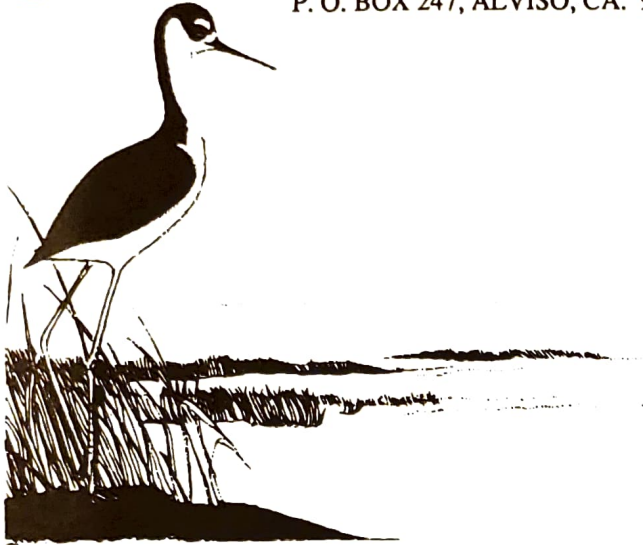


San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Newsletter

P. O. BOX 247, ALVISO, CA. 95002 • (408) 946-6548

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Volume 10, Number 6

November/December 1991

SFBBO GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, December 4, 1991
7:30

Sunnyvale Senior Center
Bldg. 2, Rooms 201/202
820 W. McKinley Ave.
Sunnyvale

From Hwy. 101, take Mathilda Exit southwest.
Go south, past Central Exp. Turn right on
McKinley and go 1 1/2 blocks to the Senior
Center.

Speaker: Marc Holmes
Save San Francisco Bay Assoc.

Topic: The politics of the Red Fox
control as it pertains to the Clapper Rail

also

Meet Dianne Kopec, SFBBO Biologist, who will
give a short report on current Bird Observatory
projects.

SFBBO Building Museum Collection

by Paul L. Noble

SFBBO is currently building a collection of museum study skins for our educational programs. We have the necessary State & Federal Permits in hand. State and Federal law prohibits the possession of birds or mammals by those not licensed. Dave Martin, of San Jose State University, is generously donating cabinets and skins to get the us started. Paul Noble, curator of the museum, is preparing additional skins as they come in. Most skins have been donated by members of the Bird Observatory. You can help in this effort in building our collection by bringing us birds and mammals you find dead and in good condition. If you find a dead bird or mammal please do the following. Be sure it is in good condition. A good test is to pull the fur or feathers from the belly of the animal. If the fur or feathers fall out discard the animal as decay has already set in. If free from decay, and maggots etc. Make a cone out of newspaper and place animal head first into the paper cone. Seal tip and rear of cone, place in sealable plastic freezer bag and freeze at once. Bring into SFBBO promptly with the following information: where specimen was collected, by whom, date collected and cause of death, if known. Place information in bag with specimen.

From the Biologists Desk

by Dianne Kopec

Botulism Surveys

Little evidence of avian botulism was found this summer in South Bay sloughs monitored by SFBBO. Our weekly surveys of Artesian (Mallard) and Guadalupe Sloughs began in June, but it was not until 22 August that the first sick bird, a Green-winged Teal, was collected in Artesian Slough. Minor botulism outbreaks occurred in late August and again in late September/early October, though the total number of dead or sick birds generally remained below 15. Guadalupe Slough had a lower incidence of botulism, fewer than 10 birds were collected this season.

During the summer months, the wildlife surveys of Artesian Slough were dominated by the nesting activities of Black-crowned Night Herons, Snowy Egrets, and Great Egrets. The former colonies of the west side of the slough, bordering the SFBNWR Environmental Education Center levee trails have been abandoned in favor of similar tule habitat on the east side of the main slough channel. Over 600 heron and egret nests were counted this season.

Ducks began appearing in large numbers as the seasons progressed, mallards, gadwalls, and teals dominating the counts during September and early October. Our most recent survey, 31 October, gave a count of over 500 shovelers (my favorite duck). These surveys will continue through November. Any members interested in joining us on a survey, and available on weekdays, please give me a call at the Observatory.

Colonial Breeding Birds

Just an aside that adds to our botulism work. Don Starks and I saw an adult White-faced ibis carrying twigs (nesting material?) flying over and around the heron colony on Artesian Slough. This bird was originally brought to Don's attention by Bess Nericcio and Arriana Rosenbluth who saw two earlier this summer. Ibis have been increasing in numbers in their range as well as expanding their summer distribution. Don feels that maybe in the next year or so we might find them breeding at Artesian Slough.

Knapp Project

As discussed in previous newsletters, the Knapp Research Project is generating information on water bird use of the Knapp Property salt ponds located between Guadalupe and Alviso Sloughs. Species diversity and numbers will be analyzed in relation to numerous physical parameters to develop recommendations for salt pond management which will enhance shorebird and waterbird utilization of salt ponds.

A strong volunteer commitment to this research has maintained bimonthly bird counts documenting species number and diversity since late 1989. Current SFBBO volunteers active at the Knapp include Susie Formenti, Darrell Gray, Carole Hutchinson, Tom Espersen and Peg Woodin. We will soon expand both the physical data collected and the monitoring schedule; water quality information will be collected on the field census days and diurnal activity patterns and daily variation will be explored with a three-day series of dawn to dusk surveys each season. Additional volunteers willing to participate in this work should call us here at the office.

We recently completed a large scale map of the northern pond at the Knapp (Pond A-6). This 1:2,000 scale map was based on a series of aerial photographs taken in August 1989 by Howard Cogswell (Eco-Aire Photos). The map details historical slough channels visible from the air and gross changes in water depth. Mapping the actual water depth, a critical part of the study for defining preferences for roosting and feeding areas, will begin in early November. A system of reference markers defining a 100 meter grid pattern at the study site will also be established for use during bird counts. We would like to complete this work as quickly as possible and ask that any folks interested in a short-term volunteer commitment call Dianne at the SFBBO office.

Research Committee Meeting

On October 15th the SFBBO Research Committee met to review current research activities and discuss work at the Bird Observatory. In attendance were Dr. Robert Bowman, Dr. Howard Cogswell, Janet Hanson, Paul Noble, Doug Roster (USFWS), Peg Woodin, Don Starks, and myself. SFBBO's future activity at Bair Island occupied the bulk of the discus-

sion. Given the devastation of the colonial nesters last season on outer Bair we reviewed our options for ensuring a predator-free nesting season on at least a portion of the colony site. Although USFWS's predator control program will focus attention on Bair during the winter we cannot guarantee it will be effective prior to the 1991 breeding season. As a result we reached a consensus that fencing the primary nesting site may be the only guaranteed option to preserve a core nesting population on the island. This management to the colony, in addition to control of rampant star thistle, and coyote bush plantings will take place in mid-winter prior to the onset of breeding activity. I understand that Bair is a popular site with volunteers and we hope to have a full crew for this upcoming work. Again, please contact the SFBBO office if you are interested in participating.

A further discussion of the Scientific Committee recommendations for future research activities will be given in the next newsletter.



T. Hart

A Celebration of San Francisco Bays Hidden Wildlife.

IDG Films is making a special Christmas offer to all SFBBO members. For \$12.50 you can get the 28 minute color video, SECRETS OF THE BAY. If you would like one for yourself and one as a Christmas gift, you can get two copies for only \$20.00.

SECRETS OF THE BAY is a visually stunning environmental film that reveals the magnificent wildlife hidden among the 6 million human inhabitants of the San Francisco Bay Area . . . and endangered Peregrine Falcon nesting on the Bay bridge . . . baby harbor seals learning to crawl into their marshland napping areas . . . a love sick bird on a most unlikely "lovers lane" . . . and a beautiful shorebird ballet featuring slow-motion photography of pelicans, avocets, and a supporting cast of thousands.

This 28 minute video also showcases the human "critters" who revel in the bay - Frank Quan, the last of the Chinese shrimp fisherman . . . and the fearless (some would say crazy) swimmers who "escape from Alcatraz" every New Years Day.

Narrated by Evening Magazine's Jan Yanehiro, with original music by Emmy-Award-winning composer Gary Remal Malkin, SECRETS OF THE BAY is a film to

view again and again, a souvenir for visitors and a reminder for residents that the San Francisco Bay is truly a national treasure to be cherished and protected for generations to come.

Many people throughout the bay area were involved in creating this film including SFBBO. It was produced and directed by Chris Beaver and Judy Irving. SFBBO's biologist Dianne Kopec also stars in the film as she talks about her studies of the harbor seals of the Bay.

SECRETS OF THE BAY is also being used at San Jose State University for environmental and natural science courses. It shows the Ecology of what used to be the Bay and what the Bay is now. It shows what has been done to improve the Bay and how we can preserve its future. This is a great film for ecology classes from 7th grade thru college.

All proceeds support the Independent Documentary Group, a non-profit environmental film production group. If you would like a copy of this film for \$12.50 or two copies for \$20.00, send a check made out to IDG Films to:

IDG Films
394 Elizabeth Street
San Francisco 94114
(415) 824-5822

Wetlands Under Attack

by Ginny Becchine & Tom Espersen

At this time in history, wetlands are under the most severe attack they have ever faced. There are bills in both houses of Congress that would cause the destruction of wetlands throughout the United States. And now, the Bush administration has added even more pressure to the concerted wetland attacks.

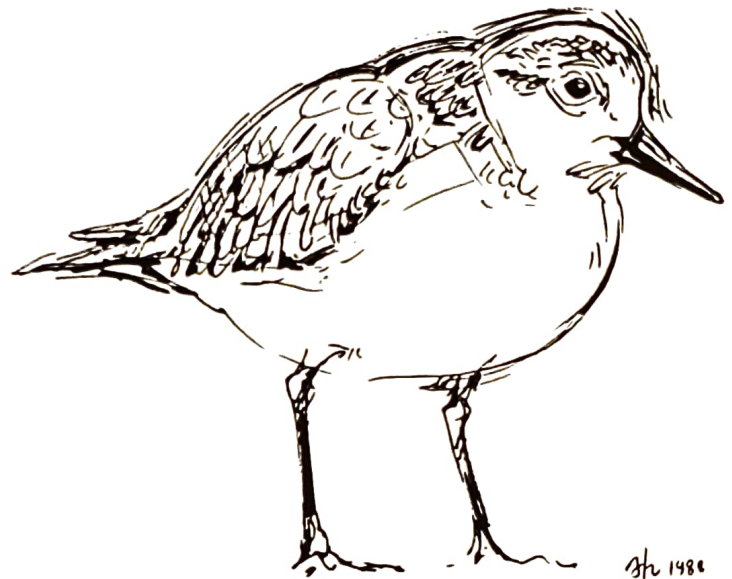
HR 1330 (Hayes) and S1463 (Breaux) would do the following: 1) redefine wetlands to exclude many wetland types, 2) remove the Environmental Protection Agency from jurisdiction over wetlands, and 3) rank wetlands as "good", "medium" or "poor". Even "good" wetlands would be developable if there is an overriding public interest. In addition, no county with extensive wetlands would be allowed to designate more than 20% of their wetlands as "good". Only those wetlands deemed high value will be subject to sequencing, which currently applies to all wetlands. Sequencing, is the process of considering all possible alternatives to development in a wetlands before Section 404 (Clean Water Act) permits are issued. For low value wetlands general rather than individual permits will be issued. General permits offer less environmental protection.

Because of the manner in which the Bush administration is revising the 1989 Wetlands Delineation Manual, many wetlands will be defined out of existence. The Delineation Manual is used by the Army Corps of Engineers to determine what lands are wetlands and, therefore, under their jurisdiction. Corps Permits are required to fill these lands. The Revisions will clearly result in a dramatic reduction of jurisdictional wetlands. The proposed manual represents a fourfold assault on scientifically accepted criteria for wetlands hydrology, it: 1) increases the number of days the soil must be saturated, 2) requires "at the surface" rather than "at or near the surface" saturation, 3) reduces the number of indicators which designate a wetlands and 4) restricts the "growing season" to meet agricultural rather than biological requirements. In fact, there is no documentation or scientific rationale for many of the proposed criteria changes.

Over 50 percent of the wetlands in the United States have already been lost to agriculture, mining, ranching, real estate development and oil exploration activities. The losses in California are even more dramatic. About 90 percent of the wetlands in California have been destroyed. Given these staggering losses, shouldn't we be hard at work finding ways to increase wetlands? California has a state goal, a 50% increase in wetlands by the year 2000. The way Washington D.C. is headed,

California rather than increasing its wetland habitat will continue to lose it.

Call President Bush at 202-456-1111 and tell him what you think. For free information from the EPA, call 800-832-7828.



Christmas Bird Count

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 15. The Bird Observatory will again organize the Alviso section of the count circle. This is always a fun filled and exciting day of birding. Both novices and experienced birders are needed. The final tally for the complete count circle will be given at a dinner held immediately following the count. If you are interested in helping in the Alviso section this year, call Jean Dubois, section leader, at (408) 395-4264 to sign up or for more details.

From the Executive Director

In the last few months I've seen the recession hit too close to home. I now have friends that are laid off. One went to work with no job waiting after 13 years of loyalty. Here he is, a good experienced worker, with no hope in his field and a big mortgage staring him in the face. Why am I bringing this sad state of affairs to your attention? Because one of the aspects of my job is to ask people to donate to our cause. Those of you who know me, also, realize that I know that sometimes you can give and sometimes you can't. There's no reason to feel guilty. I think all of us like the good feeling of getting the heartfelt acknowledgement when we are able to show our support.

Here are some statistics from the California Association of Nonprofits' latest newsletter Alert. This is for those of you who ever wonder about the donated dollar. Of all the money donated in 1990 (\$122.6 billion) 5.8% came from foundations, 6.4% from bequests, 4.8% from corporations, and 83.1% from individuals. That's right from you. Now take out a dollar bill and look at it as I quote the following numbers. This is where all that money goes. Political donations are not included in these statistics. Religion gets the big bite at 53.7%, Education 10.1%, Human Services 9.6%, Health 8.1%, Arts and culture 6.4%, Public and social benefit 4.8% and Undesignated 4.4%. International, environmental and wildlife follow with 1.8% and 1.9% respectively. Look at that dollar again. The environmental field as a whole gets two cents of every dollar donated. Time magazine ran a poll that resulted in a high percentage of support for environmental laws, recycling, etc.? I know many of you who are reading this are supporters and probably give more than two cents of the donated dollar to the environmental effort. Where is the rest of the nation?

I love to camp, travel, and visit natural areas right here in the Bay area. I feel my donations are helping to preserve and protect the wildlife and habitat that I enjoy in my own back yard. I suppose some feel that others will pay the bills or maybe that the government will do it.

As I write this, SFBBO is in the middle of a fund drive. We are asking for a conservative amount to purchase a new computer system. This computer system is needed to store and analyze the large amounts of data collected on our research projects. The information we are collecting provides vital information about the sensitive and fragile environment of the San Francisco Bay Region. It's been a little more than a week since I sent letters requesting donations, and so far some of you have come through. We've received about 50% of the \$3,000 needed. Please send your donations to SFBBO and mark your check "computer fund". Your contribution is tax deductible.

SFBBO Christmas Wish List

Since its inception members support has been a key factor in the Bird Observatory's success. Without it we could not carryout the important research projects that help us to understand the wildlife of the San Francisco Bay. Below is the Bird Observatory's Christmas Wish list for 1991. The Bird Observatory is a non-profit organizations, which makes your donation tax deductible. Please help make the wishes we all share for the birds and the environment of the Bay continue to come true.

We Wish For

- Electric Typewriter
(For filling out forms)
- Birdseed
(For baiting bird banding traps)
- Copier Paper
- Binoculars
(For field research)
- Projector Screen - 5 x 5 feet
(For classes and presentations)
- Computer Paper
(For all those reports)
- Walkie Talkie
(For communication in field work)
- FAX
(For office communications)
- Used Pick-up Truck with Hitch
(For transporting boats)
- Boots & Waders
(For muddy field work)
- Laser Printer
- Recording weather station
(For the Knapp Project)
- Field Thermometers
(For field studies)
- Design for new SFBBO T-shirt

Christmas Arts & Craft Sale

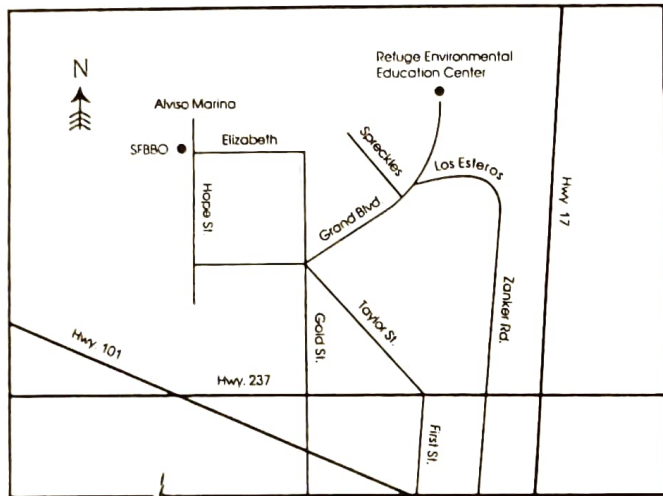
The 11th Annual Christmas Wildlife and Nature Arts and Crafts Sale sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society will be held on December 7th and 8th at De Anza College in Cupertino. Don't miss it.

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 held biannually. 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.



Knapp Study

Survey trips for the Knapp Study are continuing every other Sunday starting at 8:00 a.m. Listed below are dates scheduled through the month of January 1992. Your help is needed, no matter what your level of experience. If you are interested in this study, contact the Bird Observatory office at (408) 946-6548.

Sunday	Nov 10
Sunday	Nov 24
Sunday	Dec 8
Sunday	Dec 15
Sunday	Dec 29
Sunday	Jan 12
Sunday	Jan 26

Executive Director
Don Starks

Biologist
Diane Kopeck

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San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

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1290 Hope Street
Alviso, CA 95002
408-946-6548

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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.