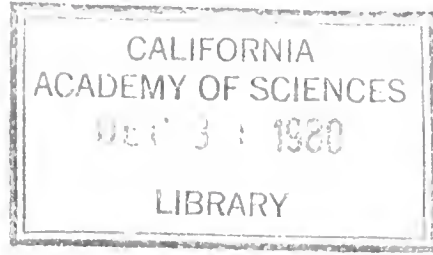
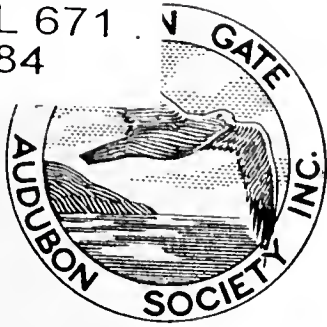


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the gull

Volume 63

Berkeley, Calif.

January 1981

Number 1

Gray Whales Featured in January

Our January general membership meeting will be on whales. As you're probably aware, January is the prime month to watch migrating California Gray Whales along our coast.

We're extremely fortunate to have as our featured speaker Lyle Bennett, a true whale expert. Lyle has been involved in whale research and education for more than ten years and is currently director of the Whale Center in Oakland.

His presentation will cover whales from their biology to their historical and often tragic relationship with man. It will feature a film or slide show of whales and some of the common sea birds seen on whale-watching trips. He will have whale information sheets, posters and a Gray Whale model for better understanding of this animal.

Whale watchers will be interested in tips on where to watch whales from shore. If you are interested in a boat trip to see these magnificent creatures, call the GGAS office (843-2222).

The meeting, Thursday, January 15, at 7:30 p.m. will be in the Golden Gate Room of the Travelodge at the Wharf, 250 Beach St. (near Pier 39), San Francisco. There is ample free parking available. The room is off the courtyard and swimming pool.

Bring the whole family or a friend to this meeting which should be highly appealing to all.

—BOB and DEBORAH HIRT, for the *Program Committee*

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Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, January 10—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 will be appropriate for beginners. From Hwy. 17 take the Hegenberger Rd. exit, go right (north) on Edgewater Dr. for about one mile to the park. Spotting scopes are desirable for this trip. Lunch is optional. We should see a variety of ducks and shorebirds. Leader: Dave Cornman (825-2106).

Saturday, January 17—Palo Alto Baylands Refuge. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto, exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the airport, yacht harbor and refuge until you reach the duck pond on the left just beyond the airport. Meet here at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch, scopes and rubber boots. We will probably walk through mud and we will be on a boardwalk which may be wet at high tide. We should see shore birds, waders and ducks including Blue-winged Teal. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

Saturday, January 17—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 at 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 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 flora and 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 this trip will be cancelled at the last minute. It will also be called off if there is no interest. It is therefore important to notify Dan Murphy (564-0074) if you plan to attend. Leave a phone number where you can be reached so he can notify you if the trip is cancelled. Leader: Eben McMillan. (✓)

Motels: Kettleman City: Olive Tree Inn, 209-386-9530; Paso Robles: Best Western Black Oak Motor Lodge, 805-238-4740; Paso Robles Inn, 805-238-2660.

Sunday, January 18—Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary Refuge. Meet at **9 a.m.** at the sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Beach Rd. in Tiburon. From Hwy. 101 take the Belvedere-Tiburon exit, go east and turn right at the third traffic light: Greenwood Cove Rd. We will look for ducks, shorebirds and courting Western Grebes. Leader: Alan Ruppert (388-2524).

Saturday, January 24—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 including the hard-to-find Wood Duck. Land birds are also plentiful. Lunch is optional. Leader: Erlene Hevel (661-4251).

Sunday, January 25—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). (✓)

Saturday, January 31—Dillon Beach. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (section H of the parking lot). From there we will drive to Tomales where we will stop by the Bank of America building on Hwy. 1 to meet people from Marin. We will depart from Tomales at **8:30 a.m.** From there we will continue to caravan to Lawson's Landing (entrance fee). Bring lunch, warm clothes, rain gear and a scope. We may see three species of loons, Red-necked Grebes, White Pelicans, Brants and Snowy Plovers. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

Saturday, February 7—Panoche Valley. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, twelve and one-half 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 in advance as Hollister is the last place where gas is readily available. 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. Leader: Chris Carpenter (376-6802). (✓)

Sunday, February 8—Los Banos State Refuge. Meet at 9 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. Be sure to fill your gas tank before the trip and car-pool 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. We suggest people interested in both the Panoche Valley and Los Banos field trips spend the night in Los Banos. Leaders: Peter and Dolores White (229-1714). (✓)

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9853 (Richmond) 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 Dan Murphy (564-0074) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

1981 Texas Birding Trip

There are still a few spaces left on this GGAS-sponsored trip to Texas next spring. The trip is a repeat of the 1978 trip which recorded more than 280 bird species. There will be an optional trip to Big Bend National Park to look for the Colima Warbler and other west Texas birds. The dates are April 18-30, with an extension to May 3. For reservations and information call Mike Wihler at 664-6567 during the day.

Condor Symposium

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will sponsor a one-day conference on the survival of the California Condor, Saturday, January 24, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills. Speakers will include members of the condor recovery team and representatives from local Audubon chapters and conservation groups. There will be question/discussion sessions as well as films, including "Death of a Chick," the film taken during the June, 1980, nest check which resulted in the death of a condor chick. Pre-registration is urged. For more information call 408-779-8694 or the GGAS office, 843-2222.

November Observations – Through November 30

November gave us little of either fall or winter.

SWIMMERS

A Red-necked Grebe at Palo Alto Nov. 22 (PG, SL, *et al.*) was very far from its usual open coast. Sixteen Whistling Swans at Abbotts Lagoon Nov. 16 (BDP) were strays in the opposite direction. Nine Eurasian Wigeons were reported (mob), six in coastal Marin County, two at Alameda and another at Coyote Hills. The albino wigeon at Bolinas Lagoon Nov. 21 (BT) would be hard to identify to species. Muddy Hollow's Tufted Duck was joined by another Nov. 9 (RS) and both remained through Nov. 28 (mob). A male Harlequin Duck delighted the terrestrial bird censusing symposium participants at Asilomar Oct. 27-31 (mob). Another Harlequin and the Oldsquaw inhabited Moss Landing to Nov. 16 (BW). Single Oldsquaws were at Fish Docks Nov. 2-23 (BA, AE, JZ, *et al.*) and Bay Bridge Toll Plaza Nov. 30 (TC) and three arrived at SE Farallon Nov. 18 (PRBO). The real prize waterfowl was the female **King Eider** that was easily seen at Abbotts Lagoon Nov. 13-28 (DS, mob)— the first one in years.

EAGLE TO ALCID

An immature Bald Eagle frequented Pine Gulch Creek Nov. 11-15 (mob) and a Black Rail was flushed there Nov. 9 (GMcC, *et al.*). A Mountain Plover was along the Drakes Beach road Nov. 11 (RS). Mountain Plovers at Clifton Court Forebay were at a less surprising location but represented Contra Costa County's first sightings. Two on Oct. 30 increased to nine on Nov. 3, with at least eight there Nov. 5 (all DE). Outer coastal American Golden Plovers are expected, but one at Corte Madera Mudflat Nov. 21 (BA) was not. Inland Red Phalaropes usually cause chuckles or astonishment, but imagine the one seen Nov. 11 (KC, SW, JG) standing on Hwy. 1 five miles south of Olema and allowing cars to pass over it until finally flying to safety! Single Rock Sandpipers were discovered back at traditional wintering sites: Bodega Head Nov. 15 (KC, *et al.*), Princeton Harbor Nov. 22-29 (MD, mob) and Pebble Beach, San Mateo Co., Nov. 29 (GMcC, PL, *et al.*).

Terns feeding intensely on salt ponds west of Coyote Hills supported a stray Parasitic Jaeger Nov. 15-23 (CS). The adult **Black-headed Gull** was discovered back at Stockton Sewage Ponds Nov. 7 (RJ, RD). Both

it and the **Little Gull** (Nov. 7 - RJ, RD) remained to Nov. 12 (JZ), but on Nov. 14 only a Franklin's Gull could be found (BB). Another Franklin's Gull flew past Coyote Hills Nov. 29 (JG). The only pelagic report worth mentioning was a Tufted Puffin off Monterey Nov. 16 (JML, *et al.*).

PASSERINES

October 30 produced two more Tropical Kingbirds, at Bodega Bay (MG, *et al.*) and Sutro Baths (AH). The **Common Skylark** lingered at Hall Ranch at least to Nov. 28 (mob). California's first **Short-billed Marsh Wren (Sedge Wren)** betrayed its presence at Pine Gulch Creek by calling Nov. 4 (DDeS, *et al.*) and Nov. 8 (RS, mob), but its habit of burrowing into impenetrable tussocks for long periods prevented hordes of birders from seeing it on other days, despite intensive searching and regrettable marsh trampling. An immature Northern Shrike enlivened Limantour Spit Nov. 4-9 (JE, *et al.*).

Indian summer weather halted the vagrant warbler season, as this table indicates; few birds arrived in November. Continuing individuals are parenthesized.

Black-and-white Warbler (total (1); 14 for the fall)			
(1)	Carmel River Mouth	Oct. (26)-30-31	mob
Tennessee Warbler (total 5; 16 for the fall)			
3	SE Farallon	arrived Oct. 24, Nov. 3, 17-	PRBO
		each stayed about 1 week	
1	Pine Gulch Creek	Nov. 5-15	JM, mob
1	Greenwood Park, Pac. Gr.	Nov. 29	EM, AM
Cape May Warbler (total 1; 4 for fall)			
1	SE Farallon	Oct. 29-Nov. 3	PRBO
Black-throated Green Warbler (total 2; 9 for fall)			
1	SE Farallon	Oct. 24-26	PRBO
1	Carmel River Mouth	Oct. 31	mob
Blackburnian Warbler (total 1; 14 for fall)			
1	SE Farallon	Oct. 29-30	PRBO
Blackpoll Warbler (total (1); 51 for fall)			
(1)	Carmel River Mouth	(Oct. 26)-Nov. 2	EM, AM
Prairie Warbler (total 1; 11 for fall)			
1	Bodega Bay	Nov. 12	RS
Palm Warbler (total 14; 52++ for fall)			
9	SE Farallon	arrived Oct. 22(2), 24(4), 30, Nov. 1, 9	PRBO
1	Nunes	Oct. 30	AG
1	Corte Madera Marsh	Nov. 1	NB
2	Pine Gulch Creek	Nov. 5-15; 15	RS, mob; EM, AM
1	Moss Landing	Nov. 29	EM, AM

A late Wilson's Warbler bathed in Berkeley Nov. 25 (AMi). A female "Baltimore" Northern Oriole briefly visited the Bodega Bay ponds Nov.

9 (JM, *et al.*). Southeast Farallon hosted a Rose-breasted Grosbeak Nov. 5-6 (PRBO). Grasshopper Sparrows found the island Oct. 24 and 28 (PRBO). Other Farallon sparrows were: two Tree Sparrows on Oct. 24 (one the next day), a Harris' Sparrow Nov. 1 and Clay-colored Sparrows Oct. 29 and Nov. 3-4 (all PRBO). Another Clay-colored Sparrow studied College of Marin Nov. 5-7 (SC). Three Sharp-tailed Sparrows had settled at Pine Gulch Creek by Nov. 5 (RS, mob) and all should winter. High tides exposed two Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Palo Alto Nov. 22 (EM, SL, *et al.*). Swamp Sparrows likewise began wintering, with one at Pine Gulch Creek Nov. 11-14 (JG, SW, KC, KY - injured when last seen), four in Olema Marsh Nov. 15-28 (GH, *et al.*) and one in Corte Madera Marsh Nov. 28 (NB). At Hall Ranch two Vesper Sparrows were reported Nov. 1 (GG, BE). Four Chestnut-collared Longspurs were still at Hall Ranch Oct. 30 (AG) and two were found Nov. 28 (GMcC, PL, *et al.*). Variable numbers of Lapland Longspurs were estimated there through the month, up to 15 on Nov. 28 (GMcC, PL, *et al.*). Inland, a Lapland Longspur rattled around Clifton Court Forebay Oct. 30 (DE).

Errata: A line was omitted from the August observations (October *Gull*, page 148). In "Central Valley Strays" read as follows (omitted part italicized): "... **Wandering Tattler** (a juvenal) plus a Red Knot and a juvenal Western Gull (*all DE*). At Rio Vista there was a first summer Western Gull Aug. 2 and a Glaucous-winged Gull Aug. 21 (both DE)." In the penultimate line of page 154 (my book review) "Sedge Wren" was changed in proof to "Sage Wren," a less appropriate name for a marsh bird!

Observers: Beverly Anderson, Stephen F. Bailey, Florence Bennett, Neil Blank, Bill Bowsman, Kurt Campbell, Scott Carey, Tom Castro, Terry L. Coddington, Maryann Danielson, Richard Davis, Dave De Sante, Art Edwards, Barbara Emley, Dick Erickson, Jules Evans, Gene Gerlach, Al Giorso, Phil Gordon, Michael Green, Jeff Greenhouse, Howard Honig, Alan Hopkins, George Hugenberg, Richard Jeffers, Danne Jones, Jeri M. Langham, Paul Lehman, Susanne Luther, Akiko Makishima (AM), Eugene Makishima, Guy McCaskie, Arnold Miller (AMi), many observers (mob), Joe Morlan, Bob O'Brien, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Phil Henderson), Benjamin D. Parmeter, Bob Richmond, Dave Shuford, Rich Stallcup, Chris Swarth, Dorothy Tobkin, Bruce Travis, Derek Watson, Betty Wentzcl, Steve Wilson, Keiko Yamane, Jon Zablackis.

—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.)

Birding Classes

Dr. Stephen F. Bailey, *Gull* Observations Editor, will teach an expanded version of his **Gull Identification Workshop** through Albany Adult School, sponsored by GGAS. Slide lecture and field portions of this course have been separated and lengthened for more leisurely learning. The goal is the identification of gull species and ages. Steve will present the plumages and identification marks plus the seasonal status and distribution of Northern California species. This difficult subject will be clarified through examination of patterns and natural variation; that is, identification by integrated understanding, not oversimplified rules.

Slide lectures will be 7-9 p.m. on eight consecutive Wednesdays, January 14-March 4. Saturday field trips are 8 a.m.-noon January 24 and 31, February 14 and 28. These two classes may be taken singly or preferably in combination, but only students from his 1979 gull workshop may participate in field trips without concurrent attendance of the slide lectures. For information call Steve at 548-9507 after January 6. To register call the school at 526-6811.

Winter Bird Sounds, taught by Marie Mans at Albany Adult School and sponsored by GGAS, will illustrate with tapes and slides the myriad bird voices heard during California's "winter." Examples from birds as different as geese, owls, kinglets and sparrows will be discussed. The class is suitable for anyone interested in bird sounds and to birders who want to widen their horizons by using sound as an aid to identification. Classes are planned for two evening sessions: Tuesday, January 20 and 27, and two morning field trips on the following Saturdays (field trips may be split depending on the number of registrants). Cost is \$11. Call the school to register, 526-6811.

The Fremont Adult School is again offering a class in **Field Identification** taught by Alice Hoch. Although the classes meet at a different spot each week, mostly in the East Bay, emphasis during the winter months will be on shorebird identification. For complete information call the school, 791-5841, or Ms. Hoch, 657-0475.

January Cooper Society Meeting

Dr. Ned K. Johnson of the UC Berkeley Museum of Vertebrate Zoology will speak on systematics of Western North American birds at the January 12 meeting of the Cooper Society. A business meeting at 7:30 p.m. precedes the 8 p.m. lecture in Room 2503 of the Life Sciences Building on the UC campus.

Come to the Quilting Bee(s)

The Mono Lake subcommittee of the Conservation Committee has kicked off a year-long fund raising for the Mono Lake Defense Fund at the Christmas Bird Count and we are now beginning work on another project— a Mono Lake quilt to be raffled in the fall. A planning and work session will be held at 2001 Yolo Ave., Berkeley, on Thursday, January 14. The quilt top is being designed by Ric Hugo, a Sacramento *Bee* artist, and Helen Green. The help of eight to ten stalwart quilters is needed to make the top and to quilt the finished work. Please phone Helen Green, 526-5943, if you are able to help.

Copies of Mono Article Sought

The September issue of *Audubon* featured an excellent, in-depth article on Mono Lake by Peter Steinhart titled "The City and the Inland Sea." The Mono Lake Committee can put this article to work convincing legislators and public servants that Mono is worth saving. If you can bear to part with your copy of the article please send it to the Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

Backyard Birders' Question Box

In the February, 1980, issue of *The Gull*, Stephen Bailey began an article with the provocative title "Ever Seen a 'Grunt-Whistle'?"

Dr. Bailey was reviewing *A Guide to the Behavior of Common Birds* by Donald W. Stokes and told us only that the "grunt-whistle" was connected with Mallard behavior. I hoped to satisfy my curiosity by keeping a closer watch on the Mallards on Spreckels Lake and doing some extra reading on the topic. It was not until this fall, however, that I obtained a copy of the book and found out just what it was that I had been hoping to see (and hear).

Stokes says, under the listing of Mallard courtship displays, that the grunt-whistle is a short, high-pitched whistle given by the male Mallard, either singly or in small groups, before a female. The back of the male's neck is arched, the bill pointing sharply downward and, as the whistle is given, the bill is suddenly raised, throwing a spray of water droplets into the air. This is all done so quickly that it may easily pass unobserved.

Starting early in the spring, I will certainly be watching for this behavior. However, while keeping an eye on the Mallards, I was lucky enough to observe some American Coot behavior that I had never seen before.

Some American Coots on the lake are very aggressive, almost running over the surface of the water, body flattened, head thrust forward, to drive off other coot intruders. When the opponents seem to be evenly matched, however, they raise their wings slightly, forming a sort of canopy over the body, lifting and spreading the tail feathers in a fan with the white outer under-tail feathers showing. They then circle slowly about one another until one gives way. During this performance, the birds' appearance is altered so much that, at first sight, I wondered if what I was observing were really coots.

If you would like to share information on bird behavior that you have observed or if you have a question about the birds that are commonly found in our area, write to Kay Steinberg, 850-38th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121.

A Letter from the Editor

I recently received a copy of a letter written to Kay Steinberg by Alexandria Rodgers of San Francisco saying how delighted she was with the Backyard Birders' column. The correspondent said in part, "I have long felt that there is more to appreciation of wildlife than mere identification and listing of same. Your column provides good information for people who want something more meaningful than making lists. It was in search of such information that I joined GGAS and I do hope the appearance of the Backyard Birders' Question Box is a harbinger of good things to come along this line in *The Gull*."

This brings up the question: just what sort of information *do* people want from *The Gull*? Certainly, there are basic columns which must appear in each issue—monthly program and field trip information and bird observations plus periodic reports of Board activity and the chapter's conservation efforts.

When I became editor in 1977 I was very new to birding, so I had to consult my own feelings as to what I would like to see published in *The Gull* if I were only sitting there reading it. One thing I decided would be useful to many readers was more information on where to bird, so I began to enlist knowledgeable people to write these site guides which I've run from time to time.

I ran Brian McCaffery's essays, "The Fabric of Nature," for several months until he went off to do work in Alaska and Australia; I received one letter praising those. Conversely, I heard a verbal comment that

that sort of thing belongs in *Audubon* magazine and that more emphasis should be on important conservation issues. There are some who feel the Observation column is too elitist or, as Ms. Rodgers said, too full of "lists." Others think it is the most valuable part of *The Gull*.

What's a poor editor to do unless readers communicate their feelings? What's a chapter to do when it asks members to phone the office and state simply whether they are for or against the chapter's policy (published in *The Gull*, June, 1980) concerning the California Condor captive breeding program? Of the approximately 6500 GGAS members, less than a dozen took time to call. They were overwhelmingly in favor of our stand against the program as originally formulated by National Audubon Society.

There is a lack of communication; Ms. Rodgers' letter was one of four I have received during my three-year tenure. Local chapters are formed to serve local members, but an immense amount of work is done by too few people for a chapter our size. If you feel less a part of GGAS than you'd wish, you have only yourself to blame.

This is a sincere and fervent request for letters from you expressing your views on the chapter and/or on *The Gull*. They will be read with great interest and an eye to making both more valuable to you. When space allows I will share them with you in these pages.

—NANCY CONZETT, *Editor*

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In honor of Elsie Roemer's birthday

Nancy Konzett

In memory of

Mary England

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Anderson

Sarah Savin

George Homem

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THE GULL

January 1981

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

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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.**