

The Stilt

Fall/Winter 2002

SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

MORPHING INTO MARSH

Along with other scientists and land managers, I was invited to visit a restored marsh in the far south bay. The group walked along the levee bordering the marsh, and splintered into smaller conversational groups that observed water flows, vegetation and of course, what birds had moved in to this newly created wetland.

The sponsoring agency was eager to point out the bulrushes and tules edging the ponds, and the abundant waterfowl, shorebirds, and pelicans now in residence. The change was not surprising given that the site's previous life had been as a dry pit inhabited by weekend dirt bikers. But the permitting agency was not entirely satisfied. Bulrush and tules inhabit brackish and freshwater marshes. An original project goal was to create some pickleweed marsh. Pickleweed, along with cordgrass, are the marsh plants most destroyed in the past 100 years, home to Clapper Rails and most in need of mud flats and salty water.

Contrary to recent news releases, South San Francisco Bay is not entirely salt ponds, but it's darn close. Over the past 150 years, many birds have adapted to using them, and now we stand on the brink of changing all that again. The favored word is "restoration", which implies that we can restore or put it all back the way it was. But as Thomas Wolfe said, you can't go home again. So decisions will be made on where we are going, on what new habitats we hope to create under the Pacific Flyway.

One can count the extant marsh restoration projects in the South Bay on one hand. Some of them represent a political struggle and

victory to put water back where it once was. Others are the results of mitigation, that process through which some wetlands are destroyed in exchange for the creation of some new. Often, hopeful mitigators must create double or triple-fold new acreage to replace what is lost. They have been hard pressed to find that amount of available real estate around the bay and they have succeeded in some significant places. But somewhere along the permitting trail, vision gets short.

Time and money (usually) trump science: observation and recording of the results in a meaningful way have been given little due diligence. Because of that, we have very little empirical knowledge of how wetlands reform in South San Francisco Bay. And since habitat composition determines bird use, our ideal "bird" visions lack the crucial underpinnings of if and how they can be made actual.

We stood on top of the tide gate, watching muddy south bay water pour in through the huge pipe in the neighboring slough, into the new wetland. Six hours later, at low tide, it would flow out, leaving behind sediments that will raise the marsh floor and seeds that will determine its vegetation. Marsh Wrens and yellowthroats chattered in the bulrush and a Loggerhead Shrike chimed its single call note from a nearby fence. We looked across at the slough's far banks, covered with bulrush in bloom. And I was reminded of a beloved biology professor's single word of admonition: Look!

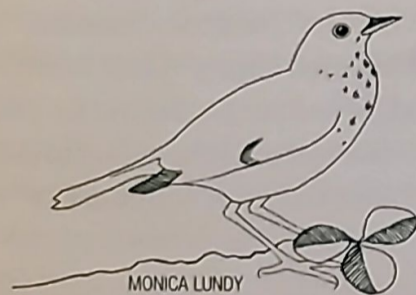
~ Janet Hanson
Executive Director, SFBBO



WICKI JENNINGS

In this issue:

- 1 *Morphing into Marsh*
Director's Corner
- 2 *6th Annual 2002 California Fall Challenge Wrap-Up*
- 3 *Ducks for Bucks*
- 4 *Why We Band Birds*
- 5 *Coyote Creek Field Station: Fall & Winter Update*
- 6 *SFBBO Biologist Attends Third North American Ornithological Conference*



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

The 6th Annual 2002 California Fall Challenge Wraps-Up Another Successful Year



Three-quarters of the Chifladores Alados team, Cheryl Strong, David Thomson, and Bryan Dias (the fourth, Stephanie Dias, is behind the camera), start their fairly early CFC Big Day at Pescadero Marsh in coastal San Mateo County.

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE DIAS

We have just wrapped up the fun and tabulations of the 6th Annual 2002 California Fall Challenge! This year's 21 teams birded in 14 California counties from Shasta to Humboldt to Kings.

It's pleasing to us here at SFBBO that birders of all skill levels continued to enjoy participating in the CFC. While it is definitely a competitive event, its primary purpose is to raise money for the SFBBO. Each year it helps to provide critically needed funding that "helps keep the lights on."

The fun part is that it gets birders out in the field to enjoy the fall migration, see some birds, and have a good time. If they turn up

rarities and contribute to our knowledge of avian distribution during migration, that's a big bonus. That's the beauty of this type of event in California: the geography is so varied and the state covers such a nice chunk of the Pacific Flyway.

This year the Fall Challenge Committee decided to go in for rewarding our fundraisers in a big way! As a result, more "rookies" played the game and one played to win: Mike Mammoser, who raised nearly \$3000 to win a one-week cruise for two in Prince William Sound, Alaska, aboard Discovery Voyages. Sherry Hudson, SFBBO staffer, came in 2nd with \$2,143 to win a beautiful new pair of Swarovsky Binoculars from Wild Bird Center, Los Gatos (thanks again, Freddie!). All our \$500+ fundraisers are rewarded with a fog-gray SFBBO fleece vest, to keep them warm during the 2003 CFC! Many thanks to those who helped raise money for the CFC this year!

In the birding department, the Monterey team, "The Overachievers," led by SFBBO Board Member, Scott Terrill, won the competition for *Highest Percentage of the County List* with a .5906. Team member Mike Rogers was on hand at the Annual Meeting to pick up the team's prize, a beautiful new Leica Televid spotting scope with a 20/60 zoom eyepiece (donated by Leica, Inc.) It was a tight competition, with the Merced Refugees coming in at .5829 and Team Santa Cruz with .5484. The Monterey team also came in tops on

Number of Species Seen in one county (176), which earned them a weekend for two at Crystal Springs Lodge in Klamath. All that and they set a new single Big Day record for October in Monterey!

We continue to use county lists of commonly occurring species, based on lists created by John Sterling, California's county birding czar and the generous provider of the CFC's official lists. We want to thank John for his hard work again this year with his valuable contribution! This "par" approach encourages birding of little known counties, such as San Benito and Nevada counties. Of course, there are always those birders who make a weekend event out of a Napa Big Day and we think that's fine too!

Thanks, also, to all of you who submitted proposed changes to county lists. These valuable contributions have been forwarded to John for consideration and possible incorporation into next year. Many thanks to those without whom the CFC would never have happened: the help with reworking and updating the rules, the many who set up and cleaned up at the CFC kick-off party, and everything in between! Lastly, thanks to the CFC committee members who met weekly prior to the event in order to make it all happen! The group included Karen DeMello, Jan Hintermeister, Lowell Saumweber, Janet Hanson, Bryan Dias and countless input and effort from staff as well as many SFBBO members and Board of Directors members.

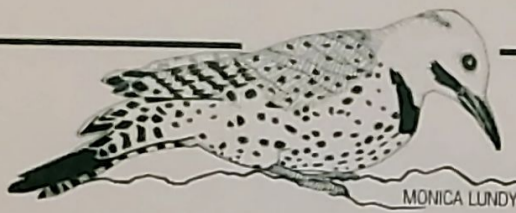
Thanks to everyone who took part in the 6th Annual 2002 California Fall Challenge. We hope to see you next fall for the 7th Annual Challenge!

Good birding!

-Lowell Saumweber
2002 CFC Chair
with contributions by
Bryan Dias
Outreach Coordinator

HERE ARE SOME OF THIS YEAR'S TOP CFC FUNDRAISERS!

Mike Mammoser	\$2,900.00
Sherry Hudson	\$2,143.00
Janet Hanson	\$1,581.00
Lou Young	\$1,546.00
Cheryl Strong	\$1,378.20
Jan Hintermeister	\$1,190.00
Gina Barton	\$892.00
Harriet Gerson	\$720.00
Karen DeMell	\$520.00
MaryWiznewski	\$505.00
Bryan Dias	\$350.00
Shirley Wodkte	\$275.00
Roger Wolfe	\$200.00
Vicki Silvas-Young	\$200.00
Gerry Ellis	} \$1,000.00
Robin Smith	
Scott Terrill	



DUCKS FOR BUCKS

The tires spun. The wet gravel flew. The rubber burned. The truck did not budge. The boat trailer, submerged in the slough did not budge. Nothing budged, in fact, but the little gray Avon boat, which floated off of the trailer with the rising tide. I was stuck in the muck on the Mallard Slough boat ramp. So here we go again, I thought. Now what?

This definitely was not in the job description. Nor was it in the Avian Disease Prevention Program manual. And this was my first season doing botulism surveys. I tried angling the truck wheels off to the left, to try and bump the truck out of the ruts. The spinning tires dug into the gravel ramp. I gave the truck a bit of gas. Sometimes this worked. No dice today. More spinning tires, more flying gravel, more burning rubber.

The tide continued to rise. It would eventually submerge the gravelly boat ramp that the truck now sat on. And I was seriously stuck. "Janet's just going to kill me", I thought, as visions of drowned trucks and boat trailers raced through my mind. I sighed deeply and lowered my head against the steering wheel and closed my eyes. Why was everything so hard around here? Just once, could something be nice and easy?

"Never a dull moment" was not a cliché at SFBBO. I started running every silly idea that I could think of through my wee brain. The tide continued to rise. I didn't dare look back and see just how far the water had creped up the ramp." Think, you bozo", I mumbled to myself.

Diana and Shu-Chieh, who were standing along side the truck on the boat ramp, looked around for something to stuff in the deep ruts that the truck tires were stuck in. Bits of bulrush were all that we could come up with. That didn't work either. The tide continued to rise. I continued to think of silly ideas, and to think seriously of when to start to actually panic. Just then, of course, a great and silly idea popped into my head. I slid the back cab window

open and shouted to Diana and Shu-Chieh, "I have a goofy idea. Somebody get in the back of the truck and jump up and down".

Diana was closest to the truck and clambered readily up into the bed. "Right here in the back?" she shouted over at me.

I nodded, swallowed hard and thought, here we go again, another fine mess I'm trying to get out of. "Okay", I yelled out the window, "Hold on and jump!"

Diana did so splendidly. Shu-Chieh, who had never been on one of these adventurous botulism trips before, watched in wide-eyed fascination. "Here goes, hold on!" I yelled again.

Diana jumped. I gave the truck some gas. The wheels spun. The truck squirmed, slithered, and bounced comically up and down. I could smell burning rubber in the warm afternoon air. During a particularly well-executed jump over the right rear wheel by Diana, the tire grabbed and dug into the gravel, the truck jerked hopefully forward a bit. I gave it more gas, hoping the tires wouldn't start to spin again. The truck began to lurch hesitantly up the ramp. Gravel flew, splashing into the water and the boat behind the truck. Diana kept bouncing, and the truck squirmed and slid sideways on a bed of drift bulrush. Then it lurched forward again and ponderously crawled up the ramp.

We started to hoot, whoo-hoo and applaud. Out of the slough came the trailer and the boat, draped in widgeon grass and fragments of drift bulrush, streaming gallons of water. I turned off the engine, and all was suddenly quiet. I slumped in the seat and sighed, "Jeese Louise".

Diana and Shu-Chieh were still laughing and applauding. I just shook my head, relieved that we got the truck out of there. Ah, just another south bay adventure.

On a quiet day, botulism trips were quite pleasant. This wasn't a quiet day. But it had been a clean season so far. No botulism. No sick ducks, not a one. Avian

Botulism was prone to places like Mallard slough where fresh quiet water, and warm late summer weather combined to create ideal conditions for the proliferation of the soil bacterium that caused the disease. I was literally holding my breath through the dog days of last September and October, when outbreaks were most likely to occur.

It hadn't been a bad duck year so far. It was, however, a bad gull day, meaning we picked up six sick gulls. I got the boat stuck in the mud twice trying to catch them, and we had no more space in which to put any more gulls. "The inn is full," Diana announced.

All of our bird boxes were occupied by two ornery gulls each. Gulls got themselves into trouble on a regular basis foraging in the landfill dumps for vintage KFC and other gourmet varieties of spoiled meat. They had bad cases of food poisoning. And they were not happy about it. They were not happy about being rescued by us, either.

But being the sort of day that this was turning into, we had a few more surprises in store for us, including the mired truck on the boat ramp. Coming out of south Coyote Creek, loaded to the gunwales with gulls, I spotted what looked like a weird little gull bobbing forlornly on the water. Diana saw it too, and pointed it out. From afar, it looked like a very small, sooty gull. As I pulled the boat along side the bird, Diana easily netted it. As she untangled the little bird from the net, my jaw dropped, for I realized what it was. Shu-Chieh was rummaging in the cooler for the hydration gear and a towel. Diana held the little bewildered looking bird up, and began to check it for signs of injury. "What is it?" Shu-Chieh asked me.

All I could manage to say was, "Good grief, it's a Murre."

It was in winter plumage, so it didn't have that penguin-in-a-tuxedo look of the breeding Common Murres I'd seen out on the

Continued on page 6

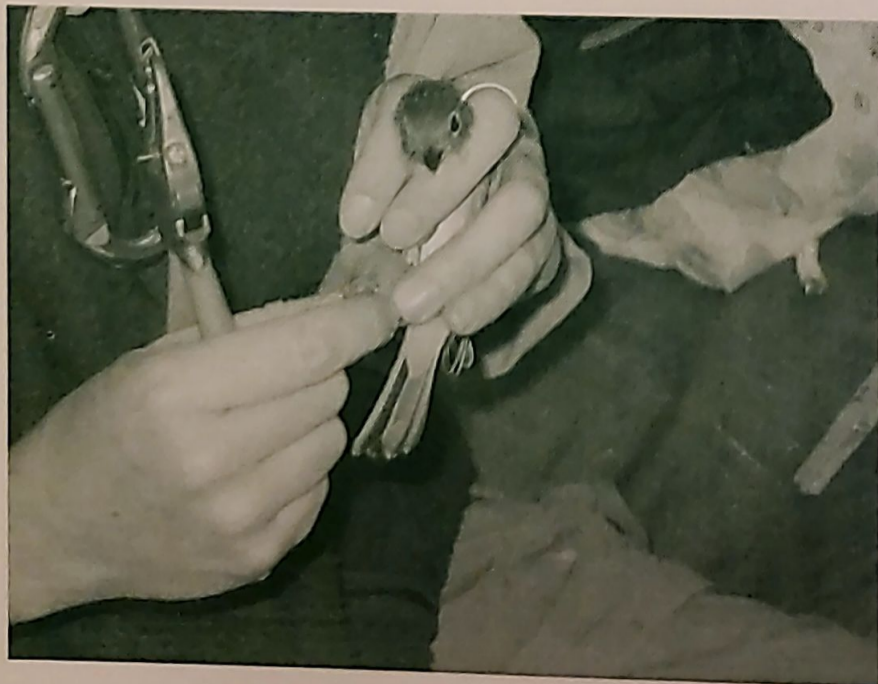
WHY WE BAND BIRDS

I've heard many comments about my job as a biologist with SFBBO's Landbird Program like, "What a cool job! You are lucky to get to work outside and with wildlife."

Yes, I am lucky, and we do collect a lot of interesting data by banding birds and the other important work we do at our Coyote Creek Field Station (CCFS). Maybe you know a little, or even a lot, about banding birds but don't really know why we actually do here in the South Bay at SFBBO.

Bird banding in general can give a lot of valuable information. Individually identifying each bird through banding helps us study dispersal, migration, behavior, social structure, life span, survival rate, reproductive success, and population growth.

Head Landbird Biologist, Sherry Hudson, checks the band on this Western Flycatcher for a good fit. The manner in which she holds the bird is ideal – the bird is kept secure yet not constricted. This allows the biologists to work quickly and accurately without causing any harm to the bird.



Landbird Biologist, Gina Barton, carefully removes a Hermit Thrush from one of our mist-nets. Our banders work quickly in order to minimize stress on the captured birds. However, tremendous care is taken in handling the birds as well as great attention paid to accuracy and detail when gathering the data.

We, along with most other banding facilities in North America, send all of our banding data to the Bird Banding Laboratory (which is part of the USGS), which stores all of this information. This collective of information can tell us how far a bird may travel during migration and which path it chooses to take. At SFBBO we have banded birds that have been

recaptured as far as Alaska, British Columbia and Michigan, and have also recaptured birds from as far as Alaska and Bishop, California.

We are able to help answer many other questions about the lives of birds in our area through our work at CCFS. For example, we have been able to determine minimum life spans for many individual species of

birds. At CCFS we have quite a few life span records that we constantly record and update. We have had both a Downy Woodpecker and Red-winged Blackbird documented for living 12 years! Look at more CCFS records on our website at www.sfbbo.org as well as numerous other educational topics and resources such as photos of the banding process and articles.

More specifically at SFBBO, we are banding to study seasonal and long term population patterns of migratory, wintering and year-round resident birds and their association with the surrounding habitat. In conjunction with banding, we have been conducting annual vegetation surveys in which we identify surrounding trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. We have found that 18 species (including House Wrens, Bullock's Orioles, Myrtle Warblers and Chestnut-backed Chickadees) and four guilds have significantly increased in abundance over time at CCFS. Guilds are groups of birds that forage for food in the same way (e.g. members of the bark gleaning guild feed from tree trunks and branches such as woodpeckers and brown creepers).

We have also found strong associations for some species preference to habitat characteristics. The habitat variables that are important in affecting avian communities at CCFS are *habitat cover* and *complexity*. Habitat complexity includes a diversity of plant species present at different successional or growing stages. Some of the species most strongly associated with these two variables were the Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Chesnut-backed Chickadee and Varied Thrush.

Not only were there habitat associations with specific species, but also with some guilds (the foliage gleaners), the neotropical migrants, and the wintering species. The foliage gleaning guild feeds from foliage and occasionally from branches. This group includes warblers, kinglets, chickadees, goldfinches, wrens and jays. Numbers of foliage gleaners along with the neotropical migrants and winterers increased significantly in the revegetated habitat areas at CCFS.

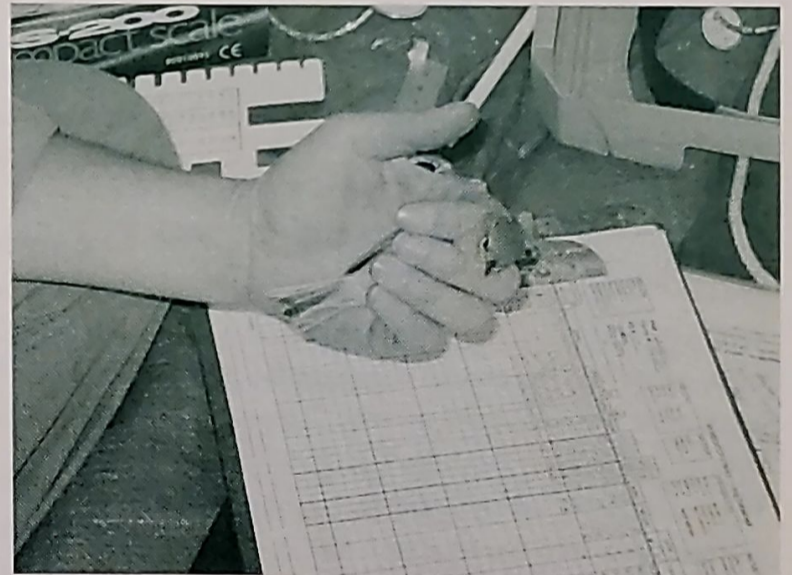
We have also been able to assess the *species diversity* and signs of breeding over time. Species diversity is the number of species weighted by the number of individuals. For example, if there are ten bird species and each species has 20 individuals, then this would be considered a "high species diversity." However, if there are the same ten bird species and one species has 20 individuals and the other species have only one individual, then this would be a "lower species diversity" than the previous example. There were significant increases of species diversity in both wintering birds found in the revegetated habitat and year-round residents found in the overflow channel. There were, however, significant decreases of species diversity in neotropical migrants found in the revegetated habitat. Bullock's Oriole has shown a significant increase of breeding over time.

Having collected banding data for years has allowed us to look at many different facets of the resident and migrant bird populations on Coyote Creek, and their relation to the surrounding habitat. Much of the trends described were from a ten-year period between 1987 and 1997. Not



Sherry Hudson inspects this Orange-crowned Warbler for various indicative characteristics that allow us to determine important information such as feather molt, breeding status, weight, sex and age. This information is crucial to the population biology work we do at SFBBO.

After careful examination and measurement of the bird's characteristics, each individual bird's information is recorded onto a data sheet. This data is then entered into our own database for future study, as well as being sent to the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory in Maryland. There, banding operations from all over North America send their data to this shared information collective allowing for a wide-range of studies.



only has our data allowed us to answer the questions discussed above, but also has brought up new and interesting questions that we would like to investigate soon!

If you happen to come across a dead bird with a band on it, call 1-800-327-2263 with the band number, how, when and where the bird or band was found. This could give provide interesting and important information to both those who originally banded the bird and the overall bird community.

~Gina Barton
Biologist, Landbird Program

SU CASA, MI CASA?

DO YOU OWN OR KNOW OF RENTAL HOUSING AVAILABLE NEXT SPRING?

SFBBO is seeking science interns for the spring field season, April through August 2003. We need accommodations for 2 to 4 interns within easy driving distance of north San Jose. All reasonable offers entertained; tax-deductible donations are a definite option. Please contact Janet Hanson here at the Observatory.

Coyote Creek Field Station: Fall & Winter Update – December 2002

The fall and early winter have been exciting seasons at SFBBO's Coyote Creek Field Station: fall migration flew by, winter residents have shown up, and new bander training is well underway! Some regular Saturday banding days were cancelled in September so we could conduct our new bander-training program. However, despite fewer net hours in September (550 hours versus 950 in

August), we captured many more individuals: 57 birds per 100 net hours in September as opposed to 29 birds per 100 net hours in August.

October was even busier than September, with 85 birds per 100 net hours! However, now that the winter residents have mostly settled in, things have quieted down a little; in November we captured 38 birds per 100 net hours.

The great increase of birds in September was due to the movement of warblers, flycatchers, and other migrants through our area, as well as the arrival of wintering birds near the end of the month. The peak time for migrating Western 'Pacific-Slope' Flycatchers and Yellow Warblers moving through was mid-September. Late September and early October brought us winter residents such as Hermit Thrush, and the sparrows: Fox, Lincoln's, White-crowned and Golden-crowned. Look for these species at CCFS as well as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, who started showing up here in mid-October.

Some of the less commonly captured species that have found their way into our nets recently have been Varied Thrushes, a

Grasshopper Sparrow (on 17 November), a Cooper's Hawk in October, and three Townsend's Warblers on December 1st! The Townsend's Warblers were especially a treat, since the latest ones we captured last year were in September and early October.

Perhaps more exciting than birds caught in the nets are the interesting and unusual fall migrants that were seen at CCFS and other

locales in the south bay. On 24 September Mike Mammoser and others detected both a Chestnut-sided Warbler and a Blackpoll Warbler in the riparian vegetation at CCFS. In the days following, several people re-sighted both birds. Then on

September 27th, three individual Blackpoll Warblers were sighted

at Almaden Lake by Scott Terrill and Mike Mammoser, while another was sighted at the Water Treatment Facility on Embarcadero Way by Bob Reiling. These sightings are unusual because these are considered primarily eastern migrants; and five Blackpoll Warblers in less than a week is quite unusual in our neck of the woods!

Here are some interesting facts about these two unusual species: The Blackpoll Warbler breeds in the northern coniferous forests of Alaska and Canada, and they undertake the longest migration of any warbler - some birds of this species travel over 8000 km from Alaska to Brazil, with some of them flying approximately 3000 km over water. This would mean a potential non-stop flight of up to 88 hours! Understandably, these little flying balls of energy can nearly double their body weight before undertaking this adventure.



Head Landbird Biologist, Sherry Hudson, removes a captured bird from a mist-net. SFBBO has completed another outstanding year of banding in 2002 at the Coyote Creek Field Station, as we have done continuously for over 10 years, as well as at a few "off-site" locations in the South Bay.

DUCKS FOR BUCKS

Continued from page 3

Farallon Islands many years ago. "What in the world is it doing here?" I asked, since coastal seabirds weren't exactly common in southern San Francisco Bay.

Diana said that our wayward little charge was a bit thin, so it was probably sick with something, not eating, and definitely lost. We had to find a place for the Murre in the plastic storage tub, since our bird boxes were full of gulls. It was just that kind of day. We had them sometimes. This one had been a doozie, and I still had to wash the boat and deliver my flock of ornery gulls and the Murre to the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, the brave souls who took care of grouchy, sick gulls for us. It would be a long, trying day before I was through. We headed back to the boat ramp, with a boatload of squawking gulls and a spring tide still on the rise!

~Sue Macias

Biologist, Birds of the Baylands Program

The Chestnut-sided Warbler breeds primarily in northern hardwood and mixed forests of eastern North America and winters throughout Central America and southern Mexico. This is a bird that inhabits early successional habitats such as abandoned farmlands and regenerating clear-cut forests, and has increased greatly in numbers since the early 1800s. If you happen upon this bird during the early breeding season you may hear its distinctive song: "pleased, pleased, pleased to meetcha!"

Although fall migrants will be long gone by the time you receive this newsletter, look for exciting winter residents, both at the Coyote Creek Field Station and in your own backyard! Happy birding!

~Sherry Hudson

Lead Landbird Biologist

FERRATA

In the last issue of The Stilt, the "Volunteer Spotlight" column on Gerry Ellis erroneously reported that he was a "certified bander." Though he has participated in bird banding activities, he is not certified. The editor apologizes for this error.

MAIL PREFERENCE – From time to time, SFBBO makes its mailing list available to only other non-profit organizations for a single use. List trades are the least expensive, most effective way for SFBBO to reach new supporters; we never sell our list. If you would prefer that your name not be shared, please drop us a note at admin@sfbbo.org. Thank you!

Our thanks to these supporters of the Observatory...

MEMBERSHIPS

We thank the following for their membership support, April through September 2002:

Ohlone Audubon Society, Four Wheel Campers, Inc., David Ainley, Kieran Alcumbrac, Frances Alvernaz, R. Jay Andree, Kendra S. Armer, Gary and Joy Aspenall, Morna Baird, Jean Barrett, Jean Beardsley, Daniel M. Becker, M.D. and Johanna van de Woestijne, M.D., Erling Belland, Francesca P. Berger, Bill and Rita Bevans, William Bilobran, Pete Bloom, Diana Bonogofsky, Barbara F. Borthwick, Debra Bowen, Bob and Barbara Brandriff, Victor and Norma Bravo, Thomas Brennan, Mary Brezner, Eleanor Briccetti, Kay Brown, Geraldine A. Brown, Joelle Buffa, Ruth Buneman, Norma L. Cabot, Beatrice Campione, David Cardinal, Dudley B. Carlson, Bliss Carnochan, Jennifer and Simon Chadwick, Ann Chiller, Robert and Susan L. Christiansen, Leo E. Christiansen, Cary and Barbara Cochrell, Jack Cole, Irene Contreras, John Corcoran, Susan and Robert Cossins, Charles and Joan Coston, Judith Crowley, Kathleen and Derek Currall, Bena Currin, Steve Day, Karen DeMello, Leroy and Jacqueline Dias, Peggy L. Don, Diane Dube, Don and Margaret Emery, Hans and Diane Ernst, Michael Ezekiel, Janet Farmer, Mike Feighner, Gordon Firestein and Doris Lang, Joan K. Frisoli, Harold E. Fukuma, Christina Garcia and Marcelino Madrigal, Eddie Gilmartin, Alan G. Goggins, Tanette Goldberg, Rod Golden, Phil and Pat Gordon, Joan R. Goslow, Barbara Gress-Graham, Theresa Grieve, Joan Hadden, Jean Halford, Denise and David Hamilton, Roger D. Harris and Meryl Sundove, John Harris, Louise W. and James W. Harris, Leslie Harrod, Pat Hauswald, Jonathan Hays, Nathan Hendricks, Carl Hendrickson, Richard Hester, Greg Hofmann, Richard and Terry Horrigan, Wild Bird Center, Steve B. Huckabone, Lee Hung, Susan Hunt, Barbara Hurtig-Willis, Carole Hutchinson, Amy Hutzler, June Hymas, Dorothy F. Johnson, Patricia and Gerald Johnson, R. Kent Johnson, Linda I. Johnson, Kit Jones, Eileen Kay, Mary L. Kelly MD, Gerald Kelly, Roland Kenner, Milt Klassen, Judy Klein, Julie Klingmann, Robert B. and Adelle B. Knox, Thomas Konno, Stuart H. Koretz, Jennifer Krauel and Ann Mei Chang, John A. and Renata Kroeger, Richard Kust, LeeAnn Lahren and William Waytena, Jessie Lawson, Valerie L. Layne, Yvette Leung and Liwen Mah, Heather Levien, Pamela

H. Lewis, David Lewis, M.D., Robert A. Lewis, Harold and Eleanor Lipton, Dean Lloyd, Nelle Lyons, John and Betty MacDonald, Julie and Robert MacLean, Barbara Magnuson, Betty H. Magowan, Mary J. Malloy, M.D. and John P. Kane, M.D., Marian Mankos, Lori Mann, Larry and Judie Manning, Lester and Mary Manson, Bruce Mast, Harold and Beverly May, Joanne McDermott, David C. McIntyre, Kevin McKereghan, Winton McKibben, Michael and Mary Anne Melby, Earl O. Menefee, Peter Metropulos, Mark C. Miller, Dave Miller and Kathy Kennedy, William D. Miller, Tamara Mitchell, Robert Moncrieff MD, John V. and Ruth Ann Moore, Clyde Morris, Jean Myers, Donna H. Olsen, Kristen A. Olson, Kitty Pearson, Jean M. Perata and Dennis Davison, Kenneth Petersen, Pamela Peterson, Joseph L. Podolsky, Sara Polgar, Rikke Preisler, Eric Preston, Roberta A. Preu, Donald and Diethild Price, Kirstan A. Price, David Quady, Mary Lou Ramsey D.D.S., Robert W. Reiling, Donald A. Reinberg, Laurel Rezeau, David Rice, James M. and Carrie B. Richardson, H. T. and Marguerite Richter, Deborah Robbins, Christine Robinson, Annemarie Rosengreen, Steve Rovell, Allen Royer Family, Tom Ryan, Jennifer Rycenga, Grace Sain, James and Andrea Sandstrom, Paul Saraceni and Wendy Beckman, Ruth Scarborough, Douglas Schreve, Marilyn and Phil Scowcroft, Clysta Seney and John McLemore, Elaine Senf and Donald Dvorak, Frances Shaw, Jerome M. Shaw, David Shuford, Stephen Shunk, Helga Small, Karen K. Smith, Sheila B. Sousa, Edward and Jacquelyn Spacek, Mike Spence, Suzanne Van Stee, John Steiner, Thomas Stewart, Doug, Jason, and James Stinson, Karlene and Terry Stoker,

Beverley J. Strong, Dolores Taller, William Taylor, George and Nola Theobald, Kathleen P. Thomas, Francis Toldi, Marilyn and George Trabert, Ruth and Gene Troetschler, Anna H. Virtue, Judith Wagner, Zona Walcott and Ron Goldthwaite, Michael and Johanna Wald, Jeff and Susan Wall, George Wallace, Alan and Sandra Walther, David Weintraub, Estelle and Joseph Weiss, Kelly and Julie Wells, Diane E. Wilson, Allan and Julia Wofchuck, Christine Wolfe, Roger Wolfe, Debbie Wong and Tadd Ottman, Shu-Chieh Wu, Des and Cathy Wytman, Carolyn Yale, Bob and Carol Yutzky

CONTRIBUTIONS

We thank the following for their gifts to SFBBO, April through September 2002:

Kieran Alcumbrac, Brian K. Anderson, Adu Bagley, Robert G. Ball, Irene A. Beardsley, Peg Bernucci, George Bing, Tom and Marian Vanden Bosch, Bob and Barbara Brandriff, Victor and Norma Bravo, Andy Burg, Floyd Carley, Jennifer and Simon Chadwick, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Cary and Barbara Cochrell, Janet Farmer, Harold E. Fukuma, Mary Geiger, Harriet Gerson, Phil and Pat Gordon, Marie Gordon, Cornelia Grimes, James Hall, Nikki Hall, Hugh and Rosita Harvey, Claudia Hernandez-Gaxiola, Jan Z. Hintermeister, Bridget Hoffman and Marciano Pitargue, Louise Hudson, Kit Jones, Milt Klassen, Abe Klein, Judy Klein, Robert B. and Adelle B. Knox, Thomas Konno, Richard Kust, Jessie Lawson, Nelle Lyons, Michael Mammoser, Keith and Luella McFarland, Peter Metropulos, Sandy and Steve Moore, T. Charles and Meredith Moore, Jean Myers, Caroline Nabetta, John and Nena Padley, Kenneth Petersen, Armin H. Ramel, Michael Rogers, Janice Ross, Marguerite A. Ryan, John S. Schwarz, Jeff Shaeffer and Tamee Becker, Robin W. Smith, Thomas Stewart, Linda Sullivan, Mark and Leila Sutherland, Karl and Helen Tashjian, George and Nola Theobald, Hazel I. Tilden, Jennifer and Jack Tipton, Anna Wilcox, Virginia and Riley Willcox, Erika M. Wilson

DONATIONS

Our gratitude for the generosity and thoughtfulness of these donors for their contributions:

High Tech Passport, Ltd./Enea Family; Rita & Rob Colwell; Sandy Moore and Eddie Gilmartin; Four Wheel Campers, Woodland; Wild Bird Center, Los Gatos

WISH LIST

OFFICE: Energy efficient freezer, Small energy-efficient refrigerator, New photocopier, Interior design consultation

COYOTE CREEK FIELD STATION: Digital camera, New signage

BIRDS OF THE BAYLANDS PROGRAM: New low-emission 15 hp outboard motor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jan Hintermeister, President
Santa Clara

Vicki Silvas-Young, Secretary
San Jose

Richard Carlson, Treasurer
Palo Alto

Gerry Ellis
San Jose

Mary Kuchlenz
Foster City

Mary Ann Mancuso
Napa

Sandy Spakoff
Fremont

Scott Terrill, Ph.D.
Los Gatos

Lou Young
San Jose

STAFF

Janet Tashjian Hanson
Executive Director

Bryan Dias
Outreach & Education Coordinator

LAND BIRD PROGRAM

Sherry Hudson
Lead Biologist

Gina Barton
Biologist

Alvaro Jaramillo
Biologist

BIRDS OF THE BAYLANDS PROGRAM

Cheryl Strong
Lead Biologist

Sue Macias
Biologist

SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

David Ainley, Ph.D.
San Jose

Doug Bell, Ph.D.
Sacramento State University

Shannon E. Bros, Ph.D.
San Jose State University

Howard L. Cogswell, Ph.D.
*Professor Emeritus
California State University, Hayward*

Charles Collins, Ph.D.
California State University, Long Beach

Adrian del Nevo, Ph.D.
Palos Verdes

Leora Feeney
Biological Field Services

Paul Jones
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

John Kelly, Ph.D.
*Audubon Canyon Ranch, Cypress Grove
Preserve, Marin*

Peter Metropulos
Subregional Editor, American Birds

Bob Richmond
Hayward Regional Shoreline

Steven Rottenborn, Ph.D.
Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

W. David Shuford
Point Reyes Bird Observatory

Nils Warnock, Ph.D.
Point Reyes Bird Observatory

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Janis Buchanan Tom Ryan
Daniel Kluz Emilie Strauss
Chris Otahal Peg Woodin

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.

• • • • •

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All memberships, contributions and gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

SFBBO

Telephone: 408/946-6548
Fax: 408/946-9279
Email: sfbbo@sfbbo.org
Web site: www.sfbbo.org

The Still is a quarterly publication of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Graphic design by Proteus Graphics, Palo Alto. Printed on recycled paper by The Robots Printing Company, Mountain View. For permission to reprint any portion of it, call the Observatory at 408/946-6548.

Copyright, 2002 San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

SFBBO Biologist attends Third North American Ornithological Conference

Approximately 1400 scientists from around the world attended the 3rd NAOC, held in New Orleans, Louisiana from 24-28 September. This meeting incorporated the annual meetings of the American Ornithologists' Union, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, Society of Caribbean Ornithology, and the Sección Mexicana del Consejo Internacional para la Preservación de los Aves.

Researchers from North, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa gave some 900 presentations on topics ranging from conservation, migration, behavior, breeding biology, census methods, systematics, physiology, ecology, vocalizations, Island treasures, woodpecker biology, and shrike biology.

I attended the NAOC as the SFBBO representative. I presented an oral paper entitled "Contamination levels in piscivorous birds in the San Francisco Bay." In this talk, I presented mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels found in tern and cormorant eggs in three regions of the Bay. I compared egg contamination levels with known levels of these two contaminants found in the water from data collected by the San Francisco Estuary Institute. I also introduced data on hatching success in tern colonies from fieldwork performed this past summer. Of special concern, especially in the South Bay, is how potential restoration efforts could stir up contaminants stored in sediments, making them available for uptake by the food web.

I also presented data collected in the Brazilian Amazon in a poster entitled "Landscape changes and bird movements in the central Amazon." This poster focused on the immediate turnover in mist net captures from forest birds to open-area species when a 100-meter border of forest is removed from around forest patches.

While Tropical Storm Isidore caused a few cancellations of talks and field excursions early in the week, it also offered excellent birding directly outside the InterContinental Hotel in downtown New Orleans! We were all required to stay in the hotel for two entire

days while torrential downpours and wind hit New Orleans. A curfew was put into effect Wednesday night to limit car travel due to potential flooding.

Immediately after the main part of the storm had passed, 1400 biologists/bird-watchers headed outside. A small group of trees outside the hotel housed about ten species of warblers and one Whip-poor-will. Closer to the river there were reports of Magnificent Frigatebirds, Sooty and Black terns, and even a Brown Noddy. Most of these birds were probably forced into a stopover en route to their wintering grounds. Others were no doubt blown off course by the storm.

Scientific meetings and conferences, from international to regional, are important for SFBBO biologists to attend. They provide an incredible opportunity to get our name out into the scientific community. This increases our potential for collaborating with fellow scientists as well as increasing our potential for bringing in grant money. The more other scientists and other organizations have heard of SFBBO, and the more they see the great research and other important work we do, the more likely they are to support us. Increased collaboration can only improve the science and other programs that we do here.

Our main goal at SFBBO is scientific research, and the conservation of birds in the Bay region. In order to do good research, we must share our findings, obser-

ervations and ideas with other scientists and get feedback. The best way to reach the most people (scientists, non-governmental organizations, government organizations, etc) is to attend meetings and conferences. Further, it allows to meet others to discuss program and organizational planning, share ideas, and network. Funding for these important activities is largely provided by the direct support and fundraising of our members, Board of Directors, and staff.

~Cheryl Strong,
Head Biologist,
Birds of the Baylands Program



PHOTO BY SFBBO

A Bay Area Caspian Tern family prepares to dine on a fish. These terns are one of three species of colonial nesting shorebirds (others are Double-crested Cormorants and Forster's Terns) studied as part of SFBBO's "contaminant study" presented at this year's NAOC Conference.



San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
P.O. Box 247 1290 Hope Street Alviso, CA 95002
phone 408 946-6548 fax 408 946-9279 SFBBO@aol.com

Non Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ALVISO, CA
PERMIT #9