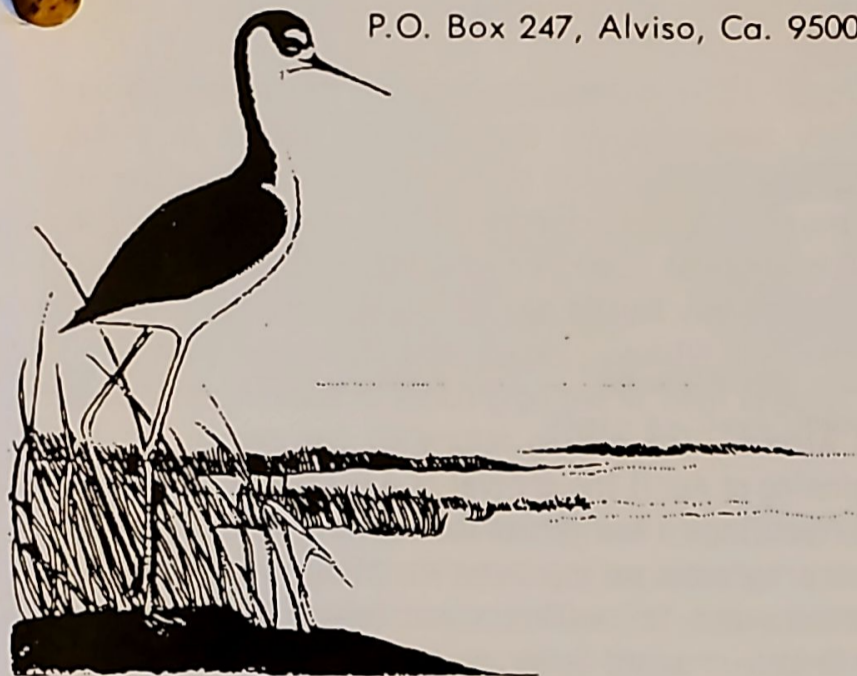


SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

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

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NUMBER 12

JUNE 1985

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT CLASS WORKS ON BAIR ISLAND

In April the Bird Observatory was given some assistance on Bair Island by Mike Kutilek's Wildlife Management class from San Jose State University. While obtaining some practical experience in wildlife management, these students were able to get a close look at many of the birds that nest on the Island and find out what it's like to be an SFBBO volunteer. They participated in enhancement of the Least Tern and Caspian Tern nesting areas and were able to observe nesting platforms which had been erected by the Refuge for the Great Blue Heron colony.

Least Terns prefer to nest on white unvegetated ground. In southern California they nest on white sandy beaches. At Bair Island, they nest in a former salt evaporation pond which is covered in some years with salt crystals. In order to enhance and possibly attract Least Terns back to this nesting site, oyster shell fragments were brought from the shore of the island and spread over the site. This hard working and energetic group of students made several trips carrying enough shell fragments in their backpacks to cover a 50 sq. ft. area. They helped us conduct a brief census of active nests in the Heron and Egret colonies and observed the nesting platforms erected by the Refuge. These nesting platforms were built to provide additional nesting sites for the Great Blue Herons who have traditionally nested in coyote bushes, which have deteriorated in the past few years. The last job of the day involved clearing encroaching vegetation from a section of the levee that Caspian Terns have traditionally used for nesting. For unknown reasons, the terns did not nest on this levee last year. We hope they will come back to nest this year.

It was a long day and after dark before the second boat load of volunteers were able to get off the island in the shallow waters of a 4ft. tide. There was only one way to go - out a narrow borrow pit channel to the bay and the long way around the Island back to the harbor. But for those who volunteered to wait for the second boat trip, an evening boat cruise on the Bay with a view of the city lights made up for the cold wait.

Participants on the trip, along with their instructor Mike Kutilek, were Syndie Meyer, Matt Anderson, Tim Hering, Laura Aoki, Matt Beauregard, Mark Conover, Janet Carr and Chris Christian. Many thanks to them for their help and hard work.



Photo by Tom Rountree

BIRDERS NEEDED IN SALT POND RESEARCH

If you consider yourself a bird watcher, or even just an aspiring one, then you may be interested to learn about a new research project presently beginning in the South Bay and how you can contribute towards its success.

The study will examine the various ecological aspects of seven salt evaporation ponds located in Alviso. Chemical and biological evaluations will be made of each pond related to the different habitat types present. Determinations of bird community structure is one area where enthusiastic volunteers are needed to gather baseline data. During the course of a year many thousands of birds of many different species may utilize these salt ponds. We are looking for people who are interested in using their birding skills for field research by becoming involved in this study.

For those who would like to participate, bird counts are conducted two weekends each month, and continue through April 1986. If you're interested, now or in the future, please call the Observatory or Dave Lonzarich at (415) 341-5208.



Dave Lonzarich

SFBBO PUBLICATIONS

SFBBO has contributed time and data to the following technical reports:

- 1) South Bay Dischargers Authority
Comparative Marsh Study, 1983-1985.
- 2) South Bay Dischargers Authority
Avian Botulism Study, 1983-1985.
- 3) Environmental Impact Report - Final Draft
for the proposed Fremont Airport Changes.
- 4) A Breeding Bird Survey of the San
Francisco Bay Salt Pond Levee System, 1981.

We would like to thank all the volunteer's that have made these publications possible. Without your help they would have not been possible. These publications are available to read at the Bird Observatory or if you would like a personal copy you can donate the cost of copying the report. Give us a call - we'll be glad to help you.

BANDING AT THE CREEK -- UPDATE

Coyote Creek Riparian Station is taking its first fledgling flight this spring. CCRS is an enhancement to the SFBBO Coyote Creek Banding Project which was begun in 1982.

By April 1985, the number of birds banded at CCRS had already surpassed the total number banded in 1984. There were over 1,000 birds captured in a combination of nets and traps. This winter White-crowned Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, and House Finches were our most commonly banded species. As the newsletter goes to press the White-crowned and Golden-crowned are arriving at their breeding grounds in Washington, Canada and Alaska. The spring migration has begun. In the beginning of April the arrival of a Rufous Hummingbird and Warbling Vireo signaled the beginning of a change. As April progressed we saw more Warbling Vireos, Wilson's Warblers and Yellowthroats and fewer White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows. In addition to the above, we have captured and banded Fox Sparrows, Lincoln Sparrows, Myrtle and Audubon Warblers, Hermit Thrushes, Red-winged and Tri-colored Blackbirds, Downy Woodpeckers and Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Some of the questions raised by this activity are: How many of these individuals will return to Coyote Creek in the fall? How many birds of the year will accompany them? How many will stay throughout the winter? How many will migrate north in the spring of 1986? Answers to these questions will provide us with information on productivity as well as comparative survivorship on the breeding grounds, in route and on the wintering grounds.

Many thanks to Dick Mewaldt for getting our new field laboratory set-up and functioning (including electricity and telephone), for keeping our trap lines baited and full of birds on banding days, and for establishing a series of 'permanent' net lanes. Special thanks for donated equipment, supplies and elbow-grease go to David Johnson, Russ and Marilyn Fowler, Allen and Jim Royer, Kathy Hobson, Peg Woodin, Peter Perrine, David Jensen, Dave Lonzarich, and Fran and Dick Mewaldt.

Since early February, we have been banding on week-ends and on Wednesdays. In addition to those mentioned above, certified banders and apprentices include Barbara Cox, Susie Formenti, Tim Gates, Terry Hart, Michealle Havenhill, Valerie Layne, Nancy Norvell, Elsie Richey, Alfred Schmitz, Allen Sillett and Lynn Teneffoss.

Continued



Photo by Dave Johnson

If you are interested in volunteering and committing to 2 or more days a month to banding please contact Nancy Norvell at the Bird Observatory office. If you would like to work weekends, contact Allen Royer at (408) 251-6133. If you would like to work on Wednesdays contact Dick Mewaldt at (408) 258-7491.

CCRS Committee

CALIFORNIA GULL STUDY

The light from the nearly full moon was so bright that it cast sharp shadows. At my feet, ghost gulls glided across the earth, disappearing into the gleaming blackness of the water. When I looked up, the wheeling gulls were stark white in the pale butter colored moonlight. I felt that strange blend of excitement and serenity which other volunteers have experienced on night trips into the California gull colony.

Two hours later, the sextet of volunteers, of which I was a member, had concluded the first of fourteen scheduled nocturnal visits to the colony. The egg count indicated that we can expect to be busy during the 1985 nesting season. We had counted 858 nests with eggs in them. Perhaps the final number will be one-third again that many, as the population of the colony continues to expand.

The number of volunteers required to census and help band chicks will expand, too. If you would like to participate in one or more visits this season, telephone the Bird Observatory office or sign up at the next General Membership meeting. Like the old Uncle Sam posters, "We need you!"

Ed Roberts

Classes & Trips

SFBBO Birding Tours

From July 12 to July 15 you can bird the Yosemite Region with Bruce LaBar and Carolyn Frederiksen. You will bird both sides of the Sierra using Yosemite as a base camp and because of this difference in habitat you will see a variety of birds. Last year's trip produced Blue Grouse, Sage Thrasher, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Gray Flycatcher, Hermit Warbler, and Rosy Finch. You'll be camping at Yosemite for three nights. Be prepared for cool nights and afternoon showers. The cost of this trip is \$90 per person and includes all camp site reservations and fees, museum entrances fees, and the guidance of tour leaders. Not included in the cost are meals, transportation, and sundry items such as beverages, etc. For more information call Don Starks (tour organizer) evenings at (408) 371-9720 or write him at 2076 Foxworthy Ave. San Jose, Ca. 95124.

Birding Field Trip

This summer the Fremont Adult School will offer "Birding Field Trips". This session should be of special interest to teachers and others who are unable to attend weekday classes during the school year. The six-week class will meet on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, June 18 - July 23. It will be taught by Alice Hoch. Students will observe and learn about field identification and life styles of local birds during trips to different birding spots each Tuesday. Registration will be at 9:30 am on June 18 in the Conference Room of the Fremont Adult School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont. Be prepared to bird-watch that morning.

Fremont Adult Education is offering a field class on "Birds and Flowers of Point Lobos", on Saturday, June 29th from 9 am to 3 pm. This class is timed to coincide with the height of nesting activity of Brandt's Cormorants. You can also expect to see nesting Pelagic Cormorants, Western Gulls, and other species, plus the wildflowers which will be blooming at that time. Bring snacks, lunch, and beverage and wear sturdy shoes. The instructor for this class is Alice Hoch. You must pre-register for this trip by Monday, June 24th. Register by mail or in person at the Fremont Adult School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont 94533. Include \$10.50 class fee and for a registration confirmation, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For more information contact the Fremont Adult School, Community Education at (415) 791-5841 or Alice Hoch at (415) 657-0475.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, June 6, 1985

Refuge Environmental Education Center
in Alviso

7:30 pm

FEATURED SPEAKER: Refuge personnel will discuss "Management of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge from a biologist's viewpoint."



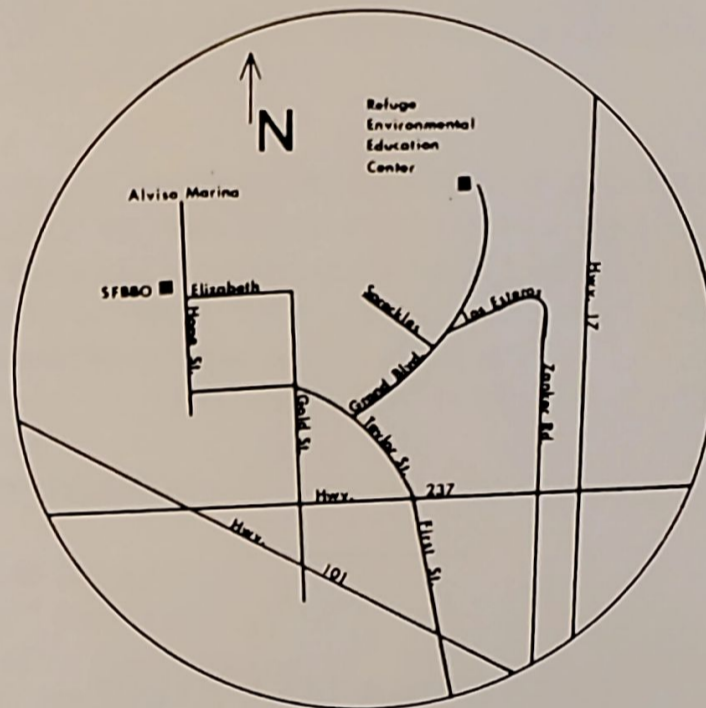
Editor Susie Formenti

Assistant Editor, Dave Nauer

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 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.



DONATIONS. . . Thanks to Joyce Bizjak, Fran Mewaldt and Pat Dubois for the refreshments for the May General Membership meeting.

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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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