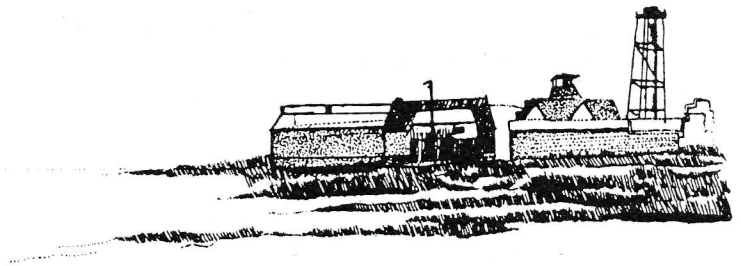
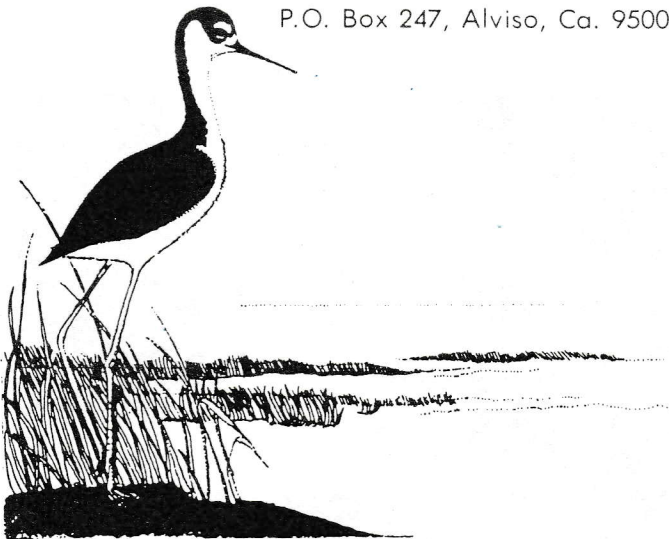


SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

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July/August 1990

SFBBO CHANGES FORMAT FOR GENERAL MEETINGS

Felix Smith on water politics, especially as it concerned the Kesterson Refuge. Luis Baptista and bird songs in females and its role in mate selection. Bob Drews and the varied frogs of Africa. Don Roberson and rarities that can be expected on Christmas Bird Counts. Do you remember the speaker on Lyme disease? Or how about the identification of our tough local gulls. Remember Joe Jehl and his topic of birds of Mono Lake. Many of our speakers have dealt with subjects that are controversial in the arena of environmentalism. In any event we have had fantastic speakers at our General Meetings which dealt in a variety of subjects.

In the past few months attendance at our meetings has dwindled. Many members have expressed their disappointment at not being able to attend SFBBO meetings because of their busy schedules. This is unfortunate as well as frustrating. SFBBO staff and volunteers have spent many hours lining up speakers for our meetings. This takes many phone calls, much time, and a little salesmanship in order to get the caliber of speakers that have given presentations at our General Meetings.

The Bird Observatory board has had many discussions regarding General Meetings and what could be done to increase participation. In April it was decided to discontinue our monthly meetings and go to a biannual format.

These meetings will be held to coincide with the scheduling of our new and on going projects and later an informative meeting on the results of the seasons studies. We will keep you informed on the upcoming meetings through the newsletter.

The members who have attended these past General Meetings have expressed their appreciation for the informative, entertaining and interesting speakers that have given presentations at our meetings. The Staff and the members would like to thank these speakers for taking the time from their busy schedules to share their expertise and information.



SFBBO Annual Picnic

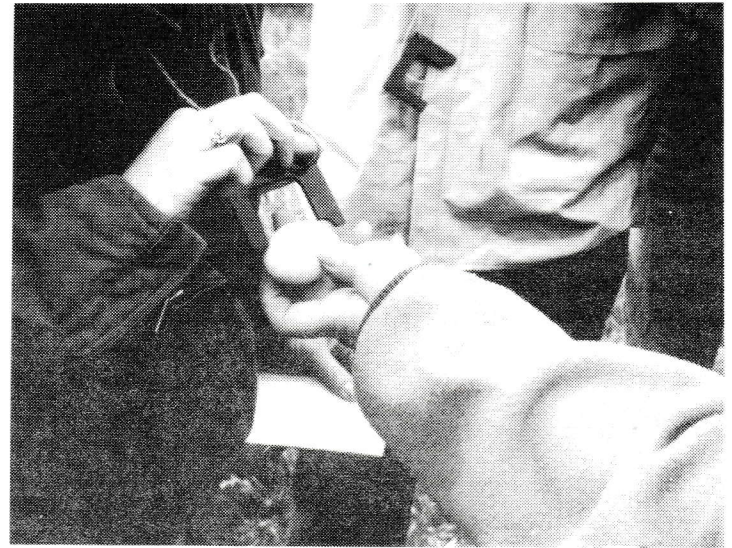
Join SFBBO staff, volunteers and members for the annual potluck picnic at Santa Teresa County Park on August 18. The topic of the day will be the Rufous-crowned Sparrow which inhabits Santa Teresa Park in South San Jose.

Spring Census On Bair Island

In late February thru mid March the herons and egrets return to Bair Island and begin courtship and nest building and for the Bird Observatory this means the beginning of colonial nesting bird surveys. On April 21 a group of 22 SFBBO members left the Redwood City Yacht Harbor to census the heron rookery on outer Bair Island where they have been conducting nesting surveys of Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons and Snowy & Great Egrets for many years. As always, work on the island has to be completed in an efficient and timely manner, since we are limited by the flow of the tides for access to the island. Timing is critical. Thirty minutes delay and you could be left high and dry on the island until the next rising tide. Organizing volunteers to complete a large census as this takes great skill and planning. After grouping the volunteers for last minute instructions and explaining the use of the measuring device to identify the eggs of the four species, we headed out from the south end of the Island to count Black-crowned Night Heron and Snowy Egret nests. Much to our surprise and dismay we found this colony abandoned. In 1989 there were approximately 50 nests at this site, so you can imagine the disappointment to find this colony empty. Was the colony abandoned because of an untimely disturbance made by campers that had built a lean-to just inside the colony site? It has been observed by other researchers that such disturbances early in the nesting season of Black-crowned Night Herons has caused an abandonment of nesting sites.



Peg Woodin gives volunteers last minute instructions before entering heron colony. (Photo by Susie Formenti)



Volunteers measure egg of a Black-crowned Night Heron. (Photo by Susie Formenti)

With no eggs to count in the south colony we regrouped and headed for the north colony to continue the census. At the south end of the north colony where we first began our survey we found both Black-crowned and Snowy Egret nests in abundance. With the idea that it would be difficult to identify the eggs of each species everyone held their measuring device in hand ready to measure each egg. But once you saw a Black-crowned egg and a Snowy egg together, it was very easy to make the distinction between the sizes. Soon you could walk up to a nest and with confidence say to the recorder, "Snowy nest, four eggs". Once this section of the colony was counted we circled back to enter a section of the colony that was more diverse in species including Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets.

If you have been following the story in our past newsletters about the deteriorating condition of the coyote brush that Great Blue Herons have been nesting in on the island, you will be glad to know that the artificial nests constructed by our members are getting some use. In the January/February newsletters we described our trip to Bair Island to place these artificial grape vine nests in the colony. Of the 16 artificial nests that have been placed in the colony in the past two years, three have been used a second season by Great Blue Herons and two new nests have been used this year. The two loose bundles of grape vines that were color coded and placed on platformes in the center of the colony were

also integrated into many Great Blue Heron and Great Egret nests.

The total nest count for this survey date was:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Nests</u>
Snowy Egrets	195
Great Blue Herons	22
Great Egrets	10
Black-crowned Night Herons	229

SFBBO greatly appreciates the assistance of the following volunteers on Bair Island this season: Debra Anthonyson, Becky & Carrie Arnold, Tom Esperson, Roxie Farwell, Susie Formenti, Vicky Funari, Linda & Chuck Goff, Ed Gusterson, Roger Hothem, Carol Hutchinson, Debra Kleffman, Kirk King, Mahshid & Ryan Marsh, Jean Perata, Kyle Polychronis, Ron Restanid, Glenn Rogers, Peg Woodin, and Lou Young.



Great Blue Heron chicks in the nest. (Photo by Susie Formenti)

Editors Note

During our census on April 21 a sick adult Black-crowned Night Heron was observed walking thru the vegetation in the south colony. This individual bird was the only one found in the colony and could not fly and was easily captured by Peg Woodin. Upon examination no apparent injuries were noted, but it seemed to be under weight. This bird was placed in a box and transported to Wildlife Rescue where Kappy Springer undertook the rehabilitation. Within five days it gained 120 grams and appeared healthy and ready for release. Kappy returned the bird to SFBBO to be released back into its habitat. The release appeared to be successful as it flew over the salt pond and joined other members of its species.

DESERT RATS RETURN

by Paul L. Noble

Don Starks and I lead a successful tour to SE Arizona this past May. We and five participants caravanned thru the best SE Arizona has to offer. We visited Organ Pipe National Monument where we were mobbed by flocks of hungry birds at our campsite. Quitobequito Springs along the Mexican border produced Black Vultures, quite rare anywhere in Arizona. Madera Canyon near Tucson provided some impressive owling including Elf and Whiskered owls. Also seen here were Elegant Trogon and an early Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher. We moved on to Patagonia and saw Thick-billed Kingbird and had excellent views of Northern Bearless Tyrannulet. The Gray Hawks were here and we heard them, but they are nesting this time of year so we stayed away for fear of disturbing them (August is easiest to see these magnificent hawks). At Sierra Vista we visited the new Bureau of Land Management holding along the San Pedro River. I have never seen so many Vermillion Flycatchers or Summer Tanagers in my life! This place promises to be as well known as Madera, Cave Creek and Ramsey. Ramsey Canyon was a decided disappointment. Severe drought in SE Arizona has dried up many perennial streams and the hummingbirds were far and few between. Saw mill Canyon in the Huachucas produced another trogon and the reliable Buff-breasted Flycatchers. Our last days were spent visiting Cave Creek and Rustler Park in the Chiricauhuas, where we saw Olive Warbler, Virginia Warbler and Cordilleran Flycatchers.

SE Arizona is a special place, particularly for birders, but also for desert rats in general. If you could not make it for this trip, your in luck as we offer another in August. With a little rain it should be outstanding. Call the Bird Observatory for details. Don't miss out!

SOUTH EAST ARIZONA IN AUGUST

August 4 - 12

Leaders

Paul Noble
Don Starks

Cost

\$165 members
\$180 non members

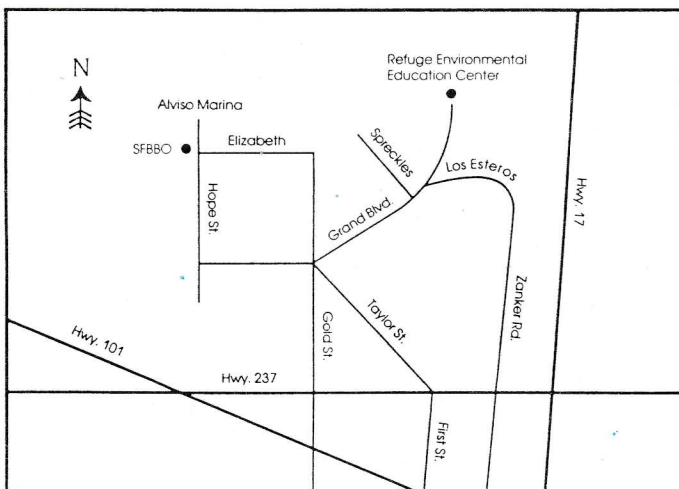
For more details call the Bird Observatory office at (408) 946-6548

The Bird Observatory 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 typically held on the first Thursday of each month, but are sometimes changed due to the availability of the speaker. The program starts 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 office for dates and times.

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

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



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PROJECT SCHEDULE 1990

The following are scheduled dates for SFBBO studies thru the month of August. If you would like to volunteer your time for any of these studies, please call the Bird Observatory office. Your help is needed, no matter what your level of experience. Because of logistics the number of volunteers for some of the trips will be limited, so call soon.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Activity</u>
JUNE		
23	Alcatraz	Observations
24	Bair Island	Survey
	Botulism	Survey
30	Knapp	Survey
JULY		
1	Botulism	Survey
7	Bair Island	Survey
8	Botulism	Survey
14	Alcatraz	Observations
15	Knapp	Survey
	Botulism	Survey
21	Bair Island	Survey
22	Botulism	Survey
28	Knapp	Survey
	Botulism	Survey
29	Alcatraz	Observations
AUGUST		
4	Botulism	Survey
5	Bair Island	Survey
12	Knapp	Survey
	Botulism	Survey
18	Alcatraz	Observations
19	Bair Island	Survey
	Botulism	Survey
25	Botulism	Survey
	Knapp	Survey

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

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in the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

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



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

* Single payment becomes part of an endowment fund.