of your trip assignment, and trip leaders will contact you at the start time.

# CALIFORNIA FALL CHALLENGE 2006 REGISTRATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail me pledge forms.

I will download pledge forms\*.

CHOOSE AN OPTION:

**Sign me up for the California Fall Challenge Guided Trip:**

My preferred Guided Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Guided Trip donation fee:  \$35  \$50  \$75  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign me up for the California Fall Challenge on a self-organized trip:**

Registration:  \$25  \$50  \$75  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign me up for Big Day Competitive Birding:**

Team Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Self-pledge/registration:  \$25  \$50  \$75  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring organization (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
sponsorship amount: \_\_\_\_\_

CHOOSE AN OPTION:

**I will only attend the annual meeting for CFC Awards on October 29.**

**I will attend the annual meeting and the anniversary party on October 29, 2006.**

*Please remember to carpool to Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve due to vehicle restrictions.*

*More information online at [www.sfbbo.org/cfc/index.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/index.htm)*

PERSON ATTENDING

MEMBER \$14

NONMEMBER \$18

ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

I am enclosing a check of \_\_\_\_\_ payable to: San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

I made the \_\_\_\_\_ payment online via the link at [www.sfbbo.org/cfc/support.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/support.htm).  
(Select "California Fall Challenge" under Program.)

**Mail form to: San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, California Fall Challenge, P.O. Box 247, Alviso, CA 95002.**

**\*You can also download a Word document of this form and PDF pledge forms with registration materials at [www.sfbbo.org/cfc/registration.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/registration.htm), and e-mail your registration to [cfc@sfbbo.org](mailto:cfc@sfbbo.org).**

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Website: [www.sfbbo.org](http://www.sfbbo.org)

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The Bird Observatory is located at 1290 Hope Street in Alviso, behind the historic Bayside Canning Co. building. If you would like to visit the office or our Coyote Creek Field Station, please call in advance.

Board meetings are held monthly and are open to the Membership. Call the Observatory for dates and times.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Expert-guided monthly walks on the Bay Trail, at the Coyote Creek Field Station, and to our other research sites! Sign up for these walks by calling the Bird Observatory office at 408-946-6548 or e-mailing [jchow@sfbbo.org](mailto:jchow@sfbbo.org). Space is limited to 15 - 20 people. All events are free for members and \$10 for non-members.

### SCIENCE OF BIRDS

"Science of Birds" is a new walk series highlighting conservation science. Learn about current research and fieldwork from Bird Observatory biologists and do a little birding on the way! Each walk will focus on a specific Bird Observatory project in the salt ponds, parks, or open spaces of the Bay Area.

### BIRDING THE BAY TRAIL

Participate in our "Birding the Bay Trail" walk series! Join various leaders as we explore the sixteen best birding locations along the Bay Trail. Go to [www.sfbbo.org](http://www.sfbbo.org) to get your own free copy of the "Birding the Bay Trail" guide.

### BIRD BANDING AT COYOTE CREEK

Visit the Bird Observatory's field station and experience conservation science in action. Tour mist nets, watch a bird banding demonstration, and explore a restored riparian habitat. Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS) is a wildlife haven in the middle of Silicon Valley.

SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 15,  
HALF DAY OR FULL DAY

### CALIFORNIA FALL CHALLENGE BIRD-A-THON

**SITE: All over the Bay Area and beyond!**

Participate in the 10th annual "CALIFORNIA FALL CHALLENGE" bird-a-thon that culminates in prizes and celebrations to mark the Bird Observatory's 25th anniversary!

*More details inside and at [www.sfbbo.org/cfc/](http://www.sfbbo.org/cfc/).*

■ SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7 8 – 10 A.M.

### Science of Birds: Power Lines and Birds

SITE: CCFS

*Bird collisions with power lines, wind turbines, and towers have been well documented, but what is being done to prevent them here in Silicon Valley? Join Bird Observatory Field Assistants Caitlin Robinson and Corina Jung on a walk along power lines around Coyote Creek as they explain a project studying the use of markers to deter birds from power lines.*

■ SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 9 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

### Annual Meeting and 25th Anniversary Party

SITE: Sun Field Station at  
the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

*Mark your calendars now so that you won't miss the CFC prizes and the party! The annual meeting is free and also includes program updates; the anniversary party is \$14 for members and \$18 for nonmembers, and includes a tour of Jasper Ridge and lunch. More information and how to RSVP at [www.sfbbo.org/celebrate.htm](http://www.sfbbo.org/celebrate.htm) or call 408 946 6548.*

■ SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 8:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

### Bird Banding at Coyote Creek

SITE: CCFS

*Meet at the Borders bookstore parking lot in McCarthy Ranch, Milpitas. Please remember to RSVP on the Friday before the tour. In the event of rain, the tour is cancelled. For more information, e-mail Education Specialist Laura Weiss, [lweiss@sfbbo.org](mailto:lweiss@sfbbo.org).*

■ SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.

### Birding the Bay Trail with Alvaro Jaramillo

SITE: Palo Alto Baylands

*Join Bird Observatory biologist Al Jaramillo on a winter bird walk at Palo Alto Baylands.*

**INTERESTED IN CARPOOLING?** We've started a mail list group to make carpooling to San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory events easier. Join the group by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BirdObsCarpool/>.



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