

The Stilt

Vol. 16 No. 1

Spring 1997

The Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory



In this issue:

South Bay's Snowy Plovers
by Mike Mammoser

1

Bair Island
Saved from development

3

Mapper Rails at Palo Alto
Baylands
by Robin Dakin

4

Exploring Our Baylands
A book review

4

New Faces at the Observatory
Introduction of our newest staff
and advisors

5

Opportunities in the Field
Spring projects and classes

6

Our Great "New" Truck!
Thanks to Pacific Gas and
Electric

8

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Bird Observatory
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South San Francisco Bay's

Snowy Plover - A Natural History

by Michael Mammoser

INTRODUCTION

The development of the salt evaporator system along the edge of San Francisco Bay around the turn of the century brought with it an unexpected benefit to the local birding community. It enticed the little Snowy Plover into the bay from the seacoast as a permanent resident of the South Bay avifauna. Normally breeding on sandy coastal beaches above the high tide line, this handsome plover found the levees and dried-out salt pond bottoms to be suitable alternative nesting habitat and quickly set up shop.

A cosmopolitan species, the Snowy Plover can be found worldwide, with two to six subspecies recognized, depending on the authority cited. In North America it is found along the Pacific coast from southern Washington State to Baja Sur in Mexico, and along the Gulf coast from western Florida to northeastern Mexico, as well as on the Yucatan peninsula and through the Greater and Lesser Antilles. Scattered populations can be found throughout the interior western states, utilizing brackish and saline wetlands, as well as dried salt flats and braided river channels.

IDENTIFICATION

Snowy Plover, the smallest plover breeding in the United States, is paler above than other plover species likely to be encountered in the Bay Area. Their bill and legs are entirely dark, and they have dark patches on either side of the breast, which never connect in a complete breastband. This combination of characters should suffice to separate this species from any other that is likely to cause confusion. Additional markings include a dark forecrown stripe above the white forehead and a dark cheek patch on the face. The dark markings of the head and breast tend to be black in males and dark brown in females, while they tend to be lacking completely in juveniles. The feathers of the

upperparts of juveniles have thin whitish edges, paler than the interior of the feathers and imparting a scaly appearance that is typical of juvenile plovers in general. Birds in basic (nonbreeding) plumage can be somewhat duller, with both sexes looking like breeding-plumaged females.

HABITAT

Whether living on coastal beaches, inland flats, or artificial evaporation ponds, Snowy Plovers prefer the wide open spaces with little or no vegetation. They feed, roost, and nest in locations where they have a panoramic view, allowing them to spot approaching predators from great distances. Because Snowy Plovers are ground nesting birds, this advance warning of danger is essential to their survival and nesting success.

Another survival strategy for these birds is camouflage. Snowy Plovers seem to prefer a substrate with a color composition that closely matches their own, allowing them to blend in almost perfectly with the surface on which they spend virtually their entire lives. In fact, the first indication one may have of the presence of one of these birds is the sudden movement of a "lump of sand".

On the coast, Snowy Plovers inhabit sandy beaches that have a relatively broad expanse of sand dunes above the high tide line, an area that is generally littered with driftwood, seaweed, shells, etc. Within this debris the birds remain hidden as they carry out their daily activities, perhaps venturing forth to feed along the water's edge. Within salt-evaporator systems, such as the one along the fringe of South San Francisco Bay, these birds utilize the bare flat-topped levees that separate the ponds and, when water levels are low enough, the exposed pond bottoms. Again, surfaces containing shells, rocks, wood, or even man-made debris seem to appeal to these birds. At inland locations, plovers occupy dry lake beds as well as alkaline and saline flats adjacent to wetlands. They may also be found on sandy bars in braided river channels.

Continued on page 2

Although some coastal Snowy Plovers move between breeding and wintering sites, sometimes up to hundreds of miles, most of these birds, including those occupying the edge of San Francisco Bay, are permanent residents in these areas. Birds from nesting populations in the interior of the U.S. migrate to coastal areas in winter, augmenting existing coastal populations, although a few remain inland in central California, Arizona, and New Mexico.

FEEDING HABITS

When feeding, Snowy Plovers forage in the manner typical of most plovers; scanning the ground or shallow water for food items, running a short distance with quick hurried steps, and stopping to scan again. They repeat this process over and over, looking for the small invertebrates upon which they feed. This behavior differs from the foraging methods of most sandpipers, which tend to move more slowly and methodically, picking while they move. Many times it is possible to pick out a plover from a flock of shorebirds simply by looking for a bird exhibiting this particular feeding style.

Food items of Snowy Plovers are quite varied, ranging from insects such as brine flies and beetles, to larvae and worms, to small crabs and shrimp. Different populations of Snowy Plovers may have completely different diets, depending on the particular habitat in which they live. Thus plovers living on coastal beaches might utilize a prey base that is distinctly different from those living on salt evaporators or inland flats.

REPRODUCTION

In the San Francisco Bay Area, male Snowy Plovers begin establishing territories in February and March, defending them against other males through the use of displays and vocalizations. Although these displays are generally sufficient to defend the territory, fighting can frequently result, with birds kicking, pecking, and pulling feathers. Once paired, both sexes will defend a shared territory against conspecifics, and even against birds of different species.

Males advertise for mates by vocalizing, calling "tu wheet" from their territory to passing or nearby birds, and performing scraping displays. Once a female has been attracted to a male's territory, courtship displays play an important role in cementing the bond between the pair. The scraping display is one of these important rituals. Typically, the male initiates this display by pressing his breast to the ground and pushing his feet backwards,

all the while rotating his body in a circle, resulting in the creation of a shallow depression in the ground. Whenever he finishes, the female generally repeats the procedure herself in the same spot. The pair may move from location to location within the territory, repeating this display and creating a number of scrapes. Ultimately, one of these scrapes will become the pair's nest.

Another one of the courtship rituals in which these birds engage is debris-tossing, where a bird picks up some small item from the ground and tosses it back over its shoulder towards the nest. These objects may then be used to line the nest. Additionally, Snowy Plovers are known for situating their nests near or under larger pieces of debris, the purpose of which is not quite clear. Many theories have been put forth; this debris may serve as camouflage for the nest, as a landmark for the nest site, or it may shelter the nest from adverse weather conditions.

Snowy Plovers typically lay three eggs, but various studies have found that 5-25% of the nests in a given area may contain two-egg clutches. Clutch sizes outside of this range are found only rarely, and single-egg clutches are generally abandoned. The buff-colored eggs are spotted with blotches of black and brown, making them look very much like rocks and allowing them to remain deceptively hidden, even under the closest scrutiny.

The male and female share the incubation duties, keeping the eggs covered and protected from the weather, and maintaining the temperature required for proper development. After an incubation period that averages about twenty-eight days, the eggs hatch, producing well-developed downy young. Within hours of hatching, the young plovers are alert and active, foraging and feeding on their own, but constantly being attended by a parent.

These little "balls of fluff" are quite cryptically marked on the upperparts, being sandy in color with irregular dark markings. When danger threatens, a call from the parent sends them into a frozen crouched position, where they seem to melt right into the fabric of the ground surface. The parents will further try to protect their offspring by performing a distraction display, running and flapping their wings as if injured, distracting the attention of would-be predators away from the young. After leading a potential predator a safe distance away, the adults suddenly take off, leaving the pursuer behind.



Photo by Alan Walther

Snowy Plovers in the San Francisco Bay area will produce two or even three broods in a season. In these cases, females will leave the brood within days after the young hatch, letting the male care for them, while she seeks out another male with which to initiate a subsequent nesting attempt. If a female tries to nest a third time, she may very well attempt it with her first mate of the season, who by that time has cared for their initial brood to fledging.

CONSERVATION

Development and recreational use by humans of the coastal beach habitat of the Snowy Plover has heightened concern among conservationists and resulted in the listing of the west coast population as "threatened" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It may be reasonable to assume that as long as the salt-pond system of San Francisco Bay remains intact and relatively free of human recreational uses, the population of Snowy Plover using this habitat can remain stable. Variations in salt-pond water levels, affecting the amount of exposed pond bottom, may have an impact on the number of birds that can be supported by this particular habitat.

Perhaps a greater threat to the "inner bay" Snowy Plover is the burgeoning predator base. The introduced Red Fox, recently-established California Gull breeding colonies, and increasing Common Raven populations have the potential to wreak havoc on the eggs and chicks of the plover. Trapping programs have been implemented for the Red Fox, whose introduction in the west has already been implicated in the decline of the endangered Clapper Rail population. The gulls and ravens

are probably exploiting the local landfills as a food resource and, as these dumps eventually close, their populations may subside.

WHERE TO FIND

If one wants to see Snowy Plovers, they are fairly easy to find in their coastal haunts. In Monterey County, check the beach at the Salinas River mouth and Moss Landing State Beach. Many of the beaches along the San Mateo County coast, such as Pescadero Beach, can also harbor plovers. The North Beach at Point Reyes, in Marin County, is also a good location. Check the upper portions of the beach, above the high tide line. Just remember if you visit these coastal sites during the breeding season to view the birds from a distance so as not to impact their nesting success.

Finding these birds may be more difficult around the south end of San Francisco Bay, because they tend to occupy areas that aren't generally open to the public. Places with potential include the Alviso Slough Trail that loops out of the Alviso Marina (check the impoundment between the railroad tracks and salt pond just north of the marina), Crittenden Marsh near the end of the Moffett Field runways (if it's not full of rainwater), or the salt-pond levees at either end of Dumbarton Bridge.

Wherever you may look for Snowy Plovers, finding one of these "lumps of sand that move" is sure to brighten any birding field trip.

REFERENCES

Differences in Wintering Areas of Snowy Plovers from Inland Breeding Sites in Western North America. Gary Page, Mark Stern, Peter Paton. *Condor* 97:258-262

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Distribution and Abundance of the Snowy Plover on Its Western North American Breeding Grounds. Gary Page, Lynne Stenzel, David Shuford. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 62(2):245-255

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G.W. Page, J.S. & J.C. Warriner, P.W.C. Paton

Bair Island Saved from Development

A few months ago, the development of at least the inner portion of Bair Island seemed imminent. When asked if it could be saved as open space, the stock answer was "dream on!"

But the dream became reality in January when a representative of the owner, Kumagai Gumi, signed a letter of intent with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), to sell the property for eventual addition to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

According to John Wade of POST, the 1,626 acres of land to be acquired includes all of the portions of Bair Island that were not already protected, including "inner" Bair Island which fronts on Highway 101 in Redwood City. A private anonymous source loaned POST the \$15 million to secure the deal. To repay this loan, \$10 million will be requested from the federal Land and Water

Conservation Fund; POST has 5 years to raise the other \$5 million from private funding sources.

The Observatory has been collecting data on the wildlife of Bair Island since 1981. The potential of the land for habitat restoration and enhancement for wildlife is enormous. We are preparing to lend technical support to the refuge toward these goals. The Board, staff and members of the SFBBO are thrilled with the purchase and protection of Bair Island and offer our heartiest congratulations to the coalition of groups that managed to make the dream come true: Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, the bay area Audubon Society chapters and the Peninsula Open Space Trust.

SFBBO 1996 Income & Expenses

INCOME:

<i>Memberships</i>	7,030
<i>Programs</i>	38,705
<i>Donations</i>	11,037
<i>Other</i>	189
Total Income	\$56,961

EXPENSES:

<i>Salaries, including programs</i>	18,846
<i>Programs</i>	3,722
<i>Vehicles & Boats</i>	4,451
<i>Insurance</i>	3,741
<i>Facilities, Library & Office</i>	11,567
<i>Fundraising</i>	3,692
<i>Other</i>	1,140
Total Expenses	\$47,149

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

\$9,802

Wish List

Book Shelves or Cases

Book Review

Exploring Our Baylands by Diane Conradson

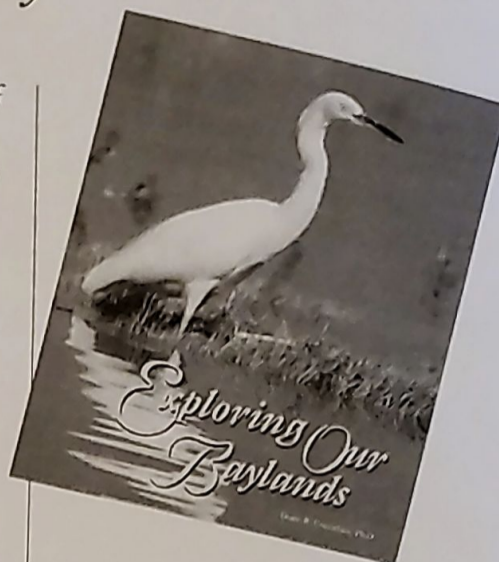
Reviewed by Ed Pandolfino

"Exploring Our Baylands" is the third edition of Diane Conradson's exquisite little guide to the San Francisco Bay's natural history. This book is a pleasure to hold and see as well as read. The choice of page size, format, fonts, layout and jacket material were all made very carefully and the result is a book that begs to be picked, held and read.

Given the impossible task of covering the subject in depth in less than seventy pages, Dr. Conradson wisely chose to position this as a "sampler". We have all had the experience of going to a great restaurant for the first time and having the waiter's descriptions convince us that we need a taste of all twelve specials. The Bay is certainly a banquet for anyone interested in nature and "Exploring Our Baylands" provides thoughtfully selected tidbits from every aspect of the area. It covers the Bay's geology, marsh dynamics, plants characteristic of each type of marsh and their adaptations, the critically important and usually overlooked invertebrates, the fish, mammals and, of course, the birds.

In guides like this one, one tends to most often find fault in the areas with which one is most familiar. However, there is little I would change in her section on birds except that I might alert readers to the very real possibility of seeing a Peregrine Falcon over the marshes (certainly more likely than a Black Rail).

Even given the overview nature of the book, I learned lots of things I didn't previously know about mud flat crustaceans and learned a few things I should have known (like the parasitic nature of that orange, hairy salt marsh dodder). Every sections has the feeling of having been painstakingly pared down to just the essentials



required to give the reader a basic level of understanding and the impetus to get out there and see things first hand.

As with any well-chosen sampler, this book whets the appetite to learn more. Therein lies the main area for improvement. I found myself wanting to find guidebooks for some kind reference works to supplement Dr. Conradson's introductions. This is no problem when the subject is birds, mammals, fish or insects, but it would have been great to include a brief biography on sources of deeper coverage of marsh plants and the invertebrates that form the broad base of the pyramid that supports the incredible diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area.

"Exploring Our Baylands" is a book that knows exactly what it wants to do and does it in a most attractive, informative and entertaining fashion.

Available at the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society bookstore, San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Newark, CA 94536. 510/792-0222. \$9.95.



1997 Palo Alto Clapper Rail Count

by Robin Dakin

Each year SFBBO volunteers and staff participate in the annual high tide rail survey at Palo Alto Baylands. We contribute to the project, conducted by the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, by surveying areas of the marsh not accessible to air boats. This means that our volunteers get access to good Clapper Rail viewing areas which are not open to the public, including the PG&E boardwalks. Despite predictions of 7 foot tides for January 8, the day of the count, the marsh was not completely inundated. This is reflected

in our results: only 13 Clapper Rails, 2 Virginia Rails and 4 Black Rails. In addition, a Short-Eared Owl, a White-Tailed Kite, a Great Blue Heron and 2 Black-crowned Night Herons were sighted.

We would like to thank the following volunteers for their participation: Sue Macias, Ann Moser, Paul Stevens, Susan Stout and Vivek Tiwari and Alan Walther



SFBBO UpDates

Golden Gate Great Blues

The largest audience in the history of the Randall Museum's Natural History Series attended a slide show on San Francisco's only heronry on December 5, 1996. Presented by SFBBO members Tom Henry and Nancy DeStefanis, the event drew a SRO crowd of adults and youngsters curious about the Stow Lake colony of Great Blue Herons. Lou Young, SFBBO President, presented Certificates of Merit to Lee and Walt Woodall of Circosta Iron and Metal Company for their generous donation of the sheet metal used to make the tree collars (see the *Stilt* issue 15.4). Lou also recognized Curtis Coates, Acting Deputy Superintendent of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department for his support in implementing the project. Tom Henry presented a dramatic and comprehensive series of slides depicting courtship and nesting at the Stow Lake colony. Nancy discussed its history and fielded many questions. Lorraine Grassano was persuaded to demonstrate the begging vocalizations made by the youngsters. A rousing chorus of "My Blue Herons" led by Sharon Walters on accordion completed a very satisfactory evening.

Science Advisory Board Meetings

A few days before Christmas, we were able to pull together a meeting of several of our Science Advisors who are usually not readily available. These included: Adrian del Nevo, Howard Cogswell, John Takekawa (National Biological Survey, Vallejo), and Nils and Sarah Warnock, currently living in Eugene, Oregon, plus current Observatory staff. This first meeting was intense, productive and above all fun. The results are reflected in the 1997 projects listed under volunteer opportunities.

Santa Clara Valley Water District Funds Heron and Egret Monitoring Project

We recently received funding from the Santa Clara Valley Water District to support our 1996 monitoring project of all heron and egret species in Santa Clara County. We welcome this much needed help for part of our larger effort to document all colonies of these waterbirds in the four south bay counties.

1997 Goals Meeting

To be an effective organization, executive review of its mission and plans for implementing it are an essential task. Toward that end, the SFBBO Board of Directors meets every November in a special planning session for the upcoming year. The mission as revised in 1996 remains:

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a not-for-profit research organization dedicated to advancing knowledge of birds and their habitats through original research and educational activities. The scientific information is provided to governmental agencies, industry and the public to support informed natural resource management decisions for the San Francisco Bay area.

New Faces at the Observatory

Tom Ryan, M.S., Biologist

An enthusiastic birder since age 11, Tom comes to the Observatory following an internship at the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, where he worked with the Beach Watch volunteer program as a shorebird identification specialist and data analyst. He is a native of southern California and holds an M.S. in Biology from Cal State Long Beach; his research has focused on activity patterns of White-throated Swifts in southern California (hence his email address: (WTSwift@aol.com), and the status of Pygmy Palm-Swifts and nesting forest birds in Venezuela. As a graduate student under Charles Collins, Ph.D., he assisted for several seasons with the studies and banding of Caspian, Forster's, Royal and Elegant Terns and Black Skimmers at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. Tom has several publications and presentations to his credit, including recent presentations at Cooper Ornithological Society and Pacific Seabird Group. He led field trips and was Field Trip Director for the Pomona Valley Audubon Society and has worked at Victor Emanuel Nature Tours youth camps. During his first week here on the job, Tom spotted 2 rarities in our own backyard (Rock Wren and Tree Swallow). He has begun intense work on 2 SFBBO future publications and worked up 6 new protocols for field work. We welcome his infusion of knowledge and energy to the Observatory.

Adrian del Nevo, Ph.D., Advisor

Adrian is a former Senior Research Biologist with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with twenty years of experience in avian ecology and conservation biology. His responsibilities included management of all seabird research within the UK and supervision of all research by RSPB's work in Africa. He has more than 50 publications to his credit and considerable experience with seabird and shorebird research and wetlands management. After a recent move to the San Francisco Bay area, Adrian contacted the Observatory offering his expertise as an advisor, and has since attended the last two Science Advisory meetings. His contribution, even at this early juncture, has been invaluable and exciting. We are extremely pleased to have him on board as an advisor.



Board members from left to right: Richard Carlson, Robin Smith, Mike Spence, David McIntyre, Lou Young, Susan Stout, Anne Moser, Ed Pandolfino and Howard Cogswell.

Spring 1997 Projects

Volunteer Opportunities

Every spring we call for volunteer assistants with our various field projects. Below please note the project description, dates of training workshops and field observation periods. Responsibilities are assigned commensurate with expertise and training level: beginning to expert birders are welcome. Monitoring sites and times are assigned on a first come basis, with consideration given to travel time. All workshops are mandatory unless you have participated in previous years. All workshops will be held at Observatory headquarters, please RSVP. Questions? Give us a call at 408/946-6548.

HERON AND EGRET MONITORING

This will be the 16th year of data collection on the heron and egret colonies of the 4 south bay counties: San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda. We are making an all-out effort this year to locate all breeding sites. Colonies may be censused at any time during the 4-day observation windows listed below.

Workshop: 3 March, 7 - 9 PM

Survey windows:

Friday, 7 March through Monday, 10 March
Friday, 11 April through Monday, 14 April
Friday, 9 May through Monday, 13 May
Friday, 6 June through Monday, 9 June
Friday, 20 June through Monday, 23 June

FORSTER'S TERN MONITORING

As above, this is the 16th year of data collection on the Forster's Terns colonies that nest on islands in the south bay's sloughs and salt ponds. Colonies may be censused at any time during the 4-day observation windows listed below.

Workshop: TBA

Survey windows:

Friday, 11 April through Monday, 14 April
Friday, 9 May through Monday, 13 May
Friday, 6 June through Monday, 9 June
Friday, 20 June through Monday, 23 June
Friday, 11 July through Monday, 14 July

HERON AND EGRET DIURNAL NEST ATTENDANCE

At colonies where it is difficult to count nests, the number of adults become the key statistic. But, during the nesting period, adults come and go during the day, taking turns at the nest and foraging duties. These 2 day-long studies will require a team of field observers to count adults of Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets at several different colonies at specific intervals from sunrise to sunset, to document adult nest attendance patterns. The first survey will

be during incubation, the second during chick rearing. Teams will be assembled at the workshops. Besides binoculars and scopes, field equipment will include a comfortable chair and an ice chest full of refreshments!
Workshops: 3 April, 7 - 9 PM; alternate workshop date, 12 April, 10 am- 12 PM, field trip 1 - 3 PM.

Incubation Survey: 5 April

Alternate date: 19 April

Nestling Survey: 31 May

Alternate date: 14 June

TERN DIURNAL NEST ATTENDANCE

As described above, except target species will be Forster's Terns, Caspian Terns and Black Skimmers.

Workshop: 3 April, 7 - 9 PM; alternate workshop date, 12 April, 10 am- 12 PM, field trip 1 - 3 PM..

Incubation Survey: 24 May

Alternate date: 7 June

Nestling Survey: 14 June

Alternate date: 28 June

NEST SITE SELECTION BY FORSTER'S TERNS

Forster's Terns nest predominantly on islands in the south bay's salt pond system. Post-fledging is a good time to conduct research on the features of their preferred nesting habitat, specifically the vegetation, topography and soil characteristics of these artificially created islands. Some experience canoeing is helpful but not necessary and the ability to lift 20 pounds is essential. All equipment will be provided.

Post-fledging surveys: late June/early July and will continue through October 1997, hours variable.

SOUTH BAY SHOREBIRD CENSUS

On hold for scientific review.

Spring Classes

(Note some changes and additions)

All lectures will be held at our Bayside Cannery headquarters. All group sizes limited. Register by mail or phone 408/946-6548.

Owl Prowls

Paul Noble will lead an evening trip to Montebello Open Space Preserve and an all day trip to Pt. Reyes National Seashore in search of our local breeding owl species, using taped calls. Potential species include Western Screech, Northern Pygmy, Great Horned, Long-eared, Northern Saw-whet.

Field trips: Saturday evening, March 1; all day Saturday, March 8.

Fee: Member \$15 per trip, or \$20 for both trips in advance

Non-member: \$20 per trip, or \$30 for both trips in advance (includes one year membership)

Shorebirds of the Pacific Flyway

Identifying shorebirds can daunt a beginner's enthusiasm but April is a great time to conquer these obstacles and begin to enjoy viewing one of the Bay's greatest natural spectacles. Expert birder Alan Hopkins will lead the class through the maze of shorebird identification in 2 evening classes followed by field trips to the Bay shoreline and the outer coast. For beginning to intermediate birders.

Class meetings: Wednesday, April 2 and 9, 7:30-9:30 PM

Field trips: Saturday, April 5 and 12, time and location TBA

Fee: Member \$50/Non-member \$65 (includes one year membership)

Birding for Dummies

You too can learn to bird! And Steve Shunk has launched many beginning birders. Join him for a morning review of the basic skills, including choice of optics and field guides, and a morning walk here in Alviso during the height of spring migration.

Class meeting: Saturday, April 26, 9AM-12 PM

Fee: Member: \$10/ Non-member \$20 (includes one year membership)



Our thanks to these supporters of the Observatory.....

Memberships

We welcome the following new and returning members of SFBBO (November 1996 through January 1997):

Leon Abrams, Jean Alexander, Peter Allen, Ron and Viola Barklow, Joyce Bartlett, Carol Belew, Robert Berka, Will and Margaret Bechart, Ellen Blustein, Robert Bowman, Richard Brannon, Juliette Bryson, Ted Chandik, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Bill and Jean Clark, Chris and Tom Clough, Terry and Zoe Coddington, Howard Cogswell, Richard Croll, Cliff Drowley, Lorrie and Ron Emery, William Ferguson, George Finger, Dave and Susie Formenti, Lillian Fujii, Dena Funschelle, Christina Garcia, Thomas Goodier, Shirley Gordon, Phil and Pat Gordon, Thomas Grey, Theresa Grieve, Marie Grubbe, Madelon Halpern, Bernard Hand, Carl Hendrickson, Kathryn Hickey, Jan Hintermeister, Barbara Houghton, Lance Hull, Udy Irving, Peter LaTourrette, Jessie Lawson,

Robin Leong, Pamela Lewis, Donald Lewis, William Lofthouse, Alan Lyons, Bonnie Marks, Peter Metropulos, Karen Moise, Thomas Moore, John and Ruth Moore, Fran and Leroy Nelson, John and Nena Padley, Virginia Peterson, Peter Radcliff, Emily Renzel, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Ed and Alice Roberts, Michael Rogers, Marguerite Ryan, Elizabeth Ryono, April and Mark Sapsford, Jessie Schilling, Jeannie Schmitt, Elaine Senf, Frances Shaw, Martin Sidor, Philip Smith, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Don and Carol Starks, Paul Stevens, Susan and Dan Stout, Madeleine Stovel, Emilie Strauss, Jean Takekawa, Aileen Thompson, Hazel Tilden, Sara Timby, Francis Toldi, Ruth and Gene Troetschler, Tom and Marian VandenBosch, Benjamin Wang, Daniel Watson, Mark Weinberger, Henry Weston, Jr., Anna "Willy" Wilcox, Kathy Wolveris

Contributions

We thank the following individuals for their contributions to SFBBO (November 1996 through January 1997):

Leon Armer, Paul and Joan Armer, Ginny Becchine, Richard Brannon, Janice and Frank Delfino, Cliff Drowley, Dave and Susie Formenti, Phil and Pat Gordon, Jan Hintermeister, Sue Hunt, Pamela Lewis, David McIntyre, Anne Moser, John and Nena Padley, Mike and Theresa Rigney, April and Mark Sapsford, Robin Winslow Smith, Virginia Whipple, K. Clark White



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Newsletter Editor

Susie Formenti

The Bird Observatory is located at 1290 Hope St. in Alviso. The office is open weekdays and some weekends, but specific hours vary with our field schedule. Before stopping in, call 408/946-6548 and check when we will be available.

The Board meetings are open to the membership. Call the Observatory office for dates and times.

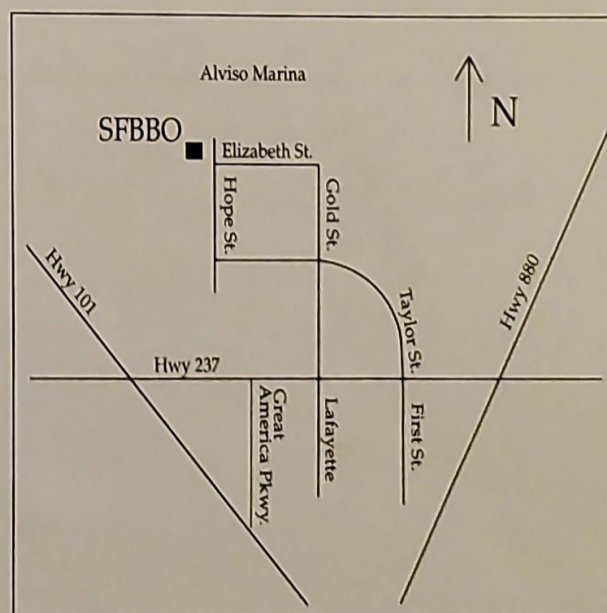
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SFBBO

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

Patron: \$2,000	Associate: \$50
Life: \$400	Family: \$35
Sustaining: \$200	Individual: \$25
Contributing: \$100	Student/Senior: \$15



Thanks to Pacific Gas and Electric
Our great "new" truck!

The Observatory has always been blessed with a good home, thanks to the Fish and Wildlife Service, a great corps of volunteer help and a very good collection of boats, including 2 inflatables with outboards and trailers, several canoes and other assorted gear. Because of our particular study areas, the boats are a necessity and we have had an ongoing situation with getting the boats to the water. In the past, we have depended upon borrowed vehicles for transportation, most frequently Peg Woodin's reliable small red truck.

But we really needed a truck of our own. Thanks to the generosity of Pacific Gas and Electric in San Francisco, we now have one. It is a 1989 GMC Sierra with a working air conditioner and radio, practically new tires and a bedliner. We weren't concerned much with high mileage because we just pull our boats over small distances to our launch sites. We also emphasized to PG&E that we didn't need a cosmetically perfect vehicle either, yet this one looks nearly new to us. And it runs great too. We couldn't be more pleased and send our sincere thanks and appreciation to Pacific Gas and Electric.



Check out our new truck! Happily brandishing the keys, from left to right: Janet Hanson, Robin Dakin, Tom Ryan. (Photo by Alan Walther)



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