

KITE TALKS

DECEMBER

KEDDOCK REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VOL. 5 - NO. 6 SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

1976

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 11, Thursday, 8:00 p.m.: An Alaskan Adventure.

The program for our regular December 11th meeting will be an account of an early summer birding trip to Western Alaska, with Gordon Inlander and Mike Parmer. The area they visited is quite unique, because of overlapping Asian and Arctic birds. R.O.S. meetings are held in Rm. 221, Deavin Hall, CSCS campus.

December 21, Sunday: R.O.S. Christmas Count, Santa Rosa area.

Here for a continuation of the great weather we've had this fall. It would be possible to count at least 170 species in our area, though the high total is somewhere around 150. Remember, though, that it is the continuing observation of numbers of individuals seen that makes this a quality count, not just numbers of species. The more people who can help with the count, the more individual birds seen.

The tallying point will be Franklin Park Clubhouse, at 1095 Franklin Ave, Santa Rosa. The clubhouse will be open from 4:30 to 6:30, so come by for food, company, and tallying when you finish your count area.

As for food, this year we are depending on YOU. Would you PLEASE bring something along to contribute to the buffet? Something that can travel in your car all day, if you like, such as bread, cheese, relish, cookies, fruit, crackers, etc. No one person has volunteered to take charge at the clubhouse, so we'll all have to pitch in. And it's fun to munch together while we watch the tallying.

Count participants are each charged \$2.00 for the count, except if you have participated in an earlier count. In that case, if you have done another count this season and paid \$1, you are charged \$1. The money is used to defray national dues and pay for the Christmas Count issue of American Birds. You will receive a copy of the Christmas issue of A.B. when it is published in the spring, with YOUR NAME in it.

THE COUNT WILL TAKE THE PLACE OF THE DECEMBER FIELD TRIP.

December 28, Sunday: Madrona Audubon Society's Western Sonoma County Christmas Count.

HOW ARE YOUR CIRCLES?

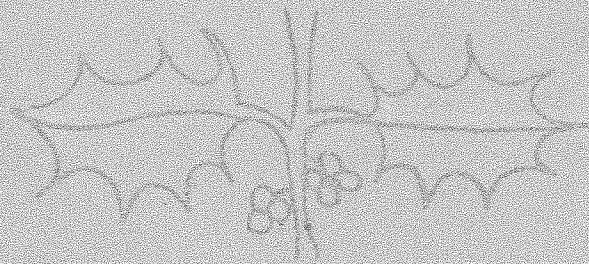
Leon Stafford is one of those dedicated Christmas Count boys who sit around for hours summarizing American Birds, the Christmas Count issue. He has designed this test of your knowledge.

Listed below are 11 Christmas Count circles in California, and 9 species (or pair of species) and their numbers in the 1973 count. Match the species with the count circles. In each case, the birds are common in their paired circle. (Some circles may not be used.)

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- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Mountain plover (101) | A. Paradise-San Gabriel |
| 2. Cattle Egret (600) | B. Santa Barbara |
| 3. Black-billed Magpie (300) | C. Los Angeles |
| 4. Cardinal (2) | D. Seage Wildlife Area |
| 5. European Widgeon (18) | E. Salton Sea (north) |
| 6. Cassin's Aubier (93,000) | F. Farallon Islands |
| 7. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker (1) | G. Carrizo Plains (San Luis Obispo Co.) |
| 8. Spotted Dove (7) / Yellow-billed Magpie (1) | H. Honey Lake |
| 9. California Condor (2) | I. Peace Valley (Inal. Gray Lodge) |
| | J. Yosemite National Park |
| | K. Del Norte County |

Answers on the back page.



OBSERVATIONS.....

On October 26 at Point Reyes, Mike and John Farmer and John Sterling saw a total of 100 species, including 3 male Common Sooties at the Coast Guard Station; a Nuttall's Woodpecker (rare on the Pt. Reyes peninsula); 1 female Black-throated Blue Warbler and 6 Palm Warblers at Damon Ranch. Also seen were 1 young male Belted Kingfisher type Northern Oriole at the Mendocino Ranch; approximately 40 Lapland Longspurs and the same number of Chestnut-collared Longspurs on the road to Damon's Ranch.

On November 1, Mike and John heard two Clapper Gulls calling in the marshes south of Napa, and saw one Bonaparte's Gull in that area.

Mike and John watched a young male American Redstart daily in their yard in Napa during the period of October 17-24.

Dave and Linda Sams have been watching a Great Horned Owl hunt nearly every evening in their field on Burnside Road during the fall. They have seen several Sharp-shinned Hawks in their area, and have three or four times seen circlings of 10-12 Kites above their house, as well as several single Kites.

DORAN BEACH ROAD SHOBE BIRD STUDY.....

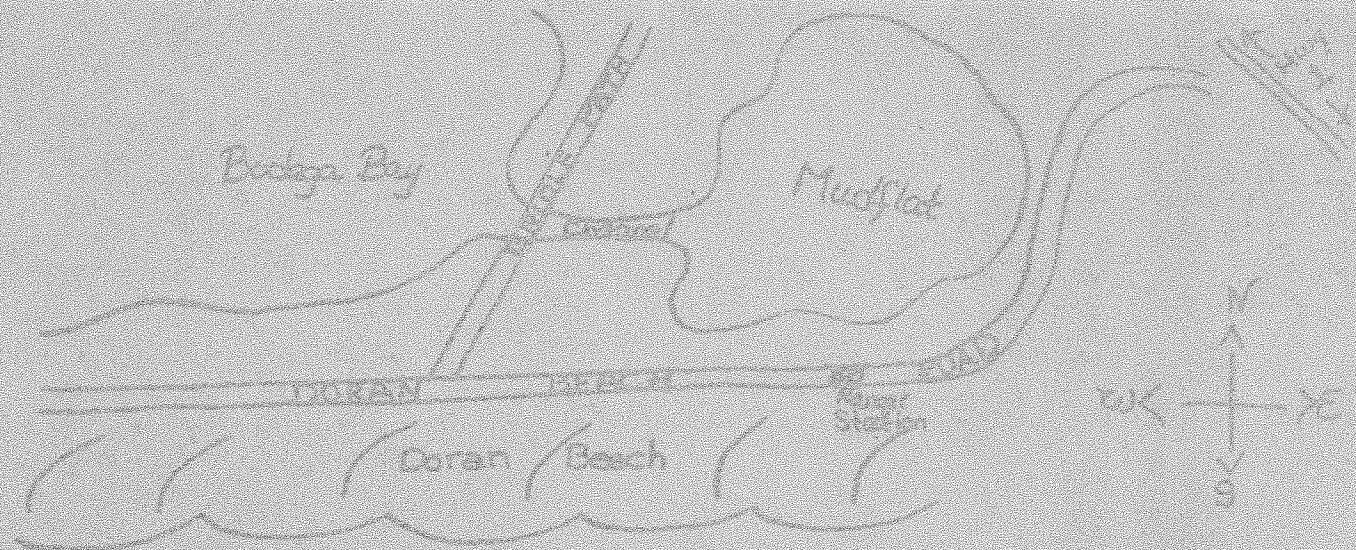
Gail Scott is a center of OSOR doing an independent study project under the direction of Dr. Jack Arnold, on the shore birds in the Doran Beach Road area. We are happy to publish her introductory paper as well as future monthly reports in the King Isles. Here follows her first report:

This is the first part of a study that will identify shore birds, order Charadriiformes, found within the Bodoga Bay region. It includes mainly sandpipers, plovers, and gulls that live in the area during the months of October and November.

South of the town of Bodoga Bay, Doran Beach Road is a turnoff from Highway 1. This peninsula area with its mudflat, beach, and the southern part of Bodoga Bay provides an excellent habitat for most shore bird life.

Shore birds are most difficult to identify, especially during winter months, when they are only patterned in gray, black, and white. Their recognition is even more frustrating.

This study commenced October 23, 1974, and will continue each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Arrival time is between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. Time, weather conditions, and tide are noted. I begin recording bird species in the mudflat and work my way to the bay side of the channel. If the tide is fairly high, most of the smaller birds will be feeding in the mudflat areas. Usually by 11:00 a.m. I have moved to Doran Beach to observe the "beach dwellers".



Most of the sandpipers and plovers that I have sighted can be seen in both the mudflat and bay side areas. The distribution varies somewhat with the size of the bird.

So far the Dunlin, or red-backed sandpiper, is the most abundant bird species in my area. This robin-sized bird may be seen at almost any location along the Doran Beach Road mudflats and occasionally on the beach near stranded water. The smaller Western and Least Sandpipers are often associated with the Dunlin. All three species feed on exposed mud and in shallow water. However, the Dunlin, because of its somewhat greater size, is also found probing through some deeper water.

DORAN BEACH STUDY, CONTINUED.....

The Dowitcher, larger than the Dunlin but smaller than the Marbled Godwit, prefers the bay and mudflat areas. Although it is not seen in great numbers, this bird is hard to miss as it vigorously probes through the mud with unlimited concentration. The Dowitcher is quite easily approached for it is too busy to take interest in the advancing birdwatcher. The Marsh Hawk visits the mudflats quite frequently, and the non-migrating Dowitcher and the other birds are startled into action as the hawk appears overhead without warning.

The Marbled Godwit is a large sandpiper, averaging 16-20 inches in height. It is also outstanding during winter months because of its coloration. The Marbled Godwit retains its brownish plumage throughout the year and is easily recognized among the smaller gray and white sandpipers. This godwit is seen commonly in fairly large numbers among the mudflats but will visit the beach regularly.

The Black Turnstones, and occasionally the Ruddy Turnstones, are more specialized. These birds prefer to feed on and under fresh, green seaweed that has been recently washed ashore. The gentle wave action of the bay provides the turnstones with their food source. Consequently they have only been sighted on the bay side of the channel.

The beach provides the best habitat for the Scaup Plovers. They are well camouflaged and feed among the drying seaweed. Though difficult to spot, once they are located they can be observed in quite close range.

Although gulls are usually seen along the beach, stormy weather drives them onto the mudflats where they huddle together. Rain also causes the other shorebird species to seek protection among the pickleweed where they are difficult to see.

As I continue my observations into the spring months, behavioral and plumage changes should be most interesting.

DORAN BEACH BIRD LIST

with approximate numbers seen per day

Order Charadriiformes

Family Scolopacidae

- Dunlin 300-2000
- Least Sandpiper 200-300
- Western Sandpiper 200-300
- Sanderling 100-300
- Willet 50-200
- Marbled Godwit 100-1000
- Dowitcher 50-100

Family Laridae

- Ring-billed Gull all gulls and terns number
- California Gull between 10-300
- Western Gull and more
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Heermann's Gull
- Forster's Tern

Family Charadriidae

- Black-bellied Plover 300-1000
- Killdeer 50-100
- Black Turnstone 25-50
- Ruddy Turnstone 2 on 11/1/74
4 on 11/15/74
- Scaup Plover 50-150
- Sandpiper Plover 5 on 11/15/74

Family Recurvirostridae

- American Avocet 1 on 10/30/74

Other than Charadriiformes: (per day)

- Great Blue Heron 1-2
- Common Egret 1-2
- Snowy Egret 1-2
- Pintail 50-200
- American Wigeon 20-30. First seen 11/15/74
- Shoveler 2 seen 11/15/74
- Coot 10-30
- Marsh Hawk 1-1

CS CS PARKING PERMIT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

Use in non-reserved sections

For the convenience of members & guests ✓
REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
meeting in Rm 221, Darwin Hall
(Display clearly in Driver's window)

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 2:

1-g, 2-B, 3-H, 4-A, 5-I, 6-F, 7-J, 8-B, 9- (C and K not used)

HELP FUND DOES COMING IN TO CARMEN PATTERSON! WE NEED YOUR MONEY