



## BULLETIN OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

May 1952

### FIELD NOTES: HOW AND WHY

Human memory is a remarkable faculty, but it is unreliable for the long time retention of factual detail. A written record is the best insurance against the loss of interesting and important observations. Every student of natural history, no matter how casual his observations may be, should keep written notes. The importance of an observation cannot always be assessed at the time of its occurrence. Often, however, it becomes important in relation to subsequent happenings and, if it was not recorded originally, may be totally lost. Furthermore, it is repetition which indicates patterns of animal behavior. Only by recording each observation of a particular behavior pattern can the true significance be determined. It is surprising (and frustrating) how often persons interested in birds report that they have observed a certain species, or activity, at some past time----but when asked for the date or for some details, cannot supply them. Following are some suggestions for the recording of field notes.

There are four items which should accompany any record, namely, (1) the name of the animal (WHAT), (2) the date of the observation (WHEN), (3) the locality of the observation (WHERE), (4) the name of the observer (WHO).

What should be recorded? Anything and everything! The more you try to record about an animal the more you will see and learn. The nature of the environment in which the animal is observed (i.e. the trees, shrubs, topography, etc.); mannerisms; voice; behavior; reactions to danger; mating actions;---in other words, where each species is found, how it looks and acts, and what it does. Put down your observations at once, as made. Do not depend upon memory---it's treacherous.

The above may sound like quite an undertaking---so start out simply and let your notes develop as your ability to see and record develops. A simple list of species seen in a certain locality on a certain date is of value. Add the number of each species seen, you now have a census and hence a clue to population. Try keeping daily lists of the species in your own yard and see how quickly the notes become valuable to you. Add numbers, or a brief (one line) note to the list. For example, "Cedar Waxwing. Flock of 20 feeding on pyracantha berries". In that little note is contained data on occurrence, numbers, habits (flock) and food. Start out with What, When, Where, and Who---add How as you see opportunity to do so.

The form in which the notebook is kept is not vital but some suggestions may be of interest. A looseleaf notebook is most convenient with the 6x9 inch size preferred. A larger size is cumbersome to carry afield, a smaller size gives too little room per page. Use ink, and use a permanent ink (you may drop it in a creek sometime!) Strongly recommended is Higgins "ETERNAL" Black. A fine pen point is most legible--the #1550 or #9550 Esterbrook pen points are excellent. The Esterbrook is an ideal fountain pen for the purpose and is very inexpensive (about \$2.00 including point). Write small and legibly---fill each line and each page so that you do not give housing space to a lot of blank paper.

The field notebook will grow with the experience of the observer and will finally become important. It is not only a record of the activities of birds but will also indicate the development of the students ability to observe, to record accurately, and to infer correctly from what is seen and heard.

Charles G. Sibley

## F I E L D   O B S E R V A T I O N S

Most, possibly all, of the migrant summer visitants have now arrived. (Who has seen a Lazuli Bunting?) Most, but not all, of the winter visitants have departed for their breeding grounds. Nesting is well advanced. Most nests found during the past month were either under construction or contained eggs. A few contained nestlings, and a few records of fledged birds have been noted. The number of nest records should increase sharply in May since nests are easiest to locate when nestlings are being fed. KEEP RECORDS AND ADD THEM TO THE NESTING SURVEY FILE.

- GREAT BLUE HERON and AMERICAN EGRET. In nests, 1 mi. SE Agnew, Apr. 20 (C. Sibley)  
MALLARD. Young noted at Byxbee Park, Palo Alto on Apr. 24 (L. Robbins and M. Miller).  
SPARROW HAWK. Nestlings heard in nest near Los Gatos, Apr. 22 (Emily Smith).  
SNOWY PLOVER. Apr. 15 at Alviso, 2 nests with 2 and 3 eggs. (C.S.)  
KILLDEER. Apr. 20, at Alviso, two downy young about 4 days old (C.S.)  
LESSER YELLOW-LEGS. Apr. 20, at Alviso, one in flock of sandpipers. (C.S.)  
SPOTTED SANDPIPER. Apr. 15, one at Alviso (C.S.)  
AVOCET. Apr. 15 at Alviso, one nest with 3 eggs (C.S.)  
BAND-TAILED PIGEON. Still roosting (Apr. 24) in oaks at Menlo-Atherton School (Les Sleeper). Still present in Los Altos, Apr. 24 (L. Robbins).  
HORNED OWL. Apr. 26, the two nestlings at Mr. Tourtillott's banded. They are now approximately one month old. (C.S.)  
WESTERN KINGBIRD. Apr. 1, 3 mi. E. Milpitas (Al and Dorothy Wool); Apr. 12, several on fence posts along McKean Rd. (E.S.)  
ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER. Apr. 12, Steven's Creek Reservoir (C.S.); Apr. 16, 3 mi. E. of Milpitas (Wool's); Apr. 21, Los Gatos (E.S.); Apr. 26, carrying nest material, Silver Creek Hills (C.S.)  
WESTERN FLYCATCHER. Apr. 25, nest with 3 eggs (fresh), Los Gatos (Gladys Record).  
WOOD PEWEE. Apr. 19, Mt. Eden Rd., and Apr. 20, Carmel Valley (E.S.); Apr. 20, Stanford (L.R.); Apr. 22, Los Gatos, Apr. 23, Glen Una, 3 mi. NW Los Gatos (E.S.)  
OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER. Apr. 12, near Los Gatos (Eva McRae); Apr. 12, Steven's Creek (C.S.); Apr. 16, Woodside (Roberta Pleas); Apr. 17, Aldercroft ('Lina Snow); Apr. 21, Stanford (Dr. C. Danforth).  
PURPLE MARTIN. Apr. 20, Carmel Valley (E.S.)  
SCRUB JAY. Apr. 11, nest with 5 young about 3 days old in San Jose (C. Zwaal).  
CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE. Nest with 7 eggs, Apr. 14, hatched by Apr. 20 (C.S.) and--  
PLAIN TITMOUSE. Incubating in nest box, Apr. 14 near Los Gatos (C.S.)  
BEWICK WREN. Incubating 7 eggs, Apr. 15, Palo Alto (Mrs. Edith Buss).  
MOCKINGBIRD. Nest with 4-5 day old young, Apr. 19, east San Jose (Grace Brubaker).  
VARIED THRUSH. Apr. 10, Uvas Valley (E.S.)  
HERMIT THRUSH. Last seen Apr. 8 near Los Gatos (Glen Una District) (E.S.)  
SWAINSON THRUSH. Apr. 13, Stanford (Malcolm Miller); Apr. 20, Salinas River, near Salinas (Charles Anderson).  
TOWNSEND SOLITAIRE. Apr. 7, 3 birds in sight at same time near Los Gatos; one on Apr. 10 (C.S.)  
BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER. Apr. 12, building nest, Steven's Creek (M. Seibert).  
PHAINOPEPLA. Apr. 24, a female observed in Los Altos (Mrs. H.B. Humphrey)  
(See "Birds of the South San Francisco Bay Region, p. 32, for other records on the peninsula).  
SOLITARY VIREO. Apr. 5, Los Gatos (Gladys Record); Apr. 10, Uvas Valley (E.S.); Apr. 11, Santa Cruz Mts. (Mary E. Shore).  
ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER. April 13, nest with 5 eggs near Los Gatos (C.S.)  
YELLOW WARBLER. Apr. 15, San Jose (E.S.); 3 singing in Los Gatos, Apr. 18 (E.S.)  
AUDUBON WARBLER. Mt. Eden Road near Saratoga, Apr. 19 (E.S.); San Jose, Apr. 19 (M.S.)  
BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER. Apr. 12, Uvas Valley, singing (E.S.); Apr. 16, near Saratoga, singing (E.S.)  
TOLMIE WARBLER. Apr. 4 first seen, and singing persistently Apr. 14-17, Santa Cruz Mts. (M.E. Shore); singing Kennedy Rd., Los Gatos, Apr. 22 (E.S.)  
LONG-TAILED CHAT. Apr. 20, singing, 1 mile southeast of Agnew (C.S.)

HOODED ORIOLE. Apr. 7, first seen, singing Apr. 21 and 25, east San Jose (G.B.)  
 Apr. 14-18, Santa Clara Co. Hospital, west San Jose (M. Wittgenstein).  
 BULLOCK ORIOLE. Apr. 22, pair near apparently finished nest, Menlo Park (L. Sleeper).  
 COWBIRD. Apr. 14, near Los Gatos (E.S.); one attacked by Warbling Vireos in Los  
 Gatos, Apr. 18 (E.S.)  
 WESTERN Tanager. Apr. 20, Pinnacles Nat. Mon., (M.W.); Apr. 25, near Evergreen  
 (Bob Golden); May 1, near Los Gatos (C.S.)  
 BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK. Apr. 1, 3 miles E. Milpitas (Wools); Apr. 11, Santa Cruz Mts.,  
 (M.E.S.); Apr. 12, Aldercroft ('Lina Snow).  
 EVENING GROSBEAK. Apr. 9, 8-10, Willow Glen, (C.Z.); Apr. 21-24, S.J.S.C. Campus (C.S.)  
 HOUSE FINCH. Apr. 21, fledgling, Los Gatos (E.S.); Apr. 26, 10 nests at 12 mi. SE  
 San Jose, 3 building, 6 with eggs, one with nestlings (C.S.)  
 GREEN-BACKED GOLDFINCH. Apr. 12, 3 nests being built, Steven's Creek (C.S.); Apr. 15,  
 incubating near Cupertino (E.S.)  
 BROWN TOWHEE. Apr. 22, incubating 4 eggs near Los Gatos (E.S.)  
 SAVANNAH SPARROW. Apr. 15, 3 nests each with 4 eggs near Alviso (C.S.)  
 OREGON JUNCO. Apr. 23 and 25, adults carrying food to young, Los Gatos (G. Record).  
 CHIPPING SPARROW. Apr. 10, singing Uvas Valley; Apr. 17, near Los Gatos (E.S.)  
 WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW. Last seen San Jose, Apr. 22 (M. Seibert); last seen east San  
 Jose, Apr. 23 (G.B.); Hall's Valley, singing, Apr. 27 (C.S.)  
 GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW. Still present Apr. 30 near Los Gatos (C.S.)  
 FOX SPARROW. Apr. 17, Santa Cruz Mts. (M.E.S.); Apr. 16, last date for banded bird  
 present through the winter, near Los Gatos (C.S.)  
 LINCOLN SPARROW. Apr. 27, Hall's Valley, Mt. Hamilton Rd. (C.S.)

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THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION NESTING SURVEY

Many members are cooperating on the Nesting Survey. Robert Hope, Janet Koppel, Wilma Harris, Les Sleeper, Grace Brubaker, Phyrne Russell, Charles and Fanny Zwaal, Emily Smith, Eva McRae, Al and Dorothy Wool, and Angelina Snow are extracting the nesting records from the Condor, the Gull, and their own notebooks.

However, WE CAN USE MORE HELP----there is much of the Condor yet to do, the Gull is not yet completed, and there are several notebooks which have been loaned to us to do. Please let the Editor know if you would be willing to help.

Even if you cannot help with the task of extracting records from periodicals and notebooks, don't forget to keep records on all the nests which you find. All nest records are wanted, and especially those for the most common species such as House Finch, Brewer Blackbird, etc. These will be the ones for which we will get the greatest number of records and will therefore be able to work up first.

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THE BIRDS OF THE SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

By

Charles G. Sibley

Do you live in San Francisco, San Mateo Co., Santa Clara Co., Santa Cruz Co., Alameda Co., or northern Monterey Co.??? If you do---and if you are interested in birds---you should have a copy of "The Birds of the South San Francisco Bay Region".

A few left --- on special at \$1.50.

## C A L E N D A R F O R M A Y

FIELD TRIP TO AL AND DOROTHY WOOLS' RANCH will be taken Sunday, May 4. The Wools have made a lake out of the marsh where we used to see nesting Tricolored Blackbirds, but enough cattails were left to satisfy the Tricolors when they returned this spring; and as for the lake, already Coots, Ruddy Ducks, and Pied-billed Grebes are nesting there. Meet in Milpitas at 8:00 a.m., on Calaveras Rd. at its junction with Highway 17. Bring lunch, and cup for coffee Dorothy will have for us.

THE MAY MEETING will be held in Palo Alto on Monday, May 12, in the Junior Museum, at the Palo Alto Community Center, at 7:30 p.m. There will be a short business meeting before the regular program at 8 o'clock. As speaker of the evening, Mrs. Frank A. Scott (Dorothy Dean Scott) will show her lovely motion picture film, "Wild Flowers of California." We remember with pleasure her "Birds of California" which she presented so delightfully at our January 1951 meeting.

Preceding the meeting there will be a no host dinner at Stanford Union, on the Stanford campus, at 6 o'clock, to meet Mr. and Mrs. Scott. No reservations will be necessary.

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD TRIP will be taken on May 14, to Montalvo, near Saratoga, with Clyde and Agnes Prusman as leaders. The grounds are beautiful, and there are many paths to explore and birds to look for. Meet at main gate to Montalvo, on Saratoga-Los Gatos Rd., at 8:00 a.m.

FINAL AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR FOR THIS SEASON comes Thursday, May 15, when Mr. Bert Harwell presents "Canada North," in Montgomery Theatre in the San Jose Civic Auditorium, at 8 p.m. This time Mr. Harwell will take his audience into the far north to see birds which nest on the tundra—Golden Plover, Snow Bunting, Willow Ptarmigan; carpets of brilliantly colored wild flowers; the summer round-up of reindeer by the Eskimos; the midnight sun. Come early if you want a good seat. Tickets will be 74 cents (students 50 cents) and can be had at the door.

There will be a dinner to meet Mr. Harwell at the De Anza Hotel, 237 W. Santa Clara St., at 6 o'clock the same evening, \$2.00 a plate. Send reservations to Mrs. Grace Brubaker, 191 Mountain View Ave., San Jose (CLaybourn 8-2289), so that she will surely have them by Monday, May 12. The dinner will be in a private room and will be informal. Mr. Harwell, who is on the staff of the National Audubon Society, is friendly and good company.

FIELD TRIP TO SEARSVILLE LAKE will be taken on Saturday, May 17, with Les and Nell Sleeper as leaders, to record nesting birds in that area, for our Cooperative Nesting Survey. Meet at the gate to Searsville Lake at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

WEEK-END CAMPING TRIP TO ARROYO SECO will be taken on May 24 and 25, with Charles and Viola Anderson as leaders. This is an opportunity to visit an easily reached section of the Santa Lucia Mts. in Monterey Co. There is a Forest Service camp at Arroyo Seco, or we may camp on the property of a friend of the Andersons who has a cabin near the camp. There are sleeping quarters in the cabin which can be had by writing to the Andersons at 1015 Connely Dr., Salinas; and we can use the kitchen. Meet about 2 miles south of Soledad at the junction of U.S. Highway 101 and the Paraiso Springs Rd., near bridge over Salinas R., at 3:00 p.m. Bring camping equipment and food for dinner, breakfast, and Sun. lunch.

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD TRIP will be taken on May 28 to Huddart Park in Woodside, with Charles and Elizabeth Mueser. It will be interesting exploring for birds in this new park. Meet in Woodside, at Caldwell's Store at 8:00 a.m.

BUTANO FOREST. The Palo Alto Women's Club, in cooperation with the San Mateo County Recreation Department, is planning a cavalcade to Butano Forest on Saturday, June 7, to give as many persons as possible an opportunity to see some of the forest, and to raise funds to contribute toward the purchase of this last stand of virgin redwoods in our area. The cavalcade will leave the Palo Alto Women's Club House, at the corner of Homer Ave. and Cowper St., at 10 a.m. The tickets will be \$1.75, but drivers will not be asked to buy tickets. Bring lunch. Coffee will be furnished.

Leona Jakobsen

FIELD TRIP DATES FOR JUNE:

June 8, Sunday, to Eagle Rock, in the Santa Cruz Mts.  
June 11, Wednesday morning bird trip, to Alum Rock Park  
June 22, Sunday, to Portola State Park  
June 25, Wednesday morning bird trip, in the Palo Alto area  
June 28, Saturday, to Point Lobos State Park

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REPORT OF WILD FLOWER TRIP TO UVAS VALLEY, April 12, 1952. Wild-flower profusion, because of the abundant rains of the preceding weeks, was an event realized for the group which met in ten cars for the trip. Driving south on Senter Road, our way was bordered in places by mustard in tall stands which, on time with the calendar, were changing in composition from the common mustard of winter (Brassica campestris) to that of spring (Brassica arvensis). Soon we arrived on open hills clothed with native wild flowers. In lavish abundance and forming a mosaic of varied colors were colonies of Owl's Clover, Tidy Tips, Chinese Houses, and Linanthus; while elsewhere were close-growing mixtures of Wild Onion, Ithuriel's Spear, Pin-point Clover, and a purple larkspur. An exciting find was a nice patch of Bitter Root. A few steps brought us to extensive areas of Gold Fields, a species also visible as streaks and ribbons of gold on hillslopes far in the distance. Scattered among all these colors were large tufts of native bunch Blue Grass and Spear Grass, which were further reminders of the undisturbed nature of the scene, and of the appearance of all the hills about before the white man came.

Continuing by car in a generally southeastward direction, with an occasional stop to examine a swale filled with Meadow Foam, or a roadside bank crowned with Yellow Pansies and Checker Bloom, we ultimately arrived at our lunch spot in the Uvas Canyon. Here, beneath Redwoods and Madrones, we found white violets (Viola ocellata) in abundance, and sharp eyes discovered a hidden clump of Checker Lily. On our return from the canyon we stopped by the roadside, first to admire its border of Fringe Pod, and then to climb a nearby rocky outcrop of serpentine. On deeper soil surrounding the outcrop we found in profusion Bird's-eyes Gilia and Cream Cups, while on the thinner soil higher up was Evening Snow and the smaller-flowered Linanthus ambiguus.

Our last stop was also a notable one. Flowering Ash is seldom encountered so handily by a roadside, and it was ready to burst into bloom. With it, within a radius of twenty feet, were seven other species of shrubs, most of which were in flower. They included Oso Berry, Red-berry, Hard Tack, Snowberry, Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry, Pipestem Clematis, Holly-leaf Cherry, and, of course, Poison Oak! Incidentally, this aggregate of shrubs in so small a space represented seven different plant families.

Carl Sharsmith

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO ALVISO AND DUMBARTON BRIDGE, April 19, 1952.

A strong, cold NW wind blew all day. Total numbers of shorebirds were high but probably not at the spring peak. The caravan first proceeded slowly along Los Esteros Road to Zanker Road. The following were noted (large numbers are estimates): Great Blue Heron, 2; American Egret, 60; Black-crowned Night Heron, 2; Mallard, 6; Cinnamon Teal, 20; Pintail, 12; Shoveller, 300; Ruddy Duck, 1; Turkey Vulture, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Clapper Rail, 2; Coot, 100; Black-bellied Plover, 20; Semipalmated Plover, 1; Killdeer, 20; Hudsonian Curlew, 10; Greater Yellow-legs, 10; (a Lesser Yellow-legs seen Apr. 20); Willet, 200; Dowitcher, 500; Western Sandpiper, 2000; Least Sandpiper, 50; Red-backed Sandpiper, 50; Black-necked Stilt, 2, in marsh near garbage dump; Avocet, 50; California Gull, Ring-billed Gull (100, both species); Forster Tern, 50; Burrowing Owl, 2; Vaux Swift, 2; Barn Swallow, 10; Cliff Swallow, 500; Pipit, 2; Meadowlark, 10; Red-winged Blackbird, 20; Brewer Blackbird, 20; House Finch, 20; Savannah Sparrow, 10; Song Sparrow, 10.

At noon the group proceeded to Dumbarton Bridge via Palo Alto, and across the bridge to the KGO transmitter. There were very few birds around the salt ponds, so we returned to the east end of the bridge and parked off the road on south side of bridge where the state bridge maintenance equipment is kept. The tide was receding rapidly and several thousand shorebirds were feeding on the exposed mud flats. The following were seen: Pied-billed Grebe, 1; Double-crested Cormorant, 1; Great Blue Heron, 1; American Egret, 3; Shoveller, 2; Lesser Scaup, 200; American Golden-eye, 1; White-winged Scoter, 10; Surf Scoter, 10; Black-bellied Plover, 50; Hudsonian Curlew, 10; Willet, 100; Dowitcher, 200; Marbled Godwit, 200; Western Sandpiper, 3000; Least Sandpiper, fewer than Western, perhaps 500-1000; Red-backed Sandpiper, 100; Avocet, 50; Ring-billed Gull, 1; Glaucous-winged Gull, 1; Caspian Tern, 2; Forster Tern, 100; Cliff Swallow, 200, building under bridge; Savannah Sparrow, 10; Song Sparrow, 1. A dead female Harbor Seal was found on the beach about half a mile south of the bridge.

Charles Sibley.

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NEW MEMBERS. The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society takes pleasure in welcoming its new members.

Mr. C. F. Jenkins, Rt. 1, Box 266, Bainter Ave., Los Gatos  
Mrs. J. R. Masson, 2230 Amherst St., Palo Alto  
Miss Harriet Mundy, 385 Northampton Dr., Palo Alto  
Mrs. Frances Sample, 1047 Noel Dr., Menlo Park  
Mr. David L. Samuels, 610 University Ave., Palo Alto  
Mr. Ralph Emerson Wells, 935 Addison Ave., Palo Alto

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SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Branch of NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

President --- Albert J. Wool, Rt. 2, Box 728, San Jose  
Corr. Sec. -- Miss Eva Allen, P.O. Box 772, Los Gatos  
Editor ----- Charles G. Sibley, Rt. 1, Box 241, Los Gatos  
Assoc. Ed. -- Miss Emily Smith, Rt. 1, Box 387, Los Gatos

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, alternately in San Jose and Palo Alto. Guests are always welcome.