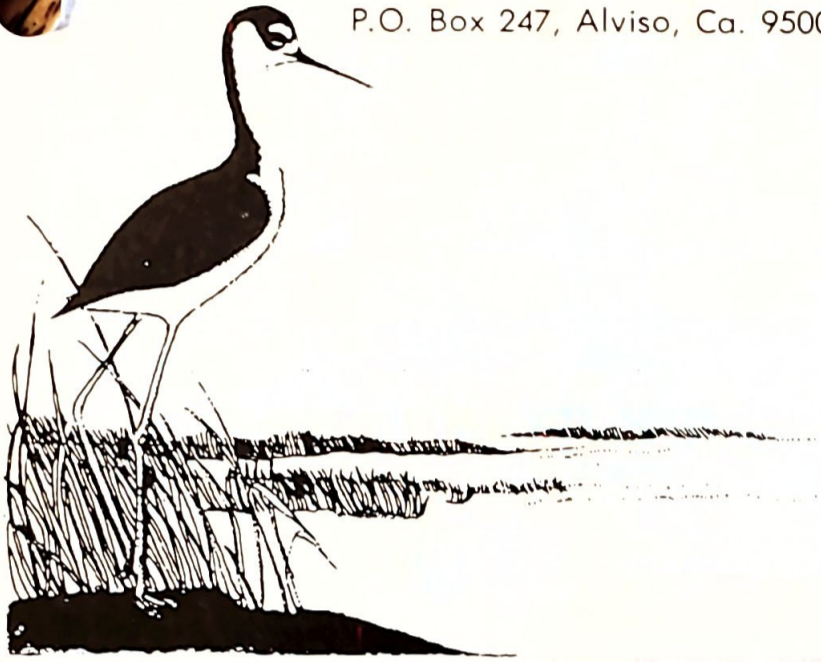


# SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 247, Alviso, Ca. 95002 • (408) 946-6548

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Alviso, Ca.  
Permit #9



Volume 5, Number 7

JULY 1986

## CALIFORNIA GULL STUDY UPDATE

By Ed Roberts

If you aren't much "taken" with gulls, about now you might be saying to yourself, "Here we go again." If, on the other hand, you are as impressed as I am with the beauty and adaptability of these birds, then this article is for you; read on, there's plenty of excitement for 1986.

The unique colony of California Gulls which has been nesting in San Francisco Bay for the past five years has grown to greater proportions. The nesting population of the main colony, residing on two levees in the Knapp tract of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, is larger than in past years. The first wave of hatching chicks provided approximately 500 bandable chicks on the first night visit to the colony on Friday, May 23. This year the colony has expanded to the access road which leads to the old duck hunting lodge. Nearly 108 active nests have been counted along this road.

In 1985, SFBBO researchers banded 2407 chicks. A preliminary estimate of the 1986 population indicates that the colony may produce a significantly larger number of hatchlings. Nesting density appears to have increased somewhat and nests are located in sections which were previously used only by a few birds or not at all.

We have observed many nesting birds which carry color bands applied by SFBBO researchers in previous years. Additionally there are large numbers of nesting birds which contain no bands and (This is an exciting discovery to those of us who have pondered the question of where the birds have come from) there are several birds

carrying bands from some other area as yet undetermined.

The evening banding trips to the colony will be completed by June 27, but you can start thinking about joining this group of gull banders next season. Even if you are not a bander, your work is of great value to the operation. Each bander requires a helper, and each levee team needs a recorder. With the large number of chicks to band, that means that SFBBO needs four to six banders and five to seven helpers per weekly trip. I suggest that you treat yourself to an evening of beauty and excitement by signing up for a trip to the California Gull Colony.



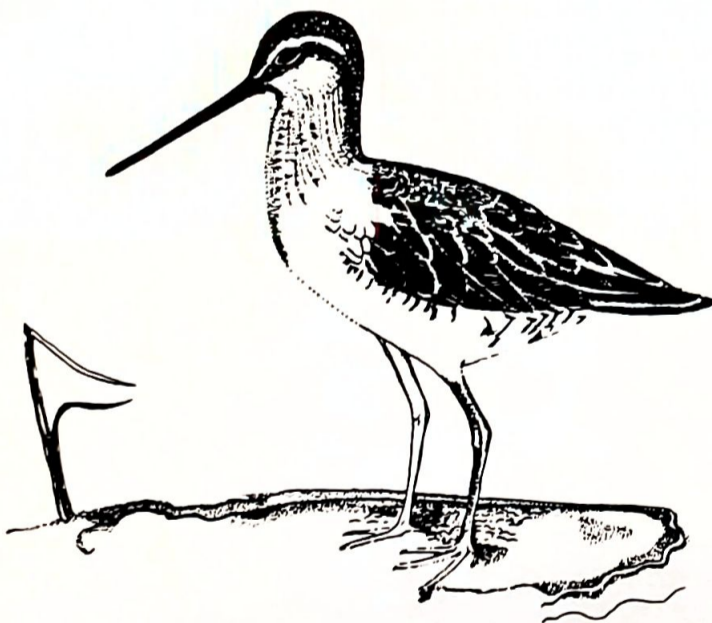
California Gull

Photo by Peg Woodin

## AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION

The following is an account of a capture of a Black-necked stilt by a Northern Harrier as observed by Tim Gates at Coyote Hills Regional Park.

"On September 2, 1985 I was birding on Shoreline Trail west of Coyote Hills Regional Park when I noticed a spiraling flock of California Gulls, Willets and Barn Swallows. These birds were disturbed by a female Northern Harrier which was attempting to pluck an unlucky Black-necked Stilt from about four or five inches of water. The Stilt repeatedly held itself underwater and resurfaced only to breathe or to try to escape. The harrier maneuvered itself over the submerged stilt and lowered its tarsi into the water to grasp the stilts back. It flew to the levee ahead of us, but did not feed because other hikers approaching from the opposite direction forced it to fly away without the Stilt. We examined the Stilt and found it had brown-edged tertials and scapulars indicating that it was a juvenile."



Have a great summer  
of birding !

## CLERICAL HELP NEEDED

Spring and Summer are the busiest time of the year at the Bird Observatory with all our on going research projects, and this adds a lot of extra work for the office staff. Clerical assistance is needed to keep up with the typing, filing, volunteer calls, record keeping, and processing and recording of the large amounts of data that is collected. Our hard working Executive Director, Kathy Hobson, puts in many more hours than she is paid for just to keep operations running smoothly.

If you can commit a few hours a week on a regular basis, it would help take some of the load off the staff. And what better way to become familiar with what's going on at the Bird Observatory and the people who volunteer their time there. If you would like to volunteer, call the office at (408) 946-6548.



## SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

A field trip series to study summer birds will be offered by Sunbeam Ecology Explorations. The trips will take participants to a variety of habitats to observe birds and a potpourri of trees, flowers and magnificent landscapes. The series will include:

June 6, 7, 8	Eagle Lake & Surrounding area.	Fee \$50
June 28	Mount Diablo	Fee \$10
July 12	A day on the coast from Pigeon Point to Point Bonita	Fee \$10
July 19-20	The Sierra between east and west slopes.	Fee \$35
August 16	Shorebird search	Fee \$10

Singups may be made for individual trips, but people signing up for the entire series will be given preference. Series fee is \$100. Trip details will be sent upon receiving registration. Instructor will be Maryann Danielson. For further information call (415) 342-6919.

## COYOTE CREEK RIPARIAN STATION

Statistical report for the first quarter of 1986 (Jan. - Mar.) with comparison with 1985.

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1985</u>
BIRDS BANDED	823	744
RECAPTURES	756	392
NUMBER OF SPECIES	33	23

Currently the Coyote Creek Riparian Station is operating 4 days a week from sunrise to approximately 12 noon or about 24 hours a week. To monitor the bird population along Coyote Creek 12 mist nets and 12 ground level traps have been established at designated points along about 1/2 mile of riparian habitat.

Future plans for CCRS projects include;

1. Building Wood Duck nesting boxes. We need donations of 2 inch galvanized steel pipe to support the boxes.
2. Building Blue Bird nest boxes, monitoring their use and establishing a "Blue Bird Trail".
3. Building nesting boxes for other cavity nesters.
4. Conducting regular censuses of birds from designated points.

If you can donate time or materials to any of these projects, please call CCRS at (408) 262-9204. If no one is there you can leave a message on the recorder.

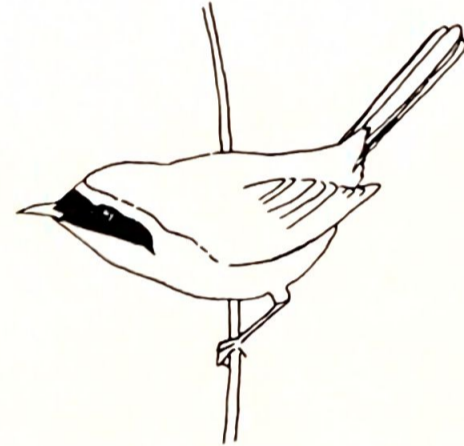
## NOTICES

Since the first Thursday of the month falls on the 3rd of July, the General Membership meeting has been changed to **July 10**, same time, same place. Please mark your calendars.

Also, note that there will be no newsletter or General Membership meeting for the month of August. The Bird Observatory office will remain open as usual from 1-5pm, Monday thru Friday. This is the busiest time of the year for our research projects and volunteer help is needed. If you would like to volunteer, call the office or stop in and sign up.

## SFBBO BOARD ELECTIONS

At the September General Membership Meeting three directors will be elected to serve three year terms on the SFBBO Board. The nominating committee is putting together a list of nominees for these three positions. If you are interested in running for a position on the Board or know of someone you would like to nominate, call Don Starks, chairperson for the nominating committee at (408) 371-9720. Your input is needed.



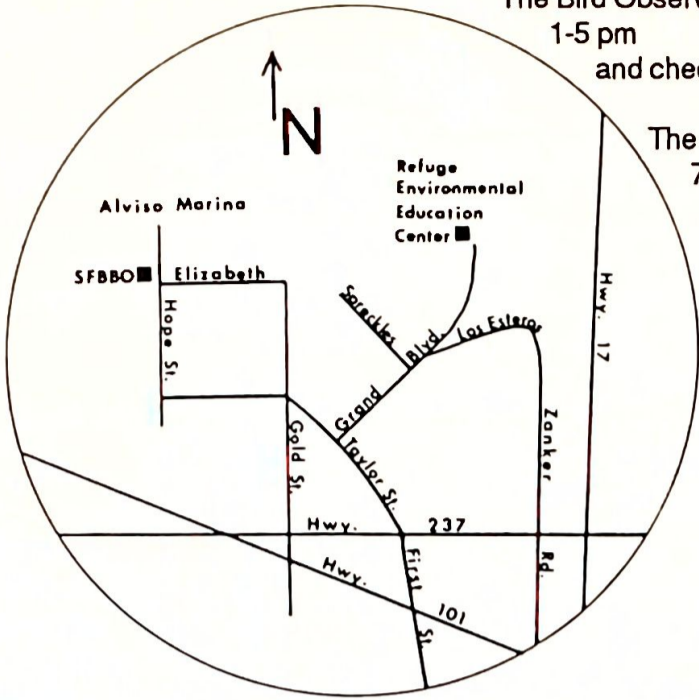
## FARALLON ISLAND EXPEDITIONS

On a clear day, twenty-five miles west of the Golden Gate Bridge, a group of rocky outcroppings can be spotted in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. These are the Farallon Islands, renowned as the largest sea bird rookery south of Alaska, with a quarter of a million nesting birds - including tufted puffins, petrels, and murre. Elephant seals, sea lions, and harbor seals find refuge at the Farallones, while humpback and blue whales can be found in nearby waters. To closely view this spectacular wildlife refuge, the Oceanic Society is offering natural history trips to the general public.

The Oceanic Society is a nonprofit organization, offering trips to the Farallon Islands for the last 12 years. Proceeds from the expeditions will support the Society's conservation and education programs, including the Gulf of the Farallones Marine Mammal Research Project. This project involves photo identification of individual whales, and our researchers will be searching for "Humphrey" as well as other humpback whales which frequent the Gulf.

Oceanic Society Coast Guard certified boats depart Saturdays and Sundays from the San Francisco Yacht Harbor, June through October. Two naturalists accompany each eight-hour expedition and will provide first hand information about the islands, their history, and their wild inhabitants. The fee for a full day excursion is \$44 per person. Group rates and gift certificates are available. For information, call the Oceanic Society at (415) 474-3385. Or write to - Oceanic Society Expeditions, Fort Mason Center, Building E, San Francisco, CA 94123.

The Bird Observatory office is located at 1290 Hope St. in Alviso. The office is open from 1-5 pm weekdays and some weekends. But before stopping in, call (408) 946-6548 and check the schedule.



The General Membership meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso. (see map) The Board meetings are open to the membership and are held monthly. Call the Observatory for dates and times.

The newsletter deadline is the first Monday of the month. Send contributions to the editor: Susie Formenti, 16675 Buckskin Ct., Morgan Hill, CA 95037.

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a non-profit corporation under IRS statute 501(c)3. All memberships and contributions are tax deductible.

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, July 10, 1986

Refuge Environmental Education Center  
in Alviso

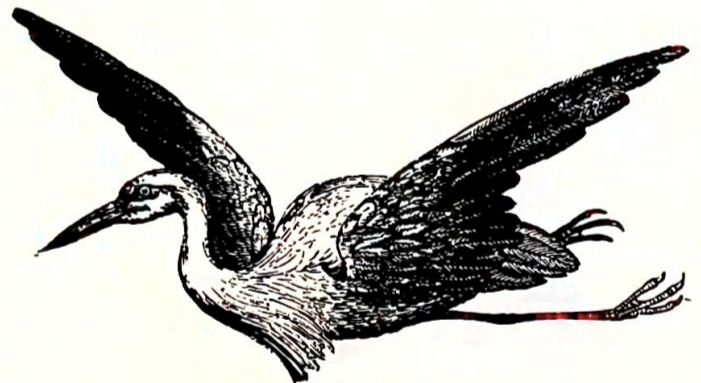
7:30 pm

**FEATURED SPEAKER:** Stephen F. Bailey, Collections Manager in Ornithology and Mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences, will give a presentation on "Coopers and Sharp-shinned hawks; one of our more difficult field identification problems".

**DONATIONS.** . . . . . Thanks to Pat Dubois, Fran Mewaldt and Jean Young for the refreshments for the June General Meeting.

The newsletter welcomes material (written or drawn) from readers. The deadline is the first Monday of the month. Send contributions to Susie Formenti, Editor, 16675 Buckskin Ct., Morgan Hill, CA 95037. The deadline is the first Monday of the month.

**HAVE YOU MOVED?.** . . . . . If you have, please send your address change to the office promptly so that you will continue to receive your newsletter.



Editor, Susie Formenti



P.O. Box 247  
Alviso, CA 95002  
(408) 946-6540

I would like to join  Renew my membership  in the  
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to SFBBO. Your gift membership is tax deductible.

Student/Senior	\$10
Regular	\$15
Family	\$20
Associate	\$50
Contributing	\$100
Sustaining	\$200
Life	\$400 *
Patron	\$2000 *
Corporation	\$500 +

\* Single payment becomes part of an endowment fund.