

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

July 1947

JULY FIELD TRIP will be an early morning, half-day trip to Stevens Creek Canyon, led by Dr. Matt Vessel. Meet at San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 6 a.m., or at junction of Stevens Creek Rd. and Permanente Rd. at 6:30, Sunday July 20, 1947. Bring mid-morning lunch.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS, by leaders of the trips:

April 20 the Society went on its annual trip to the beautiful La Costa Valley in Alameda County. Seventeen members and nine guests met in Milpitas and went out Calaveras Rd. The day was overcast but mild, with a slight southerly wind. A side trip one mile up Weller Rd. started the day's birding auspiciously with following birds observed, listed in A.O.U. Check List order: pintail, 2 flying overhead toward Calaveras Lake; Cooper hawk; red-tailed hawk, 2; sparrow hawk; mourning dove; horned owl, on nest with downy white owlet; ash-throated flycatcher; horned lark, several singing, nest with 3 eggs by roadside; crow; plain titmouse; house wren, singing; rock wren, 2 singing; western bluebird, several; Cassin vireo and lutescent warbler, both singing; western meadowlark, several singing; green-backed goldfinch, several; savannah sparrow, several; grasshopper sparrow, 3 singing; lark sparrow, several singing; rufous-crowned sparrow; white-crowned sparrow, 2. Nice list of sparrows! Along the Calaveras Rd., past the lake and to the entrance to La Costa Valley, only two stops were made for extended observation, one at Geary Rd. and the other in the wide valley of the Alameda Creek. At these two stops, and here and there on the road as we drove along, the following birds were observed: great blue heron, perhaps 12 pairs nesting in sycamores; turkey vulture, 12+; Cooper hawk; red-tailed hawk, nest with 3 eggs; prairie falcon, flying; sparrow hawk; mourning dove, several pairs; Anna and Allen hummingbirds, in eucalyptus grove; red-shafted flicker; Cal. woodpecker, several; Nuttall woodpecker; western kingbird, several; ash-throated flycatcher; black phoebe; western flycatcher; violet-green swallow, several; rough-winged swallow, 3; cliff swallow, nesting colony; yellow-billed magpie, several; plain titmouse; bush-tit, 2; wren-tit, singing; house and Bewick wrens, both singing; western bluebird, nesting pair; cedar waxwing, 7; Hutton, Cassin, and warbling vireos, all singing; western meadowlark, several singing; Bullock oriole and black-headed grosbeak, both singing; lazuli bunting, singing; house finch, several singing; Oregon junco and chipping sparrow, both singing.

In La Costa Valley we followed the San Antonio Cr. a short way and then, after lunch, walked up over hilly pastureland to the eagle's nest. Along the way we added to our bird list: green heron; mallard; turkey vulture, 10+; sharp-shinned hawk, 2; red-tailed hawk, nest in niche in cliff above creek; golden

eagle, 3 adults, nest with 2 eaglets; sparrow hawk, nesting (4 eggs) in old magpie nest; Cal. quail, call-notes; killdeer, several, one pair with downy young; greater yellowlegs, in creek; mourning dove, several; red-shafted flicker, nest with one egg; Cal. woodpecker, several; Lewis woodpecker, 6; Nuttall woodpecker; western kingbird; black phoebe; ash-throated flycatcher; Cal. jay, new nest without eggs; yellow-billed magpie, many and nests; western bluebird; yellow warbler, singing; red-winged blackbird, many; Bullock oriole, singing; Brewer blackbird, nest with 4 eggs.

The nest of the golden eagle was the highlight of the trip. Kent Carnie and Winkie Van de Griendt scaled the giant live oak to reach the nest, fifty feet above ground, to get pictures. The brooding parent bird sat tight until Winkie was within five feet of her, when she pitched out and flapped away toward the north, leaving two surprised downy white eaglets, not more than two weeks old.

On the way home we detoured into a 3-acre cattail marsh, between Weller Rd. and the Airpoint School, to find out what was making the uproar we had heard in the morning when we were a mile up the Weller Rd. Over the marsh was a cloud of blackbirds, a giant nesting colony of perhaps two thousand tricolored blackbirds, with a few red-winged blackbirds intermingled. The birds were just starting to nest. We found about fifty nests, many still empty but some containing from one to three eggs. According to the records, the tricoloreds have rarely been found nesting in Santa Clara Valley.

Albert J. Wool