

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

February, 1950

THE THIRD AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR, "Paul Bunyan Country," will be presented by Walter J. Breckenridge Thursday, February 9, in Montgomery Theatre, San Jose Civic Auditorium. This all-color motion picture will portray that part of Minnesota made famous by Paul Bunyan legends. While much of the virgin forest has been cleared or lumbered, there are great areas of second-growth forest inhabited by many kinds of birds and mammals. Minnesota is also full of reminders of the glacial period: beautiful lakes, ten thousand in all, and many other interesting examples of glacial action. "Paul Bunyan Country" presents this north country and its wildlife not only as they appear during open weather but also during bitterly cold winter. Dr. Breckenridge is director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, but is equally distinguished as scientist and artist. Along with his other scientific and artistic accomplishments he is an accomplished wildlife photographer. From all accounts this is a good Screen Tour and should be well advertised.

There will be a matinee at four o'clock, as well as the evening performance at eight. Single admission tickets will be sold at the theatre the day of the performances, between 3:30 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon and 7:15 and 8 in the evening. Matinee tickets for school children (for the matinee only) will be 25 cents. For both performances the general admission tickets will be 74 cents and the student tickets 50 cents. The Palo Alto Garden Club will present the same Screen Tour Saturday morning, Feb. 11, in the Palo Alto High School Auditorium, at 10 o'clock.

THE REGULAR FEBRUARY MEETING will be held the following Monday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College. Mr. Edward D. Wood, of the Natural Science Department, Modesto Junior College, who was unable to be with us at our December meeting, will show his color motion picture which was announced for that meeting, "Wildlife of the Rockies." And he will also show the film which he took on the field trip to the Los Banos Bird and Game Refuge last October. Mr. Wood and other members of the Modesto Wildlife Conservation Society joined our group at the Refuge that day, and the two societies enjoyed a joint trip. Guests will be welcome at the meeting.

THE FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP will be a week-end trip to Tomales Bay and Point Reyes, in Marin County, February 18 and 19, with Mr. and Mrs. George W. Nielsen as leaders. The Niensens took this trip with the Golden Gate Audubon Society a year ago and found it a thrilling birding experience, with old-squaw, harlequin duck, and many black brant highlighting a long list of birds. We shall spend Saturday night at the Point Reyes Hotel, Point Reyes Station, each one making his own reservation (double room with bath \$3.50, without \$2.50; single room with bath \$2.50, without \$1.50). We'll make up our own parties and meet at Point Reyes Station. But if you have transportation to offer or want transportation, phone the Niensens, Los Gatos 1463-W. For those who can come early, meet at the Point Reyes Hotel at one o'clock, for a Saturday afternoon trip. We shall meet again at six o'clock for dinner at the Point Reyes Hotel. The Sunday trip will start at 8:30 a.m. from the Hotel. Bring your warmest wraps and plenty of them; also a picnic lunch for Sunday.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH AND APRIL (details in coming notices):

- Mar.11, Saturday, field trip to Jasper Ridge and Searsville Lake, with Curt Dietz as leader
- Mar.13, Monday, regular meeting in Palo Alto
Les Sleeper, program chairman
- Mar.16, Thursday, Screen Tour in San Jose, matinee and evening,
"Midnight Movies in Animal Land," Howard Cleaves
- Mar.18, Saturday, the same Screen Tour in Palo Alto, matinee,
sponsored by the Palo Alto Garden Club
- Mar.26, Sunday, field trip to New Almaden and the quicksilver mines,
with Mr. and Mrs. William R. Ouderkirk as leaders
- Apr. 8, Saturday, field trip to Dumbarton Bridge and marshes near
Alvarado, with Mr. and Mrs. Neil Dickinson as leaders
- Apr.10, Monday, regular meeting in San Jose
Al Wool, program chairman
- Apr.23, Sunday, field trip to Arroyo Hondo, in the Mt. Hamilton Range
with Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur F. Luick as leaders
- Apr.27, Thursday, Screen Tour in San Jose, matinee and evening,
"Our Living Earth," Alexander Sprunt, Jr.
- Apr.28, Friday, Screen Tour in Palo Alto, morning, "Outdoor Holiday,"
Alexander Sprunt, Jr., sponsored by Palo Alto Garden Club

JANUARY 15 FIELD TRIP REPORT. After several days of rain and anxious speculation as to what the weather might be on our field trip day, we were happily surprised with a beautiful midwinter day. Thirty-three members and guests met at half past eight in Los Gatos for the trip to Mt. Hermon and Santa Cruz. The drive over the mountain proved delightful, for in many places frost crystals, glistening in the sunlight, rimmed the leaves of grasses, blackberry vines, and other low-growing plants, and spangled the twigs of leafless trees.

At Camp Evers we parked our cars and walked over to the blueberry farm near the peat bog. Along the road we heard several meadowlarks singing and saw twelve perched together on a telephone wire. We also heard killdeer calling and saw a group of seventeen fly over. In brush on one side was an unusual number of song sparrows. They were moving about too much to be accurately counted, but we agreed there were at least twenty. Farther on were many golden-crowned and white-crowned sparrows; and feeding under the berry bushes, a very large flock of Oregon juncos. The blueberry bushes were very pretty with their red leaves, and there was a lot of color in the leafless twigs of nearby willow trees.

Driving from Camp Evers toward Mt. Hermon we saw fifteen western bluebirds on fence posts and flying down for insects in the grass. In the same field there were Savannah sparrows and a big flock of house finches. We stopped once to admire a sparrow hawk on a low telephone wire, so close we could see every marking. At Mt. Hermon we left our cars at the Lakeside parking area, and were dismayed to find the marshy "lake," where birding and botanizing has been so wonderful, drained and now a playground. As we walked across it we saw, here and there, bubbles of marsh gas escaping through the water-soaked ground, and at the far end where the sun had not yet shone, bent-over icicles sticking up from the ground—"upside-down icicles," due to the bubbles, Dr. Friedlander said. In this area were many robins, and it was here we counted twenty-four bush-tits as they "dribbled" across an open space from a redwood to a live oak. On our way to Mr. and Mrs. Boylan's home on Pine Avenue, we saw at least twenty purple finches in a madrone tree, eating the berries.

At the Boylans' there were bright-colored syrup bottles for the hummingbirds, feed trays to which chickadees and juncos were coming, and bird houses for nesting birds next spring. Farther up the road, at Miss Miller's summer home, chickadees came to our hands for walnut meats and pygmy nuthatches and bush-tits to suet hung up only a few feet away. To our surprise, bush-tits also picked up bread crumbs from a feed tray.

After a picnic lunch at the Big Trees County Park, we drove on to Santa Cruz, to see the monarch butterflies which winter in the grove of red gums in the Natural Bridges Beach Park. Thousands of the butterflies were clinging to the long pendulous branches of the gum trees, looking like flowers at first glance. In the warm sunlight they opened and closed their wings, which displayed the ruddy gold of their coloring. Many butterflies were fluttering about among the trees, and some that had been too much battered by wind and rain were down in the grass. Mrs. Boylan said the monarchs come in late October and stay until March.

After enjoying the butterflies we turned back and drove along the West Cliff Drive. The tide was very low—a low minus tide—and a surprising number of seaweed-covered rocks were exposed. We stopped several times and with Mr. Hill's telescope enjoyed good views of black turnstone, black-bellied plover, Hudsonian curlew, marbled godwit, and willet. On a sandy beach in one of the coves a flock of sanderlings were running back and forth with the waves. Out from the shore, among scoters and scaup ducks, were five red-breasted mergansers. A lone loon with a slender bill which did not turn up, we decided was a Pacific loon. On a bird rock were many Brandt's and double-crested cormorants and a few Baird's. Several of the Brandt's showed the white filaments and blue throat-pouch which is seen only during the breeding season. By this time it was getting cold and a strong wind was blowing; and so we checked our list and called it a day, a very good day.

Our list for the day: Pacific loon, 1; eared grebe, 6; western grebe, 3; brown pelican, 1; double-crested cormorant, 20+; Brandt's cormorant, 30+; Baird's cormorant, 6; scaup duck, 24; white-winged scoter, 1; surf scoter, 12; red-breasted merganser, 5; sharp-shinned hawk, 1; red-tailed hawk, 2; sparrow hawk, 3; Cal. quail, 22; killdeer, 19; black-bellied plover, 2; black turnstone, 4; Hudsonian curlew, 2; willet, 24, marbled godwit, 4; sanderling, 40+; western gull and also herring, California, ring-billed, and short-billed gulls, in small numbers; Anna's hummingbird, 1; red-shafted flicker, 4; acorn woodpecker, 15+; downy woodpecker, 1; black phoebe, 3; Steller's jay, 6+; Cal. jay, 2; chestnut-backed chickadee, 13+; bush-tit, 38; pygmy nuthatch, 8; wren-tit, 3; Bewick's wren, 2; mockingbird, 1; robin, 100+; hermit thrush, 2; western bluebird, 15; ruby-crowned kinglet, 2; Audubon's warbler, 12; western meadowlark, 20+; Brewer's blackbird, 12; purple finch, 12; house finch, 75+; Ark. goldfinch, 1; spotted towhee, 3; brown towhee, 6; Savannah sparrow, 15; Ore. junco 200+; white-crowned sparrow, 30+; golden-crowned sparrow, 20+; song sparrow, 20+. (Mrs. Boylan said we should have seen at her home varied thrush, Townsend's warbler, and fox sparrow.)

Charles and Fanny Zwaal

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Branch of National Audubon Society
Monthly meetings second Monday, alternately in San Jose and Palo Alto
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