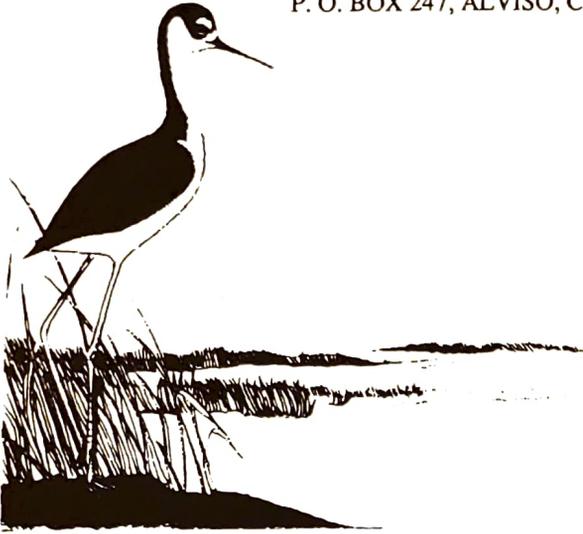


San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Newsletter

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

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Executive Director Leaves SFBBO

Don Starks, SFBBO Executive Director since 1987 has informed the Board of Directors of his intentions to leave his position as Executive Director to pursue other endeavors. The Board of Directors has accepted Don's resignation, which took effect November 25, and has formed a search committee to secure a replacement. The Board of Directors thanks Don for guiding the Observatory forward during his reign and wish him well in his new activities.

Coyote Bush Planted on Bair Island

SFBBO volunteers spent Saturday, December 7, planting seedling coyote bush in the north Heron colony of Bair Island. Last winter seed from the declining coyote bush was gathered by volunteer Glen Rogers, a landscape architect. Plants were propagated by Magic Inc. - a nature plant nursery in Palo Alto. The existing Coyote Bush, which has served as nesting structures for herons and egrets has been declining for several years. A decline accelerated by the effect of the 6 year drought. These new seedlings were placed in the main north colony near the dead and dying existing plants. Several were protected by vine netting to compare herbivore predation. Water retentive polymer was mixed with the planting soil to increase water holding capacity and plants were given a good drink of bottled water. Staff Biologist Dianne Kopec will water the plants periodically during her work with harbor seals, but rainfall will help these new plants the most. Growth will be monitored throughout the next few years which what we hope will become future nesting areas for the Islands heron and egret population. The Bird Observatory would like to thank the following volunteers for their work on this project: Rick Baird, Ginny Becchine, Mary Brezner, Ray Martin, Paul L. Noble, Peg Woodin.

Position Available - Executive Director

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is soliciting applications for the position of Executive Director. SFBBO is a non-profit biological research organization located in Alviso, CA. Our purpose is to provide data on the status of birdlife in the Bay Area to those formulating environmental policy. Applicants must be highly motivated, have non-profit experience, be able to work smoothly with the Board of Directors and have background in environmental/biological science. Responsibilities include fundraising (foundation, agency, major donor), membership expansion, volunteer activity coordination and networking with conservation/environmental organizations. Please submit resumes by January 31, 1992 to SFBBO c/o Paul L. Noble, 520 Gabilan #10, Los Altos, CA 94022.

From the Biologists Desk

by *Dianne Kopec*

Botulism Monitoring

Our weekly botulism surveys of the sloughs south of Coyote Creek ended in late November. Compared with the previous summer, 1991 was a relatively light year for avian disease in the study area, but the total collection of 108 dead and diseased birds remained ten times higher than the 1988 and 1989 collections.

To summarize our findings, little evidence of disease was observed until August when 26 birds were found. Collections peaked in September with 36 vertebrates (including a striped bass and a muskrat), declined slightly to 32 birds in October and the collections dropped to seven birds in November.

As is common in cases of botulism, ducks succumbed in greatest numbers with 52 dead and 17 diseased ducks collected. Certain species were dominant. The large collections of Mallard (15), Gadwall (14) and Northern Shoveler (10) occurred when these species topped the wildlife counts while disproportionately high numbers of Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal (21) were collected.

Gulls made up the second largest collection group, with 16 dead and 7 diseased birds; Western Gulls and California Gulls were found in proportional numbers.

The decline in avian disease, from 1990 levels, may be partially due to below normal air temperatures and a lower bird density during the summer months. Yet, the reasons behind the continued presence of disease at this moderate level remains unclear. While the discharge of freshwater effluent into these sloughs does not necessitate an outbreak of avian disease, as evidenced by the low incidence of disease in 1988 and 1989, continued study is needed to clarify the other factors which contribute to a disease outbreak.

Colonial Nesting Survey

In the next month we will begin organizing volunteers for the 1992 survey of colonial nesting activities in the South Bay. As in the past, volunteers will monitor breeding activity in a defined section of bay shoreline, saltponds or islands. We aim to expand our data collection to permit a more complete evaluation of reproductive success at the different sites.

Volunteer field assistants are needed for this study! These are GREAT field sites and the collected information will add to our 10+ year records of colonial breeding activity in the South Bay. Once again, we can't protect what we don't know is there, so let's get out in the field and give these birds a voice.

Final Notes

I'd like to add my own thanks for all of your generous donations to our computer fund. I'm ever impressed with our members' commitment to the study and preservation of our bay's wildlife. Your contributions of time and resources will certainly help us make a difference.

And finally, Don and I spent many a fine hour together on the South Bay sloughs as he patiently reviewed for me our resident bird species. Many thanks for all your efforts, Don, and all the best wishes as you move ahead to a greater future.

Thank You Thank You Thank You

When we started our donation drive for a new computer, we knew we were working with a membership and community that supports us. But the response was truly wonderful, allowing us to purchase the computer equipment we need to continue evaluating and publish the findings from our many field studies. You were more than generous, and we have met our goals.

We are now the proud new owners of a MSE 486 computer, fully IBM compatible, with two disk drives, a 110 megabyte hard drive, a Sony high resolution monitor, and Epson wide carriage high speed printer, and a very good surge protector to keep it all running. If the numbers mean little to you, let's just say it is a very fast, very versatile machine. Making charts, doing statistical analyses, or printing high quality graphics has, because of your support, become much faster and easier. Our staff biologist, Dianne Kopec, who works on an IBM at home, can easily transfer work from the ongoing Knapp study between home and office.

Help came in many forms in getting the machine up and running. A computer consultant from San Jose State University, Kelvin Chan, helped select the equipment. We also received software donations. For example, Jay Hanson donated the data base program DBase for the Mac, as well as an IBM version of the same program. Now, with our Mac Plus, we can run virtually any software we choose. And when we want to print to the finest quality possible, thanks to Hewlett Packard and

the Bay Area Conservation Committees, we will soon have an HP IIIP laser printer, that should work for the Mac as well as the MSE.

Getting the data from field study to publication, with all the attendant number crunching and chart making is what we do. The versatility and speed of our new equipment will help tremendously.

It wasn't just that we received donations toward our new computer, it was that so many people gave that made us reach our goal. In tough economic times it is wonderful to see people pitch in and help. Once, again, to all that helped, our most heartfelt thanks.

Darrell Gray

For Sale

Need a desk for home, or a table? Well how about an aluminum boat? Although we have met our goal of purchasing a new computer, we would like to buy more memory for our Mac Plus, and need to purchase some accessories for the printers. If you would like to make a donation, and adopt one or two aluminum boats, or several desks, please call the Observatory at (408) 946-6548 for further details.

Classes and Tours 1992

Tentative Dates

SFBBO is announcing it's tentative schedule for classes and tours for 1992. A full itinerary and schedule is forth coming and will be available after the 1st of the year. Pre-registration is required for all classes and tours. Call the Bird Observatory office to register. A 100% refund seven days prior to the start of the class or tour, 50% six days or less.

Class Description	Starting Date	Cost
Owl Biology	Feb 26, 1992	\$40/\$55*
Taxidermy	April 1, 1992	\$95/\$110*
Hawk Identification	April 29, 1992	\$45/\$60*
Sparrow Identification	April 30, 1992	\$40/\$55*
Shorebird Identification	August 19, 1992	\$50/\$65*
Duck Identification	November 4, 1992	\$35/\$50*

Tour Description	Starting Date	Cost	Leader
Sierra Nevada and Owls	June 12/14, 1992	\$50/\$60*	Paul Noble
Kern River	June 26/27, 1992	\$50/\$60*	Don Starks
Arizona	August 1/9, 1992	\$205/\$225*	Paul Noble

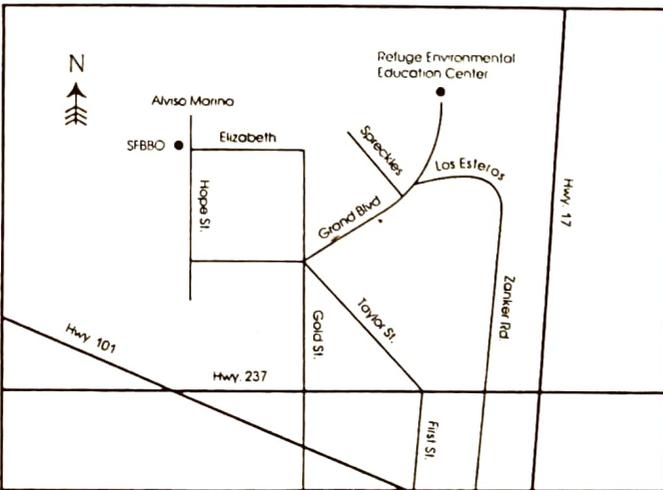
* Member/Non-member

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 quarterly. 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 Bucksin 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.



SFBBO QUARTERLY MEETING

Wednesday, March 4, 1992
7:30

Refuge
Environmental Education Center
in
Alviso
(see map)

Speaker: Fred Nichols
U.S. Geological Survey

Topic: The invasion of the Asian Clam in the San Francisco Bay.

Knapp Study

Survey trips for the Knapp Study are continuing every other Sunday, weather permitting, starting at 8:00 a.m. 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.

Waterbird Fieldtrip

The Fremont Adult School will be offering a field class to observe birds along the shores of Alameda and Oakland on Saturday, February 15th, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The class is for both beginning and experienced bird-watchers. We expect to see grebes, egrets, ducks, shorebirds, terns, gulls and other birds. Participants must PRE-REGISTER by February 10th. Register by mail or in person at the Fremont Adult School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont, 94538. Include fee of \$20, your phone number, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Make check out to the Fremont Adult School. For more information call Fremont Adult School at 791-5841 or the instructor, Alice Hoch, at 657-0475.

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Biologist

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San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

P.O. Box 247
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 _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



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

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

* Single payment becomes part of an endowment fund.