

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

October ¹⁵, 1949

THE SECOND OCTOBER FIELD TRIP will be taken next Sunday, October 30, to the Los Banos Bird and Game Refuge, under the leadership of Agnes and Clyde Prusman. This trip is being taken in the duck hunting season, because greater numbers of waterfowl come into the refuge during this time. (If you didn't go on the Los Banos trip last year, one sentence from Al Wool's report of that trip will give you some idea what to expect: "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.") The meeting place for the trip next Sunday will be Tiny's restaurant in Los Banos on Highway 152, at 8 a.m. If you do not want breakfast in Los Banos, be at Tiny's at 8:30 or at the Refuge entrance at 9 o'clock. The Refuge manager, Mr. Wattenbarger, will take charge of the party at the entrance gate at 9 o'clock. Bring lunch and warm wraps (it was sunny and mild last year, but it can be windy and cold). Members who can take additional passengers or who want transportation, meet at the usual place, corner of East San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 5:45 a.m.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS. Mr. Bert Harwell, who needs no introduction to California bird enthusiasts, will present the first Audubon Screen Tour, "Canada West," November 17. That will be on a Thursday, just three weeks away. Inclosed with our notices mailed two weeks ago, were two folders announcing this series of motion picture lectures; inclosed with this notice are two more folders, with circular letters. Please help advertise the Audubon Screen Tours, which our Society is sponsoring, by passing along these folders to friends who will be interested. If you can use more folders, let the corresponding secretary know, or send her the names and addresses of the interested persons, and she will mail the folders directly to them.

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

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JULY FIELD TRIP REPORT. Stevens Creek field trips in July have always provided unusual opportunities to see flycatchers, and the trip taken July 10, 1949, was no exception. Of the five members of the flycatcher family likely to be present in Stevens Creek Canyon, all five were seen and heard: black phoebe, Western flycatcher, Western wood pewee, olive-sided flycatcher, and ash-throated flycatcher. The olive-sided flycatcher was heard at every stop we made during the morning, and there were many opportunities to get well acquainted with this interesting bird.

The first stop was at the bridge over the creek, less than a mile below the dam. We had hardly arrived when Mrs. Ryan, who owns the fenced-in property along the creek, drove up and invited us in. Here there was an old winery, and across the creek was a small orchard of chestnut trees and a few peach trees and grapevines. Olive-sided flycatchers and wood pewees perched almost side by side on the bare branches of trees about the winery, making it possible to compare size and markings of these two similar flycatchers. A wood pewee was carrying food to its nest, but the nest was too high for us to ascertain the size of the young. Several observers caught sight of a russet-backed thrush as it slipped through the creek shrubbery, and good views of yellow warbler, white-breasted nuthatch, spotted towhee, pileolated warbler, and plain titmouse were had by most of the group. Warbling vireo and solitary vireo were both heard singing here, as well as the green-backed goldfinch and its less common cousin, The Lawrence's goldfinch. Along the slope several coveys of quail were flushed (at least twenty-five birds), and for twenty minutes or more a mourning dove sunbathed atop a tall snag. Just as we were leaving this area a bird flashing yellow and red alighted in the shrubbery ahead. The beautiful bird paused long enough so that most of us were able to see it well and identify it as the Western tanager.

At Stevens Creek reservoir, where we made our second stop, there was still a considerable volume of water. We scanned the shore line for herons without success, but on the concrete incline of the dam a small sandpiper-like bird was spotted which defied identification. Jim Peterson and three others approached within ten feet of the bird and finally judged it the Baird's sandpiper, ^{rather} a rare bird for Santa Clara Valley. This sandpiper is a "globe-spanner." Twice a year it traverses the length of both American continents, on its migrations between its nesting grounds along the Arctic coast and its wintering grounds in Chile and Argentina. Turning our attention to the swallows which were skimming over the water for insects, we had good views of both violet-green and cliff swallows; but the martins seen here other years were absent.

Our next stop was at the first bridge which crosses the creek above the reservoir. While we ate our snack lunches here, a yellow warbler came into view, and also orange-crowned warbler and russet-backed thrush; and then an ash-throated flycatcher was seen carrying food into a hole in a sycamore where it had young in a nest. Near the water's edge were dozens of goldfinches, several song sparrows, and a spotted towhee. And all the time we were here we could hear the persistent "pil-pil-pil" and "what-peeves-you" notes of an olive-sided flycatcher.

The last stop was across the road from the Boy Scout camp. In this location, the day previous, the writer got within ten feet of a black-throated gray warbler, but the warbler was gone now and we had to content ourselves with unusually good views of the yellow and pileolated warblers. The purple finch was heard here, along with the warbling vireo and the ubiquitous flycatchers. The summary at the end of the trip showed that thirty-seven species of birds had been seen or heard

during the morning excursion by the sixteen observers. Although the flycatchers highlighted the trip, the Western tanager was an interesting addition to our list of "Stevens Creek birds in July."

The following members took the trip: Florence Durfee, Frances Fischer, Elsie Hoeck, David Maxon, Mr. and Mrs. William Ouderkirk, Jim Peterson and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Prusman, and Matt Vessel (leader). The guests whom we were glad to welcome were: Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Carr, Dr. Ernst Friedlander, and Mr. R. Stober.

Matt Vessel

SEPTEMBER 18 FIELD TRIP REPORT. This Sunday fourteen members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society were glad of the opportunity to meet with the Golden Gate Audubon Society, to see shore birds on Bay Farm Island with Mrs. Junea Kelly. It was a clear, windless day, and warm. Early comers at the meeting place—Lincoln Park in Alameda—had good views of black-crowned night herons in the live oaks. The birds showed the three plumages of first year, second year, and fully adult birds. When every one had assembled at 10 o'clock, the sixty or more observers divided into groups to make bird counts in seven areas at the same time, to get a fair idea of the numbers of shore birds in the Bay Farm Island region that day. During the count time the birds were loafing, waiting for the ebbing tide to uncover the mud flats on Bay Farm Island.

When the count was finished, the groups gathered on Island Avenue in time to watch the shore birds come in after the turn of the tide. Streams of Western sandpipers, avocets, willets, dowitchers, black-bellied plovers, and marbled godwits came to feed on the mud flats as the tide went out. Soon there were vast numbers of birds probing busily in the mud. Then some disturbance—probably the jaeger which was seen later—suddenly put them all in flight. It seemed for a moment like a great flurry of snowflakes. Thousands of birds were flying swiftly, bands of them twisting and turning with marvelous synchronism, now flashing white, now dark. But soon the spectacle was over and they were all feeding again on the mud flats. Among them a black turnstone was picking its food off a piling rather than probe in the mud for it. There were many semipalmated plovers among the larger black-bellied plovers, and several Hudsonian curlews and greater yellow-legs. New to many of us were the four knots which Mrs. Kelly pointed out.

Some of the party walked out on the levee, to follow the birds out as the tide receded; and four or five, who did not mind wading through mud and deep water, crossed a cut in the levee and finally reached its end. They were rewarded with the sight of a jaeger, which they were sure was a pomarine jaeger. Through a spotting scope they watched it actively go after terns and gulls. "To see this master of aeronautics outmaneuver a tern was a treat," to quote Jim Peterson who was there, along with Seth Bailey and David Maxon. They also saw a wandering tattler, bobbing as it walked about on the sunken destroyers which lie against the levee.

The joint trip with the Golden Gate Audubon Society was much enjoyed. We hope there will be more opportunities for the two societies to bird together. The fourteen who took part in the trip were: Neil Dickinson, Mrs. Caroline Davis, Mrs. Hillebrand, Mr. and Mrs. Ouderkirk, Mrs. Perry Anne Peterson, Mrs. Grace Peterson, Jim Peterson, Emily Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Snow, Mrs. Whitney, and Mr. and Mrs. Zwaal,

Anne Peterson