

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

April, ¹⁵ 1948

THE SECOND APRIL FIELD TRIP. In reply to our letter, asking if we might come to the Hastings Natural History Reservation in Carmel Valley for a field trip, Dr. Linsdale wrote that Saturday, April 17, would be a good day for members of our Society to visit the Reservation, and that he would be expecting us that day.

We shall start early and have an 8 o'clock breakfast in Monterey, before driving out to the Reservation. Meet at 5:45 a.m., at the corner of East San Carlos and Fifth Streets, San Jose; or, if not interested in breakfast in Monterey, meet the party at the junction of the Carmel Valley Road with State Highway No. 1 (about 2 miles south of Monterey) at 8:45. If you can take passengers or need transportation, phone Mrs. Lester Brubaker in San Jose, or Emily Smith in Los Gatos, or Mr. B. N. Dickinson in Menlo Park. We shall drive to Monterey by way of Gilroy and Fort Ord. Bring picnic lunch.

Ralph A. Smith, President

Emily Smith, Corr. Sec. - Route 1, Box 387, Los Gatos
Phone Los Gatos 994-W

REPORT OF APRIL 4th FIELD TRIP. Due to wet weather the turnout of members was light (as one member remarked, "For a dry year we've had a lot of rain on our field trips"). Although showers made birding difficult, we had enough good luck to make the trip well worth while for six members who braved the elements.

At the start of the trip, on Alum Rock Ave. at Miguelito Ave., many Brewer blackbirds were busy building nests in the Monterey pines beside the road. The females, escorted by their mates, were carrying nesting material into the dense foliage of the pines. One female was observed picking up damp soil and carrying it to her nest. In a field in this same area a large flock of green-backed Arkansas goldfinches were feeding on the seeds of groundsel and other weeds. Several times, thirty or more of these social little birds would gather in a tree and sing in chorus. The tinkling song of the Lawrence goldfinch attracted our attention to a group of these goldfinches in a small, leafless elm. We counted eight black-faced males singing exuberantly around one seemingly dazed female.

We walked up Alum Rock Ave. a few hundred yards, listing robins, meadowlark, golden- and white-crowned sparrows, mockingbirds, house finches, English sparrows, and brown towhees. Then we saw a bulky nest in a cypress tree, with a shrike sitting in it. In a few minutes its mate came to the nest with food, which was accepted and gulped down.

We returned to our cars and drove into Alum Rock Park, stopping at the junction of Alum Rock Ave. with Penitencia Creek Rd. to listen for the canyon wren up on Alum Rock -- it had been heard singing there when the trip was scouted three days before -- but we heard only its call note. Beneath the bridge here a black phoebe had started its nest of mud and bits of dry grass.

We continued on to the picnic grounds near the springs. Here Steller jays were building nests as busily as the Brewer black-

birds had been on Alum Rock Ave. But with the jays, both birds of a pair were carrying twigs. We saw a jay snap off a twig from a tree; also saw two jays on the ground picking up soil. Once we heard the whisper song of a jay.

Then came the high light of the trip. A water ouzel was carrying nesting material into a niche in the bank of the creek. The bank shelves out over the creek, and a tongue of tufa, wet with dripping water, protrudes from the niche. The water ouzel would come flying swiftly up creek with a mouthful of rootlets, alight on a boulder in the creek beneath the niche, dip several times, walk down the boulder to the water's edge and carefully wash its load, and then fly up to the tongue of tufa and disappear in the niche. It would remain in the niche, out of sight, only a minute or two before streaking down creek, or up creek, for more rootlets and sometimes a dead leaf or limp plant stem. During twenty-five minutes it made six round trips. Then two birds came out of the niche, for a recess of about ten minutes. With the return of both birds to the nest, work began again, one bird bringing material and the other presumably building it into a nest in the damp niche.

By now it was raining steadily and the six of us were huddled under three umbrellas, shedding water much less successfully than the water ouzels; and so we decided to call off the rest of the trip and go home.

Birds observed on Alum Rock Ave. in the vicinity of Miguelito Ave. and in Alum Rock Park (those marked with an asterisk were seen during the scouting trip, April 1, to both upper and lower picnic grounds in the Park, but not seen April 4): *turkey vulture, 1; *red-tailed hawk, 1; *Cal. quail, pair; *Anna hummingbird, 1; red-shafted flicker, 3; *acorn woodpecker, 8; *downy woodpecker, pair; *Nuttall woodpecker, 6; black phoebe, 2 (6, Apr.1); violet-green swallow, 5; Steller jay, 12 (more, Apr.1); Cal. jay, 3; *crow, 1; *chestnut-backed chickadee, a well-developed young bird, out of the nest, being fed by an adult; titmouse, 1; bush-tit, 2 (3 pairs, Apr.1); *white-breasted nuthatch, 1; dipper (or water ouzel), pair; canyon wren, 1; mockingbird, pair (3 pairs, Apr.1); *Cal. thrasher, 1; robin, 29; *hermit thrush, 1; ruby-crowned kinglet, 1 (5 or 6, Apr.1); loggerhead shrike, pair; Hutton vireo, 1; *warbling vireo, 1 (incomplete song, 3 times); *orange-crowned warbler, 4; Audubon warbler, 4; *Townsend warbler, 6 (3 or 4 singing); *pileolated warbler, 1; English sparrow, 4; Western meadowlark, 1; Brewer blackbird, 60+; house finch, 12; Ark. goldfinch, 70+; Lawrence goldfinch, 9; *spotted towhee, 1; brown towhee, 3; *Ore. junco, 4 or 5 pairs; white-crowned sparrow, 16; golden-crowned sparrow, 8; song sparrow, 2.

Members making the trip: Mrs. Grace Brubaker, Mrs. Caroline Davis, George Foreman, Emily Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zwaal, leaders.

Charles and Fanny Zwaal