

The Stilt

Vol. 18 No. 2

Summer 1999

The Newsletter of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Flight Into the Future

After twelve years of traveling separate but parallel paths, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and the bird-banding program of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station are once again under one roof. During talks that began in February of this year, the Board of Directors of both organizations agreed upon a plan that would transfer the bird banding program, the Richard Mewaldt Library and management of the creek-side location to SFBBO.

The Coyote Creek Riparian Station was originally developed by Dr. Mewaldt as a program under the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Dr. Mewaldt was a Professor of Biology at San Jose State University and an accomplished, much-published ornithologist. He envisioned one or more land-bird research stations situated from the baylands to the mountains surrounding the Santa Clara Valley. He had already played a role in establishing the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and SFBBO. Dr. H. Cogswell wrote: "Then he discovered the bird-funneling effect of the strip of willows, cottonwoods, and box-elders along Coyote Creek as it approaches the southernmost end of San Francisco Bay - and furthermore, it was owned by a public agency which had reasons to keep the general public out of the area. There seemed no better location for an ongoing research program where nets and other equipment could be left in the field from day-to-day. So, Coyote Creek Riparian Station was born . . ." (*The Stilt*, 15:3).

In June of 1986, CCRS became an independent research organization. Under the guidance of Dr. Mewaldt and Mike Rigney, CCRS developed a model program for volunteer water quality monitoring, including the StreamKeepers program. However, bird research through banding and point counts at their creekside location remained an important part of the overall program.

Now the Staff, Board of Directors and Members of SFBBO extend a warm welcome to the Members of CCRS. We are glad to have you aboard, and look forward to creating a single strong organization dedicated to the conservation of our local birds through research and education. We owe no less to the birds that we all so admire and for whose future we are responsible.

Janet Tashjian Hanson
Executive Director

*This issue is dedicated to Mike Rigney and Dr. Richard Mewaldt,
the prime movers that created and sustained the bird banding program of
Coyote Creek.*



Mike Rigney, about to release a Merlin in January of 1987. (R Mewaldt)



The riparian corridor of Coyote Creek, 1995.



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The Future of the Bird Banding Program

By Janet Hanson and Al Jaramillo

Let us begin this update by stating unequivocally that SFBBO intends to retain and continue the bird-banding program at the Coyote Creek location. There are, however, myriad transitional steps to be taken that we hope to inform you of here:

The Site

In the past, access to the study site has been provided by two agencies: the City of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Both agencies have been contacted and work begun to secure access privileges for the purpose of continuing the banding program. Meanwhile, the CCRS Board of Directors will continue their site cleanup program during the month of June. SFBBO intends to move the large modular building to our Alviso location (on the pad behind the cannery). The original green banding trailer will be left on site and various banding enthusiasts, most notably Vicky Silvas-Young and Gerry Ellis, have taken on the task of cleaning it up, not an easy task in a place with no running water!

The Science

Banding was supported by a 10-year contract from the Water District which came to an end in the fall of 1998. While we abhor allowing a large hole to develop in this valuable long-term data set, we should take advantage of this brief stoppage to reevaluate the purpose and methodology of a continuing banding program. We have been in contact with several known experts, including Dr. C. J. Ralph (Redwood Sciences Laboratory, Arcata) and we are planning to meet to review our current procedures and incorporate recommended changes of protocol.

The Source of Funding

Another unavoidable issue to be tackled is funding. We are in the process of developing a budget for the banding program. When annual costs are well documented, we can begin the search for support. Volunteers can take on many of the routine tasks and this can make the monthly overhead appear very low. However, we need to be sure to fund staff time, most importantly for publication, which is the valuable final product of the entire program.

How You Can Help

Banding may resume if enough volunteers step forward to take on various tasks, such as scheduling and data entry. Give us a call if you would like to help with this. You can also donate specifically for the banding program. Check with your employer for matching funds programs and double your donation.

Additionally, our 3rd Annual California Fall Challenge will occur September 18 through October 16, 1999. This event is

not only great fun, but provides a way for our membership to raise funds through sponsorship of their big day of birding. Participants can specify the banding program as the destination for all the funds they raise. Look for more information on this event in our mid-summer mailing, but start planning your big day now: which county, what specialties, and lining up those sponsors at work, through your filofax, your school, club, neighbors, etc. Consider the CFC as your way to support continued banding at Coyote Creek.

SFBBO President's Message

As President of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, I am pleased to greet the many members of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station that are joining SFBBO. I never quite understood why the two organizations were separate, and am delighted to see them back together. Scientific understanding of Bay Area birds and our many other activities can only gain by working under one administrative umbrella instead of two.

We particularly want to thank the CCRS board members who decided that sacrificing everything to maintain separation simply did not make sense. Their wisdom and hard work are leaving us with one stronger organization.

We are moving forward to re-establish riparian bird research and banding programs, and the anticipated CCRS surplus will help even more. With our expanded membership we can make our voices heard when issues affecting Bay Area birds arise. We are particularly hopeful that the combined CCRS and SFBBO databases can bring light rather than heat to the debates over such massive new efforts as the San Francisco Airport expansion.

I look forward to meeting more of you out in the field.

Richard C. Carlson
President, SFBBO



Song Sparrow, banded at CCRS in 1993.



Al Jaramillo signs a copy of his new book for Gerry Ellis. (J. Hanson)

A Message from the Chair of Coyote Creek Riparian Station

As we successfully complete the transition of Coyote Creek Riparian Station avian and riparian programs and prepare to wrap up corporate affairs, it is a pleasure to report on the changes. Avian research has been welcomed and reestablished at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (whence CCRS originally fledged as a field station). Spring banding is starting, the ten-year report is finishing, and planning for a new lower-Guadalupe River research project sponsored by the San Jose watershed action fund is beginning. The CCRS geographic information systems migrated to the new North Bay Riparian Station at the Bay Model in Sausalito, and all the field data from the riparian program are being copied for the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative for local access and use. All the CCRS bills are paid and loans repaid, and once clean-up and closure is finished, a final contribution will be made to SFBBO on behalf of the avian program.

Additionally, CCRS Watershed Program Director Mike Rigney and his wife Theresa send greetings. They are thoroughly enjoying working for The Nature Conservancy at the Hassayampa River Preserve near Wickenburg, Arizona, and have already made the acquaintance of a resident gila monster who guards the mailbox.

While it was not easy for the CCRS Board and Membership to decide to make these changes, we do believe we have succeeded in our transition objectives of furthering the CCRS mission in support of understanding and protecting the riparian and bird resources of the South San Francisco Bay Area. The Board joins me in saying thanks to CCRS members for your long-standing interest in CCRS programs and your support as volunteers, members and contributors to our success. We look forward to continuing to pursue our shared commitment to riparian and avian research and resources with you and the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Trish Mulvey
Chair and CEO

May 2nd, 1999 An Open House at the Bayside Cannery

The agreements reached between the CCRS and SFBBO Boards included transfer of the CCRS membership rolls to SFBBO. To welcome CCRS members and answer questions regarding the future of the bird-banding program, SFBBO invited all interested parties to an event held on Sunday, May 2nd, 1999.

Our guests were treated to fresh strawberries and delicious carrot cake - many thanks to our ad hoc hostess, Robin Smith. We introduced the staff of SFBBO, including Senior Biologist Doug Bell, who had not yet met many of our long-time members. There was great interest in the future of the bird-banding program and these questions were addressed by Alvaro Jaramillo, formerly of CCRS and now a Senior Biologist here at SFBBO. Alvaro's book, *New World Blackbirds: The Icterids*, was recently published by Princeton University Press. We were able to secure copies from both amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com to have on hand for folks wishing to obtain a copy with Alvaro's personal signature.

Introducing Alvaro Jaramillo

Our "other" new Senior Biologist Alvaro Jaramillo was born in Chile, however his family moved to Toronto, Canada while he was still a boy and it was there that he first became interested in nature. At an early age his interests varied: first it was mammals, then one summer he was a "rockhound" venturing around Ontario looking for cool rocks, finally settling down on birds as his primary natural history interest. His early birding consisted of chasing around bird rarities in Ontario but that came to an end, or at least a major slowdown, once he discovered international travel and University began. He studied at the University of Toronto where he earned a Bachelor's degree in zoology and a Masters degree in Ecology and Evolution. His research interest for his thesis was co-evolution in Argentine cowbirds, supervised by Professor Jim Rising. Just before his post graduate work, he was also able to take part in a study of the endangered White-breasted Guinea fowl in the Ivory Coast, otherwise his travels have been in the Americas. Alvaro did a short stint at Simon Fraser University where he worked on the foraging ecology of leaf-cutter ants in

Ecuador before deciding to move to California and return to birds as his area of interest. His interest in cowbirds and blackbirds led to the authorship of a book (*New World Blackbirds: The Icterids*) dealing with this family of birds, illustrated by Canadian artist Peter Burke. Currently he is busy producing a field guide to the birds of Chile in his "spare" time. During the last couple of years Alvaro was working as a biologist at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station, both in the field and behind the computer. He continues working on some of the projects begun by CCRS as well as new tasks at SFBBO relating to the study of land birds in the South Bay. Alvaro enjoys both the scientific and amateur aspects of ornithology. His scientific interests include avian ecology, wildlife conservation, and systematics while also maintaining an interest in publishing on bird identification and distribution in magazines such as *Birding*, *Birders Journal* (Canada), and *Birding World* (U.K.). He believes that SFBBO fills an important role that interfaces birding with professional ornithology, both of which he enjoys immensely and is glad to be a part of the team.



Fran Mewaldt (center) chats with Hazel Tilden (left) and Russ & Marilyn Fowler (standing) at the Open House. (J. Hanson)

*See the next issue
of The Stilt for
review and results
of the 1999
Waterbird Season.*

Salt Ponds and Birds, Part Two

In this issue, we reprint the first part of an article that originally appeared in The Stilt in September of 1986. Dave Lonzarich was a Research Associate of SFBBO and received his M.A. from San Jose State University in 1989, entitled "Temporal and spatial variations in salt pond environments and implications for fish and invertebrates". His observations of life supported in the ponds are still valid and well worth another read today, although as always, we encourage our readers to form their own conclusions.

SALT POND STUDY

By David Lonzarich

Did you ever wonder what goes on beneath the surface of those salt ponds which rim the borders of the south San Francisco Bay? What is it that attracts phalaropes, ducks, pelicans, and shorebirds to those shallow and colored waters? On my first exposure to them, in 1983, I often found myself wondering about this very peculiar man-made habitat. Although an important component of the bay environment, comparatively little is known about the biology of salt ponds. We all know about the small brine shrimp although I imagine familiarity with this animal is more for the role it plays in the Mono Lake food chain than with its value to the migratory and resident birds of the bay. And maybe some of you have even heard rumors that there are actually fish swimming around in those ponds.

For me, at least, there was a constant fascination, because I was certain the waters held some wonderful mystery within them. Who knew precisely what went on under the surface? I knew only a few things for certain, one of the most basic and important being the idea that life from pond to pond was diversified despite the homogeneous appearance of the ponds.

Studies on bird distribution on ponds in south San Francisco Bay conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Swarth, et al (1981) and SFBBO have demonstrated that birds are quite selective in their habitat choice. In other words, one pond is not just as good as another. Bird associations common to different ponds are at least partly based on similarities in feeding habits. For instance, pelicans, wading birds, cormorants, Western and Pied-billed Grebes normally share common local distributions, using ponds customarily not frequented by such birds as phalaropes and Eared Grebes. Such affinities are some indication of the type of life below the water's surface. Salinity, an important and variable element, is likely a major reason for the different species composition in different ponds.

Fish-eating birds, such as the pelicans and cormorants, are the typical inhabitants of the low salinity ponds, where an abundant and available prey provides a good food source. Waterfowl also show a strong preference for lower salinity ponds, presumably feeding on the aquatic vegetation. Phalaropes and Eared Grebes are most abundant in the ponds with relatively high salinities. In these ponds, conditions allow for a

tremendous production of brine shrimp, probably the staple food for these birds as they make their migration through the bay area.

Swarth and others were mainly concerned with the interactions between birds and the aquatic animals in the very high salinity ponds. I believed that a lot remained unexplored, and so I set out in my study to learn about the ecology of ponds with medium to low salinities. Much of my work has focused on determining the identity of the ponds' aquatic life. We have looked at where the animals are located and what influences affect their distributions. Bird counts made simultaneously by SFBBO volunteers have reaffirmed the view that birds are selecting some ponds over others. Now with my work, we have a better grasp on the reasons why. Although clearly there is no simple equation which will explain to us why certain species of birds are attracted to particular ponds, we have concluded that spatial differences in bird distributions throughout the salt ponds are strongly influenced by the presence of widely different aquatic community structures from pond to pond.

Continued in the next issue of the Stilt.

Rail Project *An update by Biologist Danielle Lefer*

Knowledge of the natural history and habitat requirements of Soras and Virginia Rails is limited. In Santa Clara County in particular, very little information is available on Virginia Rail seasonal movement and breeding ecology. We planned to follow radio-tagged birds through the spring and early summer (March 1999 through June 1999) in order to learn about the seasonal movement, migration, breeding ecology of our local south bay population. We equipped the birds with 1.9 gram radio-transmitters with a harness attachment technique designed by biologists at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. This attachment has been successfully used on over 60 Soras. After two intensive months of trapping, with the help of die-hard

volunteers Lee Franks and Charles Coston, we only had two birds with transmitters: one Virginia Rail and one Sora. These two birds were tracked intensively until the beginning of May, when we lost both birds' signals. Unfortunately, since they left the study site at the same time that heavy equipment was being used nearby, we will never know if they might have otherwise remained in the area through the breeding season. Ongoing call counts have shown a decrease in calls from January through the present, and no birds have been heard in May. Since it would be great to know where these two birds have gone, and if they've remained within the south bay, we will scan the south bay marshes by plane in search of

our missing birds. Final results of this project will be published in a later issue of the Stilt.

California
FALL CHALLENGE



Reminder

**3rd Annual California
Fall Challenge**

Sept 18 through Oct 16, 1999

*Watch your mailbox in July,
or visit our website www.sfbbo.org*

NOTHING TO GROUSE ABOUT

SFBBO Sage Grouse Trip (March 19-21) a Booming Success

Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor dark of brutally early morning could keep 16 intrepid birders from our appointed rounds to see Sage Grouse on their lek near Susanville. The displaying grouse were the high point of the trip, but a total of 115 species were seen and included "lifers" for several participants.

Our timing for the grouse was perfect. On Friday 15 males presented their mating ritual on the lek for nearly 2 hours, on Saturday we watched 12 males, and on Sunday morning two die-hards saw only a tired-acting sextet strutting and booming intermittently. One could conclude that leader Dick Carlson scheduled the trip to take place just at the end of the lekking season, thus achieving the optimum balance of activity and weather. Well, almost optimum - this La Nina year continued its unpredictable weather.

Dick and Pat Carlson scouted the location of the lek late Thursday afternoon (3/18). Without their diligence we would never have found it in the early morning (4:30) dark on Friday. The final approach was over a very rough road - Dick ferried people from our cars along the highway to the parking spot in his 4-wheel drive, then we quietly walked a little less than a half-mile to within about 100 meters of the lek. As we hiked we could begin to hear the "booming" which relieved the leaders' anxiety by assuring that we had the right place and time. Indeed, Friday and Saturday large dark birds were seen flying toward our goal in the near-dark as we approached the lek. The lek was plainly visible as a large patch of short, pale golden grass surrounded by sage and chaparral. As the sky lightened we set up our scopes and began picking out the grouse among the volcanic rocks peppering the lek. The males were spectacular, but the females stayed low in the grass, moving only occasionally and apparently to get away from excess male ardor.

From the lek Dick led most of the group to the Honey Lake Wildlife Refuge east of Susanville while assistant leader Lou Young and spotter Jean Young split off for scouting duties



Sage Grouse party on the edge of the Honey Lake Wildlife Area. (L. Young)

to the west and north for Saturday and Sunday. The main group had spectacular views of Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, Canada Geese, White-fronted Geese, White Pelicans, Tundra Swans, and a pot-pourri of ducks and teal. We watched in awe as 20,000 Snow Geese and several thousand Sandhill Cranes gathered in enormous flocks and started their northward migration. Red-tailed Hawks were on nests and many Northern Harriers were patrolling the marshes. One particular bird stood out - the most obvious, high-browed Clark's Grebe that many of us had ever seen was close to the lakeshore. [On Sunday Lou and Jean saw probably this same bird practicing his mating "run" solo.] From Honey Lake the group went to the Wendel area for a somewhat challenging hike to see Chukar and Sage Sparrow.

Next stop on Friday was Janesville; which should be re-named "Lewis' Woodpecker City." The woodpeckers were everywhere, we saw at least 25. At the cemetery we added Acorn Woodpeckers and Pygmy Nuthatch. The day was completed back at the refuge where several Short-eared Owls put on a wonderful show.

The weather persons excelled at erroneous predictions for Saturday. They had promised beautiful weather, but we awoke to a cold wind and low clouds that made the morning even darker than on Friday. We now had two 4 wheel drive vehicles to

transport the folks who had arrived Friday afternoon and so made short work of reaching the lek area. After an hour of good grouse viewing a wall of rain approached and we bounced out of the rutted road and off to Honey Lake. As we approached the refuge we did well in the wet fields and sloughs along the road (Red-winged, Yellow-headed and Tri-colored Blackbirds in giant flocks). Of interest were the Black-billed Magpie nests being built in the arched metal insulator supports atop several electric poles. Then the weather caught up to us - just as we arrived at the refuge we were met by a lovely snowstorm that blocked our view of everything!

Our resourceful leader quickly devised a revised plan. We drove back toward Susanville, intercepting the rest of the group along the road, and had a wonderful leisurely breakfast. We did stop along the road on the way to breakfast to collect a few more birds out of a farm pond along route 395. Breakfast over, the weather was a little clearer and the group visited the Janesville cemetery and the Janesville area for more Lewis' Woodpeckers, crowned sparrows, and lone Cassin's Finch and Band-tailed Pigeon. We successfully searched fields for ducks, geese, courting Kestrels, and hawks. John Meyer found a single Long-billed Curlew for us. Back at Honey lake Dakin Unit we

Continued on page 8

Around the Bay

SFBBO's contributions to bayside events

March 15, 1999

"Perils to Migratory Birds: Who is protecting these international fliers?"

Bay Area Environmental Forum

Speakers included Craig Breon, professor of law at Santa Clara University (and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society advocate) and Scott Terrill, Principal at H.T. Harvey & Associates. Scott spoke on the biology and genetics of migration in birds, infusing his talk with his own experiences as a postdoctoral researcher working on Blackcap Warblers in the lab of Prof. Peter Berthold in Germany. Doug presented a talk on two of SFBBO's flagship species - the Forster's Tern, a migratory bird in the classic sense, and the California Gull, a species that is both migratory and a year-round resident of the Bay Area. Craig gave the final presentation on the history and development of laws that protect migratory birds in North America.

March 17-19, 1999

State of the Estuary Conference

The Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals report was released at the conference, held in San Francisco. The report represents more than two years of work by bay area scientists and is widely viewed as the blueprint for future restoration work on the bay. SFBBO biologists Janet Hanson and Tom Ryan contributed species accounts for several indicator species that utilize salt pond habitat for foraging and breeding, including Wilson's Phalarope and Forster's Tern.

March 29 - April 3, 1999

Cooper Ornithological Society's 69th Annual Meeting

Doug Bell participated in the society's shorebird research meeting and attended several highly informative symposia dealing with urbanization/land use issues and the science of assessing avian population trends in such environments. During the annual banquet, Doug was awarded the Cooper Society's Painton Award for his paper on hybridization in Western and Glaucous-winged gulls.

April 22, 1999

SF Natural History Lecture Series

SFBBO Member and Chief Ardeid Volunteer Nancy DeStefanis presented a talk on the Great Blue Herons at Stow

Lake in Golden Gate Park. Playing to a packed crowd at the Randall Museum, Nancy finished up with a rousing rendition of "My Blue Herons", with accordion accompaniment.

May 8, 1999

International Migratory Bird Day

SFBBO once again co-sponsored IMBD at the Environmental Education Center in Alviso. Our contributions included judging posters and hosting a display table of information on the Observatory. An on-site banding demonstration by Lynn Cropper and Diane Kodama received much positive reaction. Wind hampered our levee station for spotting Forster's Terns nests, hosted by Robin Smith. Other volunteers included the masters of canopy deployment, Jan Hintermeister and George Oetzel.

May 12, 1999

California Academy of Science's Annual Open House

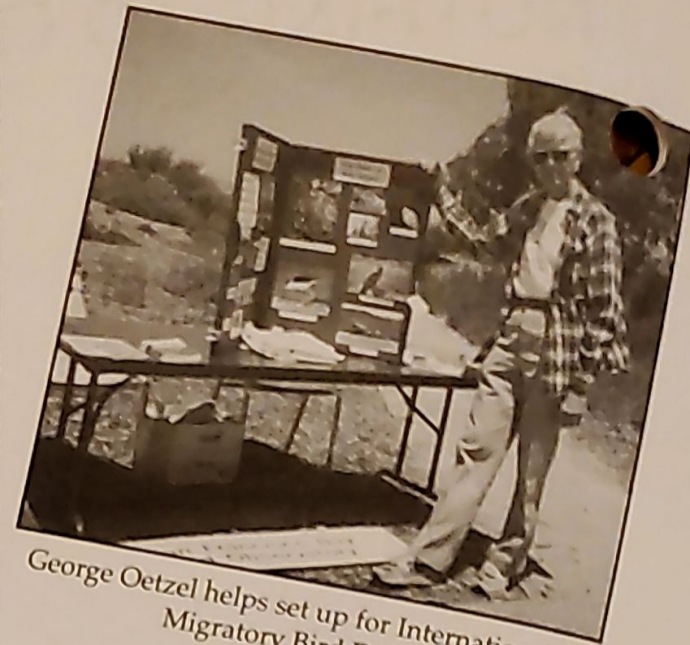
Doug Bell and SFBBO were invited by Dr. Luis F. Baptista, Chair of the Dept. of Ornithology and Mammalogy. Doug set up a display outlining SFBBO's research and monitoring programs. This event is attended by the academy's membership, and permits a behind the scenes look at research and the scientific collections of the academy. The event gives many parents a chance to bring children in to see and experience zoological specimens and research "first-hand".

And upcoming.....

June 23, 1999

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Pacific Division

In conjunction with AAAS-Pacific Division's annual meeting to be held at SF State University, June 19-23, 1999, SFBBO will be hosting a symposium entitled "Nature and the Urban Environment". Doug Bell has organized the symposium speakers and authors to participate. The talks will range from discussing impacts of the Red Fox on Clapper Rail populations in the south bay's environments to a discourse on the ecology and economics of urban ecosystems. For those wishing to attend the meetings, registration materials can be obtained from the AAAS:PD website: www.biology.umt.edu/aaas.



George Oetzel helps set up for International Migratory Bird Day. (J. Hanson)

Transitions

Following a much awaited retirement party, Board Member **Ed Pandolfino** also retired from the SFBBO with his move to Loomis in Placer County. Ed has been a great motivating force behind the inauguration of our California Fall Challenge and has led numerous field trips. We will miss his "just do it" attitude and wish him well on his new ventures in the Sierra foothills. But Ed, Placer is a GREAT county for the Fall Challenge, right? **Kim Briones** has taken a job with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Kim worked on our Rail Project as a field biologist this last fall and winter. We hope she gets to enjoy a lot of field work and wish her much success.

We welcome Scott Terrill and **Steve Rottenborn** to our Science Advisory Board. Both have been deeply involved with the banding program at Coyote Creek and we are grateful for their knowledge and expertise. **Chris Otahal**, formerly Director of CCRS's Avian Research Program has begun work at the Kern River Preserve. Chris is continuing to work on several publications of banding related data and we welcome him as an SFBBO Research Associate.

And finally, we want to express deep gratitude to **Mike and Theresa Rigney**. They acted on their dreams, an accomplishment we are still aspiring to and they set a course we are still following. We wish them all the best in their new work with the Nature Conservancy in Arizona.

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

Memberships

We welcome the following new and returning members of the SFBBO (February, March, and April):

John Bailey, Bruce Bajema, Deborah Bartens, Laurie Bechtler, Bill and Rita Bevans, Diana Bonogofsky, Barbara Borthwick, Robert Bowman, Ann Brohmer, Carol Burkhart, Jennifer Campbell, Dudley Carlson, George Cash, Robert and Susan Christiansen, Rich Cimino, Doug and Gail Cheeseman, Les and Mary Chibana, Bill and Jean Clark, Terry and Zoe Coddington, Charles & Joan Coston, Kate Curry, Carol Dienger, Don Eastwood, Don and Margaret Emery, Dave and Jan Ehrhardt, Linda Fielding, Joan Frisoli, Gail Fulbeck, Christina Garcia and Marcelino Madrigal, Lorraine Grassano, Antonia Griffin, Roger Harris, Grace Hattori, Chip Haven, Gjon Hazard, Lillian Henningsen, Kathryn Hickey, Calvin Hom, Lee Hung, Amy Hutzal, June Hymas, Chris Illes, Timothy Johnson, Lyle Jumawan, Michael Kraus, Edwin Laak, Elke Lange, Tod and

Noreen Likins, William Lofthouse, M.D., Bob and Sharon Lutman, Lori Mann, John and Maria Meyer, Dayton Misfeldt, Nora Monette, John V. & Ruth Ann Moore, Thomas Moore, Caroline Nabeta, Michio Ninokata, Rod Norden, Kent Nybakken, Pam Ogasawara, Donna Olsen, Doug Padley, Ed Pandolfino, Virginia Peterson, Ben Pless, Donna and Darwin Poulos, Vijay Ramachandran, Jean Richmond, Patti Roberts, Glenn Rogers, Annamarie Rosengreen, Anne Rosenthal, Susan Sandstrom, June Santoro, Marilyn and Phil Scowcroft, David Shaw, Marjory Siegel, Vicki Silvas Young, Sandra Skolnik, Kendric & Marion Smith, Philip and Sue Smith, Mike Spence, Louisa Squires, Paul Stevens, Helen Stevenson, Katherine Stiles, Charles Thompson, Bracey and Richard Tiede, Vivek Tiwari, Tom & Marian Vanden Bosch, Neal Van Keuren, Chandler Vienneau, Alan and Bill Walker, Sandra Walther, David Weintraub, K. Clark White, Virginia Willcox, Kermit Wilson, Sandra Wilson, William Wilson, Niki Wood, Ardyth Woodbury

Contributions

Our special thanks to these Contributors to the Observatory (February, March, and April):

Linda Allen, John Bailey, Bruce Bajema, Deborah Bartens, Laurie Bechtler, Bill and Rita Bevans, Barbara Borthwick, Juliette Bryson, Les and Mary Chibana, Eva Coffin, Carol Dienger, Don Eastwood, Dave and Jan Ehrhardt, Leslie Flint, Gail Fulbeck, Harriet Gerson, Antonia Griffin, Jean Halford, Calvin Hom, Chris Illes, Timothy Johnson, Michael Kraus, Elke Lange, Tod and Noreen Likins, Cathy Loewen, Bob and Sharon Lutman, John and Maria Meyer, Dayton Misfeldt, Caroline Nabeta, Michio Ninokata, Rod Norden, Kent Nybakken, Donna and Darwin Poulos, Vijay Ramachandran, Annamarie Rosengreen, Steve Rutledge, June Santoro, Philip and Sue Smith, Jane & Timothy Starbird, Katherine Stiles, Mark and Leila Sutherland, Bracey and Richard Tiede, Vivek Tiwari, Ruth & Gene Troetschler, Tom & Marian Vanden Bosch, Kermit Wilson, Allan Wofchuck.

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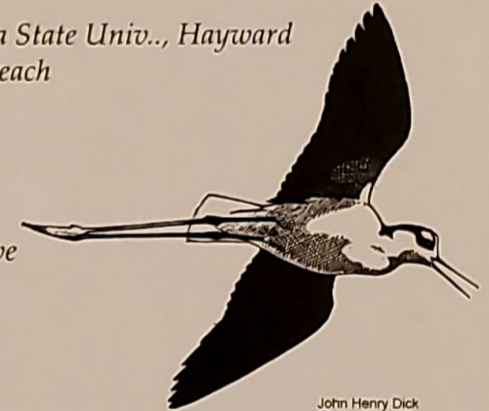
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John Henry Dick

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.

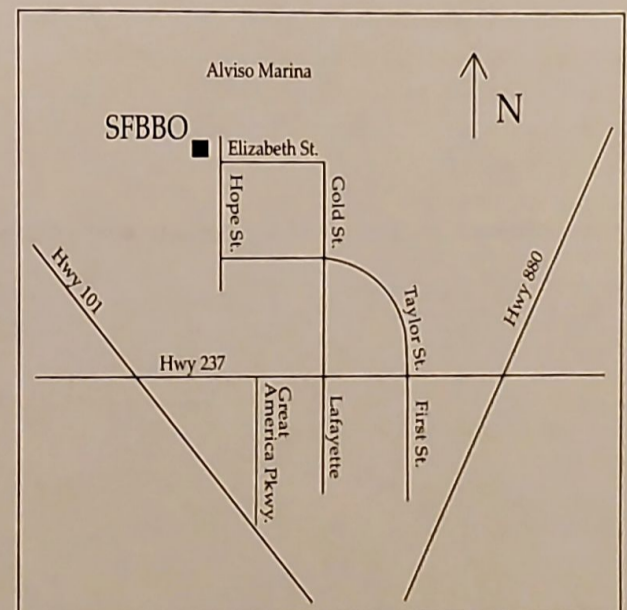
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SFBBO

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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 follows:

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



Sage Grouse Continued

rounded out the waterfowl and added Bald and Golden Eagles. Then we were off on the long and scenic drive to Eagle Lake, with one stop to admire the wilderness "shoe tree." - a huge pine, just off the road in the exact middle of nowhere, festooned with many pairs of sneakers, boots, shoes and slippers hanging from branches as high as 40 feet from the ground.

As we drove to and around Eagle Lake through occasional sun, rain, snow and sleet we had Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Belted Kingfisher, Pinyon Jay, and a spectacular Northern Goshawk. The lake held hundreds of Bufflehead and Goldeneyes. On our return to Honey Lake Fleming Unit just at dark we saw a miniature version of the Short-eared Owl show and a fly-over by the only Black-crowned Night-heron of the trip. In spite of the weather, 91 species were recorded on Saturday.

The group spent Sunday morning walking leisurely along the Bizz Johnson trail which follows an old railroad line along the Susan River from the outskirts of Susanville. Here we had wonderful views of a large flock of Evening Grosbeak, California Quail, Winter Wren, Lewis' Woodpecker, and Townsend's Solitaire. A Cooper's Hawk and a pair of Wood Ducks were glimpsed briefly. Because most participants needed to start for home by late morning, we covered only about a mile of this wonderful 26-mile trail. In just over 2 hours we tallied 34 species in a very easy, pleasant walk.

Throughout the weekend we had wonderful looks at wildlife other than birds: antelope, mule deer, western gray squirrel, Beldings ground squirrel, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, and nutria plus lots of beaver handiwork (toothwork?) along the Susan River. We didn't count the voles that were in the talons of hawks and kestrels.

To summarize the trip, we have to fall back on the "bad-news good-news" cliché. It was bad that weather on Saturday was unpleasant, but it was good because it led us to bird some areas we might otherwise not have. It was bad that the trip had to be scheduled by the grouse, therefore before most migrants returned, but it was good that there were no leaves on the deciduous trees to obstruct our view of the birds that were there. It was bad that not everyone got to see every species, but it is good if it will inspire future repeat trips to this wonderful area of high desert and mountains. The good news outweighed the bad by far. We hope we'll see you on future trips.

Member Contributions

Thanks to all who contributed to make our 1998 Christmas wish of a new truck rack come true! This great addition to our pickup truck enables our field crew to carry 2 double kayaks, 4 singles and much assorted equipment all on one vehicle. We love it and thanks again!

Our repeated gratitude to John and Nena Padley, who have once again made an outstanding contribution to our Endowment Fund. Thanks to the Padleys and others, the Endowment is growing in strength, creating a stable future for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.

Attention CCRS Members

Your CCRS membership is being transferred to SFBBO with no change in expiration date or category status. The expiration date is displayed on your mailing address. Please check it for accuracy. If you had membership in both organizations, we are honoring the later of the two expiration dates. If you have any questions regarding your membership, donation history or anything else, please contact us immediately at admin@sfbbo.org.

Program and Operational Grant

In May of 1999, the City of San Jose bestowed a Program and Operational Grant upon SFBBO, as part of the Watershed Management Initiative. SFBBO Senior Biologist, Al Jaramillo, is designing a study of avian habitat use in the Santa Clara Basin Watershed. We thank the City of San Jose for this generous support and invite our readers to learn more about the study in future issues of *The Stilt*.



San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

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