

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

September, 1949

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING will be held next Monday evening, September 12, in Room 206, Science Building, San Jose State College, at 8 o'clock. It will be an informal, get-together meeting after the summer vacation, with the program chiefly an exchange of field observations by members. Come prepared to share your bird and other out-door experiences with other enthusiasts (the Neil Dickinsons will have much to tell of their all-summer trip to the Atlantic Coast). If you have color slides or movies taken this summer or on any of our field trips, bring them with you, so that we can have pictures to enjoy, too. Al Wool will have charge of the meeting, and will have screen and projectors on hand.

THE SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP will be taken the following Sunday, Sept. 18, to Bay Farm Island, Alameda, where shore birds are sure to be good. We learned recently that the Golden Gate Audubon Society also has a trip scheduled for Bay Farm Island that same Sunday, with Mrs. Junea Kelly as leader. A phone call to Mrs. Kelly resulted in arrangements for a joint trip. Meet in Alameda at Lincoln Park (corner of High St. and Santa Clara Ave.) at 10 o'clock, and bring lunch. San Jose members who wish to go in caravan, meet on 13th St. at Santa Clara St. (north side of Santa Clara St.) at 8:15 a.m.; Palo Alto members meet at S. P. Railroad Station at 8:30.

THE FIRST SCREEN TOUR will come November 17, with Mr. Bert Harwell as speaker. Dr. Matt Vessel has generously agreed to serve again as chairman of the Screen Tours Committee. He reports that good progress is being made. Mrs. Irving Snow took over the responsibility of planning the lay-out of the announcement folders; Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Prusman are working on the posters; and Mr. and Mrs. William Ouderkirk will handle publicity through the newspapers. At the meeting next Monday Dr. Vessel will tell us of other things which must be done to insure the success of this third series of Screen Tours we are sponsoring.

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

JUNE 19 FIELD TRIP REPORT. The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society met at Agnew for a trip to the egret heronry. The day was clear, calm, and warm at 6 a.m. when we commenced at the railroad station. A robin was building a nest on a low limb, and other birds were feeding in the blossoming eucalyptus trees. Palm trees along the main drive were replete with nests of Brewer's blackbird, English sparrow, and house finch.

Moving on to the heronry, we found the swamp near the shed a good spot for birding. Three male cowbirds sang and displayed before one female; and a long-tailed chat and two yellow-throats were clearly seen by nearly every one. Doves, easily the most obvious bird of the day, were coming in to drink the fresh water. The brief sight of an Anthony's green heron and of a duck which might have been a female wood duck, led us to search for their nests in possible places; but all we found was three bee trees. Circling the eucalyptus grove, where the American egrets and great blue herons were nesting, we tried to count the occupied nests; but finally estimated that there were twenty-five to forty, and that there were five or six times as many egret nests as

great blue heron. On the ground under the trees were egg shells from these nests, which suggested a census method for another year. Where the eucalyptus grove borders the Guadalupe Creek, we searched for the Traill's flycatcher which used to nest there. The Western flycatcher was calling, but the Traill's was missing.

At noon time we gladly accepted Ann Peterson's invitation to eat our lunches in her yard beside the Guadalupe Creek, just north of Montague Road. Here a wood pewee was calling constantly; a russet-backed thrush was singing, and a mockingbird which couldn't imitate a thrush; and black-headed grosbeak, yellow warbler, and song sparrow sang occasionally. In the afternoon as we drove out, on our way to Alviso, red-wings saluted us along the ditches.

We approached Alviso by way of the Zanker Road, to visit the alfalfa field where two kites had been seen several times earlier this season. Mowing was in progress in the field, and a hen ring-necked pheasant made a beautiful appearance. The sparrow hawk was there, but no kite. At the radio station a male pheasant fed in full view. David Maxon walked toward it and finally flushed it, so that we could see the sequence of feeding, hiding, and then the flush. At the levee, where the sharp-tailed sparrow wintered, we found the lowest water ever (none), but plenty of Savannah sparrows, some feeding young, and several marsh wrens. From the center of Alviso we walked out along the railroad track eastward to evaporation ponds, where many Forster's terns were picking up flies from the surface of the water, stilts were posturing, and a couple of Western sandpipers were feeding. There were at least eight stilts, and that they were nesting was evidenced by one egg on a small island. A flock of about fifty willets was flushed as we walked out on the levee. While not properly aquatic, hundreds of cliff swallows were part of this scene, as they foraged back and forth and dropped food to young ones along the telephone wire. The evaporation ponds west of Alviso were our last stop for observation. Half a dozen snowy plovers ran ahead of us along the levee, probably trying to lead us away from eggs or young (we found a dead baby plover here), and several avocets screamed at us. There were probably fifty avocets in this area, and on the levee we found two of their nests with eggs. On our return to the cars two members who had not gone out on the levee, reported they had seen a white-tailed kite while we were gone.

Persons present: Ann Peterson and Jim Peterson, co-leaders; Jean Peterson, Grace Brubaker, Curt Dietz, George Foreman, Elsie Hoeck, David Maxon, Mr. and Mrs. Ouderkirk, Mr. and Mrs. Prusman, Emily Smith, Fanny Zwaal.

Birds listed: great blue heron, American egret, Anthony's green heron, turkey vulture, white-tailed kite, sparrow hawk, California quail, ring-necked pheasant, California clapper rail, snowy plover, killdeer, willet, Western sandpiper, avocet, black-necked stilt, glaucous-winged gull, Forster's tern, mourning dove, Anna's hummingbird, red-shafted flicker, downy woodpecker, black phoebe, Western flycatcher, Western wood pewee, violet-green swallow, barn swallow, cliff swallow, long-billed marsh wren, mockingbird, robin, russet-backed thrush, yellow warbler, yellow-throat, long-tailed chat, English sparrow, Western meadowlark, red-wing, Bullock's oriole, Brewer's blackbird, cowbird, black-headed grosbeak, house finch, willow goldfinch, green-backed goldfinch, brown towhee, Savannah sparrow, song sparrow.

Jim Peterson