

THE WRENTIT  
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Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

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1946 Christmas Census

The December field trip and census was a day full of surprises. Dr. Vessel led the Alviso contingent and Miss Emily Smith led the Alum Rock division. After the count, both groups met at the home of the Brubaker's for a comparison and compilation of the total list.

Alviso was rich with birds and a good list was made, but no Kites were seen, and no Yellowthroats heard. A new species for the winter months was noted with the discovery of eight Barn Swallows at the piggery. This is perhaps the most important point of the day.

Alum Rock yielded a good variety of species, but numbers were low. No Golden Eagles were seen, (Wool wasn't along), and Audubon Warblers were absent from the park. At the mouth of the canyon two Magpies were seen. Details are listed below.

San Jose, Calif. (nearly the same area as in 1945; salt-water marshes and sloughs 42%, pear orchards near marshes 8%, foothill canyon 37%, city suburbs and orchards 13%). - - Dec. 29; 9 to 3:30. Alternately cloudy with some rain, and sunny; prevailing wind south, 5 to 13 m.p.h. temp. 35 to 52 F. Twenty-three observers in 3 parties. Total hours, 14 on foot (7 A.R. area; 2, with 40x scope, Alviso area). Eared Grebe, 46; Pied-bill grebe, 6; Great Blue Heron, 4; Am. Egret, 4; Mallard, 6; American Pintail, 560; shoveller, 56; canvas-back, 55; ruddy duck, 22; Am. Merganser, 5; red-tailed hawk, 4; marsh hawk, 4; sparrow hawk, 7; Cal. quail, 3; clapper rail, 1; Am. coot, 840; killdeer, 7; willet, 360; greater yellowlegs, 8; least sandpiper, 140; dowitcher, 240; western sandpiper, 180; marbled godwit, 1; avocet, 320; western gull, 40; Cal. gull, 22; Bonaparte gull, 73; short-eared owl, 1; Anna's hummingbird, 5; red-shafted flicker, 25; Nuttall's woodpecker, 6; black phoebe, 4; barn swallow, 10 (deeply forked tail clearly seen --M.F.V.); Stellar's Jay, 15; Cal. Jay, 23; yellow billed magpie, 2; chestnut-backed chickadee, 33; plain titmouse, 8; bush-tit, 106; white-breasted nuthatch, 2; wrentit, 12; dipper, 3; Bewick's wren, 2; canyon wren, 4; mockingbird, 2; Cal. thrasher, 4; robin, 31; varied thrush, 5; hermit thrush, 7; western bluebird, 7; ruby-crowned kinglet, 18; Am. pipit, 15; loggerhead shrike, 5; Hutton's vireo, 3; Audubon's warbler, 6; English sparrow, 17; western meadowlark, 53; redwing, 6; Brewer's blackbird, 412; purple finch, 13; house finch, 44; willow goldfinch, 12; green-backed goldfinch, 65; spotted towhee, 4; brown towhee, 22; savannah sparrow, 36; lark sparrow, 30; rufous crown sparrow, 4; Oregon junco, 114; white crowned sparrow, 166; golden-crown sparrow, 62; song sparrow, 17;. Total, 75 species; about 4480 individuals (seen in A.R. Park Dec. 27; golden eagle, 3; white-throated swift, 2).

Anna and Anne Arntzen, Grace Brubaker, B. N. Dickinson, Florence Durfee, Ruth Faulkner, Grace Ganley, Pearl Harwood, J. Heath, Eva McRae, June Miller, Anna Peterson, Jim Peterson, Sharon and Jean Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. C. Prusman, Emily Smith, Etta W. Smith, M. F. Vessel, Florence Wood, Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Zwaal.

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October, 1946

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The Golden Eagle In Santa Clara County

by Albert Wool

The rolling hills on the east side of the valley, which lie between the Pacheco Pass and Calaveras Lake are the stronghold of the Golden Eagle. To the student of natural history it is gratifying to know that here in the sparsely settled cattle country with its open ridges cut by intersecting canyons, the eagle has been holding his own well in recent years.

The eagle builds a huge stick nest and lays its eggs in March. Slightly over a month later the eggs are hatched and for the next sixty-odd days the (commonly) two young are fed a continuous stream of ground squirrels, with an occasional rabbit, fawn, or snake. A visit to one nest when the young was three weeks old disclosed thirty-two freshly killed ground squirrels.

Although he is considerably larger than either, we might confuse the eagle with the Redtail Hawk or the Turkey Vulture. The eagle is much darker than the Redtail and its wings are broader, more rounded at the tip, and do not have the two dark tones that distinguish the Turkey Vulture. An immature eagle is readily recognized by the white rump and the white wing spots.

As long as conditions remain unchanged in the Mount Hamilton range of mountains, we may be assured that the Golden Eagle will remain as our largest and most splendid bird of prey in Santa Clara County.

Tentative Field Trip Schedule

February 16	Spring Valley and Searsville Lakes	Mr. Albert Wool
March 9	Palo Alto Yacht Harbor and Stanford Campus, led by	Mrs. Etta Smith
March 23	Sierra Road and Alum Rock	Jim Peterson
April 13	LaCoste Valley, by way of Calaveras	Mr. Albert Wool
April 27	Alviso Marsh, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor	Dr. Vessel
May 11	Pinnacles, joint with Monterey Club	Mrs. Linda Woods
May 25	San Antone Valley, over Mount Hamilton, led by	Mrs. Grace Brubaker
June 8	Dumbarton and San Mateo Bridges	Mr. Kent Carnie
June 22	Alum Rock Park, and meeting	Dr. Ralph A. Smith
July	Stevens Creek Canyon and Park	Dr. Vessel

### The Berkeley Field Trip

The Strawberry Canyon Trip started from the college campus, three cars heading for the stadium at Berkeley. On the way the cars were separated but came back together for a look at a huge flock of gulls and Killdeer. Those near were Ring-bills, but as the flock stretched for a quarter mile we couldn't be sure of them all. At this same location a flock of blackbirds was maneuvering like shorebirds between rests on the wires. Perhaps the cold morning inspired this activity, perhaps it is a substitute for migration in this sedentary species.

The Palo Alto delegation proceeded separately and the unified group met at the stadium where Mr. William Landels greeted his old birding friends from the valley, then led us downhill to the birds. Purple Finches were eating berries, Fox Sparrows scratched in the underbrush. Wrentits under the windows were an oddity, as was the Audubon Warbler four stories up on the campanile. Four birds were feeding close together; Brown Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow and Junco in that order for size. Returning to the cars, we organized for the uphill trip and soon were on our way to the Botanical gardens. Birds were scattered in small groups, with nothing spectacular. A good Junco alarm note was traced to a worried Fox Sparrow, and a Sharp-shin hawk was observed perched near the road. Bright spot of the day was the crest of a Ruby-crown kinglet as it hopped about on the ground in the gardens. In view at the same time were Fox, Song, and crowned sparrows. These were dusting in the shade of creek bordering willows. Hawks appeared overhead but in general the birds were few as we walked about the gardens and ate lunch near the entrance. After lunch we drove to Lake Merritt to study gulls, ducks and geese at close range. Feeding time was the climax with its mob scene of sparrows, pigeons, gulls, ducks, and geese scrambling for corn. Fifty-two species were listed, not including the Red-bellied hawk seen by part of the group on the way home.

#### Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

President	- - - - -	Dr. Ralph A. Smith
Secretary	- - - - -	Mr. Kent Carnie
Treasurer	- - - - -	Mrs. Eva McRae
Editor	- - - - -	James Peterson

#### Re-introducing the Wrentit

In this number of the Wrentit the society presents the first of a new series. The publication shall be a calendar of events, past and forecast, only insofar as they concern the local society. It shall lay its chief claim to existence in its conservatively noted and recorded observations of birds in its vicinity. These observations may be in the form of field trips, seasonal notes, breeding records and unusual occurrences in the local bird population. This information is to be collected in the hope that one day it will be the basis of a book on birds of the valley.