

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

April, 1948

THE LAST SCREEN TOURS LECTURE will be given next Tuesday evening, April 6, in the Montgomery Theatre in the San Jose Civic Auditorium, at 8 o'clock. Dr. Telford Work will present his colored motion picture, "Bits of Land along the Coast." He will tell about the adventurous and exciting visits which he and his companions made to rocky, offshore islands of the California coast, to obtain pictures of the home life of sea birds and mammals.

If you do not have a season ticket, single performance tickets will be available at the door. (General admission 75 cents, students or children 65 cents.)

THE FIRST OF TWO APRIL FIELD TRIPS will be taken this coming Sunday, April 4, to Alum Rock Park, with Charles and Fanny Zwaal as leaders. Birding should be interesting. During the first two weeks of April there is always an overlapping of late-lingering winter visitant birds and early-arriving summer residents, and already many permanents are nesting.

The meeting place for the trip will be on Alum Rock Avenue at Miguelito Road (end of Linda Vista bus line), at 8 a.m.

San Jose members wanting transportation meet at the corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth Streets promptly at 7:45; Palo Alto members at S. P. Depot in Palo Alto at 7:30. Bring lunch.

The second April field trip will be taken to Hastings Natural History Reservation in Carmel Valley, probably Saturday, April 17. Announcements of the trip will be mailed the end of next week.

Ralph A. Smith, President

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MARCH FIELD TRIP REPORT. It was overcast and chilly the morning of March 14, 1948. It had rained all night, and it looked as if it would rain some more; besides, daylight saving was making 8 o'clock come an hour earlier. It took a brave soul to start out on a field trip that day. Eleven in all, with rain coats and rubbers, started up an old road which leads into the hills between Shannon and Kennedy Roads, just east of Los Gatos. The road follows a dry creek bed, lined with sycamores and oaks and choked with underbrush. Across the creek was an apricot orchard in beautiful bloom. We had gone only a few steps when we saw a pair of bush-tits drop down into a blackberry vine, which was draped over a low branch of an oak. There, only three feet above the ground, the tiny birds were building their big, baglike nest. (During the morning we saw two more bush-tit nests, well along in construction, one of them near the top of a large oak.) As we hiked leisurely along the road, birds were singing on every side. What a chorus! (Some one should write a symphony,

"Birds in Spring.") It was fun picking out and naming the bird voices: a house finch, bursting with song while its mate worked on a nest in the Prusmans' garage; purple finches, warbling melodiously between bites of apricot flowers; song sparrow, Bewick wren, spotted towhee, all singing again and again in the underbrush; plain titmouse and Hutton vireo, in the live oaks; wren-tit, junco, thrasher, and from a field in the background, a meadowlark. A hubbub of twittering songs came from a large flock of Arkansas goldfinches in the apricot trees. Most interesting of all was the flight song of the black phoebe. The graceful bird rose suddenly into the air and fluttered for a few seconds, as an accompaniment to its simple song. Winter visitant birds were singing, too: white-crowned and golden-crowned sparrows; ruby-crowned kinglet; an Audubon warbler, in gaudy spring plumage; hermit thrush, very softly; and several beautiful varied thrushes.

The sun broke through the clouds before we reached the top of a little hill and brightened the wild flowers at our feet and the flowers of the wild clematis vine which had clambered over bushes. In the warm sunlight we searched diligently for the rufous-crowned sparrow which was singing here two days before, but failed to find it. Before we reluctantly turned back for a midmorning breakfast in the Prusmans' patio, we were thrilled by the sight of a white-tailed kite flying over our heads. It was overcast and chilly again by the time we were back at the Prusmans', which made a brisk fire in the grill and a breakfast of bacon and eggs very welcome. After breakfast we wandered up another road into a hidden valley where more apricot trees were blossoming. There was less singing now, but we added a Lawrence goldfinch and two orange-crowned warblers to our list of singing birds. From a clump of eucalyptus trees, which were in flower, we got the excited buzzing and chittering of Allen and Anna hummingbirds. But the half-day trip was soon over and it was time to summarize our bird observations.

Our list of birds: white-tailed kite, 1; red-tailed hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 1; Cal. quail, flock of about 20; Anna hummingbird, 3+; Allen hummingbird, 4+; red-shafted flicker, 9; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 2; black phoebe, 3; violet-green swallow, 12 flying together; Cal. jay, 4; crow, 1; chestnut-backed chickadee, 6+; plain titmouse, 6; bush-tit, 3 pairs and small flock of 7; wren-tit, 7; Bewick wren, 4; Cal. thrasher, 2; robin, flock of 50+; varied thrush, 6; hermit thrush, 5; Western bluebird, 1 pair; ruby-crowned kinglet, 6; Hutton vireo, 3; orange-crowned warbler, 2; Audubon warbler, 1; Western meadowlark, 2; Brewer blackbird, 1 pair; purple finch, 20+; house finch, 8; Arkansas goldfinch, flock of 30+ and several pairs; Lawrence goldfinch, 1 pair; spotted towhee, 3; brown towhee, 4 or 5 pairs; rufous-crowned sparrow, 2 (March 12); Ore. junco, 2 pairs and small flock of 8; white-crowned sparrow, 6; golden-crowned sparrow, flock of 30+; song sparrow, 5.

Members present: Mrs. Grace Brubaker, Mrs. Caroline Davis, Miss Frances Fischer and guest, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Harwood, Miss Emily Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zwaal; Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Prusman, leaders.

Agnes Prusman