

BULLETIN OF THE
SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

March

1953

CALENDAR FOR MARCH

The Fourth Audubon Screen Tour in the San Jose series comes next Friday, March 6, when Allan Cruickshank presents "Santa Lucia Sea Cliffs." This is a Screen Tour close at home—our own California coast where, south of Monterey, the Santa Lucia Mountains drop abruptly into the Pacific. In this scenic tour we are promised more than fifty species of birds which live along that coast, and also Sea Otters romping in the surf. Mr. Cruickshank's skill in imitating bird calls, his ready wit, and his ability at story-telling, all make him a popular lecturer.

The Screen Tour will be presented at 8:00 p.m. in the Roosevelt Junior High School auditorium on East Santa Clara Street at 19th Street (not Montgomery Theatre, which was explained in the February Bulletin). Tickets are 85 cents (students 55 cents) and will be on sale at the Roosevelt auditorium the evening of the performance.

At the Matinee Audubon Screen Tour in Redwood City on Saturday afternoon, March 7, Allan Cruickshank will present "Santa Lucia Sea Cliffs," the same film he shows at San Jose the evening before. The Screen Tour will be presented at 1:30 p.m. in the Sequoia Union High School auditorium. Single admission tickets are 75 cents for adults and 40 cents for students and children, and can be purchased at the door.

Regular March Meeting in Palo Alto on Monday, March 9, at 8:00 p.m. in the Junior Museum at the Community Center. The Program will consist of some fine motion pictures of California wildlife. These films have been recently acquired by San Jose State College. There will be time also for reports of field observations by members.

Wednesday Morning Bird Trip on March 11 to Mrs. F. Wesley Wright's home, 540 Atherton Ave., Atherton. Mrs. Wright is planning an interesting walk from her place to nearby Bear Gulch Reservoir. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Mrs. Wright's home or, if you are not sure of the way, in Palo Alto at the S. F. Station in time to start promptly at 8:45.

The Field Trip scheduled for blossom time will have to be moved forward a week if any fruit tree blossoms are to be enjoyed. Sunday, March 15, is the date now set. Dr. and Mrs. James A. Cutting will lead an easy walk in the foothills near Saratoga, including Woodhill Ranch, the home of Mrs. Fremont Older. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the intersection of the Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road and Prospect Road. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning Bird Trip on March 25 to the old Glen Una Ranch, with a walk up Hume Canyon back of the original ranch house. Meet at home of Miss Emily Smith, 19651 Glen Una Drive (gray house with hedge around it, at corner of Bellecourt) at 8:30 a.m. Turn off Saratoga-Los Gatos Road at either Bellecourt or Glen Una Dr., about a mile from Saratoga.

Audubon Convention at Asilomar, March 28-31, taking as its theme "Conservation in your own backyard and conservation education as related to California's needs." A preliminary folder indicates a fine program of panel discussions, field trips, and films (one by Stephen F. Briggs on the American Flamingo). You will soon receive the official program and reservation blanks.

California Conservation Week begins with Bird and Arbor Day on March 7. The enclosed yellow sheet, from the San Francisco office of the National Audubon Society, warns of threats to conservation in California.

The Sierra Club Yodeler reports two conservation bills introduced in the 83rd Congress by Congressman Leroy Johnson of California. House Resolution 1037 would create Green River Canyons National Park from a portion of Dinosaur National Monument. The threat to this scenic area from the construction of dams has been temporarily removed, for reclamation authorities have been instructed to search for alternative building sites. The second bill, H.R. 1038, would prohibit construction of dams or other large man-made projects within or effecting any national park or monument.

PROPOSED BY-LAWS

Included with the Bulletin this month is a copy of the proposed by-laws, as prepared by the By-Laws Committee, under the chairmanship of Wilbur Luick. These by-laws have been approved by the Board of Directors, and are herewith presented for your ratification.

You will note that the by-laws make provision for appointment of a committee to consider future revision. It is fully recognized by the Board that the by-laws as here constituted are not a perfect instrument and may need some modification to bring them into conformity with the wishes of the membership. It was felt by the Board that since provision existed for such future change, the by-laws should be ratified as they stand in order to give us a working basis for operation.

Please note that ballots and envelopes in which they are to be mailed must not carry sender's identification, to be considered valid.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

SPRING MIGRANTS. First record of an Orange-crowned Warbler this season in our area was Feb. 22, near Saratoga (Emily Smith and Charles Sibley). Like the record for the Allen Hummingbird reported in February Bulletin this is a few days earlier than usual. On Feb. 25, at the same place, Agnes Prusman and others on the Wednesday morning bird trip heard an Orange-crowned Warbler singing quite persistently. There have been many reports of Allen Hummingbirds this month, one from Jerry Buzzell on Feb. 8, at Los Altos. A Rufous Hummingbird was seen at a syrup feeder near Cupertino on Feb. 10 by Lucia DeWolf. Did any one see Violet-green Swallows in Santa Clara Valley during February? Tree Swallows?

NEST-BUILDING. On Feb. 1, in Pacific Grove, Lynn Robbins saw a pair of Yellow-billed Magpies "carry large twigs into a grove of pines—made several trips in just a few minutes." Al Wool saw magpies "packing sticks" on Feb. 3, at his ranch east of Milpitas. (As early as Mar. 14, 1952, Jo Ouder Kirk heard magpie nestlings being fed near San Martin.) Pair of Bushtits were busily starting nest in Atlas Cedar near San Jose on Feb. 4 (Fanny Zwaal), and two nests were being roofed over near Saratoga on Feb. 25 (Agnes Prusman and others on Wednesday a.m. bird trip). Female House Finch was actively nest-building in vine by garage door in Palo Alto on Feb. 26 (Harriet Mundy)—important Nesting Survey record!

OTHER OBSERVATIONS. Flock of 94 Canada Geese on grassy slope by Crystal Springs Reservoir, Feb. 14 (Chas. Zwaal). Near the geese a Bald Eagle was seen perched at top of small tree at edge of reservoir (Fanny Zwaal). Earlier, in Mt. Hermon, Adist Boylan wrote that on Dec. 20 a Bald Eagle "flew over our yard—a big thing with white head and tail—flew low, just over treetops." Grace Brubaker has had an unaccountable visitor to her feed tray quite regularly during February—a female or immature Western Tanager!

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

To Morgan Hill Area, January 18, 1953. In spite of the threat of rain, seven cars showed up at Morgan Hill to do some birding in Paradise Valley, in the hills west of town.

The only ~~spot~~^{stop} in Paradise Valley was at the Machado School, beside the Llagas Creek. Here and in the orchards on both sides of the creek, the birds were "good to us," showing up in goodly numbers, both as to species and individuals.

After a couple of hours in the above area, we visited the Greefs' cattle ranch in Eastman Canyon, in the Uvas Creek region, hoping to see the Wood Ducks and other ducks which come to the reservoir there. We hiked up to the reservoir in the beautiful canyon back of the ranch houses, but we and the ducks did not happen to be there at the same time. However the scenery made up for the disappointment. Many thanks were voiced to Mr. and Mrs. Greeff for their kind permission to enter their property.

The weatherman was good to us and withheld the rain until we had crossed Santa Clara Valley to the foothills east of San Martin in time for lunch under cover.

Birds seen at Machado School: Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shafted Flicker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Nuttall Woodpecker, Scrub Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Plain Titmouse (singing), Bushtit (flock), White-breasted Nuthatch (tooting its song), Brown Creeper (singing), Bewick Wren (singing), California Thrasher (singing), Robin, Varied Thrush, Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (singing), Hutton Vireo (singing), Audubon Warbler, House Finch, Green-backed Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee (singing), Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco (singing), and Song Sparrow (singing and giving territorial threat displays).

Additional birds, seen in Eastman Canyon: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, California Quail, Killdeer, Band-tailed Pigeon (flock of 37), Anna Hummingbird (singing), Belted Kingfisher, Black Phoebe, Steller Jay, Wren-tit (singing), Brewer Blackbird, and White-crowned Sparrow (flock of about 60).

Jo and Bill Ouderkirk, Leaders

To Crystal Springs and Pilarcitos Reservoirs. On the bright, warm Saturday morning of January 30, 1953, thirty members and guests of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society met at the Pulgas Water Temple at the south end of the Crystal Springs Reservoir. We soon moved on to a place beside the Canada Road where a wide expanse of the upper reservoir could be seen. There were many ducks and other water birds, but only fifteen of the hundred or more Canada Geese which are usually seen there at this time of year.

Several stops were made along the Sawyer Road on the edge of the lower reservoir. A special stop was made to enjoy the rare Leatherwood shrubs which were daintily covered with yellow flowers. From the San Andreas Dam, with permission of the San Francisco Water Department, we were privileged to make the trip to Pilarcitos Reservoir. There were no water birds on the reservoir, but along a wooded trail, where there were fine Douglas Firs, many Varied Thrushes were seen, and Golden-crowned Kinglets were lisping their calls. Below the dam, along the Pilarcitos Creek, Pine Siskins were picking seeds out of the little "cones" of alder trees, and overhead Red-tailed Hawks were apparently courting.

During the trip 63 species were observed: Eared Grebe, 2; Western Grebe, 6; Pied-billed Grebe, 4; Double-crested Cormorant, 1; Great Blue Heron, 4; Canada Goose, 15; Mallard, 17; Pintail, 4; Shoveller, 6; Ring-necked Duck, 36; Scaup Duck, 1; Buffle-head, 2; Ruddy Duck, 40; American Merganser, 1 female; Turkey Vulture, 7; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Cooper Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 6; Sparrow Hawk, 5; Coot, many; Herring Gull, about 50; Ring-billed Gull, 15; Band-tailed Pigeon, flock of about 100; Anna Hummingbird, 1; Allen Hummingbird, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Red-shafted Flicker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black Phoebe, 2; Steller Jay, 5; Scrub Jay, 18; Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 12; Plain Titmouse, 2; Bushtit, flock of about 30; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Pigmy Nuthatch, 12 (in Douglas Firs at Pilarcitos); Brown Creeper, 1; Wren-tit, 10; Winter Wren, 1 (singing); Bewick Wren, 2; California Thrasher, 2; Robin, 50; Varied Thrush, 30; Hermit Thrush, 6; Western Bluebird, 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 10; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6; Hutton Vireo, 6; Western Meadowlark, 8; Red-winged

Blackbird (song heard); Brewer Blackbird, 6; Purple Finch, 2; House Finch, 2; Pine Siskin, 18; Green-backed Goldfinch, 8; Spotted Towhee, 3; Brown Towhee, 8; Oregon Junco, 30; White-crowned Sparrow, 30; Golden-crowned Sparrow, 3; Fox Sparrow, 1; and Song Sparrow, 4.

Robert Wright and Les Sleeper, Leaders

To Tomales Point, February 15, 1953. A cool but beautiful, sunny morning greeted the nine-car caravan of members and friends which made the trip from Point Reyes Station to the McClure ranch on Tomales Point. There were two short stops, one by a lagoon at upper end of Tomales Bay and the other by a grove of Bishop Pine west of Inverness. The drive out over the "downs" of Tomales Point, with the ocean on one hand and Tomales Bay on the other, afforded marvellous panoramic views. Then, following cow paths, there was a 2-mile walk to the end of the Point, where the promised Harlequin Ducks were found. Good views of these most beautiful of the sea ducks were hard to obtain, because the ducks were swimming and diving in choppy waters.

Those who took this rugged trip were amply rewarded by a list of 86 species: Common Loon, Pacific Loon, Red-throated Loon, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe (150 seen at one time), Pied-billed Grebe, White Pelican, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Brandt Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant (showing the white flank patches of the breeding season), Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Snowy Egret, Black Brant, Mallard, Pintail, Canvas-back, Scaup Duck, American Golden-eye, Buffle-head, Harlequin Duck, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, California Quail, Coot, Black Oyster-catcher, Killdeer, Black Turnstone, Wilson Snipe, Red-backed Sandpiper, Glaucous-winged Gull, Western Gull, California Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Heermann Gull, California Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Mourning Dove, Horned Owl (near McClure ranch), Anna Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-shafted Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Black Pheobe, Say Pheobe, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Steller Jay, Scrub Jay, Raven, Crow, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Plain Titmouse, Wren-tit, Bewick Wren, Robin, Varied Thrush, Western Bluebird (many on the "downs"), American Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Hutton Vireo, Myrtle Warbler, Audubon Warbler (many on the "downs"), English Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer Blackbird, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Green-backed Goldfinch, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

Mr and Mrs. Carlyle Sather, Leaders.

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Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month (except July and August) alternately in San Jose and Palo Alto. Guests are welcome.