



BULLETIN OF THE
SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

April 1953

SPRING MIGRATION

In central California the spring migration "officially" begins with the arrival of the Allen Hummingbird in late January. By the time the first Orange-crowned Warbler reaches the San Francisco Bay region in late February the Allen Hummers may already have hatched their first brood. March and April are the months of greatest migratory activity and by late April in normal years all of the smaller migratory land birds which nest here have arrived.

Although there is considerable variation in the date of arrival of a given species from year to year the degree of precision is nevertheless remarkable. It is now well established that the basic timing of migration is controlled by the gradually changing day-length and modified to some extent by weather conditions en route.

On their northward migration the Cliff Swallows of the Pacific Coast arrive at the southern border of California on March 10 (average). By March 15 they have usually reached Monterey, by March 20 they will have appeared at Eureka, March 30 in southern Oregon, April 20 at Portland, and April 30 at Seattle. Western Tanagers cross the Mexican border into California about April 22. By April 30 they have arrived at Monterey and are found in Mendocino County by May 10. The Western Tanagers which migrate along the Sierra Nevada breed farther north than coastal birds and move faster. By May 10, when coastal birds have proceeded only to northern California, Western Tanagers are arriving at the Canadian border in the Cascades.

Following are the dates of the first-seen arrivals for the 15 most common summer resident birds in Berkeley, California. These dates are from the records of various ornithologists covering the years 1911-1947. (Weston, Condor, 50:81-82). Arrival dates for the San Jose area will average one or two days earlier than for Berkeley.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Earliest arrival date</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Latest arrival date</u>
Allen Hummingbird	Jan. 29	Feb. 10	Feb. 24
Orange-crowned Warbler	Feb. 21	Mar. 1	Mar. 14
House Wren	Mar. 4	Mar. 20	Apr. 6
Warbling Vireo	Mar. 9	Mar. 22	Apr. 6
Wilson's (Pileolated) Warbler	Mar. 10	Mar. 22	Apr. 3
Western Flycatcher	Mar. 11	Mar. 22	Apr. 9
Cliff Swallow	Mar. 15	Mar. 22	Apr. 8
Chipping Sparrow	Mar. 29	Apr. 12	Apr. 26
Tolmie Warbler	Apr. 2	Apr. 15	Apr. 26
Black-headed Grosbeak	Apr. 4	Apr. 12	Apr. 22
Yellow Warbler	Apr. 7	Apr. 18	May 2
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Apr. 8	Apr. 21	May 6
Lazuli Bunting	Apr. 12	Apr. 25	May 7
Swainson's (Russet-backed) Thrush	Apr. 14	Apr. 25	May 6
Western Wood Pewee	Apr. 18	Apr. 29	May 8

Charles Sibley

HOUSE FOR SALE - On an acre between Los Gatos and Saratoga; secluded and quiet except for high level of bird song from Feb. to June; large live oaks and other trees; mature shrubs; a creek; deer often seen, Gray Foxes and Screech Owls as nocturnal entertainment; Olive-sided Flycatchers, Western Tanagers, etc. as breeding birds. Owners moving to Ithaca, N.Y. and hoping to find another place just like it!
'Phone ELgato 4-4429 - (Please pass the word along)

Charles and Frances Sibley

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

SPRING ARRIVALS - First report of Violet-green Swallows came from Dorothy Wool: one bird on Feb. 23 at the Wool's ranch in foothills east of Milpitas. On Mar. 23 near Saratoga (Glen Una Dr.), 5 Violet-greens were flying about a house where Violet-greens nested last year (Emily Smith). Mar. 30 near Los Altos, Jerry Buzzell observed 4 Violet-greens flying about "a tall live oak stub" which offered a nest hole. Jerry also reported Cliff Swallows in Los Altos on Mar. 25. A House Wren was seen on Mar. 13 near Saragoga, giving sputtering call notes; on Mar 24 brief song was heard in same place (E.S.) Three Warbling Vireos, Mar. 21, were singing in different places near Saratoga (E.S.). Charles Zwaal reported a Bullock Oriole Mar. 23 in San Jose. On Mar. 25 Jo Ouderkirk, near San Martin, saw "a male oriole at the bird bath", and on the same day the Wools saw their first Bullock Oriole at their ranch. The chattering call notes and brief song of a Solitary Vireo were heard near Saratoga on Mar. 26 (E.S.) and in Los Gatos on Mar. 29 (Gladys Record). Miss Record had her first Western Flycatcher on Mar. 26. The next day there were 3 Western Flycatchers near Saratoga (E.S.). There have been two reports of Pileolated Warblers: on Mar. 27, one bird in Los Gatos (G.R.) and on Mar. 29 two or three in canyon east of Milpitas (Manette Wittgenstein). Four Western Kingbirds had arrived at the Wool's ranch on Mar. 29.

WINTER VISITANTS - In Jan. a Yellow-shafted Flicker was seen in company with Red-shafted Flickers at Fountain Oaks Ranch, Morgan Hill by Mrs. Helen A. de S. Canavarro. Mrs. Canavarro also reports 12 Tree Swallows near Watsonville, Feb. 5. The rare Harris Sparrow, in company with White-crowned Sparrows, was a visitor this month (Mar. 17-25) to Grace Brubaker's feed tray in the east foothills. It was an immature bird but already showing "a complete circle of black around its pinkish bill". Since late Feb. both imm. and adult White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrows have been showing evidence of prenuptial molt of the crown feathers. The molt is especially noticeable in the imm. White-crowns which are replacing brown and tan head stripes for the black and white of adult birds. During March there has been an increase in volume of song among the "crowned" sparrows, and during late March much sparring and chasing when the birds are feeding on the ground. Audubon Warblers are undergoing a more extensive molt. They were dull birds when they arrived last fall, but the nuptial plumage of the males is coming in with gaudy splashes of black and yellow. On Feb. 26 a male, its molt incomplete, was singing a little near Saratoga (Emily Smith). Audubon Warblers and both White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrows were present near Saratoga on the last day of March--also Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit and Varied thrushes, Fox Sparrows and Cedar Waxwings (E.S.). Manette Wittgenstein saw 2 or 3 Varied Thrushes in a canyon east of Milpitas on Mar. 29. Only daily records by many persons can determine dates of departure of those birds which winter in the Santa Clara Valley. Send last dates to the Editor.

NESTING BIRDS - On the Wed. trip to Atherton, Mar. 11, Roberta Wright pointed out nests of White-breasted Nuthatch and Plain Titmouse in holes in oaks. Both were lining their nests. On Mar. 25 on the Wed. trip near Saratoga (Glen Una) a female Lawrence Goldfinch was building in a Deodar cedar. Nearby a female Green-backed Goldfinch was lining her nest in a Monterey pine. In the same area a Brown Towhee was incubating (nest in English laurel) and a pair of Bush-tits were building in a Norway spruce. Not far away a female Oregon Junco was collecting dog hairs, probably for nest lining. (E.S.). On Mar. 22, Eva McRae found an Oregon Junco building on a shelf under the eaves of her home near Los Gatos--the shelf was used last year by a Western Flycatcher. On Mar. 20, Georgina Burke found a junco's nest with 3 eggs on the ground in her garden near Saratoga. Two days later there were 4 eggs and incubation had begun. On Apr. 3 the eggs had hatched.

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As indicated by the "ad" at the bottom of page 1, the Sibleys are leaving California. Dr. Sibley has accepted the post of Associate Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University, replacing Dr. Arthur A. Allen who is retiring.

Emily Smith

REPORT OF FIELD TRIP TO FOOTHILLS NEAR SARATOGA, March 15, 1953. After the strain and worry of filing Income Tax returns, thirty-seven Audubon Society members took a day off to enjoy birding at Blossom Time. The group journeyed to Woodshill Ranch, the home of Mrs. Fremont Older, where the orchards and wooded ravines were alive with bird activity. In no time at all Pat Donaghey and Pete Botsford had discovered chickadees nesting in one of the old tree portals at the entrance to the ranch. When a likely flicker hole was seen in a telephone pole, Pat knocked on the pole to find out if anyone were at home. Evidently no one was, and Mrs. Older suggested the Audubon Society leave its calling card. Along the way three Bushtit nests were found, all in live oaks. At one a Bushtit entered with an insect in its bill. The other two nests were in the process of being built. Into one the birds were carrying billfuls of what looked like willow cotton, and into the other bits of lichen which had been pulled off the branches of a nearby oak.

To the beginners the air seemed filled with a confusion of bird songs, but to the initiated it was a grand chorus from which the individual singers could be recognized and named. For the leaders the greatest thrill of the trip was our first view of a Townsend Warbler.

From Woodshill Ranch the caravan of cars wound its way to our home atop Arrowhead Lane, where lunches were eaten in view of the blossoming valley below. This ended the scheduled trip, but a few die-hards went on to Stevens Creek Dam for more birding and "blossoming." When we returned to our home our enthusiasm was further heightened by the discovery of a Lewis Woodpecker on the topmost branch of our big oak tree.

Birds listed at Woodshill Ranch: Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, California Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Anna Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Allen Hummingbird, Red-shafted Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Violet-green Swallow, Steller Jay, Scrub Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Plain Titmouse, Bushtit, Wren-tit, Bewick Wren, California Thrasher, Varied Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler Audubon Warbler, Townsend Warbler, Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, Green-backed Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

James and Gerturde Cutting, Leaders.

WINTER BIRD-POPULATION STUDY. Congratulations are due Patrick Donaghey (age 11) and Peter Botsford (age 10) for an excellent winter census of the birds of a 125-acre area near Stanford University. On six trips between Jan. 4 and Feb. 8, 1953, these young naturalists recorded 43 species, with an average of 27 species on each trip. They kept counts of the number of each species and, with the aid of Pat's mother, have prepared a formal, typed report for the National Audubon Society.

CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Late Afternoon Visit on Thursday, April 9, to Mrs. Lucia DeWolf's home, 22000 Regnart Rd. (between Cupertino and Saratoga), to see three species of hummingbirds buzzing about syrup feeders. Meet at 4:00 p.m. at the intersection of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd. and Prospect Rd. If you can stay until six o'clock the show will be at its best.

Wild Flower Trip on Saturday, April 11, to serpentine hills south of San Jose, where low-growing annuals carpet the ground with color, and Horned Larks and Rock Wrens nest. There will be short walks on several hills, to see the flowers close at hand and to hear the larks "sing at heaven's gate." Meet promptly at 8:00 a.m. in San Jose, by the State College campus, corner of E. San Carlos and 5th Streets. Bring lunch.

Regular April Meeting in San Jose on Monday, April 13, at 8:00 p.m. in Room 210, Science Building, San Jose State College. Dr. Matt F. Vessel, Professor of Science Education at San Jose State College, and an active member of our Audubon Society, will talk with Kodachrome slides. Dr. Vessel has been very successful helping beginners to know birds. During the program there will be time for reports of field observations by members.

Shorebird Field Trip on Sunday, April 19, to salt-marsh areas in the vicinity of Alviso, Sunnyvale, and Byxbee Park in Palo Alto. The spring migration should be at its peak at this time, with maximum numbers of shorebirds present. Meet at Alviso School in time to start the trip at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch, and a spotting scope if you have one.

Wednesday Morning Bird Trip, April 22, to Searsville Lake to visit the heronry and to look for the many birds which nest in the vicinity of the lake during this time of the year.

Learning to know the Common Birds and will illustrate his talk with

Charles and Elizabeth Mueser will lead the trip. Meet in Palo Alto at the S.P. station at 8:00 a.m., or at the entrance to Searsville Lake at 8:30.

Last Audubon Screen Tour in San Jose this season comes Friday evening, April 24. Walter H. Shackleton, who comes from Kentucky, will present "Oddities in Nature." This beautiful color film stresses nature oddities--walking fern, flying squirrel, praying mantis; how a vireo weaves its nest, why a spider does not become entangled in its own web. But when one sees in the film that these "oddities" of plants and animals are marvellous adaptations for successful living, then nature no longer seems odd.

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. 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, April 25, Mr. Shackleton will present "Oddities in Nature", 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 children and students, and can be purchased at the door.

Field Trip to Alum Rock Park on Saturday, April 25. Let's try a double trip, one for beginners and those who still feel like beginners, and the other for the rest. Children who want to know more about birds and other interesting things along a trail, will be welcome in the beginners group, which John Harville will lead. If you have not come on field trips because you thought only experienced birders go on these trips (which isn't the case at all), try this one. Meet promptly at 8:00 a.m. in San Jose at the corner of E. San Carlos and 5th Streets, by the State College campus. Bring lunch. There are sure to be empty seats in some one's car for those who need transportation.

FIELD TRIP DATES FOR MAY AND JUNE (These trips have been asked for. Are there other trips you would like to take? Please let Emily Smith know).

May 3, Sunday, to Al and Dorothy Wool's ranch, east from Milpitas.

May 9, Saturday, to Santa Cruz Mts., in vicinity of Montezuma School.

May 17, Sunday, to Fremont Park or to Pilarcitos Reservoir.

June 6, Saturday, to Mount Diablo State Park.

June 21, Saturday, to Butano Forest.

Midweek morning bird trips on second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

VOTE ON BY-LAWS. Eighty-three ballots were cast, of which 80 were affirmative and 3 negative. At the next meeting of the Board of Directors the tellers will certify the results of the vote, after which the by-laws will officially go into effect.

The Society is indebted to Wilbur Luick and his committee, Emily Smith and Henri Hill, for their fine job in revising the by-laws. This was one of those tedious but necessary tasks which come up at intervals in every society. We were fortunate indeed to have had the benefit of the experience of this trio.

NEW MEMBERS we are glad to welcome to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society:

Peter Botsford, 111 Floresta Way, Ladera, Menlo Park

Miss Lillian E. Gorham, 2 Augusta Court, Los Gatos

Miss Gladys Jasper, 1935 Walnut Grove Ave., San Jose 14

Miss Jeanie Nieri, 425 East Fuller St., Redwood City

Mrs. Gladys Watters Scott, 2 Augusta Court, Los Gatos

With the death of Eva Allen on March 8, 1953, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society lost a faithful corresponding secretary. Because Eva loved the outdoors—she was a lumberman's daughter in her native state of Washington—she joined our Society in March 1950. She was happy in her association with the Society and always had its interests very much at heart.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Branch of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

President --- Dr. H. B. Humphrey, 715 Fremont Ave., Mountain View

Secretary --- Mrs. Bernice Bottini, 918 Sunset Dr., Santa Clara

Treasurer --- Mrs. Eva McRae, San Jose State College, San Jose 14

Editor ----- Dr. Charles G. Sibley, 15880 Ravine Rd., Los Gatos

Assoc. Ed. --- Miss Emily Smith, 19651 Glen Una Dr., Los Gatos

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