

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

December, 1948

AN INFORMAL MEETING will be held this coming Monday evening, December 13, in Palo Alto at the Palo Alto Senior High School, corner of El Camino Real (Highway 101) and Embarcadero Road. The meeting is set for 7:45 o'clock, in Room 146 (enter the El Camino entrance and turn right).

Reports of seasonal bird observations by members will be an important part of the evening's program. Please bring your observations in writing, giving date and place of observation, for the Society's files.

Albert Wool will show his latest color film. He says it is too short to warrant a title, but that it is high-lighted by interesting shots of condors and of nesting rufous-crowned sparrows.

San Jose members who can take passengers and those who want transportation, meet at corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth St. promptly at 7 o'clock.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. Mr. Rigby is inviting the Society to join him in a bird count in the Palo Alto region this year. He has mapped out an area which reaches across the Peninsula from San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean at Half Moon Bay, with Crystal Springs Reservoir near its center. This circular area, fifteen miles in diameter, includes many types of bird habitats, and should furnish a specular bird count. Mr. Rigby has divided the area into eight likely birding territories, and he states that the minimum coverage of the whole area requires at least one car and two observers for each division. He will present his plan in more detail at the meeting in Palo Alto next Monday evening. When final arrangements for the Society's annual Christmas Bird Count have been made, announcements will be mailed to the members.

B. Neil Dickinson, Pres. - 1135 Crane St., Menlo Park
Emily Smith, Corr. Sec. - 387 Glen Una Dr., Los Gatos

Please let me know, please, if you want to join on Monday. I'll be glad to drive out to pick you up. Emily Smith

NOVEMBER 30 FIELD TRIP REPORT. The morning was clear and promising as eleven members and nine guests of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society left Palo Alto at 8 o'clock, with Anno Nuevo Point as their objective. The first stop, at the southeast end of Crystal Springs Reservoir, to see the geese and other waterfowl which find refuge there, was apparently going to be a disappointment, for the lakes were blanketed by morning fog. But luckily the fog began to thin and soon it was gone, and there on the lake below us were hundreds of birds resting on the water and along the shore. Mr. Hill's telescope and the spotting scope, which Lester Brubaker had brought, were set up beside the road, and every one had excellent views of nine species of ducks, eared and pied-billed grebes, a cormorant, herons, and even a few shore birds. Before long two flocks of Canada geese on the wing gave us the thrill we had wanted. In one flock two sizes of geese were seen, indicating the presence of a subspecies, probably the lesser Canada goose.

Because this first stop consumed more time than the leader anticipated, no more stops were made until the coast was reached. On the beach at Pescadero Lagoon sanderlings were running out behind retreating waves, snatching bits of food from the sand as they ran, and then, turning just in time, scooting back ahead of the incoming waves. On this same beach we found the remains of two oceanic birds, a Pacific fulmar and a sooty shearwater, which had recently been washed ashore and were still in good condition. The heads and feet were removed, so that they could be used later to check our field identification against skins in the San Jose State College collection.

Pigeon Point proved somewhat of a disappointment, although we had a fine view of a female white-winged scoter feeding in the surf just below our look-out point. By the time we reached Anno Nuevo Point a north wind was blowing strong. As we walked out onto the sand dunes, which offer a striking contrast to the rugged coast north and south, we were surprised to see a white-tailed kite perched on the top of a stunted willow. After a belated lunch on the lee side of a big dune, we were ready for more birding. The embayment on the south side of the Point, where the sea was less rough, contained many gulls, cormorants, pelicans, scoters and grebes. Several sea lions exhibited unusual curiosity in our activities and investigated us from close range, perhaps adding us to their "life list." On the way back to our cars we found good birding in a small orchard by a farm house. Here a full-plumaged red-breasted sapsucker was by all odds the most accomodating bird of the day. It permitted a ten minute observation by the entire group from a distance of ten to fifteen feet, while it went about its business of boring holes.

It was now half past three and time to disband. We checked the birds we had seen, totalling them at 59, and agreed it had been a very enjoyable day. Following are the birds we checked: eared grebe, Western grebe, pied-billed grebe, brown pelican, double-crested cormorant, Brandt's cormorant, great blue heron, American egret, Canada goose, mallard, baldpate, pintail, green-winged teal, shoveller, ring-necked duck, canvas-back, scaup duck, white-winged scoter, surf scoter, ruddy duck, American merganser, turkey vulture, white-tailed kite, red-tailed hawk, marsh hawk, coot, killdeer, black-bellied plover, black turnstone, greater yellow-legs, dowitcher, sanderling, Western gull, Cal. gull, ring-billed gull, Heermann's gull, red-shafted flicker, acorn woodpecker, red-breasted sapsucker, downy woodpecker, black phoebe, Cal. jay, plain titmouse, bush-tit, Bewick's wren, robin, hermit thrush, ruby-crowned kinglet, American pipit, Audubon's warbler, yellow-throat, Western meadowlark, house finch, pine siskin, American goldfinch, Ark. goldfinch, Ore. junco, white-crowned sparrow, golden-crowned sparrow.

Jim Rigby