

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

September, 1948

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken this coming Sunday morning, September 12, to the Dumbarton Bridge area, to see phalaropes (perhaps three species) and other birds which migrate along our shores at this season. Mr. Jim Rigby will be leader. There will be an easy hike of about three miles. Meet at the parking area at the east end of the Bridge at 8 a.m. San Jose members who want to go in caravan meet at the corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 7:15; Palo Alto members at the S.P. Depot in Palo Alto at 7:45. Bring lunch, if you think you may want to bird farther afield in the afternoon.

REGULAR SEPTEMBER MEETING will be held Wednesday evening, September 15, in Room 210, San Jose State College, at 7:45 o'clock. Seasonal observations of birds by the members will have first place on the program. What interesting bird behaviour have you observed this summer? Have you seen any evidence of late nesting this season? Are there any summer resident birds still in your neighborhood? Have any winter visitants arrived? Please bring your bird observations in writing, giving date and place of observation, for our files.

Dr. Matt Vessel will tell us about plans for the second series of Screen Tours lectures, which we will sponsor this coming year. Folders announcing the series will be ready for distribution, and there will be envelopes and lists of names, all brought to the meeting. Bring your pen along so that we can have an envelope-addressing bee.

B. Neil Dickinson, Pres. - 1135 Crane St., Menlo Park
Emily Smith, Corr. Sec. - Route 1, Box 387, Los Gatos

JUNE 26 FIELD TRIP. Birding along the coast from Half Moon Bay to Mussel Rock proved very interesting to the seventeen members of the Society who participated. Mr. Hill's telescope again proved invaluable, providing excellent views of sea birds ordinarily not well seen.

A tenacious high fog clung to the coast until midday, and all day there was a stiff ocean breeze. Around Half Moon Bay stops were made at Dunes Beach, El Granada, and Princeton, which yielded white-winged and surf scoters, a flock of Western grebes, and a line of brown pelicans, well offshore, flying north. Four Caspian terns in a gathering of Western, ring-billed, and Heermann gulls precipitated a spirited discussion as to the coloration of the bill of this species. Three of the birds had a dusky tip to their red bill. On the basis of descriptions in Hoffmann's "Birds of the Pacific States" we decided the three were second-year birds, retaining the dusky coloration of the bill (an immature character), while the fourth bird with the all red bill was fully matured. Just beyond Montara a stop was made at a small marshy plot in hopes of seeing a yellow-throat. Several were heard and seen in flight, but all were so secretive that no one obtained a good view.

Nearing Devil's Slide we stopped at a point overlooking the ocean from an elevation of perhaps 200 feet. Here we found our first pigeon guillemot and a second-year Pacific loon. At Devil's Slide we were greeted by a family of duck hawks, which are apparently living in the vicinity. At least three and perhaps four birds were seen. One startling maneuver, witnessed by several observers, was executed by two of the birds who locked talons in mid-air and fell earthward down the sheer face of the Slide for more than a hundred feet. On the Slide only one cormorant nest was found in contrast to many seen here last year at this time. Both Baird and Brandt cormorants were in flight and on the water in the vicinity of the Slide, and it seems reasonable to suppose more nests were located on the unobservable part of the Slide.

After lunch we moved to the north side of Devil's Slide from where we could see an islet of guano-covered rock, inhabited by a large colony of California murres. Perhaps some of these birds are nesting here, as they did in the early 1900's, but we could see no definite signs of nesting. Two guillemots were seen here, one flying with something in its bill, the other feeding close to the rock. The final stop was made at Mussel Rock, where the San Andreas fault runs out to sea, but the Rock proved less interesting than was expected, and no birds were added to the list. From Mussel Rock the party returned without stop to Palo Alto by way of Spring Valley.

Birds listed on the trip: Pacific loon, 1; W. grebe, 10; pied-billed grebe, 1; brown pelican, 18; Brandt cormorant, 60; Baird cormorant, 8; mallard, 2; white-winged scoter, 12; surf scoter, 3; turkey vulture, 1; red-tailed hawk, 3; duck hawk, 3; Am. coot, 2; killdeer, 3; willet, 3; Heermann gull, 14; ring-billed gull, 3; W. gull, 50; Caspian tern, 7; Cal. murre, 300; pigeon guillemot, 3; mourning dove, 1; Anna hummingbird, 2; acorn woodpecker, 1; rough-winged swallow, 1; barn swallow, 20; cliff swallow, 30; wren-tit, 1; Bewick wren, 1; loggerhead shrike, 1; yellow-throat, 3; Eng. sparrow, 2; W. meadowlark, 1; red-winged blackbird, 6; Brewer blackbird, 50; black-headed grosbeak, 1; house finch, 30; pine siskin, 1; Am. goldfinch, 4; Ark. goldfinch, 2; brown towhee, 6; white-crowned sparrow, 3; song sparrow, 3.

Jim Rigby