

NOV 1979

CIRCULATING COPY  
Sea Grant Depository

LOAN COPY ONLY

# PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP



## BULLETIN

Vol.6

WINTER

1979

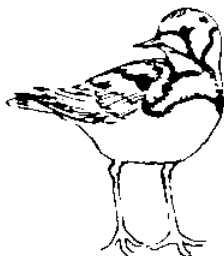
No.2

(Nybakken, R/CZ-45B)

## SHOREBIRD HABITAT AND FOOD UTILIZATION IN ELKHORN SLOUGH, CALIFORNIA

Allen, Bernadette. Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, Moss Landing, California 95039

To provide baseline data for California's federal Estuarine Sanctuary and for a Sea Grant-sponsored wetlands management study, 46 censuses were taken from November 1977 through November 1979 in Elkhorn Slough. Over all seasons and habitats, 10 species were consistently abundant, revealing 3 general patterns of shorebird use similar to those reported for Bolinas Lagoon by Page, *et al.* (1979). Habitat types such as mudflats, salt marshes and ponds were used consistently within species, but use of smaller areas of the slough for feeding varied considerably. Mudflats were used mostly for feeding, salt marshes and ponds for loafing and secondarily for feeding. Feeding habits of 3 consistently abundant species, including 25 Marbled Godwits, 20 Willets, and 105 Western Sandpipers, were analyzed. Both the Willet and Marbled Godwit ate grapsid crabs, with the Marbled Godwit also consuming bivalves and polychaetes. Western Sandpipers ate a larger diversity of prey, including insects, polychaetes, amphipods, ostracods and oligochaetes. A preliminary comparison of prey items in stomach-pumped samples and stomachs from sacrificed birds indicated concurrence in prey species, but not in relative abundance.



Ruddy Turnstone

## OPPORTUNISM AND SITE FAITHFULNESS IN WINTERING SANDERLINGS

Myers, J.P. and B.J. McCaffery. Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Bodega Marine Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley. 94720

Sanderlings show strong site-faithfulness in their choice of wintering grounds from one year to the next. Records of color-marked individuals show that 72% of birds banded as adults and 50% of those banded as juveniles return to the banding site at Bodega Bay during the subsequent winter. This pattern of winter philopatry is complicated, however, by abrupt switches in foraging location not only within Rodega Bay but also to other regional lagoon systems, including Limantour Estero and Abbott's Lagoon on Point Reyes Peninsula. During early fall up to 25% of the Bodega Bay banded sanderlings may be on Point Reyes. These wandering birds then return to Bodega Bay by early winter.