



# SEQUOIA NEEDLES

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County  
Founded 1949

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November-January 2008-2009

## GALAPAGOS ISLANDS, 2008

BY SUE AND BOB COSSINS

In early summer of this year, we finally realized our dream of visiting the Galapagos Islands!

In reading about the area beforehand we learned that the islands are in the Pacific Ocean about 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador and are a national park of that country. To get there, most people first fly to Quito, the capital city. Ecuador is in northwestern South America and the equator runs through it. From Quito we flew to the islands, to a small airport on the island of Baltra.

After reading the book, *The Beak of the Finch: a Story of Evolution in Our Time*, by Jonathan Weiner, I was tuned into looking for my first Darwin Finch species (There are 13 Darwin Finch species in all.). I didn't have to wait long. Just outside the airport building was a Small Ground Finch sitting atop a "MasterCard" sign.

We met our two naturalist guides and went by bus a short way to a small bay where our ship (home for the next eleven days), the Tip Top IV, was anchored. As we exited the bus we were immediately introduced to two more endemic species - Galapagos Sea Lion and Marine Iguana, both sitting on the small concrete dock. The four sea lions were actually stretched out on the two wooden benches and one was nursing her pup. The six Marine Iguanas seemed not to notice us either as we walked very near them to get to the pangas (zodiac boats) that took us to our ship. As we left the dock we watched the Blue-footed Boobies, an endemic subspecies, plunge dive into the bay while the vivid red-orange Sally Lightfoot Crabs decorated the shoreline lava rocks.



Photo by Bob Cossins

Large-billed Ground Finch, Galapagos Islands

To our joy and amazement we had many more close encounters with wildlife over the next eleven days.

Our typical day would go something like this - wake up early (usually by 6:00am), eat breakfast in the ship's dining room, go ashore (either a wet or dry landing) for a nature hike, return to the ship for lunch, go snorkeling from the pangas, and return for dinner. On most evenings one of our naturalists would entertain us with a PowerPoint program about an aspect of the islands -- evolution, human history -- and plans for the next day.

There were fourteen guests, seven crewmen, and the husband and wife naturalist team - all on our 118-foot ship. All told we landed on ten islands.

As far as bird species in the islands, there are only about 60 resident species. Several of the finches and the mockingbirds can be identified by location: which island and which vegetation zone. But some of the finches have subtle differences and you need a good look and a good field guide to help in their identification. These birds are examples of adaptive radiation where one species has developed differently on different islands as a result of their isolation.

We hope you can join us at a Sequoia Audubon meeting in the spring of 2009 to see some of the 3000 digital images that Bob took in the Galapagos and the extension trip to Machu Picchu, Peru.

### Monthly Meetings San Mateo Garden Center (See program details on page 2)

#### November

Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM

Program: Penguins of the World

#### December

Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM

Program: Birding Class: Molt Strategies of Songbirds

Potluck meeting: Doors open at 5:30 PM

#### January

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM

Program: Tropical Montane Cloud Forests of South America with an Emphasis on Ecuador

### Upcoming Field Trips

(See trip details beginning on page 3)

#### November

Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> Coyote Point\*

Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> San Mateo  
Beaches

Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> Pescadero Marsh

Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> Coyote Hills

Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> Edgewood Park

#### December

Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> Cosumnes River  
Preserve

Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> Birding Class Field  
Trip

Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> Pescadero Marsh\*

Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> Edgewood Park

#### January

Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> Wavecrest Raptors

\*Beginner/Family Trip

(Continued on page 3)

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## MEETING PROGRAMS

BY SUE COSSINS & PAULA MILLER

### Penguins of the World

By Debra Shearwater

Thursday, November 13, 7:00 PM

Everyone sees penguins in a different way. Ocean adventurers, exceptional divers, and amazing survivors, penguins have managed to adapt to the harshest climate on earth, spending their lives in the frigid

Monthly Meetings  
San Mateo Garden Center  
605 Parkside Way, San Mateo  
*Parkside Way is west of Alameda de las Pulgas, between 26th and 28th Avenues.*

seas and on ice and snow-covered slopes. Join Debra Shearwater for an in-depth look at these appealing creatures. She will discuss, using images, every species of penguin in the world – Emperors, Kings, Gentoos, Rockhoppers, Chinstraps, Adelies, Galapagos, Macaronis, Royal and Little – eighteen in all.

Debra has personally traveled to all of the world's penguin breeding areas, save one – South Africa, which she will see Cape to Cape, on a special voyage in 2009.

Over the years she has captured thousands of images of these very special and delightful marine birds!



Galapagos penguin. Photo by Bob Cossins

### Birding Class: Molt Strategies of Songbirds

By Gina Barton

Thursday, December 11, 7:00 PM

Birds undergo various molts throughout their life cycle. Each species' life cycle and life history affect which molt strategy it may undergo. Understanding these

strategies and patterns helps us age birds when we capture them for scientific study. Many people are surprised to learn that this information can also aid us in aging birds while birding.

Gina Barton is the Landbird Program Supervisor for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and the Coyote Creek Field Station Manager (a year-round bird banding station). She has studied molt in western North American passerine birds since 2001.

To quote Bob Power, Executive Director of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, regarding Gina, "She is articulate, engaging, and a wonderful representative of SFBBO."

**A potluck dinner beginning at 6 P.M will precede this program.** Doors open at 5:30 P.M. Please bring a plate, cup, utensils, and a side dish to share. SAS will provide the main course, hot beverages, and dessert.

### Accompanying Field Trip

Saturday, December 13

The field trip will be in the Bay Area. Location and time will be announced at the class.

### Tropical Montane Cloud Forests of South America with an Emphasis on Ecuador

By Loring and Ann Dales

Thursday, January 8, 7:00 PM

Loring Dales, M.D., a long-time Audubon Society member and an avid birder for over five decades, will be our guest speaker. He has birded in tropical America multiple times and is particularly intrigued by cloud forests and the birds that inhabit them.

The topic for the evening will concentrate on bird life, how the forests function ecologically as well as the conservation status of these forests.

Loring will focus on the birds of Ecuador's West-Andean slope cloud forests, depicting many individual species and how birders can find and view them. From a birder's perspective, he will present tips on planning and taking a trip to these repositories of spectacular biodiversity.

**Coyote Point Bird Walk**

Saturday, November 1, 9:00 AM – Noon  
Discover the birds at Coyote Point. This area has become a hotspot for birders on the peninsula. The wetland fronting San Francisco Bay attracts numerous shorebirds. The trees and grassy areas also provide good birding.

**Directions:** Take 101 to Coyote Point, San Mateo. Make a northbound turn at Dore Ave., a southbound turn at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, go east over the overpass, and back onto 101 northbound to Dore Ave. Follow the signs to Coyote Point. Meet in the parking lot near the Yacht Club at 9:00 AM sharp. Bring your binoculars and scopes and dress in layers. This trip will be wheelchair accessible on paved pathways.

**Leader:** Werner Schumann (650) 692-1560

**Beginner/Family Trip**

**Beaches of the San Mateo Coast**

Sunday, November 9, 8:00 AM – Noon  
This trip will explore the under-birded State Beaches of the San Mateo Coast: San Gregorio, Pomponio and Bean Hollow. We will also stop in briefly at Pescadero Marsh if there are recent sightings of interest. Carpooling is encouraged; bring a State Park Pass or pay the State Park day use fee. Heavy rain cancels. Directions: Start at the parking lot of San Gregorio State Beach, junction of SR 1 and SR 84 at 8:00 AM sharp.

**Leader:** Jennifer Rycenga (650) 440-0063 or (650) 712-0194, or email [gyrrfalcon@earthlink.net](mailto:gyrrfalcon@earthlink.net)

**Biking and Birding Coyote Hills: In Search of the Long-Lost Flamingo**

Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont  
Sunday, November 23, 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM

Flamingos in the South Bay? You bet! Join former SFBBO waterbird biologist Cynthia Padula and Outreach Coordinator Stephanie Ellis on a bird watching bike ride around the lovely Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont. You will learn about the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and see a variety of shorebird and waterfowl species that utilize the salt ponds to roost

and feed. This trip is planned at high tide to maximize species diversity in the ponds. Expect to see up to 50 different species including a Chilean Flamingo that escaped from a zoo. Come exercise your body, your soul and your senses!

Please bring your own bike, helmet, scope, binoculars, and a brown bag lunch. We will provide an extra spotting scope. The biking route is approximately eight miles at a very slow pace with one moderate hill. RSVP to Stephanie Ellis at [outreach@sfbbo.org](mailto:outreach@sfbbo.org) for meeting location and directions. (In 2007 this trip was very successful. Some people even brought scopes and tied them to the backs of their bikes with bungee cords.) There is a \$5.00 per person fee as well as a \$6.00 parking fee at the park entrance. Carpooling is encouraged.

**Directions:** Provided at time of registration.

**Leaders:** Cynthia Padula and Stephanie Ellis, [outreach@sfbbo.org](mailto:outreach@sfbbo.org)

**Pescadero Marsh State Park Docent Nature Walk**

Sunday, November 16, 1:00 – 3:00 PM  
Sunday, December 21, 1:00 – 3:00 PM  
Sunday, January 18, 1:00 – 3:00 PM  
Come and discover Pescadero Marsh. The California State Park docents will lead a field trip to learn about the marsh. This beautiful park has a mile-long shoreline, rocky cliffs, and, of course, a world-famous marsh. Winter is a great time to see migratory waterfowl at the marsh. The docents will point out the plants and animals that inhabit this San Mateo County treasure. Wear clothing in layers for cold and windy to sunny weather. Heavy rain cancels.

**Directions:** Go south from Half Moon Bay on Hwy 1, about 12 miles. Just past the bridge over Pescadero Creek, look for the south parking lot. If you get to the intersection of Pescadero Road and Hwy 1, you have gone too far.

**Contacts:** Ranger Dave Augustine (650) 879-2170 or Rita Jennings (650) 728-2254.

[http://www.greenfoothills.org/news/2001/08-01\\_PescaderoButano.html](http://www.greenfoothills.org/news/2001/08-01_PescaderoButano.html)

(Continued on page 4)

**Upcoming Field Trips**

**Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup>** Pescadero Marsh\*  
**Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup>** Edgewood Park\*  
Saturday - Sunday, Jan 31<sup>st</sup> - Feb 1<sup>st</sup>  
Sacramento Wildlife Refuges

**February**

**Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup>** Pillar Point

• **Beginner/Family Trip**

Check the field trip descriptions for any special information or requirements. Late comers may be disappointed. For all field trips bring your binoculars, a hat, sun block, and water; wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, and always dress in layers for hot, sunny weather to cool, windy conditions. While we will attempt to stay on schedule, circumstances may dictate changes to field trip leaders, dates, or times. For the latest schedule and updates, always go the Sequoia Audubon web site; contact the trip leader, or call Carol Masterson at (650) 347-1769.



Snowy Egret at Hayward Shoreline Center

Photo by Justine Carson

(Field Trips, continued from page 3)

## **Beginner/Family Nature Hike**

### **Edgewood County Park Walk**

Sunday, November 23, 8:00 – 11:00 AM

Sunday, December 21, 8:00 – 11:00 AM

Sunday, January 25, 8:00 – 11:00 AM

Winter birding at Edgewood Park is great. Come and visit this unique habitat with oak woodland, grassland, and chaparral. We will look for Kites, Hawks, Sparrows, Warblers, Thrushes, Kinglets and more. Ask the leader about the Sequoia Audubon Bird Conservation Program at Edgewood Park and how you can get involved. Starting at 8 AM increases the chance of seeing all the interesting birds at Edgewood. Walk is over moderately strenuous terrain. Heavy rain cancels.

**Directions:** Meet the leader in the parking lot adjacent to the Day Camp area. The Edgewood Park entrance is east of Hwy 280 on Edgewood Road in Redwood City.

**Leader:** Marilyn Travis (650) 592-7733

### **Cosumnes River Preserve, Stockton**

Saturday December 6, 8:00 AM – Dusk

The Cosumnes River Preserve is located halfway between Stockton and Sacramento. This 1500 acre preserve has rich stands of valley oak, riparian forest, and seasonal wetlands. We will look for Ross, Snow, and White-fronted Geese, ducks, and Tundra Swans. We hope to see lots of Sandhill Cranes. We will try to arrange car pools. Bring lunch, fluids, binoculars, scope, cameras, and FRS radios if you have them. We will meet at 8:00 AM at the Cosumnes Preserve visitor center. Rain cancels. Reservations are requested so we know how many to expect.

**Directions:** Take Interstate 5 to the Thornton-Walnut Grove Road exit. Go east towards the Chevron gas station and turn left immediately after the Chevron station onto Thornton Rd. Follow Thornton Road north for about 2 miles and it will turn into Franklin Boulevard, continue north on Franklin, crossing over the Thornton-Franklin bridge. The Visitor Center and parking lot are on your right, just after the bridge. <http://www.cosumnes.org/>

**Leader:** Carol Masterson (650) 347-1769 or [carolmasterson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolmasterson@sbcglobal.net)

**Beginner/Advanced Birding car trip with some short walks**

### **Field Trip to Accompany the December Birding Class**

Saturday, December 13

The field trip will be in the Bay Area, TBA at the class.

**Leader:** Gina Barton

**RSVP required to [gbarton@sfbbo.org](mailto:gbarton@sfbbo.org)**

### **Wavecrest Raptors & Short-Eared Owls**

Saturday, January 17, 3 PM – Sunset

The North Wavecrest area is considered by the Sequoia Audubon Society as the most important habitat for wintering raptors in San Mateo County, supporting a greater diversity of raptors and number of individuals than any other site. The recent purchase of a portion of the Wavecrest property by POST has come as great news, because any development of this area would impact this very unique habitat for raptors found on the coastside. Gary Deghi will talk about the long fight to save Wavecrest from developers. We expect to see Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Harriers, White-tailed Kites, American Kestrels and then at dusk we

will make a special effort to see the Short-eared Owl (a species of special concern) that winter here every year. If we are lucky, we may see rarities such as Ferruginous Hawk or Rough-legged Hawk.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 1 South from Hwy 92. Turn right (west) on Wavecrest Road. Meet at the ball field at the end of Wavecrest Road at 3:00 PM.

**Leader:** Gary Deghi (650) 726-1340

**Beginner/Advanced/Family Birding Trip**

### **Sacramento Wildlife Refuges Weekend Trip**

Saturday & Sunday, January 31 & February 1

The Central Valley is considered to be the single most important wintering site for waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Come join us for a weekend of great birding at the Sacramento Refuge Complex. This area has freshwater marshes, riparian woodlands, and valley grasslands. Some species we may see include White-faced Ibis, lots of ducks, Snow, White-fronted and Ross's Geese, hawks, sparrows, woodpeckers, and more. We will travel in a car-caravan since walkers tend to disturb the wildlife in some areas. Motel reservations are advised. Willows and Williams have a good selection of motels in all price ranges. Camping is available at the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area in Colusa. Our precise itinerary will depend on where the birds are. **Trip reservations are requested** so we will know how many to expect. Bring lunch, fluids, binoculars, scope, cameras, and FRS radios if you have them. Rain cancels.

[http://gorp.away.com/gorp/resource/us\\_nwr/ca\\_sacra.htm](http://gorp.away.com/gorp/resource/us_nwr/ca_sacra.htm)

**Directions:** Take Hwy 80 northeast towards Sacramento; go north on Hwy 505 to Hwy 5 north towards Williams and Colusa. We will meet at the parking lot inside the entrance to the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, south of Willows, at 9:00 AM sharp each day.

**Leader:** Carol Masterson (650) 347-1769 or [carolmasterson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolmasterson@sbcglobal.net)

**Beginner/Advanced birding car trip with short walks**

### **Pillar Point – Coastside Birding**

Saturday, February 7, 9:00 AM – Noon

This is the only sheltered harbor between Santa Cruz and San Francisco, so Pillar Point is a prime birding area. This area is a stopover point for shorebirds and a favorite for seabirds. Not only does the harbor usually have one or two surprises, but the nearby willows, cypress, and grassland have proven to be a first-rate area for warblers and sparrows. **Directions:** Take Hwy 92 to Hwy 1. Follow Hwy 1 north to Capistrano Rd. and turn left at the lights. Turn left at the first opportunity; we will meet in the parking lot at the east end of the harbor near the boat launch ramp. This will be a morning walking trip along the beach and rocky areas, so boots and sturdy shoes are recommended. Wear clothing in layers for cold and windy to sunny weather. Heavy rain cancels.

**Leader:** Gary Deghi (650) 726-1340

**Beginner/Advanced Birding Trip**

## REPORT ON REDWOOD SHORES LIBRARY BIRD WALK

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BY SONNY MENCHER

On Sunday, September 21, Robin Smith and I met nearly forty people, including 10 children, at the new library for the first of the planned monthly bird walks. First, Robin talked to the group about the importance of wetlands and mud flats and how the different bird species feed in different parts and depths.

Since the tide was high at the Belmont Slough behind the library, and therefore no birds were feeding in exposed mud, the group carpooled to the nearby Radio Road ponds near the water treatment plant and had a wonderful time viewing the thousands of birds.

Birds seen included Black Skimmers, Egrets, Elegant Terns, Marbled Godwits, Willets, Mallards, Ruddy Ducks, White Pelicans, Ring-billed Gulls, Dowitchers, American Avocets, and Black-necked Stilts. One Western Sandpiper gave the group really close up views. Even though I visit these ponds several times a week, the number of birds and the liftoffs never fail to excite.

The next walk is scheduled for 10/26/08 at 3:00 PM and the tide will be better for a walk along the slough at the library.

### THANK YOU FIELD TRIP LEADERS!

As we look back on this year of birding, we need to thank all our great field trip leaders who led trips in 2008. You are the guys that know where to find the hidden birds and the great birding spots. We can truly say Sequoia Audubon field trip leaders know how to do it right. Thank you all so much.

Carol Masterson  
Chris MacIntosh  
Cynthia Padula  
Debi Shearwater  
Donna Petersen  
Eileen Kay  
Eric Lichtwardt  
Gary Deghi  
Gina Barton  
Jeff Fairclough  
Jennifer Rycenga  
Joe Macho  
Joe Morlan  
Laurie Graham

Lee Franks  
Leslie Flint  
Linda Kincaid  
Marilyn Travis  
Martha O'Neal  
Pescadero Marsh Docents  
Ranger Nelle Lyons  
Rita Jennings  
Robin Smith  
Sonny Mencher  
Stephanie Ellis  
Sue Cossins  
Sue James  
Werner Shumann

*Thank you!!!!*  
*Thank you!!!!*



Photo by Justine Carson

Long-billed Curlew feeding in Palo Alto Baylands mud flats

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Educational Interpretive Center at the New Redwood Shores Library**

Books and birds - what could be better? A spectacular new public library was opened on September 6, 2008. The library, located near Belmont Slough and the Bay Trail, will include a hands-on interpretive center highlighting life in the sloughs, wetlands, and bay. Sequoia Audubon has been asked to assist with interpretive help in the library, field trips, and educational programs for children and adults. This is a unique opportunity to work with the community to help introduce nature, conservation, and birding to a new generation. For more information about how you can get involved contact Sonny Mencher at [sequoiaaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:sequoiaaudubon@yahoo.com)

#### **Friends of Bayfront Park, Menlo Park**

Bayfront Park will have a new name in 2009. Menlo Park City Council voted on September 2, 2008 to rename the park Bedwell Bayfront Park, in honor of Mike Bedwell. He was, for 27 years, the city manager, and died early this year. Especially appropriate is that he guided the city for years and ensured that Bayfront Park did indeed become a park after the end of the landfill era. A storyboard will also be installed at the park, to explain Mike Bedwell's role and give other information about the park.

Meantime, Friends of Bayfront Park has resumed monthly "bird mornings" at the park, from 9-11 AM on the second Saturday of each month. Besides the usual bird books and the park list, volunteers bring Kaufmann's "Las Aves de Norteamerica" for visitors who are not primary English speakers. Invite your friends or nearby residents who'd like to see birds through a scope or learn a little more about them. Families welcome, too. Meet along the entrance road by the tidal pond. **Volunteers invited to help from January forward – contact Chris MacIntosh: [cmaci@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmaci@sbcglobal.net), 650-325-7841.**

## OTHER BIRDING ACTIVITIES

(Sequoia Audubon does not sponsor the following activities.)

### **Sandhill Crane Festival**

Friday – Sunday, November 7 – 9

Hutchins Street Square, 125 South Hutchins Street, Lodi, CA  
Features field trips, art show, nature tours, wild life demonstrations and family activities.

**Contact:** [www.cranefestival.com](http://www.cranefestival.com) or 1-800-581-6150

### **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium**

Thursday – Sunday, November 20 – 23

Stockton Grand Hotel, Stockton, CA

The California Central Valley hosts over 200 bird species, including 22 raptor species, cranes, and tens of thousands of wintering waterfowl. This event offers workshops, field trips, a birders' market and much more.

Featured speakers:

Hans Peeters – Owls of California & the West

Jack Laws – Exploring the Sierra Nevada as Naturalist & Artist

Ed Harper – Moderator of the Bird Identification Panel

Jon Dunn – Bird ID Workshop

Joe Morlan – Raptor ID Workshop

For more information and registration packets contact:

Frances Oliver, 1817 Songbird Place, Lodi, CA 95240-7826  
(209) 369-2010.

Email: [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net); website: [www.cvbs.org](http://www.cvbs.org)

### **Golden Gate National Recreation Area Endangered Species Big Year Events**

Explore the GGRNA on one or all of these field trips and you may see some of the endangered species that live there. Info at [www.ggnrbigyear.org](http://www.ggnrbigyear.org).

**Snowy Plover:** Saturday, November 8, 8:00 AM — 2 PM

Join local naturalist Matt Zlatunich on a five-mile hike through the Presidio's diverse habitats in search of endangered species including [Brown Pelican](#), [Western Snowy Plover](#), [San Francisco Lessingia](#), and [Southern Sea Otter](#). Bring food and water.

**RSVP required:** [e-mail mbzlat@yahoo.com](mailto:mbzlat@yahoo.com). Meet at Baker Beach north parking lot.

**Marbled Murrelet:** Sunday, December 14, or Sunday, December 28, 8:00 — 10:00 AM.

Join local naturalist Matt Zlatunich for a relaxing sea watch at Lands End. Search for [Marbled Murrelet](#), [Brown Pelican](#), [Humpback Whale](#), [Steller Sea Lion](#), and [California Sea Otter](#)!

**RSVP required:** [mbzlat@yahoo.com](mailto:mbzlat@yahoo.com). Bring spotting scopes and binoculars if you have them; also bring water and snacks to munch on. Meet at Louis' Restaurant.

**Least Tern:** Sunday, November 9, 9 AM — Noon. This event will assist with habitat restoration. The California Least Tern winters from Central America south. Help prepare habitat for our terns' nesting season with Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the main refuge gate, northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

**RSVP required:** Call 510-522-0601 or e-mail [leoraala-alameda@att.net](mailto:leoraala-alameda@att.net).

### **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival**

**Friday – Monday, January 16 – 19**

Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds.

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is sponsored by the Morro Coast Audubon Society. It gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops.

Field trip group sizes are limited to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. For more information about the Festival, call (866) 464-5105 or check out the website at: [www.morrobaybirdfestival.org](http://www.morrobaybirdfestival.org). You can request that your name be added to the mailing list for the 2009 brochure, or register online. The registration deadline is January 5, but early signups are encouraged.

### **Point Reyes Bird Observatory**

**First weekend of each month, 9 – 11 AM**

On the first weekend of each month, Point Reyes Bird Observatory offers two-hour birding trips to one of their research locations or other habitats in the North Bay. This is a great chance to meet their biologists, learn about regional birds and habitats, and discover some of the birding hot-spots. Please check accessibility information in each bird walk description or call the number below for further information.

Walks are free to PRBO members and cost \$10 per person for non-members. For more information regarding walks, times, or directions, please contact Missy Wipf at (707) 781-2555, ext 302 or [mwipf@prbo.org](mailto:mwipf@prbo.org). Sign-ups are not necessary, but please let them know if you are bringing a group of 5 or more. To determine if a PRBO monthly bird walk is cancelled due to weather, please call (707) 781-2555, ext 355. Rain cancels.

You can become a member of PRBO at the bird walk (individuals \$40; family \$55) – info at [www.prbo.org](http://www.prbo.org)

### **American Birding Association 2009 Annual Convention – Corpus Christi, TX**

Monday – Sunday, April 27 – May 3

The American Birding Association is celebrating its 40th Anniversary with a big birding bash! Not only did they select "America's birdiest city" for their celebration, but they plan on seeing almost half of the breeding birds in the United States during the field trips. With field trips to the best of the central Texas Coast in the height of migration, it is sure to boost your life list! Pre- and post trips go to the Hill Country, Upper Texas Coast, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Join them in Corpus Christi at the Omni Bayfront Hotel, overlooking the Gulf of Mexico and look for all the migrants that follow its coast. Info at [www.aba.org](http://www.aba.org)



### **BLUEBIRD PROGRAM UPDATE**

By Susan Kritzik, San Mateo County Coordinator  
sgkritzik@sbcglobal.net

It's time for monitors to clean out and repair nest boxes and enter those count numbers into little boxes on the glowing screen! The few reports we have to date show a lot of problems with predation and abandoned nests. So we really need everyone's data to see how widespread this problem is. Perhaps the dry spring or cool summer had a negative impact on the insect supply, leading to abandoned nests?

When cleaning out nest boxes this winter, consider adding a metal patch to the hole to prevent woodpecker damage and a metal cone predator guard (for pole boxes) to keep out raccoons, and Tanglefoot on the pole to keep out snakes. These are available at Birder's Garden in San Carlos, (650) 595-0300. If a box has repeatedly suffered predation or has not had a nest in a few years, consider relocating it during the winter season.

We are also in need of carpenters to build and repair nest boxes this winter, as my neighbor who usually does this is out of the country. Donations of good quality redwood or cedar lumber are always useful for these purposes. And if anyone has a retriever (used to get hanging boxes out of trees, not a dog) that they are no longer using, we need some.

Thanks for all of your help and hard work!



### **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS**

by Nancy Arbuckle  
crockerbuckle@mindspring.com

Members are urged to get involved in any of the issues outlined below or to share other issues they feel are relevant with the Conservation Committee.

#### Redwood City's Measure W

On November 4, Redwood City citizens will vote on Measure W, an initiative of critical local and regional importance. Measure W is a citizen's initiative placed on the ballot by 6,500 residents. It is designed to protect parks and open space and at its center is 1,433 acres of bayfront property, currently owned by Cargill and zoned as open space.

Measure W is a RWC charter amendment that would allow voters the final say on any proposal to use open space land for non-open space uses. It states that the City Council must gain voter approval before allowing development on open space lands. A two-thirds majority of voters approving the zoning change is required.

Protecting this important bay land is a major priority for our chapter this year. This area is adjacent to protected wetlands and must not be developed. Sequoia Audubon volunteers have been instrumental in making Measure W a reality. We have gathered signatures to place the initiative on the ballot, attended city council meetings to speak in its favor, canvassed precincts to educate Redwood City voters about the measure, raised funds for the campaign, and worked phonebanks to help ensure its passage.

#### Clos de la Tech

The Conservation Committee is monitoring local high-tech executive and winemaker T.J. Rodgers' request for a new zoning category. It would permit scenic wineries above 1,500 feet to produce up to 13,000 cases per year, much higher than the county's current limit of 2,500 cases. The draft EIR has elicited extensive public comment. At issue are noise, water quality, pesticide use, traffic, and loss of natural vegetation—all of concern as they relate to local wildlife, including birds. In addition, the property in question is adjacent to a National Audubon sanctuary, the Williams Sisters Ranch.

#### Endangered Species Act

The Bush administration, in one of its final acts, has proposed changes in the Endangered Species Act regulations that will, in effect, gut our most important wildlife law. With these proposed rule changes looming large, National Audubon asked every chapter to submit public comments on the proposed changes. Specifically, we were asked to submit stories on how the Act has worked to save endangered plants or animals in our area. We submitted a letter for the public record highlighting the importance of the ESA in saving the California Clapper Rail.


**It's that time of year  
again!  
Enclosed is an  
envelope  
for our annual fund-  
raising appeal.**

**We sincerely  
appreciate your  
donation to keep SAS  
going.**

**Sequoia Audubon Society**

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### **2008 Annual Christmas Bird Counts**

**Crystal Springs Count — Saturday December 20, 2008**  
**Año Nuevo Count — Saturday January 3, 2009.**

#### **Please Join Us For Our Christmas Bird Counts**

San Mateo County has two count circles - the Crystal Springs count in the northern half of the county and the Año Nuevo count along the southern coast.

For information contact: Leslie Flint [lflint@earthlink.net](mailto:lflint@earthlink.net) 650-573-6279 or Gary Deghi at [gdeghe@h-bgroup.com](mailto:gdeghe@h-bgroup.com).

And don't forget the dinners held after the counts. Have some great food and review what birds were found on the count. You can access the Christmas Count database at the Audubon web site [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/)

**Birding Mailing Lists:** To read about current bird sightings and topics relating to birding around San Francisco Bay you can join a mailing group. This will also allow you to post a bird sighting of your own.

For the Peninsula, send an empty email message to: [peninsula-birding-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:peninsula-birding-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

For the South Bay, subscribe at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/south-bay-birds/>

For San Francisco, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfbirds> and follow the instructions to subscribe.



Short-eared Owl

#### **THE BIRD BOX**

**RARE BIRD  
ALERT**

**415-681-7422**

#### **Why Do Birds Fly in a V?**

View the short video interview of our birding instructor, Stephanie Ellis, with CBS 5. It's for their "Good Question" segment. It has already aired but you can view the video stream online at <http://cbs5.com/goodquestion>. The interview was 30 minutes at Crissy Field, but the clip is less than a minute.

#### **Mission Statement**

*The mission of Sequoia Audubon Society is to participate in environmental education and conservation, and in the restoration, preservation, protection and enjoyment of our native natural resources with emphasis on birds and their habitats.*