



CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OCT - 3 1977 LIBRARY

# the gull

Volume 6059

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October 1977

Number 9

### A Whale of a Program

For our October membership meeting, we will have Jim Scarff as our guest. He will speak on the current biological and legal status of the Bowhead whale, the most endangered of the whale species with as few as 1,000 - 2,000 individuals left in the world. Jim is a well known authority on whales and a member of GGAS. He has just been named California Regional Executive of the National Wildlife Federation.

The excellent color film, "In Search of the Bowhead Whale", produced by the Film Board of Canada, will be shown. The program will be in San Francisco at the Oceanic Society building in Fort Mason. To get to this location, enter Fort Mason at the main gate at Franklin and Bay Streets. Proceed to the end of the main road and then turn left. The second building on the right is the Oceanic Society. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 20. Please plan to attend.

-MIKE WIHLER, Program Chairman

### Oakland Christmas Count

This year's GGAS-sponsored Oakland Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 18—please mark your calendars and start preparing for our best count yet. We welcome all newcomers as well as entreat the continued support of our seasoned veterans. Last year's team leaders should notify Bob Hirt at 566-4401 (between 7:00 and 10:00 p.m.) as to their availability and count area preferences. Those who have feeders and will be able to keep track of birds visiting them on count day, please contact Clark Gleason at 843-8846. Owlers should start getting their tapes ready and scouting their areas now.

-BOB HIRT

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## Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, October 1—Golden Gate Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at 43rd Ave. and Fulton St. for a walk around the lakes and vicinity. Lunch optional. Leader Erlene Hevel (661-4231).

Saturday, October 8—Golden Gate National Recreation Area for migrating hawks and other fall birds. From San Francisco on U.S. 101 take Alexander exit just north of the Golden Gate Bridge. Drive ½ mile toward Sausalito. Turn left at GGNRA sign and meet at parking lot at east entrance of tunnel at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Brian McCaffery. Information: Harriet Fraser (661-8891).

Sunday, October 9—Annadel State Park, Sonoma County. A good chance of seeing the Pileated Woodpecker as well as other wintering birds. From Hwy. 12 turn south on Los Alamos Rd., go one block and turn right. Where the road forks in a few hundred yards, bear left. Drive about ½ mile and cross the bridge over the canal. Follow signs to large parking lot at end of road. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Cary lunch and be prepared to walk 3-4 miles. Leader: Gene Hull (525-6893). ( $\sqrt{}$ )

Wednesday, October 12— Mini-trip to see wildlife at Lake Merritt, Oakland. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Rotary Science Center at the north end of the lake. Bring scopes; lunch optional. Leader: Herold Connon. Information: Ruth Voss (525-6893).

Saturday, October 15—Mini-trip to GGNRA for hawks. Directions leader same as for Oct. 8, but meet at 9:30 a.m. Lunch optional.

Wednesday, October 19—Trip to marsh and mudflats near Bay Bridge Toll Plaza for shorebirds and terns. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at parking lot behind Holiday Inn just west of the Eastshore Freeway on Powell Street in Emeryville. Lunch optional; no trip if it rains. Leader: Ruth Dement (527-7923).

Saturday, October 22—Lake Merritt, Oakland. A good place for waterfowl. Meet at 9:00 a.m.; directions are the same as the Oct. 12 trip. Lunch optional. Leader: Herold Connon.

Saturday, October 29—Bay Bridge Toll Plaza. Directions same as October 19 trip. Meet at 9:00 a.m. Lunch optional. Leader: Aileen Pierson (587-4163).

Sunday, October 30—A two-mile walk to Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreational Area, to look for land and shorebirds. Take Hwy. 1 exit off Hwy. 101 toward Stinson Beach. In about ¼ mile turn left into Tennessee Valley Rd. Meet at end of road at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020).

Want to carpool? Call Kate Partridge to make arrangements for either side of the bay, at 849-1951 (home) or 642-3628 (8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). The trips that are checked ( $\sqrt{}$ ) are the ones we will carpool on. There is a Pelagic trip from Montcrey Harbor on October 9. If you are interested in giving someone a ride for this trip or in obtaining a ride for yourself, please call.

-FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## Marine Mammal Trips

The Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor boat trips to view marine mammals seen along the California coast. Past trips have produced excellent views of the gray whale, Dall porpoise, white-sided dolphin, harbor porpoise, California sea lion, sea otter, harbor seal, as well as other species.

The trips are scheduled for January 7, 8 and 15 and will leave from Monterey harbor. The fare will be \$15.00 per person. Reservations can be obtained by sending a self addressed stamped envelope and check payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, California 94705. Details on where and when to meet will be sent with acknowledgement.

## Galapagos, South America Trip in '78

Mike Wihler is organizing a trip to the Galapagos Islands, mainland Ecuador, and the Andes of Peru, to take place in the summer of 1978. We will spend a week cruising among the Galapagos on the "Neptuno", a 198 foot ship complete with dining room, cocktail lounge, and cabins with private baths and air conditioning. Daily excursions to shore will allow us to view the many species that inhabit these incredible Islands, accompanied by local naturalists. Our exploration of Peru will include Lima, a visit to Cuzco and the famous ruins of Machu Picchu, and the Sunday Indian market at Pisac. In Ecuador we'll visit Quito, the avenue of the volcanos, and a highland Indian market. Mike Wihler will escort the group, which is limited to 25 persons. The 18 day trip will cost approximately \$1700 per person, including air fare from Los Angeles, first class hotels, meals, transfers, the services of local guides, and accident and limited sickness insurance. If you are interested, contact Mike Wihler at 664-6567 or Forum Travel International at 843-8294 (2437 Durant Suite #208, Berkeley, CA 94704). Our November meeting will feature a presentation and slide show on the Galapagos and our trip to the Andes.

# Conservation Notes SAVING HABITAT IN GOLDEN GATE PARK

Upon returning to the City from a seven week vacation, I decided to bird a few of my favorite spots in Golden Gate Park. The Chain of Lakes were on the top of my list, but when I got there I found the area had been altered. The blackberry briars from the section on the west shore of Middle Lake had been cleared, the lower branches of the redwoods and cedars had been removed, and two or three trees had been cut down. Though the area cleared is hardly the size of a city intersection and might seem hardly worth saving based its general appearance it has proved one of the richest micro-habitats in San Francisco. It has produced as wide a variety of bird life as any other area in the City.

Of special interest were the rarities reported during the past few years which included American Redstarts, Black and White Warblers, a Tennessee Warbler, a Black Throated-Blue Warbler, Summer Tanagers, a Rose Breasted Grosbeak, a Tropical Kingbird and a Lincoln's Sparrow. Whether such species continue to frequent the area remains to be seen.

Though the Recreation and Park Department generally does a fine job managing and maintaining San Francisco's Parks they do so without benefit of a Master Plan, Environmental Impact Reports or public input. Various members of the Rec. and Park Department have informed me that they get limited public input, and have stated they would be interested in additional comments regarding how the public uses the park. This provides us with an excellent opportunity to influence the future of San Francisco's parks by providing park management with information about valuable natural areas.

During the coming months the western part of Golden Gate Park may undergo extensive reclamation. There is little doubt that it needs some work. Lakes are filling with reeds, trees haven't been pruned for years, many areas are seriously eroding, and, pending electoral success, a new automatic irrigation system will be constructed. In the meantime, a Master Plan will be developed during the next two years. It is the opinion of this writer that only essential reclamation projects be undertaken until the Master Plan is implemented. For example, if all the reeds are cleared from North Lake, that area will no longer support a large variety of birds including at least two reported Virginia Rails. If the forest west of the Chain of Lakes is pruned extensively, it will no longer support the large numbers of woodpeckers, nuthatches and other treetop species it presently supports.

To suggest that no reclamation in these areas should take place for the next two years might prove counterproductive; but to suggest that adequate reeds belong in the lakes to support the resident mallards, coots, rails and yellowthroats is quite appropriate; to suggest that hollow and dead boughs remain in numbers enough to support the treetop species is equally appropriate. The fact that the sand duncs are making a comeback in many of the City's parks is apparent and it would be quite prudent to start planting groundcover now, before large forested areas are further damaged.

The vital issue seems to be that extensive reclamation and renevation projects should be postponed until after the development of a Master Plan. Work in western Golden Gate Park should focus on maintenance and prevention of further erosion.

Those of us interested in preserving some of the better birding areas in Golden Gate Park and San Francisco's other parks should inform the Recreation and Park Department of the value of those areas. Address your correspondence to Mr. John Spring, McLaren Lodge, Fell and Stanyon Streets, San Francisco, CA 94117.

-DAN MURPHY

MINERAL KING. The Mineral King area of the southern Sierra has been the site of proposed development for several decades. It is surrounded on three sides by Sequoia National Park and attempts have been made to include it in the park which, up to now, have failed. There are now bills in both houses of Congress, S.88 in the Senate and H.R.1771 in the House of Representatives, that would preserve this area in its natural state by including it in Sequoia National Park.

**REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK.** The bills to expand Redwood National Park by 48,000 acres, H.R.3813 in the House and S.1976 in the Senate, are, at this writing, still alive. The expansion of the park is needed to protect entire ecosystems and reduce erosion, as well as improve recreation opportunities.

As this is being written, Congress is in recess, and these two issues will be taken up when it reconvenes. If these matters have not been decided when you read this, please write your Senators and Representatives and give your support for these bills.

ALASKA GAS PIPELINE. Decision and approval for the route of the natural gas pipeline from Prudhoc Bay to the lower 48 states is expected shortly. There were three proposed routes for the pipeline—the El Paso route, the Arctic route, and the Alcan route. None of the routes are without problems. Construction costs are about the same for all three

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routes, about 7 billion dollars. Recently the Arctic route option was discarded. It was also considered the most environmentally disturbing. The El Paso route follows the existing oil pipeline but crosses with high seismic risk. The Alcan route follows the oil pipeline part of the way, avoids high-risk seismic areas and is considered the least environmentally disturbing.

The Audubon Leader, a bimonthly alert on conservation issues, is available from the National Audubon for \$5 (24 issues). The Audubon Leader allows more rapid communication with its membership than the Audubon which has been discontinued.

-CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

### Extra Day at the GGAS Office

The GGAS office will be open the third Saturday of each month beginning in October. The office will be staffed with volunteer help from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

# August and Early September Observations

A most interesting period and perhaps a precursor of an outstanding fall, August and early September produced some surprises, discussed by topics below.

#### PELAGIC NEWS

An extremely warm water year brought normally more southern species to our area, sometimes in surprising numbers. A **Bluefooted Booby**, only the third Northern California record, was watched from the Cliff House in San Francisco 2 Sept. (PM). Single immature **Magnificent Frigatebirds** were seen soaring over the Golden Gate (PB et al.) and Monterey Bay by late August. Among them was an interesting Manx Shearwater, well seen, cleanly black-and-white with white undertail coverts (JM, DR et al.). Most California Manxes are of the winter-breeding, black-vented variety from Baja California (*Puffinus puffinus opisthomelas*); although there is disagreement, to me this bird fit the description of the summer-breeding, white-vented West Mexican race P. p. auricularis—the "Townsend's Shearwater". As it has again been pointed out (see Birding Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 115), these two "races" differ significantly in biology and may well constitute separate species. There is no doubt, however, as to the identity of up to twenty **Craveri's Murrelets** (along with fifteen Xantus') in Monterey

Bay 27 Aug. (KG et al.). Modern records are almost unknown, and this invasion is unprecedented.

Several highly pelagie migrants were observed on shore. An adult Long-tailed Jaeger was described from the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza (BBTP) 31 Aug. (HJ, NC). More expected was a Parasitie Jaeger there two days later (KY, HJ). A South Polar Skua was scoped from Cliff House 28 Aug. (DD), along with thirteen Sabine's Gulls. Monterey had two South Polar Skuas 27 Aug. Single Arctie Terns were identified at the BBTP 25 Aug. (JR, BF) and at Pescadero 4-5 Sept. (PM), while in the normal offshore migration a count of 700 in Monterey Bay 27 Aug. was quite high (JM et al.). Unrelated shoreline finds were a Harlequin Duck at Cliff House 2-3 Sept. (PM, MLR) and a Franklin's Gull in Monterey 19 Aug. (DH), while another was inland at Modesto 1 Sept. (JL).

#### SHOREBIRD CLUES

The better shorebird finds—some very exciting—all fell into patterns that are now beginning to be recognized. Five Wandcring Tattlers at the BBTP 14 Aug. (VR, DR) were far from the coast but at this time of year a few are found in such places. Up to three Stilt Sandpipers at Woodland 25-29 Aug. (JLa) were good birds, but placed during their two best weeks in our area. Four individual Semipalmated Sandpipers were carefully identified: Limantour 5 Aug. (GP), Bolinas 6 Aug. (JE), Peseadero 6 Aug. (PM), and Bodega Bay 13 Aug. (LCB, BDP). Notice the eloseness of the dates; early August may well be the time to search for this species. Best of all was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper on Point Reyes 5-6 Aug. (JLa, VR et al.). But last year's Salinas River birds were 27 Aug.—6 Sept., and the four previous fall records for the state fell within the first half of September.

### **HUMMINGBIRD BLUES**

A description of a very large, noisy hummingbird with a brilliant green gorget in a Berkeley backyard 25 Aug. may fit the characteristics of the Rivoli's Hummingbird and could eonstitute a first state record. Proper documentation is probably lacking, but it is interesting that the Nevada record was on 28 Aug. Now if only I had seen it . . .

### **VAGRANT VIEWS**

By the turn of the month, reprts of the eagerly awaited "eastern" vagrants were already pouring in. A Black-and-white Warbler in Tilden Park 12-19 Aug. (CM, EM) and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on Limantour Rd. 14 Aug. (DG) may have been summering individuals, but the rest surely are migrants. The more expected of these were an Eastern

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Kingbird at Rodeo Lagoon 3 Sept. (MLR); Red-eyed Vireos in San Rafael 28 Aug. (WMP) and Tilden Park 3 Sept. (TO); Black-and-white Warblers at the Fish Docks 21 Aug. (EM; as usual, I'm using specific Point Reves spots here-see the May Gull for details) and Monterey 3 Sept. (JW); Tennessee Warblers at the Fish Docks 4 Sept. (A&WG), Drakes Beach 2-4 Sept. (BF, KY), and New Willows 4 Sept. (LCB, BDP); Northern Waterthrush at the Carmel River mouth 3 Sept. (VR, EM); and six American Redstarts from coastal Marin, San Mateo, and Monterey Counties; two others were in Tilden Park 26 Aug. (JM). On more exciting notes were a Lucy's Warbler at the Carmel River mouth 28 Aug. (JLa)—this seems to be the spot for them in our area—and an incredible rash of early Prairie Warblers. Four were present the first week of September, making any attempts to find a pattern for this bird a shambles. The records: Fish Docks 29 Aug.—4 Sept. (DP, DR et al.), Pacific Grove 2-3 Sept. (WR, VR, JW), Drakes Beach 2-6 Sept. and another there 5-6 Sept. (BF, KY, VR et al.). A rare Canada Warbler was described from Tilden Park 30-31 Aug. (JWe, BO, ED, DG). And a Clay-colored Sparrow was near Nunes Ranch 4-5 Sept. (LCB, IW, VR).

Observers: Laurence C. Binford, Paul Buckley, Nancy Conzett, Ed Dames, Donna Dittman, Jules Evens, Bud Fry, Kimby Garrett, Al and Wilma Ghiorso, Doug Gomke, Dave Harlow, Tom Heindel, Herb Jorritsma, Jeri Langham (JLa), John Luther (JL), Eugene Makishima, Peter Metropoulos, Joe Marlan, Colin Murphy, Bob O'Brien, Todd Olsen, Gary Page, Dennis Parker, Benjamin D. Parmeter, William M. Pursell, William Reese, Van Remsen, Jean Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, John Westlake (JWe), James Wolstencroft (JW), Keiko Yamane.

-DON ROBERSON, Observations Editor 2244 Encinal #5, Alameda, CA 94501 (865-2462)

### Waterfowl and Shorebird Class

"Waterfowl and Birds of the Shore", a Merritt College field studies class will be given by retired Oakland naturalist Paul F. Covel. The class will meet Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. at portable building T-51 on the Merritt campus off Redwood Road. Beginning Saturday, October 29, there will be eight sessions, each ending at noon. All trips will be held in the East Bay, with Leora Feeney assisting on the Alameda South Shore studies. For information phone Registration, Merritt College, 531-4911, or write 12500 Campus Drive, Oakland, 94619.

# The Bird School With Rich Stallcup

"The Bird School" is a special nine-week course in ornithology to be taught by Rich Stallcup at the National Audubon Society's Whittell Education Center, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California The program will consist of nine evening workshops beginning Nov. 10 (Thursdays, 7-9 pm) and each session will be followed by a Saturday field trip.

Rich Stallcup is the President of the Western Ornithologists, former regional editor of *American Birds*, tour leader for Point Reyes Observatory and Bird Bonanza Tours and author of several technical papers including the widely acclaimed "Pelagic Birds of Monterey Bay" published this year by *Western Birds*.

Registration information and the class syllabus can be obtained by writing or calling the Whittell Center. The fee for this course is \$90 per person.

# Student Naturalist Identification Workshops

The continuing programs in field identification for students ages 11-15 will be held this month at Golden Gate Park. All interested students should meet at the Park entrance, located at 43rd and Fulton, at 9 am for a three-hour walk around the Chain of Lakes on Saturday, October 15th.

# Colonial Bird Register Seeks Information

Investigators at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology are anxious to sustain their current level of success in collecting information about colonial birds. Currently they are accumulating data for the 1977 breeding season. If you have data about a colony, they would appreciate very much your sending that information to them; or if you are interested in receiving information about colonies write to Donald A. McCrimmoon, Ph.D., Director, Colonial Bird Register, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14853.

# New Christmas Count for San Jose Area

December 19, 1977 is the date tentatively set for a new Christmas bird count being organized in the Mt. Hamilton area east of San Jose. For more information call Donald E. Schmoldt, 408-427-3754, or write to him at 230 Buena Vista Ave., Santa Cruz, California 95060.

### The California Condor-1977

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUDUBON SYMPOSIUMS

Based on a series of symposiums, papers and personal communications, the National Audubon Society's George Whittell Education Center has recently published an up-to-date summary of information available on the California Condor. This special publication recounts the history of condor preservation efforts and describes the current status of recovery efforts proposed to help insure the future survival of this magnificent bird.

The California Condor—1977 may be ordered by mail for \$2.50 plus 35¢ for postage and handling (California residents add 15¢ sales tax). Address orders and make checks payable to: National Audubon Society, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California 94920.

# Southern Marin Spring Bird Count

This past May more than 50 birders took part in the 1st Annual Spring Bird Count. Patterned after the long-standing Christmas Bird Count, this effort was designed to learn more about the breeding populations in Marin County.

The count revealed the presence of 159 species and of this number, 64 species were confirmed as nesting. Among the highlights of the count were the Golden Eagle, Poor-will, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Sage Sparrow and Black-chinned Sparrow, which were all found to be possible or confirmed nesting species.

# Special Pre-Christmas Sale at "The Book Nest"

A ten-day sale (October 5-9 and October 12-16) will be held at the Whittell Education Center's bookstore from 9:00 - 5:00 daily.

Featuring hundreds of natural history books, field guides, Audubon gift items, stationery and Christmas cards, this sale will provide Audubon members with an opportunity to get their Christmas gift shopping done early.

Also of special interest to Auduboners will be the sale of a wide selection of Bushnell binoculars and scopes at 20% off the list price!

# Audubon Workshop Scholarship Offered

A scholarship is available from the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc., for the Audubon Workshop of the West for one two-week session in 1978. The workshop has sessions from mid-June to mid-August. Applications may be obtained at the Golden Gate Office, 2718 Telegraph Ave., Suite 206, Berkeley, Or for more information telephone 843-2222.

Bodega Bay Institute Activities

The Bodega Bay Institute, 240 Ft. Mason, San Francisco 94123, offers a year-around program of natural history outings. A non-profit, tax exempt organization, BBI was started in 1974 by a group of biologists and naturalists and has offered over 150 varied activities to this date. Almost all programs are geared to the general public, including families. Usually no experience is necessary; special rates are available for children.

Two programs seem especially pertinent to birders: **High Tide** will explore the salt marshes of the bay with hopes of seeing rails, night herons, hawks and gulls. The daytime trip will be on Oct. 15, with an evening talk preceding it on Oct. 12. There's a fee of \$15.

Millions of Ducks, Nov. 18-20, with an evening talk preceding on Nov. 9, will take participants to California's Central Valley to explore several refuges, seeing shorebirds and more than 30 species of waterfowl during the fall migration. There is a fee of \$48 for the three day trip.

Further information on these and other activities of BBI may be obtained by calling 415-776-4449. A free newsletter is available on request.

### Gifts and Bequests

### FOR AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

In memory of:

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Memorial and honorary gifts and bequests will be used as specified by the donors. Acknowledgement will be made in *The Gull* and personally by the Corresponding Secretary, Shirley Taylor. Please send checks made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society to: Corresponding Secretary, GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California 94705. All gifts are tax deductible.



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Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward THE GULL. Monthly meetings: third Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$15 per year (individual); \$18 (family); includes AUDUBON Magazine and THE GULL; to join, make checks (no cash) payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving THE GULL. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to THE GULL separately \$3 per year; single issues 30¢. High school and college student membership \$8.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, \$12.00; senior citizen family, \$15.00.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month.