

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

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NUMBER 10

APRIL 1985

COYOTE CREEK RIPARIAN STATION

After more than two years of planning and negotiating with concerned agencies we are excited to report tangible progress in establishment of our Coyote Creek Riparian Station (CCRS). With the help of Rudolph & Sletten, Inc., General and Engineering Contractors, we have moved on-site a 10 x 40 foot Scotsman Field Office, donated by R&S Inc., to serve as our field laboratory. The CCRS of SFBBO is established as a long-term bio-monitoring station using bird-banding as a principal research tool. Its program will be devoted to pure and management related wildlife research and to the preservation and enhancement of the riparian habitat along lower Coyote Creek.

The CCRS research area is on City of San Jose property and inside the projected flood control levees (Santa Clara Valley Water District) along the last two miles of Coyote Creek as it joins the tide water of San Francisco Bay. It is adjacent to SJ/SC Water Pollution Control Plant storage and drying lagoons. Access to the area is limited. SFBBO members who qualify to work in various aspects of our CCRS program have such access.

The CCRS concept was accepted in principle by the SFBBO Board of Directors in December 1983. A principal concern of the Board was -- can the Observatory support fiscally? Consistent with that concern, and from PRBO's experience with its Palomarin Station, it is important that CCRS be self supporting.

To approach such fiscal independence, a few of us have made donations establishing the "SFBBO-CCRS Endowment Fund". With your help we hope to achieve an initial goal of \$10,000. Its purpose will be to pay, out of earnings only, the electric and telephone bills, added insurance costs, and modest amounts for mist nets and bird feed-bait. The Observatory has agreed to set up a separate investment account for the Fund and to keep a separate set of books for the CCRS. President Phyllis Swanson has appointed a standing committee to advise the Staff and Board on CCRS matters.

We hope that in the years ahead the CCRS Endowment Fund can be increased sufficiently to employ a CCRS Biologist-Coordinator and to project station operations -- and resulting contributions to knowledge -- into the twenty-first century.

Continued on Page 2



Photo by Dick Mewaldt

Please join us in giving CCRS a solid start by making a tax deductible donation [IRS Statute 501(c)3] to the "SFBB0-CCRS Endowment Fund". Use the enclosed special envelope mailer -- or send it directly to me if you wish.

Dick Mewaldt
4150 Golf Dr.
San Jose, Ca. 95127

CPR CLASS

A CPR class, taught by Armando Martinez, will be offered at the Bird Observatory office on Sunday, April 21. The class will run from 9am to 5pm and the cost is \$15. This is a great way to get your CPR certificate or renewal in one day and have fun doing it. If your interested in signing up call the office.

SFBB0 1985 STUDIES

The 1985 breeding season is getting underway and schedules and plans are being made for SFBB0's projects and studies. Listed below are the studies that will be carried out by the Bird Observatory this year with a brief description and time span. You can see that a lot of volunteer help is needed to carry these projects to completion. If your have decided that this is the year that your going to get involved and would like to work on one of these studies as a volunteer, call the Bird Observatory office for more information.

BAIR ISLAND (Volunteers needed March-August)

This is a nearly ten year old study involving censusing and banding of nesting birds on Bair Island near Redwood City. The study includes, but is not limited to, gathering data on nesting Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets, Caspian Terns, and Least Terns.

CALIFORNIA GULL PROJECT (Volunteers needed March-July)

In 1980 California Gulls began nesting on levees near Alviso. This colony is unusual because it is the only known breeding site for California Gulls west of the Sierras and the only colony associated with an estuarine environment. It is, therefore, a unique situation and one which needs to be thoroughly studied. Activities this year will center on banding the chicks and obtaining information on clutch size and hatching success. We will be working primarily at night so that we disturb the colony as little as possible.

BOTULISM STUDY (Volunteers are needed from mid-June thru mid-October)

The purpose of this study is to monitor for the presence of Clostridium botulism toxin Type C in Artesian Slough and Coyote Creek. For many years, waterfowl botulism has occurred in south San Francisco Bay. Adverse environmental conditions, such as poor water quality and high ambient temperatures, are conducive to waterfowl botulism epidemic outbreaks. Sample collections will be correlated with effluent and water quality data. Sick birds are collected, treated and later released. This 5 year study began in July 1982. Sampling is conducted at least twice per week from mid-June through mid-October. The lab work is done weekly. Training is provided for all aspects of this project. (Avian botulism is not contagious to humans.)

COLONIAL BREEDING BIRD SURVEY (Volunteers needed March-August)

The primary purpose of this study is to ascertain the current reproductive status of colonially nesting birds of the south San Francisco Bay area. Volunteers will be coordinated in a census of all colonially nesting birds to determine the number of breeding pairs, and their general success as measured by the number of fledglings. All known nesting sites will be visited twice a month to count nesting pairs and estimate on a given date, the percentages of eggs vs. the percentage of young in nests, and to determine their survival rates.

CLAPPER RAIL STUDY (Volunteers needed all year)

The California Clapper Rail is found only in salt marshes of the San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay. SFBB0 and the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge are conducting a five year study of this endangered species. Birds are captured with hand nets from an airboat. After capture the birds are measured and banded. Using combinations of a USFWS band and 3 plastic color bands, we are able to identify up to 200 individual birds. Subsequent sightings or recaptures will give basic information on populations, movements, territoriality and habitat requirements of these rails. This data will be used to protect and expand suitable rail habitat, and insure the continued existence of a healthy population of California Clapper Rails.

COYOTE CREEK BANDING PROGRAM (Year round banding on Wednesday and weekends).

The Coyote Creek Banding Program provides field experience as a part of the Bird Banding Workshop. It also gathers base-line data for use in the establishment of a long-term bio-monitoring program in several habitats (riparian, fresh water marsh, etc.) where Coyote Creek meets San Francisco Bay.

FORSTER'S TERN STUDY

This is a long term study on Forster's Terns, which will start during the coming breeding season. A detailed investigation of the breeding substrates will be done, including physical and vegetative surveys, nesting success will be monitored and young birds will be color banded. It is hoped that the investigation of breeding substrates will provide valuable management data which can be used by the Refuge to enhance the breeding habitat of these birds.

SALT MARSH YELLOWTHROAT STUDY

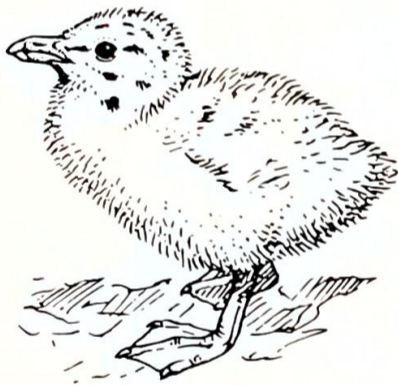
The Salt Marsh Yellowthroat is a candidate species for the Federal Endangered Species List. We will be conducting a status study to gather more information about the present populations of this subspecies. The results of the project will be used to determine whether the Salt Marsh Yellowthroat is added to the Endangered Species list. We will be censusing all breeding sites throughout its range to determine the numbers of breeding pairs of this subspecies.

CORRECTION

In writing about the 1984 study of the California Gulls in the March issue, I erroneously stated that the birds were banded with U.S. Fish & Wildlife bands. In fact, the bands used were imprinted with Fish & Wildlife numbers, but were purchased from Great Britain at a cost of around \$500, paid for by SFBBO.

Money will be needed to buy more bands for the 1985 study. I have two things to say. The first is, "Oops! Sorry folks." The second is that I'm chipping in \$20 to help buy bands for this year's study. Will you join me?

Send your donations to the Observatory and include a note that the money is for California Gull study bands. Thanks for your help.



Ed Roberts

DONATIONS

Thanks to Bob & Wilma Eickmann for their donation of a boat and trailer that the Bird Observatory has put to good use for the past few years, and to Mike Newcomer for the donation of the book entitled, "Animal Behavior" and Volumes I & II of "Mammals of the World" by Walker.

Also, thanks to Susie Formenti, Michealle Havenhill, Elsie Richey and Fran Mewaldt for the refreshments for the March General Membership meeting.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Bird Observatory needs two volunteers for two hours a month to fold, label and prepare the newsletter for mailing. If you are willing to commit to a couple of hours of work each month your help would be greatly appreciated by the office staff.

* * *

Do you have a knack for organizing? Would you like to help us with the endless flow of paperwork. We need volunteers at the office on a regular basis. If you have a free afternoon a week or month, we could use your help. Call us at (408) 946-6548 and sign up. This is an excellent way to get to know more about the bay, the birds and research.

SFBBO ANNOUNCES BIRDING CLASS FOR BEGINNERS

Don Starks, our resident tour director and birding whiz, has agreed to teach a class designed for the beginning birder and others who just want to sharpen their birding skills. The class will run from May 8 - June 12 and consist of six two hour lectures (once a week) and four half day field trips to local areas. Lectures will consist of mostly bird slides with comments by Don. Class will begin on Wednesday, May 8, at 7:30 pm at the Bird Observatory office. The cost is \$25/person and all profits go to the Bird Observatory, which makes your fee a tax deductible donation. Bring your field guide and binoculars and let's learn a little more about our local birds with Don Starks. For more information call Don at (408) 371-9720. To register call the Bird Observatory office.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, April 4, 1985

Refuge Environmental Education Center
in Alviso

7:30 pm

FEATURED SPEAKER: Paul Jones, a graduate student at San Francisco State, will report on his Masters project of the California Gulls in Alviso.

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.

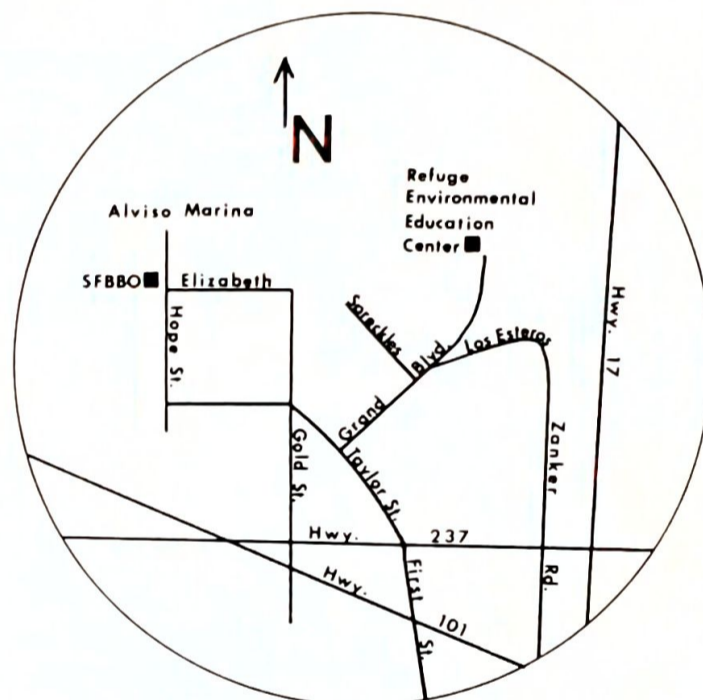
The General Membership meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso. (see map below). The Board meetings are open to the membership and are held monthly. Call the Observatory for dates and times.

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

SFBBO BIRDING TOURS

There is still space available for the Texas trip, April 20-May 5 (see article in February newsletter). Contact Don Starks at the number below if you are interested.

From May 24-27 you can tour the Death Valley area with Bruce LeBar and Carolyn Frederiksen. Most of the birding will be spent at the two best vagrant spots for spring vagrants in California: Deep Springs College and Oasis Ranch. You name the eastern warbler and it probably has been recorded at these areas! A portion of the time will be spent in the White Mountains near the Bristlecone Pines. Past year's birds included Cape May, Chestnut-sided, Hooded, Tennessee, Mourning, Black-throated Green, Canada, Blackpoll, Magnolia, and Wormeating Warblers. This is just the warblers and space limits the rest. The cost is \$70 per person. For more information call Don Starks (tour organizer) evenings at (408) 371-9720 or write him at 2076 Foxworthy Ave., San Jose, Ca. 95124.



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

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| 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 gift membership is tax deductible.

* Single payment becomes part of an endowment fund.

Editor
Susie Formenti

Assistant Editor
Dave Nauer