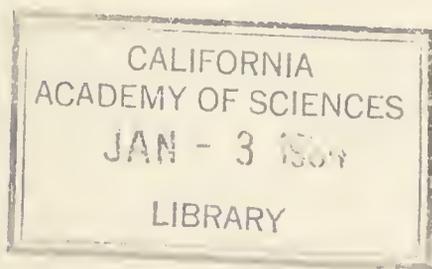


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The Gray Whales Are Coming

Tom Johnson, former exhibit manager of General Whales and current board member of the Whale Center, will speak on whaling and the ecology and migration of California's State Marine Mammal—the Gray Whale. Tom has led natural history trips in the U.S. for ten years. Come to GGAS' January meeting and join him on the Gray Whale's journey. It will start at 7:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Fort Mason Center on Thursday, Jan. 12, in Room 100, Bldg. C.

ADOPTING A REFUGE

The February meeting will also be held in San Francisco. It is scheduled for Feb. 9 at the same location. Glenn Olson, regional vice president of National Audubon, will be the speaker. Adopting a refuge is an exciting new program initiated by National Audubon that offers local chapters the opportunity to help U.S. Fish and Wildlife with management responsibilities in nearby national wildlife refuges.

Field Trips Calendar

Wednesday, Jan. 11—Mini-trip to San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the refuge at 9:15 a.m. From the East Bay take Hwy. 17 and exit on Jarvis. Where Thornton Ave. intersects Hwy. 84 make a left turn into the parking lot. From the West Bay take Hwy. 101 to the Dumbarton Bridge. This is an excellent opportunity to visit a salt marsh with a professional ornithologist. Heavy rain cancels trip. Bring scope and lunch. Trip is limited to the first 26 people who call the leader. Leader: Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Saturday, Jan. 14—Carrizo Plain. From the Bay Area drive south on Hwy. 101 to Paso Robles or south on I-5 to Kettleman City. Lodging is available in both places. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Cholame on Hwy. 46,

about 24 miles east of Paso Robles. Driving time is four-and-one-half to five hours so we suggest that you plan to arrive Friday evening. We will bird all day so you may wish to stay in the area Saturday night. Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothes and perhaps a spotting scope. This area is excellent for Sandhill Cranes, a wide variety of Raptors, Mountain Plover and Longspurs. Not only will we see birds but we will also discuss the geology of the area. The San Andreas Fault is an outstanding feature here.

Considering the length of the drive and the possibility of poor weather (high winds or snow), it is possible that this trip will be cancelled at the last minute. It will also be called off if there is no interest. It is therefore important that you notify Shirley Kelly (387-8290) if you plan to attend. Leave a phone number where you can be reached if the trip is cancelled. Leader: Eben McMillan. (✓)

Saturday, Jan. 21—Palo Alto Baylands. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto, exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the yacht harbor and the Bayland Refuge until you reach the duck pond on the left just beyond the Palo Alto Airport. Meet here at **9 a.m.** Bring lunch, scopes and clothes appropriate for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

Sunday, Jan. 22—Grizzly and Joice Islands Wildlife Area. Take I-80 north to Fairfield. Take the Fairfield/Rio Vista (Hwy. 12 east) exit and go east (right) on West Texas St. for about one-half mile to the City Park. Meet at the parking lot on the right at **8:30 a.m.** We will caravan from there to the refuge. We should see a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and marshbirds. Bring lunch and scopes. Leader: Peter Allen (981-7199). (✓)

Sunday, Jan. 29—Dillon Beach. Meet at **7:45 a.m.** at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, section H (just east of the Sir Francis Drake off-ramp from Hwy. 101). We will leave there promptly at 8 a.m. for the town of Tomales where we will stop by the Bank of America building on Hwy. 1 at 9 a.m. to meet the people from west Marin. From there we will continue to caravan to Lawson's Landing (entrance fee). Bring lunch, warm clothes, rain gear and a scope if you have one. We may see three species of Loons, Red-necked Grebes, White Pelicans, Brants and Snowy Plovers. Golden Plovers are a possibility. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

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Saturday, Feb. 4—Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at North Lake near the 43rd Ave. and Fulton St. entrance to the park. The Chain of Lakes is excellent for ducks. We may see Wood Duck. Land birds are also plentiful. Lunch is optional. Leader: Erline Hevel (661-4251).

Sunday, Feb. 5—Bay Park Refuge, Oakland. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot at the north end of Bay Park Refuge for a morning of leisurely birding. This trip is good for beginners. From Hwy. 17 take the Hegenberger Rd. exit, go right (north) on Edgewater Dr. for about one mile to the park. Bring a scope if you have one. Lunch is optional. We should see a variety of ducks and shorebirds. Leader: Dave Cornman (768-2522). (✓)

Note from the Field Trips Committee—Each year GGAS has had trips to Los Banos State Refuge and Panoche Valley. These popular trips have been arranged to allow people to attend both. Once again this year the leaders have agreed to lead the trips twice. We suggest that people who are interested in both trips spend Saturday night in Los Banos. The starting points are arranged so that either trip may be selected on either day.

Saturday/Sunday, Feb. 11/12—Los Banos State Refuge. Meet at 8 a.m. at the refuge headquarters located three miles north of Los Banos on Henry Miller Rd. Allow two-and-one-half to three hours driving time from the Bay Area. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to fill your gas tank before the trip and carpool from the Bay Area if at all possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. We will look for White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles and assorted waterfowl.

This trip will be repeated with the same meeting place and time on **Sunday**. Leaders: Peter and Dolores White (229-1714). (✓)

Saturday/Sunday, Feb. 11/12—Panoche Valley. On **Saturday** meet at 8 a.m. at the reservoir on Hwy. 25, one-fourth mile south of the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Considering the distance involved in this trip be sure to fill your gas tank before the trip and carpool from the Bay Area if at all possible. In the past we have seen Mountain Plover, Mountain Bluebird, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Vesper Sparrow and Lewis' Woodpecker.

This trip will be repeated on **Sunday** in the reverse direction. On **Sunday** meet at 8 a.m. at the junction of I-5 and Little Panoche Rd. south of Los Banos. Leader: Chris Carpenter (376-6802). (✓)

Sunday, Feb. 19—San Mateo Coast. Meet at Pescadero Beach parking lot at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and Pescadero Rd. at **8 a.m.** Please carpool to this point if possible; parking is limited. Bring lunch and clothes suitable for cold, wet and windy weather. We will look for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Leader: Jon Zablackis (642-9121 days). (✓)

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9053 and leave a message. She will contact you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelly (387-8290) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

Wanted: Sightings of Color-banded Dunlin

Researchers at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory need information on the location and color-band sequences of dunlin banded at Bolinas Lagoon in Marin County. Their study of wintering dunlin is dependent on numbers of returning banded birds and knowledge of their movements to other areas.

If you see a dunlin with color-bands note the time, date and exact location. Record the specific sequence of colors and where they are positioned on the bird's legs so that individuals can be identified.

The study birds have two bands, one on each leg, which are positioned on either the upper or lower part of the leg. This positioning of the bands (upper or lower) should be noted for both the right and left legs. Each of these bands will also have two narrow bands of color, one above the other, which must be known to identify a specific bird. Note which color is on top and which color is on bottom for each band on each leg. Colors used are red, blue, yellow, green, orange, white and beige.

Please notify the Dunlin Project, PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970, or call (415) 868-1221.

Census Sanderlings and Snowy Plovers

Volunteers are needed to participate in a comprehensive mid-winter census of Sanderlings and Snowy Plovers. Spanning the entire U.S. Pacific Coast, this annual event, a joint effort of the PRBO Snowy Plover Project and the BML Sanderling Project, is scheduled for the weekend of Jan. 21-22. We need participants to walk beaches familiar to them, counting birds of both species and looking for color-banded individuals.

Anyone interested in contributing to the census effort should write or phone Jim Siegel, c/o Sanderling Project, Bodega Marine Laboratory, P.O. Box 247, Bodega Bay, CA 94923, (707) 875-2211 or Frances Bidstrup, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 1270 Day Valley Road, Aptos, CA 95003, as soon as possible.

November Observations – through November 29

The first of November coincided almost exactly with the arrival of the winter storm track. The latter lingered persistently, resulting in a very rainy month. El Niño may be fading, but the breeding seabirds are still disrupted. This month's Farallon Island report (as always by Point Reyes Bird Observatory) details the abnormally late and sparse post-breeding return to the Island by almost all species. Conversely, some migrant seabirds have passed close to SE Farallon in larger than expected numbers, including the Arctic Loon (peak 4000+ on Nov. 15-16 related to a rare bloom of the pelagic red crab *Pleuroncodes*), Common Loon, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, California and Bonaparte's Gulls.

SHEARWATER TO KITE

Short-tailed Shearwaters are not usually identified from SE Farallon Island, but some were on Nov. 1 (4), 6 (5+) and 15 (5). October 27 brought a Cattle Egret to SE Farallon and two more arrived Nov. 1. Six or more Cattle Egrets were near San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Oct. 30 (DG, et al.) and single sightings were near Drakes Beach Nov. 11 (DT), near the Point Reyes Coast Guard Communications Station Nov. 12 (CJ) and south of Byron Nov. 22 (BB).

PRBO observers "calculated from five hours of observation that 14,400 Brant passed SE Farallon in ten hours of daylight Nov. 4. The next day we recorded 80. Talk about contracted migration! None was seen before Nov. 4." Although many ducks were slow to appear in numbers, Eurasian Wigeons arrived as expected: Golden Gate Park Nov. 12-19 (JW, mob), 2 at Gray Lodge Refuge Nov. 17 (GF) and Hayward Shoreline Nov. 26 (CW, BR). A Harlequin Duck was back in Moss Landing Nov. 5 (TO). The season's first Oldsquaw paddled Lake Merced Nov. 20 (WK). A Black-shouldered Kite Nov. 5 constituted only the fifth SE Farallon record.

CHARADRIIFORMES

As expected, the five or six Lesser Golden-Plovers apparently settling in for the winter in the Drakes Hall area of Point Reyes are all *fulva*, the "Pacific" Golden-Plover (mob). About six Mountain Plovers were in Panoche Valley by Oct. 30 (DG, et al.) and 49 were counted near Davis Nov. 6 (EH). A Rock Sandpiper was back on Bodega Head Nov. 26 (BDP). Red Phalaropes passed SE Farallon in numbers Nov. 5-18,

with a peak of 2500 on Nov. 15. A few penetrated San Francisco Bay, starting with one at Palo Alto Nov. 15 (SFB) and continuing with two on the sewage ponds east of Hayward Regional Shoreline Nov. 18 (OR) and one at Berkeley Nov. 24 (CG). Lake Merced hosted 30 on Nov. 20 (WK).

A Pomarine Jaeger at Oyster Point, South San Francisco, Nov. 15 (PeG) was unusual inside the Bay. The immature Franklin's Gull and adult **Common Black-headed** and **Little Gulls** remained at the Stockton Sewage Ponds at least through Nov. 26 (mob, DW, JW) and a second immature Franklin's Gull was seen Nov. 25 (BB) and 26 (DW, JW). Startling was a description of an apparent adult **Common Black-headed Gull** at Lake Merritt Nov. 25 (BVanM, et al.). It was never refound. The only report of Black-legged Kittiwake was of one flying past Hayward Landing Nov. 14 (BR). An Elegant Tern at Bodega Bay Nov. 22 (GF) was late for a location north of Point Reyes. A murrelet thought likely to be a Craveri's was seen at SE Farallon Nov. 15. Unfortunately, the identification could not be confirmed for this very interesting El Niño record.

WOODPECKER TO THRUSH

A "Red-naped" Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found Nov. 12 in Strybing Arboretum (JM, et al.) stayed at least until Nov. 26 (mob, BW). A late yellow-green Empidonax flycatcher in the Lake Merritt Botanical Garden Nov. 26 (RY, SW) was most likely a Western Flycatcher. At the PRBO banding station at Palomarin, a *Myiarchus* flycatcher thought to be an Ash-throated Nov. 12-13 was re-identified as a **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** Nov. 14 (DDeS, et al.) but unfortunately was not seen again. It was Northern California's third and both others lingered for long periods. Three more sightings of the Tropical Kingbirds came from Point Reyes: Horseshoe Pond on Oct. 28 (GF), Mendoza Schoolhouse Nov. 4 (AG, WG) and Nunes Ranch Nov. 12 (CJ). One wonders how many of our Tropical Kingbirds are spotted at more than one location; they certainly do move among some of the most heavily birded coastal migrant traps and they are normally conspicuous. For example, of the latter, one was found at Lake Merced independently by three observers Nov. 26-29 (JL, BW, RY).

The **Eurasian Skylark** returned to the Point Reyes fields for the sixth consecutive year! First spotted at Spaletta Ranch Nov. 2-5, it moved to Hall Ranch Nov. 6-8, but has not been reported since (DE, JH, mob, AG, WG). A Townsend's Solitaire was in Martinez Nov. 5 (NB, et al.).

As always in November, most eastern vagrant warblers were Palm Warblers. Moreover, with the early arrival of winter only one other species of eastern warbler (Black-and-white) appeared after Nov. 3.

Palm Warblers occurred as follows (Farallon dates are *arrivals* only):

20 SE Farallon	Oct. 25(6), 26(5), Nov. 3, PRBO 5(2), 15(3), 16(2), 17	
4 Point Reyes	Oct. 28, Nov. 5-6 (3 on Nov. 6)	mob
2 Bodega Bay	Oct. 28	GF
1 Pine Gulch Cr.	Nov. 25	DB, GS
3 Neary's Lagoon, Santa Cruz	Oct. 29-Nov. 7	mob, SP

These 30 brought the seasonal total to 73 to date.

A Magnolia Warbler on SE Farallon Nov. 3 followed a Black-throated Green Warbler there by one day. A Prairie Warbler lingered at Fish Docks Oct. 29-31 (MLR, JR, et al.). A window-killed Blackpoll Warbler was found Nov. 1 at the UC Medical Center in San Francisco (MY). Black-and-white Warblers were discovered east of Rodeo Lagoon Nov. 18 (CF) and in Glen Canyon Park, San Francisco, Nov. 27 (AH, DL). This fall's totals for these five species are thus increased to 15, 2, 6, 54 and 11, respectively.

OTHER EMBERIZIDAE

A Green-tailed Towhee was on SE Farallon Nov. 11. The amazing flight of American Tree Sparrows continued only to the end of October, with Farallon arrivals Oct. 25 and 27 and one at Neary's Lagoon, Santa Cruz, Oct. 28-31 (SA, BLaB, mob). However, the latter individual took second billing to the **LeConte's Sparrow** at the same place and time (Oct. 28-30; SA, BLB, mob). A Clay-colored Sparrow at Fish Docks Nov. 5 (BDP) was probably the year's last. Fall's second Swamp Sparrow was on SE Farallon Oct. 25, almost a month after the first. Four Swamp Sparrows appear to be wintering at the mouth of Pine Gulch Creek (DDeS, et al.) and another was at the Shields Salt Marsh, Inverness, Nov. 25 (BDP). Four more White-throated Sparrows stopped at SE Farallon: Oct. 28, Nov. 1, 3, 15. Also transient was one at Point Reyes Lighthouse Nov. 2 (DE, JH) and one in Panoche Valley Oct. 30 (DG, et al.) may have been on passage. As for wintering White-throated Sparrows, the usual several settled into the Bolinas, San Francisco and Berkeley areas (mob). A Harris' Sparrow enlivened Nunes Ranch Nov. 6 (EH). SE Farallon recorded both "Slate-colored" (Oct. 25) and "Pink-sided" (Nov. 3) forms of Dark-eyed Junco.

By far rarest of the longspurs was the **McCown's** at Spaletta Ranch Nov. 1 and 4 (RS, AG, WG). The two Chestnut-collared Longspurs seen there through Nov. 6 (mob) were the only ones reported except for Farallon arrivals Nov. 5 and 15. Farallon Lapland Longspurs appeared on Oct. 28 and Nov. 15. On Point Reyes, Laplands shifted among the nearby fields of Spaletta Ranch, Hall Ranch and "Drakes Comer."

Counts varied (mob), but the peak of six was noted three times, suggesting that the total was six or only slightly more. These dates were: Nov. 6 (all at Spaletta Ranch) and Nov. 25 and 26 (five at Spaletta, one at Hall, both days) (all BDP, et al.). At Hayward Regional Shoreline, the count of Lapland Longspurs increased to three on Oct. 27 and subsequently (PG, et al.) until Nov. 26, when it was four (BR).

A last Bobolink was detected at Palo Alto Baylands Nov. 3 (SM, et al.). The fall's second Rusty Blackbird visited Point Reyes Willows Nov. 2 (DE, JH). San Francisco's Great-tailed Grackle was still investigating Aquatic Park garbage cans Oct. 28 (TLC, ZC). A "Bullock's" type Northern Oriole in Glen Canyon Park, San Francisco, Nov. 27 (AH, DL) was most likely wintering.

Observers: Steve Alison, Karen L. Bailey, Stephen F. Bailey, Norah Bain, Dean Bazzi, Laurence C. Binford, Bill Bousman, Rex Burrell, Graham Chisholm, Terry L. Coddington, Zeo Coddington, Clay Coler, Herold Cannon, Nancy Conzett, David DeSante, David Edwards (DE), Al Eisner, Lee Elias, Dick Erickson, Carter Faust, Gary Fellers, Albert Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Doug Gomke, Phil Gordon (PG), Peter Gottschling (PeG), Jeff Greenhouse, John Hall, Keith Hansen, Ed Harper, Alan Hopkins, Christine Jones, Dick Kaufman, Bill Keener, Woody Kuehn, Bruce LaBar, Donna Lion, John Luther, many observers (mob), Robert A. Mendle, Susanne Methvin, Joseph Morlan, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Phil Henderson), Tom Olson, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Steve Perry, Bob Richmond, John Riorny, Mary Louise Rosegay, Shelly Sack, Karen Sanderson, Gerd Schon, David Sedgin, Ann Smith, Rich Stallcup, Maury Stern, Ron Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Bill Van Meter, Bruce Walker, Jeffrey Wall, Janet Wessel, Summer Wilson, David Wimpfheimer, Chris Wolfe, May Yamamoto, Russell Young.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*
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Conservation Notes

PROPOSED SOUTH BAY BIRD HAZARD

Radio station KNTA has made application to erect four 180-foot-high towers each supported by 12 guy wires. The site is on Leslie Salt Company land directly adjacent to the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and just north of San Jose's Alviso district.

The proposed four towers would be in a line spaced approximately 200 feet apart with some guy wires extending over 100 feet above the ground. This installation would be directly in the flyway frequently used by birds approaching the refuge.

Two agencies involved in granting permits are the Corps of Engineers and the City of San Jose. The Corps has issued a "Public Notice" dated Oct. 27, 1983, asking for comments before Nov. 26. Among several possible environmental effects listed in the "Public Notice" is "the radio towers and guy wires are expected to have an adverse impact on birds using the area and adjacent wet lands." However, in a following paragraph, the "Public Notice" adds, "the proposed activity is not expected to have any significant adverse impact on listed endangered or threatened species or on areas designated as critical habitat for such species."

The Corps states that it has received numerous comments from the public. These comments have been forwarded to the radio station. The station has 45 days to offer rebuttals or suggest mitigating plans. In early January the Corps can make a decision whether to issue a permit based on an evaluation of "the probable impact of the activity on the public interest."

The other agency is the City of San Jose. The Planning Department will issue an Environmental Impact Report after a public hearing scheduled for Jan. 9. The Planning Department would like to receive comments from the public before the hearing or to have the interested persons attend the hearing.

There is little published data on bird kills from obstructions such as radio towers. However, the choice of four guyed towers laid out in a straight line and located adjacent to a refuge and in an established flyway would suggest that the kill rate will be far higher than normal for a radio transmitter.

Any one wishing to comment to these agencies may write or phone Mr. Walter Tompson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 211 Main St., San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 974-0424 and Mr. John Lusardi, City of San Jose Planning Department, 801 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95110; (408) 277-4576.

Please note that it is too late for an official comment to the Corps, but a decision will not be made until January and a call or post card might make the difference.

CRISIS ON THE BAY — PART II

In 1973 one of the last landing areas for our native harbor seals was about to become a housing development. The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) demanded a compromise, allowing 60 new housing units on Strawberry Spit (just opposite our Audubon Richardson Bay Refuge) but requiring the developer to create an eleven-acre island out of the end of the spit to provide a "haul-out" area for the seals.

In 1974 a new Dumbarton Bridge was built by Cal Trans requiring: 14 acres of pile-supported bayfill, 6 acres of solid fill in a tidal marsh, 68 acres of fill in salt ponds and 2 acres of managed wetlands filled. The Bay was to be 90 acres smaller. BCDC stepped in and Cal Trans had to give the East Bay Regional Park District \$550,000 to restore 200 acres of diked baylands to tidal action. It also promised to give the West Bay \$350,000 to do likewise (but has yet to do so nine years later).

These are just two of the many examples that show how essential BCDC is to the preservation of the Bay and its wildlife (although many conservationists believe that BCDC does not do enough; e.g., it hasn't gotten Cal Trans to complete its part of the transaction and it should not, perhaps, have allowed any construction on Strawberry Spit). However, Governor Deukmejian has recently appointed five new commissioners to BCDC: Chairman John Reading, Vice Chairman John Dustin, Angelo Siracusa, Donald Dilutis and Robert Tufts. Two of these new appointees, John Dustin (see Part I, December '83 *Gull*) and Angelo Siracusa, have been very vocal in attacking BCDC's regulatory activities. Siracusa has been, perhaps, the most outspoken opponent of development regulation. At every BCDC meeting he has questioned the amount of, and the very need for, mitigation (the process of restoring a part of the Bay for every part destroyed—see the two examples above). In his most far-reaching statement he says, "I'm troubled by . . . the assumption that if you do something with *negative environmental impacts*, mitigation should automatically follow. I argue for positive economic effects in place of mitigation." In other words, if there is money to be made, then fill the bay, wipe out our marshes, destroy our wildlife habitats.

Ironically, it was this very philosophy that was responsible for the creation of BCDC in the first place. It may be a legitimate philosophy for a private citizen to hold but it is not an appropriate one for a commissioner on a public agency dedicated to the protection of the public interest. After all, BCDC was created to protect San Francisco Bay from such headlong development.

Of the other three appointees, Reading is a known advocate of development, has voted that way at BCDC meetings and has helped lead

the fight against mitigation. Tufts and Dilutis are unknowns. Both have voted against mitigation measures but Dilutis has refused to be interviewed and Tufts, in interviews, appears willing to be reasonable.

What can you do to protect the Bay and its wildlife? 1) The nomination of these appointees has yet to be confirmed by the State Senate. The first step in a hearing before the Senate Rules Committee. You can write the members of this committee and urge them to reject the nominations of Dustin, Siracusa and Reading. The senators on this committee are: David Roberti, chairman, Nick Petris (co-author of the bill creating BCDC, the McAteer-Petris Act), Henry Mello, Ray Johnson and William Craven. They can be written to at the State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. 2) You can take an active part in BCDC meetings. They are open to the public and usually allow public comments and letters on each issue before them. For further information call Arthur Feinstein at 282-5937 or Save-the-Bay at 849-3044. BCDC's number is 557-3686.

CRUISING FOR MONO LAKE IN 1985

In the interest of fund-raising for the defense of Mono Lake, the Mono Lake Committee wishes to sponsor one or more cruises in 1985.

We are just beginning to make plans and would appreciate hearing from any of you who are interested. Our choices will depend on you. We are considering: 1) a 14-day Alaska cruise in June to Glacier Bay from S.F. that visits eight ports in Canada and Alaska; 2) a 14-day transit of the Panama Canal from L.A. to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with six ports of call, in the spring and 3) a 10-day cruise out of L.A. to Mexico with five ports of call in late fall or early spring.

The financial benefits of reserving cruise space through MLC are a substantial group discount from the standard fare (about \$3,500 for the 14-day trips and \$2,200 for 10 days) and a part of the fee paid will be tax-deductible. Actual prices will depend on cabin size and location, number in cabin, discount, etc. We will be making final plans in early 1984; if one of these trips is a dream you'd like to see come true in 1985, please let us know. Write or call: Mono Lake Committee, c/o Mildred Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708, (415) 526-1260.

MONO LAKE TRIPS TO AÑO NUEVO

Mono Lake Committee is again sponsoring bus tours to see the elephant seals on their breeding grounds at Año Nuevo State Reserve. The dates are for Wednesdays, Feb. 8, 15 and 22. The guided tour of this unique spot in nature consists of a two-and-one-half hour, three-mile hike over sand dunes to observe the males, females and pups which are all present at this time. In addition to the three miles on the tour, there will be about another quarter-mile from the bus to the staging area,

so good footwear and readiness to walk are important. The bus will leave the North Berkeley BART station at 9 a.m. and return at 5:30 p.m. There will be an early lunch stop at a beach enroute. Bring your lunch. Cold beverages will be provided. The cost is \$17 per person prior to Jan. 29 and \$20 after that. The trips are limited to 40 people each and last year all space was taken one week before the early date!

For reservations, send a tax-deductible check payable to Mono Lake Fund (GGAS), c/o Mildred Bennett, 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you have questions, please call (415) 526-1260. The trips go rain or shine. No refunds.

RECYCLING NOTE

The El Cerrito Recycling Center at the City Corporation Yard, 7501 Schmidt Lane, will accept newspapers, magazines, corrugated cardboard boxes and *other recyclable paper*. This latter was news to me: paper milk cartons, paper egg cartons and junk mail! It is a special joy to put the trash mail directly into our "other paper" sack, most of it unopened. It amazes me to see how quickly it fills. If this service is not convenient for you, perhaps you can convince your own recycling depot to accept "other paper."

—EDITOR

Nominations

Members of the Nominating Committee for 1984 are: Jon Zablackis, chairman (642-9121, days), Shirley Kelly (387-8290) and Diane Roukes (527-5834). The committee will prepare a slate of officers and directors to be presented to the membership in a mail ballot in the May issue of *The Gull*.

If you are interested in being a candidate for office or if you wish to recommend a member you believe to be well qualified and willing to serve, please call one of the members of the committee. Nominations must be completed by March 15.

The offices to be filled in this election include two directors, one from East Bay and one from West Bay, and all officers except the president. Terms of those elected will begin in June.

The Back Yard Birder

The large flock of Brewer's blackbirds had found a perfect spot to catch the warm rays of the winter sun: a protected patio at the California Academy of Sciences. Dozens of them crouched with their wings outspread, feathers fluffed, head and body atilt, beaks open and eyes covered by the nictitating membrane. They appeared to be in a trance, allowing people to approach them even closer than usual. The whole scene was

comical, but I was curious to know more about this odd behavior.

Sunning is a common activity among as many as 170 species of birds. Sunning behavior varies greatly among species and also varies depending on the sun's intensity. Some swallows and pigeons actually roll over on one side and raise one wing to expose its underside. Panting with the beak open is common when the sun is intense. Birds even have favorite sunning spots just as they have regular bathing and dusting areas.

There are several explanations for this particular behavior. One obvious reason is that heat is absorbed by the skin and the body. Recently solar radiation has been recognized as a source of direct energy to birds through heat absorption. This source of energy can reduce the amount of energy a bird requires from its food. This would be advantageous in wintertime when food is scarcer.

Another reason for sunning is that heat and light cause the ectoparasites (parasites of the skin and feathers) to move to the bird's head or under its wings where they are easier for the bird to remove by scratching or preening.

In the case of cormorants, e.g., drying their feathers in the sun is essential. Their feathers, unlike ducks, are inadequately waterproofed so that they become sodden while diving and swimming underwater for fish. After fishing they return to shore to dry their feathers before taking flight.

Stimulation of Vitamin D production in the birds' skin, feathers and oil, or preen, gland is also achieved by sunning. When the bird preens after sunning the Vitamin D is ingested.

In addition, when molting, a bird's skin becomes irritated and sunning seems to give some measure of comfort.

Finally, the sun dries and fluffs the feathers by evaporating moisture and oils from the plumage, thus maintaining good insulation.

All mammals, birds and reptiles innately seek out the warmth of the sun on a chilly day. Luckily birds need not worry about wrinkles, skin damage and skin cancer.

—MEG PAULETICH

Birding Classes

STEPHEN BAILEY IN ALBANY

Dr. Stephen F. Bailey's ornithology classes at Albany Adult School resume on Jan. 3 with **Gull Identification** and on Jan. 12, **Owls**. For details see last month's *Gull* or call Steve at 584-9507.

JOE MORLAN IN SAN FRANCISCO

Free evening bird classes will again be offered through the Galileo-Marina Community College Center starting this January. Each class consists of a weekly two-and-one-half hour slide-lecture stressing identification, status and habitats of North American birds. The instructor is Joe Morlan, compiler of our weekly recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert" and co-author of *Birds of Northern California*. Any student may enroll at any time during the 18-week semester. Just go directly to the classroom, room 227, Marina Middle School, corner of Fillmore and Bay streets at 7 p.m. on the days listed below. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay Street on the east side of the building.

Ornithology I is an introduction to avian biology stressing concepts in evolution, population ecology and adaptation illustrated by common Bay Area birds. It is suitable for all levels and meets Tuesday starting Jan. 17.

Ornithology II is an in-depth discussion of the field-identification of North American land birds for those who already know the common birds but who wish to sharpen their birding skills. It meets Wednesdays starting Jan. 18.

Ornithology III is a continuation of Ornithology II. It is a systematic treatment of water birds and meets Thursdays starting Jan. 12.

Optional series of eight morning bird walks will be arranged on weekends for a fee of \$30, but all evening classes are expected to be free. Field trip details will be announced in class. The text for all classes will be the new *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, available only from the National Geographic Society. It can be easily ordered by telephone toll-free (800) 638-4077. They will send you the book and bill you. Please bring binoculars to class if you have them. For more information call the college at 931-3595.

ALICE HOCH IN FREMONT

The classes will again be taught by Alice Hoch who has been birding for over 20 years and has been teaching classes for the Fremont Adult School since 1975. She is a member of the San Francisco Bird Observatory and of Ohlone Audubon.

The school is at 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont. For further information phone the instructor at 657-0475 or the school at 791-5841.

Birding Field Trip Class in which students will observe and learn about field identification, life styles and ecology of local birds during field trips to different birding spots meets on Tuesdays. Each class is different

as the group will visit different places as bird life changes with the seasons. The class is designed to interest both beginning and experienced birders.

The six-week class will meet on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. starting Jan. 10 and ending Feb. 14. Registration will be at the Fremont Adult School on Jan. 10 at 9:30 a.m. Be prepared to bird-watch that morning. If possible bring binoculars.

Birds of the Delta will be a one-day trip to the Delta to observe birds. It will include an opportunity to view hundreds of Sandhill Cranes and possibly thousands of Whistling Swans on their wintering grounds in the delta of the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers. The cranes are expected to be practicing their nuptial dance. Many other birds, including hawks, will also be observed.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Meet at 9 a.m. at the school. Students should bring lunch and beverage. If possible, bring binoculars, field guides and spotting scopes. Students must pre-register by mail or in person at least five days before the workshop. The cost of the class is \$10.50. Car pools can be arranged.

Waterbirds Class is a one-day workshop on waterbirds to begin with a brief classroom session, using slides and other materials to help students learn to distinguish between confusing species. This will be followed by a field trip to study these birds in the wild. The focus will be on shorebirds, ducks, geese, gulls and other waterbirds of Alameda County.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, Feb. 4, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Meet at 9 a.m. at the school. Bring lunch and beverage and, if possible, binoculars, field guides and spotting scope. Carpools can be arranged. Students must pre-register by mail or in person at least five days before the class. The cost of the class is \$10.50.

Bits, Bytes and Birding

Golden Gate Audubon Society has moved into the computer age in grand style. In response to requests from our computer subcommittee, Compupro of Hayward and Qume Corporation of San Jose donated all the components for a complete microcomputer system.

Bill Godbout, the chairman of Compupro, generously contributed over \$14,000 worth of equipment and software, including a Compupro 816 (a dual 8 bit/16 bit microcomputer) with 2.4 megabytes of floppy disk storage, 1.5 megabytes of "RAMDISK," a 40 megabyte hard disk, *Dbase II* and *Supercalc*. Qume contributed a terminal and a *Sprint* 11/40 letter quality printer worth over \$3,200.

Our sincerest thanks to Bill Godbout of Compupro for his generous donation of an outstanding microcomputer and to his chief technician, Bill Hanke, for connecting and testing all of the components. Our gratitude goes to Qume as well for the high-quality video display terminal and printer with special thanks to Qume representative Lucille Harendza for her help.

We are projecting many uses for this equipment including word-processing for the society correspondence and *The Gull*, Christmas Count compilations, membership surveys and a variety of data base applications. We are now in the process of setting up the system and would like to invite our members who possess computer skills to join us in developing ideas and assisting us in implementing new applications. If you are a computer novice but want to learn more about computers and are willing to volunteer some time for data entry, we also welcome your help. For more information phone Hillary Hulen at 843-2222 or me at 524-5102.

—TOM SPILLANE

Thanks, Tom Spillane!

The Board and members of GGAS are indeed indebted to Tom Spillane for his brilliantly successful efforts in obtaining this very valuable equipment and software for the Society office. His knowledge and skill and donation of considerable time in this effort are much appreciated.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Talk about "rare" sightings: At Hayward Regional Shoreline which is even more impressive than *The Gull's* write-up led me to expect—after much disbelief, an argument with my spouse and a long bout with my spyglass, I can state with confidence that I saw a sea lion swim in southbound, change its mind and head back north.

—JANET ROSEN
San Francisco

Editor:

I would urge that anyone who has not read National Audubon Society President Russell Peterson's editorial, "The Ultimate Folly," (p. 4, Nov. *Audubon*) should do so—immediately.

The article deals with a subject quite different from those normally touched on in this magazine, but it deals with one that affects us more than any other: nuclear weapons and their potential to destroy all life on this planet.

Some might say that we are a birding and conservation organization and therefore, the nuclear question is "none of our business." Think again, friends. This is an issue that transcends all political lines and I **thank** Dr. Peterson for putting NAS among those who are concerned with the most important conservation issue of all.

—NANCY CONZETT
Berkeley

Editor:

Neighbors and I have been hearing a loud "clack" coming from different places in the bushes. We assumed it was a large bird. Then yesterday I noticed a female hummingbird sitting on a geranium. Suddenly there was a loud "clack" in front of her and a male zoomed upward from his skydive. In A. F. Skutch's *The Life of the Hummingbird*, p. 65-66, it says about the Anna's Hummingbird male: "At the moment of shooting over the display object, he makes an explosive sound with his tail."

Did all birdwatchers in California know about this except me? Now I notice the Anna's male makes about three skydives with "clacks" and then sits on a twig and starts his sizzling song.

—NANINE HILLIARD GREENE

(Editor: See Feb. 1983 *Gull*, pp. 32-3 for more on this subject.) Berkeley

Meet Some Board Members

DIRECTOR, East Bay, John Nutt—John is a newcomer to the Board. He is a retired engineer who worked for Kaiser Aluminum in Louisiana and Jamaica as well as in Oakland. He has been interested in the outdoors since his parents introduced him at an early age to camping in out-of-the-way places.

DIRECTOR at Large, Nancy Conzett—Nancy is a fourth-generation Californian, born in Marin County. She graduated from the California College of Arts and Crafts and has worked as a commercial artist in the East Bay and San Francisco. Her previous interest in photography carried over into making photos of birds when she became an active birder in 1977. That led to organizing, at then-GGAS President Lenore Johnsen's suggestion, a slide library for the chapter. She still heads the continuing project. She enjoyed editing *The Gull* for four-and-a-half years. She is married to Homer Conzett, a nuclear physicist; has two grown children, Andrew and Becky; one dog, Shala. She wishes to express her thanks to birding for allowing her to meet some of the nicest people she knows.

TREASURER, Ross Jennings—Ross has taught at San Francisco State University and Rice University, Houston, Texas. He is presently a doc-

torial student in Business Administration at UC-Berkeley. He is coordinator of Accounting Teaching Assistants and president of the Association of Doctoral Students in Bus Ad. His other interests are reading, backpacking, birding, jogging and bicycling.

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, Woody Kuehn—Woody is an Associate with the Early Stages Company, a San Francisco venture capital firm. He has been an active birder for about ten years and involved with GGAS for about a year.

GGAS Book Store

The following are available for sale at your GGAS office:

East Bay Bird Check List \$.25

GGAS Gull patch \$1.50

Birds of Northern California

An annotated field list \$5.00

On the "special sale list" is:

Mono Lake Guidebook \$4.00 (regularly \$7.95)

If ordering by mail please include sales tax at 6½%.

Cooper Society Research Seminar

The next monthly meeting, on Monday, Jan. 9, will feature Dr. Edward Beedy, speaking on "Habitat associations and bird community structure in coniferous forest of Yosemite National Park." Dr. Beedy's research, conducted over a period of several years, has important implications for wildlife habitat management as well as being of theoretical and historical interest.

The seminar will be in Room 2503 Life Sciences Building, UC-Berkeley, at 8 p.m. It will be preceded at 7:45 p.m. by a brief business meeting of the Northern California Chapter of the Cooper Ornithological Society. Everyone interested in birds is welcome.

News from the Ranch

On Oct. 29 the California Native Plant Society honored the memory of Barbara Menzies at Picher Canyon. A prettily-carved bench was installed recalling her many years as one of a trio who put on the great Stinson Beach Wildflower Show.

On Nov. 5, the sons of Audrey W. Evans memorialized the life and death of this longtime Bolinas resident with the planting of a buckeye tree with a bench to follow near the public fountain.

Mrs. Carol Sheerin has honored the memory of her husband, Roger, with a greatly-needed bridge over Picher Canyon Creek.

Peter and Maya Lit have given the Ranch a lot next to the ACR Butterfly Grove at Muir Beach. Also in Muir Beach, a donor has made possible the transfer of ownership of part of environmentally-sensitive Redwood Creek from ACR to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to extend its control over this threatened watershed.

Former ACR chairman Thomas Price and ACR docent member Jeanne Price have been made honorary members of the Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society to recognize their many contributions to historical and environmental preservation.

—CLIFFORD CONLY, JR.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

Gift of

Norman B. Livermore
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In memory of
June Gellerman

Alpha Delta Kappa,
California Nu Chapter

In honor of the
birthday of
Elsie B. Roemer

Clark Gleason
Roxie Gleason

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. to Minnie Groshong, Corresponding Secretary, Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705-1179. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Corresponding Secretary.



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THE GULL

January 1984

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) 843-2211

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to the GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks 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 \$8. per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

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.**