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SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

January 1951

THE JANUARY MEETING will be held Monday, January 8, at 7:30 o'clock, in Palo Alto, at the Community Center, in the Junior Museum, Middlefield Rd. Mrs. Frank Scott, of Berkeley, will show color motion pictures of California birds. Mrs. Scott showed one of her films at the Golden Gate Audubon Society dinner in San Francisco this last month, and those of us who attended the dinner as delegates from our Society, enjoyed both her pictures and her talk, and agreed that she knew her birds and her camera equally well. Guests are always welcome at our meetings.

Preceding the meeting there will be a no host dinner at the Stanford Union, on the University campus, at 6 o'clock. No reservations necessary.

THE JANUARY FIELD TRIP will be conducted by Oleta and Neil Dickinson on the following Saturday, January 13, in the Palo Alto area. The Stanford campus and surrounding country will be the main objective. (Les Sleeper has been seeing Buffle-heads and other interesting ducks at Lagunita.) Mrs. Ransom Davis has invited the group to end the morning's trip at her home in Menlo Park, with coffee for our picnic lunches. Meet at the S.P. Station in Palo Alto at 8 o'clock. San Jose members who want transportation, meet at the corner of E. San Carlos and 5th Streets at 7:15.

LAST MONTH'S TRIP TO LAKE MERRITT was postponed (two inches of pelting rain that day!) and has been rescheduled for Sunday, January 28, with Grace Brubaker and Elsie Hoeck again as leaders. Meet at Lake Merritt, in front of the Oakland Public Museum, on Oak Street, at 9:30 o'clock. Bring lunch. San Jose members who want transportation, meet at the N.E. corner of Santa Clara and 13th Streets at 8 o'clock; Palo Alto members at the S. P. Station in Palo Alto at the same time. If weather is uncertain telephone Mrs. Lester Brubaker in San Jose, CLaybourn 8-2289.

THE THIRD AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR comes Thursday, February 1. Don't forget, for this Screen Tour promises to be most interesting. Lucie Palmer will show "Underwater Kingdom," a natural color motion picture of the strange and colorful creatures which live "below the waves." These remarkable pictures, taken by Mrs. Palmer and her husband with a special camera for underwater work, are scientifically accurate, and "so beautiful as to be a work of art." Having had training as an artist, Lucie Palmer also worked out a method of making oil paintings under the sea. The American Museum of Natural History has presented a special exhibition of her work.

LOS BANOS FIELD TRIP REPORT. October 28 twenty-two members met at the Los Banos Bird and Game Refuge at 9:30. Because roads were muddy and slippery from the rain of the day before, we proceeded into the refuge in as few cars as possible.

As the procession moved along and we saw only a few Coots and a perched Red-tailed Hawk, we wondered if we were in for a disappointment. Warden Wattenbarger had said that few birds had come into the refuge so far. However we drove on to the northeast area where there is a very large, choicely located pond for resting waterfowl. Here—and it was hard to believe—were several thousand birds. We left our cars and went cautious-

ly down a ravine, using some willows for cover. At the edge of the pond we trained our glasses on the vast swimming mass, which included numerous Shovellers, Widgeons, Mallards, Pintails; some Gadwalls, green-winged Teal, Canvas-backs, Ruddy Ducks; and on the far side many Snow Geese.

We wanted to see the cranes which Mr. Wattenbarger told us he had seen, so drove to the far end of the refuge, overlooking another pond. Here we had lunch and waited. We were rewarded, too, for shortly we thrilled to see a flight of Sandhill Cranes coming in from the north. We listened, and as they came closer we could hear guttural, rolling calls. Small flights of cranes, necks outstretched, continued to pass, some seventy-odd in all.

We had an excellent view of a Golden Eagle, flying low over the grassy areas, on our way out; watched a mass of Mallards suddenly take flight with a great roar of beating wings; and in a thick tule pond, saw a lone Florida Gallinule, among many of its Coot cousins, sunning itself.

Al Wool, leader.

BIRD COURTSHIP IN DECEMBER? Christmas morning we were attracted to the kitchen window by a sudden quiet among the birds feeding in our garden. Two flickers, a female and a male with handsome red moustaches, stood on the ground facing each other, about eight inches apart. Suddenly he very definitely bowed to her! She returned his bow, but a little uncertainly. He stood very erect, with bill pointing upward and every feather in its place, their colors standing out brightly against the foggy landscape. Then began a most amazing "dance"—a swaying motion from side to side, performed by both birds in unison, but neither bird actually moving from its position. Suddenly all motion ceased, and for ten seconds they just looked at each other. Then he bowed to her again, in his very positive manner, and again she returned it, a little less uncertain this time, and their dance was resumed. This was repeated again and again, exactly the same in every particular—he with his head up and very sure of himself, and she a bit stiff and with head somewhat drawn in. We wondered when it would end, as five minutes went by, ten minutes, fifteen minutes by the clock! And how would it end? Finally she just turned away and hopped about in the grass, looking for food; and he flew up into the Wu Tung tree nearby, startling some twenty-odd small birds which had perched there, almost motionless, during the whole performance. Dorothy Williams

RARE WINTER VISITANT TO SAN JOSE. An Evening Grosbeak came to the feeding tray which Fanny and Charles Zwaal maintain at their home on Clifton Ave. in the Burbank district, the morning of December 28. And the next day at the same time—about eight o'clock—they saw it again. Each time it chose the sunflower seeds, cracking them with its huge greenish yellow bill. Evening Grosbeaks have not been reported in San Jose, to our knowledge, since 1932, when groups of a dozen or so were frequently seen in various parts of the city during February. E.S.

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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