

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

August 1951

THE AUGUST FIELD TRIP will be taken on Saturday, August 25, to various mud flats and salt ponds in the Dumbarton Bridge area, to observe southward migrating shore birds, which have been arriving from the far north ever since early in July. Dr. Charles G. Sibley will lead the trip. Meet at S. P. Station in Palo Alto at 8 a.m. Bring lunch. San Jose members wanting transportation meet at corner of E. San Carlos and Fifth Streets at 7:15.

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO CLOUD TOP, May 26, 1951. Mrs. Mary Ellen Shore welcomed Audubon Society members to her mountain home, near summit of the Los Gatos-Santa Cruz Highway, on the warmest day in May. But the trail she chose along the old stagecoach road, shaded by redwoods, oaks, and madrones, was a pleasant place to be on a hot day. (The McKiernan Lagoon, through which in the early days they drove the coaches to clean them, is still beside the old road, but there is no sign of the toll house.) Late-blossoming wild flowers—Red Larkspur, Indian Paintbrush, Wood Violet, and many others—competed with the birds for attention. Many of the birds showed nesting activity, and almost every passerine bird sang at least occasionally. Of the six occupied nests pointed out by Mrs. Shore the Solitary Vireo's nest was the easiest to see, slung between two twigs, low in a Black Oak, and decorated with strips of Kleenex. The incubating bird in the deep nest lifted its head just enough to keep an eye on the bird-watchers. In a little while its mate came into the tree and there was an exchange of soft call notes as the two birds changed places. In contrast, the nest of the Warbling Vireo was high in a Coast Live Oak and not conspicuously ornamented; but the persistent singing of the incubating bird helped to locate it.

The field trip ended in Mrs. Shore's patio, with picnic lunches, generous slices of Mrs. Shore's orange cake, and much good fellowship.

The following birds were noted along the trail, about the house, in the orchard, and in a clearing where Coyote Brush and other shrubs have taken over: Turkey Vulture; Red-tailed Hawk; Calif. Quail; Mourning Dove, pair; White-throated Swift; Anna's Hummingbird, feeding nestlings; Red-shafted Flicker; Acorn Woodpecker; Ash-throated Flycatcher, pair investigating bird box; W. Flycatcher; W. Wood Pewee, nest-building; Olive-sided Flycatcher; Violet-green Swallow; Scrub Jay; Chestnut-backed Chickadee, feeding nestlings; Bush-tit; Pygmy Nuthatch, pair (?); Wren-tit, pair; Brown Creeper; House Wren; Bewick's Wren; Calif. Thrasher; Russet-backed Thrush; W. Bluebird, feeding nestlings; Hutton's Vireo; Solitary Vireo, incubating; Warbling Vireo, incubating; Orange-crowned Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Audubon's Warbler, male; Black-throated Gray Warbler; Townsend's Warbler, female (May 24); Tolmie's Warbler, pair; Pileolated Warbler; W. Tanager, pair; Black-headed Grosbeak; Purple Finch; House Finch, feeding nestlings; Pine Siskin, pair; Green-backed Goldfinch, incubating; Spotted Towhee; Brown Towhee; Ore. Junco, carrying food to unseen young; Song Sparrow.

Emily Smith.

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO SEARSVILLE LAKE, June 9, 1951. It was a beautiful morning, with fog banks creeping down over the coastal mountains and bright sunshine on the calm surface of the lake. A female Ruddy Duck and her five downy "ruddies" completed the picture. The ducklings were diving, under the watchful eyes of their mother, and when they surfaced they popped up like corks.

The trip took us on a complete circle of the lake. The surprise for this area was a Caspian Tern looking for fish in the lake. In the willows by the lake was an interesting family of Tree Swallows. The mother was inspecting a woodpecker hole as a likely site for a (second?) nest while her mate, on a nearby perch, twittered little songs, both birds oblivious, for the moment, to calls from their fledglings. Also interesting was a pair of Black Phoebes catching dragonflies, knocking off the wings, and swallowing them with big gulps. Our active birding ended with a visit to a grove of trees where a pair of Cooper's Hawks were nesting. We could see the bulky nest near the top of a Coast Live Oak and the bird on it, obviously incubating.

Admiral and Mrs. Ransom Davis invited us to bring our picnic lunches to their patio in Menlo Park. The Admiral was responsible for delicious coffee, and Mrs. Davis for our enjoyment of a family of titmice in the "mansion" and the Violet-green Swallows in the "rustic cabin."

Birds at Searsville Lake: Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Great Blue Heron, 4 (a small herony in cottonwoods south of lake not visited); Anthony's Green Heron, 1; Mallard, 4; Ruddy Duck, female with 5 young, male not far off; Turkey Vulture, 1; Cooper's Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Am. Coot, 11; Greater Yellow-legs, 1; Caspian Tern, 1; Mourning Dove, pair; Anna's Hummingbird, 1; Allen's Hummingbird, 1; Acorn Woodpecker, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 2 pairs; Ash-throated Flycatcher, 2; Black Phoebe, 4; W. Flycatcher, 1; W. Wood Pewee, 3; Olive-sided Flycatcher, 1; Violet-green Swallow, 2; Tree Swallow, family of 6; Barn Swallow, 2; Cliff Swallow, 1; Purple Martin, pair; Scrub Jay, 4; Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 3 small groups; Plain Titmouse, 2 families; Bush-tit, pair feeding nestlings; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Wren-tit, pair; Bewick's Wren, 3; Calif. Thrasher, 2; Russet-backed Thrush, 1; W. Bluebird, 7; Solitary Vireo, 1; Warbling Vireo, 4; Orange-crowned Warbler, 1; Yellow Warbler, 5; Yellow-throat, 10; Pileolated Warbler, 2; W. Meadowlark, 1; Red-winged Blackbird, many feeding young; Bullock's Oriole, pair feeding nestlings; Brewer's Blackbird, many; Brown-headed Cowbird, 1; Black-headed Grosbeak, 1; Purple Finch, 3; House Finch, nest-building; Am. Goldfinch, male with 3 fledglings; Green-backed Goldfinch, 2 or 3 small flocks; Spotted Towhee, 3; Brown Towhee, 2; Ore. Junco, several, some in juvenal plumage; Chipping Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 5.

Les and Nell Sleeper

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO MOSS LANDING, June 23, 1951. The high fog which had overshadowed Moss Landing for several weeks was still present when the group of birders met at half past eight. With no break in the fog all morning, the light was not too good for bird observation; but the temperature was fine for walking on mud flats in late June.

On the way out to the salt ponds the birders were met by many protesting Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, and Forster's Terns. Downy young avocets and terns were in evidence on the levees and ponds ahead; but no stilt

chicks or nests were seen, although there was plenty of "cripple-bird" display on the part of the adults. The behavior of a pair of Snowy Plovers on a dry mud flat suggested a nest not far away, but it, too, remained concealed. A flock of about fifty Northern Phalaropes and two Red Phalaropes on one of the ponds was a surprise, so late in June. In a nearby slough two Northern Phalaropes, a Red-backed Sandpiper, and a Western Sandpiper, all with wing disabilities, were closely examined.

From the marshes the trip led across the highway and out the construction road to the dunes. Bank Swallows were nesting in a sand bank, not more than ten feet high, between road and slough. Eggs and nestlings, some nearly fledged, were found in the nest holes. Soon after a picnic lunch on the dunes, the trip ended on Molera Road where it crosses the Temblader Slough. In the cattails by the bridge were many nests of the Long-billed Marsh Wren. Two surplus nests were collected, for use in a schoolroom, one a dummy nest without a lining and the other a used nest which had been neatly lined.

List of birds: Pacific Loon; Red-throated Loon; Brown Pelican; Brandt's Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Am. Egret; Snowy Egret; Anthony's Green Heron; Black-crowned Night Heron; Am. Pintail; Cinnamon Teal, female with 7 young; White-winged Scoter; Surf Scoter; Ruddy Duck; Red-breasted Merganser; Turkey Vulture; Am. Coot; Snowy Plover; Killdeer; Willet; Greater Yellow-legs; Marbled Godwit; Am. Avocet; Black-necked Stilt; N. Phalarope; Red Phalarope; W. Gull; Herring Gull; Ring-billed Gull; Hermann's Gull; Forster's Tern; Least Tern; Caspian Tern; Mourning Dove; Belted Kingfisher; Black Phoebe; Horned Lark; Bank Swallow; Barn Swallow; Cliff Swallow; Am. Crow; Long-billed Marsh Wren; Loggerhead Shrike; W. Meadowlark; Brewer's Blackbird; Brown-headed Cowbird; House Finch; Am. Goldfinch; Green-backed Goldfinch; Savannah Sparrow; Song Sparrow.

Charlie and Viola Anderson.

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO BUTANO FOREST AREA, June 26, 1951. We left our homes in a blanket of fog and were amazed, when we had climbed through it, to find bright sunlight at the meeting place on Saratoga Gap. Below us the blanket of billowy fog, high-lighted by the early morning sun, stretched across the whole valley, blotting out everything except the mountain tops. So fascinating was the whole setting that we tarried long past the starting time.

Turning our cars toward Butano Canyon we followed Big Basin Road to the China Grade, and then logging and fire truck roads to the Cloverdale Road. Stops were frequent, to look for birds and to get acquainted with plants which were new to many of us. Areas of chaparral shrubs and Knobcone Pine were followed by typical "redwood association" growth. In a fire-swept area tall redwoods, stripped of their branches, were putting out new branches, but the Douglas Firs were blackened poles. Here we found an interesting assemblage of birds which nest in tree holes—Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, all three feeding nestlings in old woodpecker holes; Red-shafted Flicker, Acorn Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker; Vaux Swift, Purple Martin, Violet-green Swallow (the Violet-green actively chasing a Cliff Swallow!). On Butano Ridge we found many tall Rhododendrons in full flower, a late-blossoming stalk of Bear-Grass, and a rare saprophyte (Pityopus californica) with no common name. At the airstrip for fire-fighting planes we looked down into Butano Canyon to the magnificent green canopy of the Butano Forest.

From Cloverdale Road we turned into Butano Canyon and, with permission from the Butano Land and Development Company, drove through the gate and

past cabins in a redwood forest, to the beginning of the trail up the canyon. By now we had only time enough to walk to the falls. Along the creek were towering Western Azaleas in full bloom, Coast Red Elderberry with berries already turning scarlet, and masses of Five-finger Fern. Two pairs of Water Ouzels were feeding nestlings, one near beginning of trail and other at the falls; a Golden-crowned Kinglet was singing in the treetops and several Winter Wrens close to the ground. When we finally disbanded to follow our several ways homeward, we were resolved to be boosters for the preservation of Butano Forest.

Birds noted along the way: Red-tailed Hawk; Calif. Quail; Band-tailed Pigeon; Vaux Swift; Anna's Hummingbird; Allen's Hummingbird; Red-shafted Flicker; Acorn Woodpecker; Hairy Woodpecker; Ash-throated Flycatcher; W. Flycatcher; W. Wood Pewee; Olive-sided Flycatcher; Violet-green Swallow; Cliff Swallow; Purple Martin; Steller's Jay; Scrub Jay; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Pygmy Nuthatch; Wren-tit; Brown Creeper; Water Ouzel (Am. Dipper); Winter Wren; Bewick's Wren; Calif. Thrasher; Hermit Thrush; Russet-backed Thrush; W. Bluebird; Golden-crowned Kinglet; Hutton's Vireo; Orange-crowned Warbler; Hermit Warbler, one singing quite persistently and seen at close range on Butano Ridge; Pileolated Warbler; W. Tanager; Black-headed Grosbeak; Purple Finch; Pine Siskin; Ore. Junco; Song Sparrow.

Wilma Harris.

The following officers for 1951-52 were elected at the June meeting in Los Gatos.

President: Albert J. Wool
Vice-Pres.(Southern) Mrs. Grace Brubaker
Vice-Pres.(Northern) Mrs. Bernhard Jakobsen
Corresponding Secretary: Miss Eva Allen
Recording Secretary: Mrs. Irving Snow
Treasurer: Mrs. Eva McRae

Additional members of the Board of Directors:
Charles Sibley; Les Sleeper; Mrs. Fanny Zwaal

The Board of Directors met on July 6. The following Committee Chairmen were appointed by the Board:

Program Committee: (San Jose) Mrs. Grace Brubaker
(Palo Alto) Mrs. Bernhard Jakobsen
Social Committee: Mrs. Fanny Zwaal
Field Trip Committee:(Co-Chairmen) Emily Smith and Les Sleeper
Membership Committee: Mrs. Irving Snow
Editor: Charles Sibley
Associate Editor: Emily Smith

At this time of year (July-Sept.) most species of birds are undergoing a complete change of plumage. The annual or post-nuptial molt is now in progress. Every adult bird undergoes this molt. During its progress individuals look ragged, gaps are evident in the wings and tail, and most species are shy and retiring.

The young birds which were hatched during the past nesting season are also in the process of molting. They are changing from the juvenal plumage to the first winter plumage. This molt is called the post-juvenal molt and in most species it does not involve the wing and tail feathers. Thus, for example, a Spotted Towhee hatched in April will molt its body plumage in August but will carry the same wing and tail feathers with which it left the nest until its first post-nuptial molt next year.