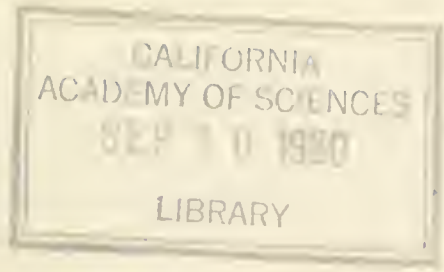


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the gull

Vol. 62 Berkeley, Calif. October 1980 Number 9

David Hunt to Speak on the Isles of Scilly

A special program on "The Fortunate Isles" by David Hunt, widely known naturalist and guide in this far southwestern part of the British Isles, will be presented on **Wednesday, October 15**, at 7:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Travelodge near Pier 39. Please note the change from our usual Thursday meeting date.

Mr. Hunt is already well known to many of our members who have accompanied George Peyton or Dr. Robert Orr on their recent trips to these beautiful islands. Birding there is an exciting experience because vagrants are as likely as on our own Point Reyes peninsula. Many of the small rocky islands are inhabited only by wildlife and are ideal nesting sites for such pelagic species as Storm-Petrel, Manx Shearwater, Fulmar and Kittiwake and for alcids such as Razorbill, Atlantic Puffin, Common Murre and Black Guillemot.

We will share some of Mr. Hunt's lore and expertise in his talk and slide show. Come early to meet our speaker and enjoy looking through his newly-published book, *A Guide to Bird-watching in the Isles of Scilly*, or at his lovely sketches and photos of birds.

The meeting will be held in the Golden Gate Room of the Travelodge at the Wharf. Free parking is available in the upper Travelodge parking lot. Take the elevator down to the first level; the meeting room is near the swimming pool and courtyard.

—MARY LOUISE ROSEGAY for the *Program Committee*

Field Trips Calendar

See the September *Gull* for details on the following trips:

Saturday, October 4—San Francisco (Lands End)

Sunday, October 5—Sunol Regional Park

Saturday, October 25—Bus trip to Monterey Bay Area

Saturday, October 11—Coyote Hills Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot by the visitors' center. From Hwy. 17 take the Jarvis Ave. exit in Newark and continue to Newark Blvd. Follow the signs from there to the park. We should see common waterfowl, shorebirds and landbirds. Leader: David Rice (865-7826). (✓)

Sunday, October 12—Point Reyes. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot by the market in Inverness. From there we will caravan to various points on Point Reyes peninsula. Bring lunch and liquids. (The Inverness market won't be open at 7 a.m.). We may see Pectoral Sandpiper, vagrant warblers and longspurs. Leader: Chris Carpenter (376-6802).

Saturday, October 18—Tomales Point. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Larkspur Ferry Terminal, Section H of the parking lot. From there we will form carpools and caravan to McClure's Beach at Point Reyes. We will leave McClure's Beach at 9 a.m. and hike about 9 miles to Tomales Point through the newly established elk refuge. We should see some pelagic species, shorebirds and landbirds. We will check a few isolated cypress groves for migrants. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothes. Leader: George Hugenberg (526-5289). (✓)

Sunday, October 26—Tennessee Valley. Meet at 9 a.m. and bring lunch. Going north across the Golden Gate Bridge take the Mill Valley exit under the Richardson Bay Bridge and in one-half mile turn left at the Tennessee Valley sign. Drive to the end of the road. We will walk on the flat trail looking for land and sea birds. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020 during work hours). (✓)

Sunday, November 2—Winter bird sounds. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Tilden Nature Center parking lot. We'll listen to winter bird sounds near Jewel Lake and other East Bay spots. Bring your lunch. From North Berkeley, drive up Spruce St. Where Spruce intersects Grizzly Peak Blvd., cross Grizzly and immediately turn left down Cañon Dr. and follow signs to the Tilden Nature Area. Be prepared to walk about 4 miles. Leader: Marie Mans (284-7681).

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Carpooling: The Field Trips Committee offers a carpooling service intended to be of convenience to people needing rides or drivers wishing to share their car space and expenses. With the high cost of gasoline and the ecological imperative to save its use, our plan seems useful and sensible, but not enough people are taking advantage of it. Next time you plan to attend a field trip, please remember to participate, one way or the other.

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9853 (Richmond) and leave a message *during the day* until 5:30 p.m. (including weekends). She will contact you. Please, no phone calls after 5:30 p.m. as this is an evening business phone.

The Field Trips Committee suggests that a guideline of 20¢ per mile divided by the total number of riders (including driver) be used for setting the shared cost of each trip. This would cover gasoline only. Any other expenses, such as bridge tolls, or parking or entrance fees should also be divided equally.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Dan Murphy (564-0074) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

August Observations — Through August 26

PELAGICS

An experimental boat trip far off Monterey July 26 found some of the birds that feed in the warmer offshore water not reached by normal pelagic trips. Most exciting was the **Red-billed Tropicbird**, but 15 Leach's Storm-Petrels and 11 Sabine's Gulls were also seen (all DR, *et al.*). It is usually a long barren trip to this offshore zone, but most of the above birds, *Pterodroma* petrels, Long-tailed Jaegers, Arctic Terns and many cetaceans strongly prefer it to coastal waters. The Sabine's Gulls were very early by coastal standards; does their phenology differ offshore? Along with the expected Xantus' Murrelets, two to four **Craveri's Murrelets** were sighted six miles off the Monterey Peninsula Aug. 23-24 (AB, JM, *et al.*) and a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was found on the former trip (AB, *et al.*).

BAY RARITIES

An Aug. 10 sailboat outing found Sooty Shearwaters inside San Francisco Bay, with two south of the Berkeley Pier, three east of Alcatraz and four east of Angel Island (JM, GA, GZ). A Pink-footed Shearwater

sampled the Bay at Fort Point Aug. 28 (DG). Flying northward over Menlo Park Aug. 16, an adult jaeger was either a Parasitic or a Long-tailed (PLaT). More regular was the adult Arctic Tern at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza Aug. 19 (DD). An adult Pigeon Guillemot north of the Berkeley Pier Aug. 10 (JM, GA, GZ) was yet another species unusually far inside the Bay. Strays from other directions included an **immature Little Blue Heron** near Vallejo Aug. 9 (JP, BDP, PL), a Black Tern there Aug. 14-16 (PG, BR) and a Vesper Sparrow at Tubbs Island Aug. 9 (JP).

CENTRAL VALLEY STRAYS

At Gray Lodge the two adult **Little Blue Herons** were last seen July 31 (BED). Consistent checking of Delta hot spots revealed several coastal shorebirds and gulls. Lodi Sewage Ponds had an American Golden Plover Aug. 18 (JL). A Sanderling at Stockton Sewage Ponds Aug. 12 was followed on Aug. 22 by the first Central Valley record of **Wandering Tattler** (a juvenal) plus a Red Knot and a juvenal Western Gull Aug. 2 and a Glaucous-winged Gull Aug. 21 (both DE). A Savannah Sparrow near Byron Aug. 15 is noteworthy because this species is absent from the Valley during summer (DE).

COASTAL SIGHTINGS

Late July contributed two more observations of immature **Magnificent Frigatebirds**, one at Santa Cruz and Capitola July 29 (SG, TS) and another at China Camp State Park northeast of San Rafael July 30 (JA). After last summer this may not seem like many, but most birders have yet to see a frigatebird as one almost never lingers. The initial Red Phalarope was rather early—Aug. 5 at Bodega Bay. Convincing reports of eight Semipalmated Sandpipers were received although the descriptions did not always rule out the much rarer Rufous-necked Sandpiper (*vide* JM). Understandably, the only adult was also the earliest, Aug. 4 at Abbott's Lagoon (DS). Dates for juvenals there were Aug. 16-18 and another Aug. 18 (both DS) and Aug. 23-25 (JR, *et al.*). Elsewhere singles appeared at Bodega Bay Aug. 10 (JH), Pescadero Marsh Aug. 17 (TB), Palo Alto Aug. 21 (DD) and Moss Landing Aug. 24 (DD). The high count for Baird's Sandpiper was at fresh water, 14 at Laguna Lake, Marin County, Aug. 9 (TB). Two Long-eared Owls on Southeast Farallon since July 24 have specialized on House Mice (PRBO). A Black Swift and a Purple Martin at Bodega Bay Aug. 19 (JP) were both seldom-seen migrants.

NOTABLE NESTINGS AND LINGERERS

The marsh at the foot of Broadway, Alameda, has now developed

enough for Clapper Rail nesting; a pair with seven young was seen there Aug. 26 (LF, *et al.*). Short-eared Owls probably bred near Byron (DE). A less successful pair was the **Great-tailed Grackles** still at Fort Mason this month. Watsonville's **White Wagtail** remained at least through Aug. 24 (mob, BDP, JP).

EASTERNERS

The very rare **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** appeared twice, on Bodega Head July 27 (GM, BDP, *et al.*; gone next day - mob) and near the end of Pierce Point Road, Point Reyes, Aug. 7 (PS, *fide* PH). Perhaps they were both the same individual. A flycatcher that appeared to be an Eastern Phoebe spent a minute at Point Reyes Lighthouse Aug. 24 (PLaT), but this is a month earlier than any of our prior records. This bird accompanied six eastern vagrants in an early movement on Point Reyes. The five warblers were: Tennessee at Mendoza Aug. 23 (WG, *et al.*), Prairie at Fish Docks Aug. 21 (early - AG, WG), Northern Waterthrush at Nunes Aug. 24-26 (PLaT) and American Redstarts at Lighthouse Aug. 24 (PLaT) and Fish Docks Aug. 26 (JD). An even earlier Prairie Warbler was on Southeast Farallon Aug. 13-15 (PRBO). The male Hooded Warbler in Tilden Park was last seen Aug. 2 (FN, LN). A female "Baltimore" Northern Oriole visited San Rafael Aug. 20-21 (*fide* DS). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak joined the first vagrant warbler at Fish Docks Aug. 21 (AG, WG). A male Indigo Bunting in Tilden Park Aug. 8 (PG) was presumably on the move, but it might have summered locally.

Addendum: Last month's list of observers omitted Dorothy Tobkin (DT - Chestnut-sided Warbler).

Observers: Janet Allen, Garth Alton, Alan Baldridge, Tony Briggs, Jane Dang, Bruce E. Deuel, Donna Dittmann, Dick Erickson, Leora Feeney, Steve Getty, Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Doug Gomke, Phil Gordon, Phil Henderson, Joel Hornstein, Peter La Tourette, Phil Linne, John Luther, Gloria Markowitz, many observers (mob), Joe Morlan, Fran Nelson, Leroy Nelson, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Phil Henderson), Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Don Roberson, Dave Shuford, Tom Southworth, Paul Sugnet, Gary Zamzow.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

(phone 548-9507; or Karen L. Bailey at 642-3327 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m.)

The Oakland Christmas Count

Social Event of the Season

This year's GGAS-sponsored annual Christmas Bird Census will be held on Sunday, December 21. We welcome all newcomers and encourage you to participate in the largest Christmas Count in the world. You needn't be an expert — there is more than enough work and fun for everyone. If you would like to take part in the society's annual gathering (and also contribute priceless information to the field of ornithology) contact the compiler, Doug Gomke, at 885-1480.

As well as expressing our thanks to all the people who have helped so much with previous counts, we would like to enter a small plea to all the team leaders to get in touch with Doug as quickly as possible and save the society the cost of a phone call; believe it or not, all those calls really add up.

Complete details on the count will be in next month's *Gull*.

—DOUG GOMKE, *Compiler*

The Bird Year

THE BIRD YEAR, A Book for Birders, with Special Reference to the Monterey Bay Area, by John Davis and Alan Baldrige. Boxwood Press, Pacific Grove, CA; 224 pp.; \$5.95.

This book does not fit traditional molds and thus cannot be reviewed in a comparative manner. As a guide to the avifauna of the Monterey Bay Area the book is neither identification guide, annotated checklist (though Appendix B reprints one) nor bird finding aid. Rather, it is a scholarly yet readable exposition of the seasonal biology, habitat distribution and ecology of the region's avifauna.

The authors' goals are stated in a brief introduction that also outlines the book's two major parts. First is a concise description of seasonal changes in local birdlife and an examination of the biological factors underlying the seasonal changes. The balance of the book is dominated by a survey of the region's bird habitats and discussion of the ecology of birds characteristic of each. In all parts the aim is not to help birders find and identify more birds but to explain what these birds do and why, especially as annual cycles are concerned.

(Continued on page 153)



Now is the Time to Order Your 1981 Birders' Calendar and Almanac

The illustration of the Varied Thrush reproduced above is an example of the beautiful artwork of Pedro J. Gonzalez which highlights the 1981 Birders' Calendar and Almanac published by GGAS. Stephen F. Bailey's informative text cites which birds have been seen six times or fewer in California, on which dates they were seen and also suggests productive birding activities for various times of the year.

The 8½x11" calendar is available to members now for the very attractive price of \$5, postpaid, including tax. Use the form on the following page to order your copies of the calendar or the indispensable *Birds of Northern California, An Annotated Field List* by McCaskie, De Benedictis, Erickson and Morlan.

Please send me copies of the 1981 California Birders' Calendar and Almanac @ \$5 each, postpaid, including tax.

Please send me copies of *Birds of Northern California, An Annotated Field List* @ \$5 each, postpaid, including tax.

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Make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society and mail with order form to GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705.

THE BIRD YEAR (Continued from page 150)

Chapter 3, "The Bird Year," describes seasonal changes in the bird-life and bird behaviors as a birder would observe them at Hastings Natural History Reservation in upper Carmel Valley. A significant flaw is the absence of a similar concise annual cycle for a coastal site such as Moss Landing and/or Point Piños. At least in the first half of the book the reader receives no balanced overview of the seasons in the entire region. Although at Hastings Reservation "early September . . . for the birder . . . is the duller part of the year. Not only is the variety of species at its most limited . . .", the same is certainly not true of nearby coastal areas. Migrants and vagrants of many types are rapidly building to maxima and the vagrant hunter is entering his most frenetic season.

Succeeding chapters discuss the seasonal biology of "Reproduction" (overall perspective and physiology), "Breeding Behavior," "Nesting," "Molts and Plumages" and "Migration." These are well-written treatments, worthy of the better general ornithology texts. Appropriate examples using both California and foreign species are provided and fully referenced to the original literature. This part concludes with "The Bird Year — Another Version," in which the seasons at Hastings Reservation are restated with biological interpretations of the prior observations. For example, in late September "a few Golden-crowns sing occasionally" becomes "Some of the newly arrived crown sparrows sing occasionally suggesting low-level activity of the interstitial tissue of some males." This is novel and effective.

Focusing on aspects of avian biology that vary seasonally, there is therefore no similar coverage of everyday facets of birds' lives. For these topics one must consult other works. Thus, it is distressing to note that the 14-page Bibliography includes no general ornithology text and few other reference works or review volumes. The citation of Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey* gives no hint that it is part of a major reference series covering all North American birds. Omitted is the most thorough study of *any* bird's ecology and behavior, Val Nolan's monograph on the Prairie Warbler (1978, *Ornith. Monog.* No. 26). Golden Gate Audubon's own invaluable *Birds of Northern California* is also ignored. Field guides apparently receive mention only because they are cited in the text. Although the Bibliography seems to be a commendable list of primary sources on the topics covered and a comprehensive compilation of historical Monterey area ornithology, most readers of this book have neither ready access to the technical literature nor the training to understand it consistently. Less than another page could have listed entries into worlds of bird literature accessible to amateurs.

The survey of Monterey Bay Area bird habitats covers 91 pages. The vegetation and physical features of each are introduced, seasonally characteristic birds are listed and selected species' ecology and status are discussed. In this section aquatic habitats and their birds finally get extensive treatment. Supplemented by fine halftone habitat photos and bird portraits, this part gives a good understanding of the bird life in each habitat and a feeling for the area as a whole. If only for this, central coast birders should consider the book worth its modest price.

None of the authors' text approximates an annotated local species list. Appendix B reprints the latest (1977) edition of the Monterey Peninsula Region field checklist, but it doesn't suit this book which has a broader geographic scope. For example, Black-necked Stilt is very common at Elkhorn Slough but "accidental" on the Monterey Peninsula list. The coded format permits no seasonal detail, the codes themselves are poorly selected and errors are easily found.

Other chapters cover "The Effect of Development on Bird Life" and the "History of Monterey Bay Ornithology."

In "The Names of Birds" we find a very lucid treatment of the history of the species concept, its application in taxonomy, scientific vs. English names and life list affected by lumping and splitting species. However, a misconception on page 13 deserves correction. In the lumping of species, Davis and Baldrige attribute the selection of a "neutral" English name (e.g. Northern Oriole) for the combined species to an effort not to "miff either easterners or westerners" by choosing the English name of one of the merged species (e.g. Baltimore Oriole, Bullock's Oriole). The real reason is to avoid ambiguity. The old names can still be used and such use indicates unequivocally that the bird mentioned belongs to one particular population group formerly considered a separate species. Use of the new combined name refers to the entire species or any member individual. If "Baltimore Oriole" were applied to the combined species there would be no name for the eastern form. "Baltimore Oriole" would henceforth be ambiguous, especially if the combined species is resplit. This has happened often and could happen to the Northern Oriole (see page 10).

If English names were governed by the same strict rules as scientific names then English names would lose all utility except the comfort from consisting of vernacular words. A far worse error (*not* committed in this book) is exemplified by the ABA Checklist name "Marsh Wren" for the Long-billed Marsh Wren. If Short-billed Marsh Wren is to be renamed "Sage Wren" then Long-billed Marsh Wren must keep its name or become something like "Reed Wren" (my choice). "Marsh Wren" can

never be used without risk of confusion with (unspecified or unidentified) "marsh wren," especially because some authors and editors cannot learn to capitalize English species names.

In summary, the material in *The Bird Year* is generally of high quality but an uneven geographic scope and lack of key references limit its usefulness. Birders must find most other information with no help from this book. The habitat survey will appeal to most who like the Monterey Bay Area. Narrow-minded birders will ignore the book because it won't contribute to listing; throughout, the volume's value is in the expositions of bird lives from which any bird student could profit.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY

GGAS Condor Phone Poll

If you have strong feelings for or against the captive propagation plan for the California Condor, we would like to know about it. Let us know your feelings by calling the GGAS office, 843-2222, or GGAS President Bob Hirt during the evening at 383-5337.

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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.