

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH, 1950

THE SECOND FIELD TRIP SCHEDULED FOR MARCH will be taken next Sunday, March 26, to the New Almaden country, with Bill and Jo Ouderkirk as leaders. Through the courtesy of Mr. C. L. Carson, the Ouderkirks have obtained permission for the Society to go onto private property on Mine Hill, where the New Almaden Mine was operated (and still is when the price of quicksilver warrants it). The wild flowers which in early April carpet many of the slopes of this hilly country, are already beginning to blossom. And along the roads leading to New Almaden, the prune orchards will be in full blossom next Sunday.

The meeting place for the trip will be the Almaden School, which is not in New Almaden but on the Almaden Road at Downer Ave., not quite half way between San Jose and New Almaden. Meet at 8:30 a.m., and bring along a lunch. San Jose members who can offer transportation meet at the corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 8; and Palo Alto members at the Palo Alto S. P. Station at 7:30. For further information phone the Ouderkirks, Los Gatos 624-W.

A TRIP TO THE PINNACLES? Neil and Oleta Dickinson have agreed to lead a week-end camping trip to the Pinnacles National Monument, April 15 and 16, if there are enough members who would like to go. Let the Dickinsons know before the end of March, if you are interested. 554 Oak Park Way, Redwood City; telephone EMerson 6-7661.

SEASONAL BIRD OBSERVATIONS. The report in our last Seasonal Observations, of a California jay gathering bits of fine grass to line its nest, brought an interesting observation from Charles Zwaal, of a California jay snapping off twigs from an elm tree to use in the construction of its nest, March 3, in San Jose.

Al Wool had an extraordinary experience with a meadowlark's nest. March 7, while working in a field with a roller, he saw a meadowlark flush from grass close to one side of his tractor, and he knew the heavy roller would pass over the nest. But when he walked back and examined the mashed nest, he found three of the five eggs unbroken, because of the slight depression in the ground in which the nest had been built. Carefully he shaped up the dome of the nest, according to meadowlark specifications, and put a fresh lining into the cup. With the three unbroken eggs back in the nest, he straightened up the grass which had been growing around the nest, and hoped for the best. A week later he found the meadowlark incubating her eggs, as if nothing had happened! Al also reported another early nesting, but with no story attached: a shrike incubating five eggs on March 5.

Spring migrants, which will nest here or farther north, are arriving every day. The song of the orange-crowned warbler, first noticed February 28, is now conspicuous in every suitable place. I heard my first warbling vireo, two of them, March 18; but Gladys Record had heard them the day before, and Charles Zwaal had reported one singing in San Jose March 17. Miss Record also reported western flycatcher March 17 and 19; and there was one in my neighborhood on the 19th. On the field trip Sunday we should add pileolated warbler to the list of spring arrivals; and perhaps house wren and Bullock's oriole. E.S.

DAZE WITH END

Periods of timelessness and spacelessness come rarely to us, I suppose, in the pragmatic world. But, when they do, they are quite uncommon experiences, full of meaning, and worthy to be contemplated.

One of those spaceless, timeless occasions came to twenty-one members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society on a week-end trip to the Tomales Bay area in mid-February. Several cars had arrived at the Inn around noon, and by two o'clock all were accounted for and ready for the drive along the eastern shore of the bay. The weather was perfect for birding, a little wind but the air was very clear and not a cloud in the sky. Focal and vocal points of interest were the grebes and loons. The highlight of the afternoon was a large flock of black brant.

Around six we returned to the Inn and were served a delicious chicken dinner. Miss Hortense Berry was the musician for the evening, and accompanied the stout-hearted through "Old Black Joe," "Song of India," and "The Old Folks." The shy and genteel chatted pleasantly around the huge fireplace---and the fisherman---well he rolled his fish eggs. And so to bed.

The early Sunday sky was filled with the rising sun, the farmhouses in the growing light, expansive, comfortable, with meadows and dark pine woods spreading a pattern around the community. To the north stretched the bay, its bank marked with subtle gradations of tones, and the little village, waking and turning to the light at the same time.

We came downstairs, the smell of breakfast filling the remotest corners of the corridors. The last morsels of sausage and pancakes became memories. Under the blue sky, and buoyant with audible expectancy, we sped towards our goal--Tomales Point.

Arrived, we looked down on the ocean, and soon the land disappeared like some cloud-bewitched troll maiden and the only thing which existed was the endless, fathomless sea. It did not appear in the least sinister or identifiable in any commonplace way. It was impersonally there, and we nodded agreeably and regarded each other with mutual respect and pleasure. For two miles we walked over a small continent, all part of one gigantic whole of land, water, wind, and sky. How gentle must creation be, how mild and strong and harmless, and what promise there is when the senses yield even this much to illimitability!

So ended two beautiful days. Harlequins were bronzed memories against a tempestuous sea, and I was glad; for, although I want all things conjoined, without time or space, I like also to think that they remain themselves, worth seeking out, worth enjoying for their own special reason, worth cherishing as a rich part of all creation.

Ninety species of birds were noted as follows:

Common loon	Horned grebe	Pied-billed grebe
Red-throated loon	Eared grebe	White pelican
Holböll's grebe	Western grebe	Brown pelican

Farallon cormorant	Killdeer	Chestnut-backed chickadee
Brandt's cormorant	Black turnstone	Plain titmouse
Baird's cormorant	Wilson's snipe	Wren-tit
Great blue heron	Least sandpiper	Bewick's wren
American egret	Western sandpiper	Robin
Snowy egret	Glaucous-winged gull	Hermit thrush
Black brant	Western gull	Western bluebird
Mallard	Herring gull	Ruby-crowned kinglet
Pintail	California gull	American pipit
Canvas-back	Ring-billed gull	California shrike
Scaup duck	Short-billed gull	Hutton's vireo
American golden-eye	Bonaparte's gull	Audubon's warbler
Buffle-head	Figeon guillemot	English sparrow
Harlequin duck	Allen's hummingbird	Western meadowlark
White-winged scoter	Belted kingfisher	Redwing blackbird
Surf scoter	Red-shafted flicker	Brewer's blackbird
Ruddy duck	Hairy woodpecker	California purple finch
Red-breasted merganser	Downy woodpecker	House finch
Turkey vulture	Nuttall's woodpecker	Pine siskin
Sharp-shinned hawk	Black phoebe	Green-backed goldfinch
Red-tailed hawk	Say's phoebe	Spotted towhee
Marsh hawk	Horned lark	Brown towhee
Duck hawk	Tree swallow	Oregon junco
Sparrow hawk	Steller's jay	White-crowned sparrow
Calif. clapper rail	California jay	Golden-crowned sparrow
(call note heard)	Raven	Fox sparrow
Coot	Crow	Song sparrow
Black oyster-catcher		

B. Wise Nielsen  
Leader and historian

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Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Branch of National Audubon Society

President, B. Neil Dickinson, 554 Oak Park Way, Redwood City  
Corresponding secretary, Miss Emily Smith, Rt. 1, Box 387, Los Gatos  
Treasurer, Mrs. Eva McRae, San Jose State College, San Jose 14

Monthly meetings second Monday, alternately in San Jose and Palo Alto

Joint membership (Local and National), \$5.00 annually  
Local membership. \$1.50 annually