







## THE AUDUBON ADVISORY

The *Audubon Advisory* is National Audubon Society's weekly national legislative update. The parts of the January 10th and 17th editions reprinted below will hopefully encourage you to get involved in influencing our elected politicians — several of whom claim to care about the environment but regularly vote against regulations and funding. You can help protect our environment by becoming part of National Audubon's *Armchair Activist* program; you'll receive a monthly mailing about one state or federal issue and a sample letter for inspiration — just write or call SSAS's Mary Jane Russell (766-7397) and she'll add you to our mailing list.

**Back With a Vengeance?** As the 105th Congress begins its session, the *Advisory* takes a look at what's in store for the environment.

**Endangered Species Act.** We anticipate that ESA reauthorization (and it could happen this year) will happen in the Senate. Sources in the House indicate that moderate Republicans plan to wait for Senate action on the ESA. However, Rep. Don Young (R-AK), newly reelected chair of the House Resources Committee, has called upon Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to outline the Clinton administration's preferred revisions to the Endangered Species Act by April 1.

**Forests.** The clearcut rider finally expired on December 31st, which means new salvage sales must now comply with environmental laws. All sales offered before the law expired, including a whole host in the rider's final days, continue without public oversight, however.

The future promises more bills imitating the salvage rider, but also some positive legislation. The most visible threat is another bill from Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) designed to marginalize public participation in the management of our national forests. Similar to last year's clearcut "salvage" rider and forest health logging bill, this bill circumvents our major environmental laws in order to facilitate logging. Perhaps even more dangerous are potential compromise-type bills from Senate Democrats on issues like forest health logging. Members of the House plan to introduce their own forest health and salvage logging legislation this year.

While we are defending against these threats, we will be promoting legislation which should benefit forest ecosystems. The bills with the highest chance for success in the 105th Congress (which has promised fiscal responsibility) would cut harmful forest subsidies, including road-building subsidies, salvage subsidies, and below-cost timber sales. A bipartisan group in the House plans to introduce a forest reform bill.

**Appropriations.** President Clinton will release his Fiscal Year 1998 budget in early February. Audubon has

been lobbying the Administration to increase the funding requests for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Endangered Species Act (ESA) implementation, the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey [formerly the National Biological Service (NBS)], and other Audubon priorities.

The President's budget is critical in laying the groundwork for a successful appropriations effort later in the year. If the President makes protecting our natural resources a priority in his budget, Congress will be forced to reexamine the budgeted funding levels for environmental programs. The President's budget sets the stage for the upcoming appropriations battles in the 105th Congress.

Soon after the President releases his budget, Congress will develop its budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The Congressional budget process determines funding levels for all government spending. Efforts to balance the federal budget mean nondefense discretionary spending, including funding for environmental programs, will receive deep cuts. Over the past three fiscal years, programs we care about have been budgeted fewer and fewer dollars.

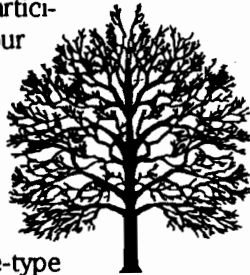
Once Congress votes on a final budget resolution, required by law to be on or before April 15th, the appropriations process begins. The Appropriations Committees must work within the budget parameters set by the Budget Committee.

**Wetlands.** Thanks to tremendous support from Audubon volunteers and environmentalists nationwide, the Army Corps of Engineers recently announced its decision to rescind nationwide permit 26 completely, effective December 1998.

Nationwide permit 26 allowed for the filling of up to ten acres of wetlands without an individual permit application and without any advance public notice. In the interim, the ceiling for use of nationwide 26 has been lowered to three acres, with preconstruction notification required for projects affecting one-third of an acre or more. Although there is cause for celebration, we must also be wary. Various developer groups, including the National Wetlands Coalition, have begun to beat the drum for legislation in Congress to reinstate nationwide permit 26.

**National Wildlife Refuges.** Yesterday [January 16th], House Resources Committee Chairman Don Young (R-AK), Subcommittee Chairman Jim Saxton (R-NJ), and Congressman John Dingell (D-MI) introduced the 105th Congress' successor to last Congress' ill-fated H.R. 1675 [which the House passed, but not the Senate], the so-called "Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act." The "National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997," H.R. 511, shows little improvement over H.R. 1675. Our main concerns include:

• Hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation are elevated to purposes of the National Wildlife Refuge System, given coequal status with bird and wildlife conservation (currently, the NWRS is the only public lands system that puts wildlife and habitat conservation first). This means





## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marion Yavarkovsky

New members — you are just in time to join us as the spring migration begins. Sunday bird walks, monthly meetings, trips, committees, and the Birdathon are all waiting for your participation. Join us! [For information on SSAS membership, please call our Membership Chairperson, Marion Yavarkovsky, at 379-2090. The best time to call is after 4 P.M., Monday through Friday.]

Baldwin.....	Evelyn Greenfield
Bellmore .....	Dorothy Cunningham, Ed Kampfer
Copiague .....	William & Caroline Mauer
East Meadow .....	C. Fritz
Hicksville.....	V. Beltrani, Leo Tabrys, Milton Thrush
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Merrick .....	Florence Hettinger
Uniondale.....	Judith Skuza
Valley Stream .....	R. Mac Knight, Toni Martin, Mary Uhlar
West Hempstead .....	William Zarou
Woodmere.....	Sondra Leon

## BIRDING IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mike Higginson

Bird-watching is an interesting pastime and it appeals to many people because there are so many facets to the hobby. A birder could be a backyard feeder watcher, a bird bander, an environmental activist, a bird tour guide, a bird club organizer, or a bird lister. Most people combine a little bit of all of these things and are never bored. There are Christmas Bird Counts, birdathons, duck surveys, breeding bird surveys, letter-writing campaigns, school presentations, and birding trips to just about anywhere to see as many new birds as possible. I confess to this last obsession. I've traveled to Arizona, Texas, Florida, Alaska, and a host of places in between to seek out new species for my life list. Last November, this ambition drove me to San Francisco for two pelagic trips and some land birding in an area that I had never before visited.

Bill Hollweg (Bill the Birder) and I arrived on a Friday and spent the day getting ready for our first boat trip the next day. Saturday morning found us at the Bodega Bay dock at 6 A.M. boarding a boat that was scheduled to go about 40 miles into the Pacific to Cordell Banks, an underwater seamount that provides shallow nearshore habitat in a deepwater offshore outer continental shelf

location, to look for Northern California ocean species. The real attraction to these trips and to the bird listers who take them are the possible sightings of birds way off course that would never be expected to be seen near San Francisco. The weather was reasonable and the swells not too uncomfortable, and everyone was able to enjoy the trip without a trace of seasickness. And what a trip! There were gulls, loons, grebes, pelicans, egrets, herons, and ducks, as well as the target birds that everyone hoped to see. A Laysan Albatross sat on the water in the wake of a fish-processing ship and waited patiently for scraps and gave us great views. It is a beautiful bird, but the real stars of the show were the shearwaters that went whizzing by just inches from the waves. Flesh-footed, Short-tailed, Pink-footed, and Sooty Shearwaters entertained us regularly and flew close enough to the boat that we were able to make out the distinguishing characteristics of each. But the prettiest of all was the Buller's Shearwater with its very distinctive w-pattern on its wings. Absolutely gorgeous. Auklets and murrelets kept us entertained on the way back to the dock.

The next day found us in Eldorado National Forest, about 30 miles east of Sacramento, with a buddy of mine that I had met on another bird trip. Tim took us around to look for Northern California land species and we were rewarded with California Quail, Anna's Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Scrub Jay, Steller's Jay, Wrentit, Bushtit, Mountain Chickadee, Western Bluebird, Hutton's Vireo, Spotted and California Towhees, and Golden-crowned Sparrow, among others. But the highlight of our visit



to the national forest was the sight of a Williamson's Sapsucker and a White-headed Woodpecker (pictured) side by side on the same tree limb about 10 feet away from us. And people ask why I do this!!

The latter part of the day was spent driving to Monterey to be up early on Monday for our second water trip, this one exploring Monterey Bay. It was a veritable cornucopia of riches for an eastern birder. Pacific Loon; Western Grebe; Black-vented Shearwater; Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants; Black Turnstone; Heermann's, Mew, and Thayer's Gulls; Elegant Tern; and Pigeon Guillemot filled our binoculars. We returned to the dock with plenty of daylight remaining and left for Mission Trails Park in Carmel because there had been reports of a Painted Redstart seen there. We saw a Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Audubon's and Townsend's Warblers, but no redstart.

We spent the next day poking around Monterey. Mountain Quail can sometimes be found on Chews Ridge, about 35 miles south. It's in the middle of the forest and worth the trip even if the quail proves elusive, as it did this day. We visited Pinnacles National Monument, an overlooked and under-visited national park. We spotted a bobcat as we drove into the park. Around the parking lot we located a

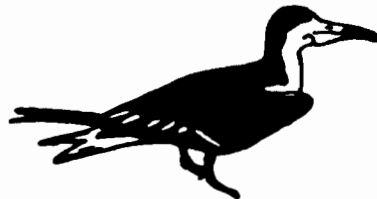


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A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
*Americans Committed to Conservation*



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