

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

November, 1948

THE NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken this coming Saturday, Nov. 20, to Pigeon Point Lighthouse and Ano Nuevo Island, under the leadership of Jim Rigby. The itinerary will include Crystal Springs Lake--where there should be geese and many ducks--and a lagoon near Pescadero. On Ano Nuevo Island there will be a 50 cents charge per car. This full trip which promises interesting birding, calls for an early start. Meet at the S. P. Depot in Palo Alto at 8 o'clock. Bring a picnic lunch and warm wraps. There are sure to be empty seats in some one's car for those who want transportation. San Jose members meet at the corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 7:15 a.m.

THE SECOND AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR, entitled "This Curious World in Nature" will be presented Friday evening, November 26, at 8 o'clock in the Montgomery Theatre, Civic Auditorium, San Jose. William Ferguson, of Omaha, Nebraska, will present this Screen Tour, a full length color film which takes its audience into the Colorado Rocky Mountains. According to advance notices, Mr. Ferguson's film is particularly rich in animal lore and contains fine studies of deer, marmots, beavers, porcupines, elk, and chipmunks. "The final sequence, in which chipmunks demonstrate remarkable powers, is one you will much enjoy and long remember." (Like the pretty ground squirrel and the egg in last month's Screen Tour?) A portion of the film portrays the depredations of man which upset the balance of nature, and emphasizes the vital need for conservation. Bring a friend and help advertise this series of Audubon Screen Tours. Single performance tickets will be sold at the Montgomery Theatre on the night of the performance: general admission, 75c; students, 60c.

B. Neil Dickinson, Pres. - 1135 Crane St., Menlo Park
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OCTOBER FIELD TRIP REPORT. October 31, the last day of the duck hunting season, fifteen members of our Audubon Society and ten guests journeyed to the Los Banos Bird and Game Reservation, to see the "two million" wild fowl which we had been assured would find refuge there from the hunters. Arriving at nine o'clock we were met at the gate by Mr. Wattenberger, who counseled us to proceed with caution, so as not to frighten any of the wild fowl away from the Reservation and thus into the waiting cordon of eager duck hunters. Driving slowly, we followed Mr. Wattenberger to a large pond where many ducks were loafing. Here we birded unobtrusively for two hours, waiting for the shooting beyond the boundaries of the 3,000-acre Reservation, to die down. It was a good day for bird watching, sunny and mild, with almost no wind. Setting up Mr. Hill's telescope we had fine views of baldpate, canvas-back, pintail, mallard, ruddy duck, scaup duck, shoveller, and green-winged teal. And over our heads we were constantly seeing flights of beautiful snow geese, white-fronted geese, and various ducks. We were thrilled when we identified four dark birds flying rapidly overhead as white-faced glossy ibis. We could easily see the long, down-curved bill. On the pond, besides the ducks, were several grebes, two cormorants, and of course many coots. We were keeping a sharp look-out for a gallinule among the coots at the pond's edge.

Finally Jim Rigby "suspicioned" that he heard one, and sure enough, a short time later, a gallinule followed a coot across a small area of open water. Both tree and violet-green swallows were skimming over the pond, and marsh wrens were sputtering in the reeds. From those same reeds a bittern flew out, and later Mrs. Nielsen saw six Wilson snipe rise and zigzag off.

It was now eleven o'clock and the shooting had died down, and so Mr. Wattenberger led us to the "crane area" at the northwest end of the Reservation. We could hear the rolling, trumpeting call of the cranes even before we were out of our cars. And there they were, scores of them! For the next half hour we watched one flight after another of these great birds as they came sailing in, with necks outstretched and legs trailing behind. Most of them finally circled downward to a field only a short distance away, each crane "dropping its landing gear" while still two or three hundred feet above the ground. It was there, while watching the cranes, that we saw three golden eagles. One immature eagle showed considerable white underneath toward the leading edge of the wings, a marking I had never seen before and which I readily admit had me fooled for a while.

We ate lunch behind a dike, over which we could watch ducks on a 50-acre pond. From our low position the pond looked like solid ducks, and we made estimates up to quarter of a million. Even after a cloud of ducks had risen from the pond—Mr. Wattenberger had gone over to look at a banding trap—still we could see but little thinning out of the ducks. Later, at another place, we heard what sounded like a great waterfall, but it was the splashing of thousands of ducks, bathing and feeding in a reed-sheltered pond. On our way back to the gate, in mid-afternoon, we made a last stop when we saw hundreds of "grounded" cranes, and not far from them a huge flock of snow geese, whitening the ground where they rested. It was a thrilling, beautiful sight to see the cranes, and then the snowy white geese with black-tipped wings, suddenly go into the air in vast numbers. Yes, it was easy to believe "two million" wild fowl were in the Los Banos bird refuge!

Our list for the Reservation included the following 53 species:

Eared grebe	Canvas-back	Red-shafted flicker
Western grebe	Scaup duck	Black phoebe
Pied-billed grebe	Cooper hawk	Say phoebe
White pelican	Red-tailed hawk	Horned lark
Double-crested cormorant	Golden eagle	Violet-green swallow
Great blue heron	Marsh hawk	Tree swallow
American egret	Ring-necked pheasant	Long-billed marsh wren
Snowy egret	Sandhill crane (Little brown is a subspecies)	Mockingbird
American bittern	Florida gallinule	American pipit
White-faced glossy ibis	American coot	Loggerhead shrike
White-fronted goose	Killdeer	Audubon warbler
Snow goose	Black-bellied plover	Western meadowlark
Mallard	Wilson snipe	Red-winged blackbird
Gadwall	Greater yellow-legs	Tricolored blackbird
Baldpate	Least sandpiper	Brewer blackbird
Pintail	Dowitcher	Savannah sparrow
Green-winged teal	Horned owl	White-crowned sparrow
Shoveller		Song sparrow

Albert J. Wool