

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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March 1954

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On Saturday, April 3, there will be an all day regional conference from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. sponsored by the California Office of the National Audubon Society. All members and interested friends are invited to attend. Speakers and discussion will consider topics dealing with current conservation policies, their effect today and for the future. The place is the San Francisco YMCA Camp at Jones Gulch in La Honda. The registration fee is one dollar. A special field trip is scheduled for Sunday, April 14th.

The Conference provides an excellent chance to spend a day with Audubon members and their friends as people will be there from all of Central California. For reservations, mail your request to National Audubon Society, 693 Sutter St., Room 201, San Francisco, California.

This announcement is made a month ahead as our next Bulletin will get the information too late for you to plan to attend the meeting. Lets have a good attendance at this conference, it will be interesting and stimulating.

Elsie Hoeck

MARCH CALENDAR

MEETINGS:

Regular Meeting, Monday, March 8, at 8:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Junior Museum. Location: Palo Alto Community Center frounds, enter off Middlefield Road.

Speaker for the evening will be Dr. H. B. Humphrey, who will present an illustrated lecture on "Some American Trees."

Board Meeting, Monday March 8th, prior to the regular meeting. Location: Junior Museum, Palo Alto Community Center. Notices to be sent.

FIELD TRIPS:

Wednesday morning, March 10th, at Roberta Wright's home at 540 Atherton Avenue, Atherton. Mrs. Wright will lead a leisurely walk from her place to Bear Gulch Reservoir. Meet in Palo Alto at the S.P. depot at 8:30 a.m. or at Mrs. Wright's home at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 13th, to new territory for a trip through wooded hillside and a stream. Jim Peterson will lead the group in the Anderson Dam area. Meet at San Jose State College, 5th and San Carlos at 8a.m or at Cockran Road, this side of the underpass on Highway 101 near Madrone Winery south of San Jose at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch.

Sunday, March 28th, George and Bernice Bottini will lead a walk from Stevens Creek Dam through pretty scenery full of many birds. Lunch will be enjoyed at the De Wolf Ranch at Cupertino (bring your own, of course.) Meet at the Permanente Junction, Grant and Stevens Creek Roads at 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday Morning, March 31st, to Villa Montalvo near Saratoga with Clyde and Agnes Prusman, leaders. The grounds are beautiful and there are many paths to explore for birds. Meet at the main gate on Saratoga-Los Gatos Road at 8:30 a.m.

These mid-week bird trips are for beginners especially - come and join us. Volunteers are needed to lead field trips. Members who would be willing to do so are requested to telephone the field trip Chairman at Ax. 6-7465. George Bottini.

REPORT ON THE NAME CONTEST

The Editorial Committee, Will Luick Chairman, received a list of 17 names submitted by various members participating in the contest to select a title for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Bulletin.

All of the suggested names were eminently suitable and attractive and the Committee found it difficult to select only four out of the list. Selection was made on the basis of the practise of other groups which have named their publication for a bird which might be considered characteristic or commonly found in the locality. Each of the birds presented for your vote is found in this area. We have tried to give a choice between marsh, meadow and hills and are adding a few lines of explanation for reasons which will be self explanatory.

(Ed. Note: How did it happen that no one but us thought of the "Wandering Tattler"? Didn't a little bird ever tell you??)

Please list your preferences as first, second, third and fourth choice: Write your choices on a letter or postcard and mail to Will Luick, 1027 Camino Ricardo, San Jose 25. Names of the winner and succeeding choices will be published in April. Funds were allocated at one time to be used for a design to accompany the bulletin title.

THESE ARE THE NAMES: listed alphabetically

The Avocet: (The member submitting this entry gave this explanation. "This idea is not original with me. It was suggested by Dr. Sibley, who called my attention to the fact that this bird, in a black and white sketch, would be an attractive illustration...used either in flight or standing...") See March Sunset.

The American Kestrel: (The member submitting this title referred to Dawson's "Birds of California" and gave this explanation quoted in part. "You are now probably wondering what in Bunker Hill is an American Kestrel. This name is an altogether too uncommon title for the pretty little falcon we seldom fail to see...hovering over a field or perched on a fence post. It is the sparrow hawk, an ugly name for such a beneficial bird...Our society's calling this hawk an "American Kestrel" would help toward the better welfare of this bird.)

The Chat: See Pages 160 and 150 in Peterson.

The Kite: See Pages 34 and 45 in Peterson.

The Avocet _____ The American Kestrel _____ The Chat _____ The Kite _____

FUTURE EVENTS OF INTEREST

During April, the Audubon Art Tour -- Bird Portraits in Color by Louis Agassiz Fuertes (Fuertes#1) -- will be in San Jose at the Rosicrucian Art Gallery. This group of original paintings is considered one of the most outstanding in the National Audubon collection of traveling exhibitions.

The Cooper Ornithological Society will hold its annual meeting in Tucson on April 22-24. A splendid program is being prepared; one of the highlights will be a symposium on warbler migration in desert areas. At this time of year the bird migration is at its height, making Tucson especially interesting to visit. The scientific sessions are open to the public and Audubon members are especially invited.

The Audubon Camp of California located in Sugar Bowl, Valley, 7,000 ft. elevation in the Sierra Nevada announces its two-week sessions for the summer of 1954.

June 27 to July 10
July 11 to July 24

July 25 to August 7
August 8 to August 21

August 22 to September 4

For reservations and information write to National Audubon Society, 693 Sutter St., Room 201, San Francisco. Anyone interested in nature and conservation may enroll, if 18 years or over. Campers are comfortably housed in frame buildings, with good food and in attractive surroundings. Board, lodging, instruction and transportation on regularly scheduled field trips and to and from train and bus stations are included in the \$95. charge for the two week period. A deposit of \$15. should be made with application for enrollment. The program provides unique experience in outdoor learning, under expert leadership.

NOTES FROM NATIONAL

The SONG OF THE LAND, a full-length film now being released by United Artists Corporation contains some fine photography and is basically interesting, but there are a number of errors of fact and some unfortunate assumptions in regard to the California Condor. Had the Society been consulted in this matter such misstatements as the following would not have occurred: "there are less than 40 Condors in existence; they lay only 1 egg every 4 years; they cannot lift their bodies by flapping but depend on air currents to rise from the ground; they are doomed to extinction".

Carl B. Koford is generally regarded as having the most authentic in Condor information. In his "The California Condor" these reports are given. The total number of Condors is estimated to be 60, fairly constant for the last 30 years or more: Condors first breed at 5 years old and produce one young every other year; in taking off from the ground they give more than 30 flaps before the first glide, usually until ten feet or more off the ground and after the first turn. It is an auxiliary device for supplementing soaring and gliding in special situations. With proper protection on their natural nesting grounds, this magnificent native species can be preserved for generations.

The story of the huge white pineapple-shaped blossoms of the fantastic Joshua Tree which blooms in April and May in the Mohave Desert and in similar arid areas in the Southwest United States is told in the Nov.-Dec. issue of Audubon Magazine. Anyone planning a spring visit to the Joshua Tree National Monument in San Bernadino and Riverside Counties this year will particularly enjoy reading it.

STUDENT GROUP ACTIVITIES

FIELD TRIP

On Saturday, March 6th, to Searsville Lake; notices will be sent on the time and the leader. Or call Jeanie Nieri, 425 East Fuller St., Redwood City.

Student Group Report: On Feb. 6th, Pat Donaghey led 6 members on the trip to Webb Ranch. The day was clear and sunny. As we walked along the San Francisquito Creek and up into the lower hills of the ranch, 42 species were seen: Robin; white-crowned sparrow, scrub jay, California quail, sparrow hawk, mourning dove, Brewer's blackbird, Song Sparrow, Meadowlark, Plain Titmouse, Brown Towhee, Bewick's Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hutton Vireo, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbird, Killdeer, Anna's Hummingbird, Green-backed Finch, Acorn Woodpecker, Cooper's Hawk, Black Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Pine Siskin, Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Redtailed Hawk, California Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, Varied Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Oregon Junco, Band-tailed Pigeon, Western Bluebird, Audubon Warbler, Bush-tit, English Sparrow, Housefinch. On the trip we saw a Cooper's Hawk being attacked by an Anna's Hummingbird. Altogether it was a very fine trip.

Pat Donaghey

FIELD TRIP REPORTS FOR FEBRUARY

Etta Waddington Smith reports a group of unusual birds seen on a trip to Alviso, Jan. 27th, Seen were 6 Holboell Grebes, 108 Ruddy Ducks; more than 500 Shovellers, 6 Pintails, 5 Scaup, 100 Bonaparte Gulls, 8 Eared Grebes, 1 Glaucous-winged Gull, 3 Burrowing Owls, 6 Red-shafted Flickers; 1 American Egret, 1 Black-crowned Night Heron, 2 Savannah Sparrows, 1 White-tailed Kite, There were also many ever present marsh birds: Avocets, Killdeer, Willets, Sandpipers, Coots, and the Saturday after the trip a flock of hundreds of Black-bellied Plover were observed.

Mrs. Helen A. DeS. Canaverro, observed 4 Mountain Plover, Jan. 4, in a newly plowed field east of Frazer Lake Rd. between Bloomfield Rd. and Shore Rd. southeast of Gilroy. On Jan. 6 in the same area there was a flock of 30 or more. Also many Killdeer, and Pipits, with them. Hunting overhead were 2 white-tailed Kites, 6 Sparrow Hawks and a Prairie Falcon. Mrs. De Canaverro is interested in knowing if anyone else saw Mountain Plover. She also saw 14 Canada Geese in a field with cattle near Soap Lake and a flock of 230 Long-billed Curlew, 30 Red-backed Sandpipers and 10 Greater Yellowlegs with large flocks of Redwing and Brewer Blackbirds.

Frank Cantu led a group of three cars on a rainy January 24th trip to try for a glimpse of the European Widgeon which had been reported seen on ponds near Fleishhacker Zoo. Although they were disappointed in this they saw flocks of Cedar Waxwings and Pine Siskins on the Skyline Blvd. drive and at their first stop at the chain of Lakes found Baldpate, Mallard, Shoveller (10 going around in a circle with heads under water), Ruddy Duck, Coot, Scaup, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned and Song Sparrow. Also Killdeer, Hermit Thrush, Sparrow Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Red-shafted Flicker, Brown Towhee, Robin and varieties of gulls.

Charles and Viola Anderson led a joint field trip with the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society to Moss Landing, Sunday, Feb. 7th. The day was exceptionally warm and visibility excellent. Between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. 68 birds were identified in the area. Perhaps the whistling swans, white-fronted Geese, green-winged Teal and other water birds on McClusky Slough highlighted the day, but the white-tailed Kite and American rough-leg on Elkhorn Slough received their share of attention. The bird list for the day included: Common Loon, Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Pacific Fulmar, Farallon Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Ring-necked Duck, Canvas-back, Lesser Scaup, White-winged Scooter, Surf Scooter, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, White-tailed Kite, American rough-legged Hawk, Coot, Snowy Plover, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson Snipe, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Least Sandpiper, Red-backed Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Glaucous-winged Gull, Western Gull, Forster Tern, Anna Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-shafted Flicker, Violet green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Pipit, Shrike, Audubon Warbler, English Sparrow, Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer Blackbird, Housefinch, Green-backed Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Song Sparrow.

Grace Brubaker was unable to lead the trip as planned to Alum Rock, Jan. 30th, but fourteen members attended and followed her plans. Elsie Hoeck reported that before lunch they visited the area beyond the Big Leaf Maple Picnic grounds and their two most exciting finds were an excellent view of 2 soaring Golden Eagles, which perched on a tree, and a hasty glimpse of the Dipper in the creekbed. Hermit thrushes were in abundance. The group also enjoyed the many ferns, polypody, coffee and maidenhair, the mosses, liverwort and fungi. The first wildflowers, milkmaids, were in bloom. Interesting changes have been made in development of the Junior Museum. Sam Smoker and Lawrence Moitozo are asking for help from the Audubon members for field trip leadership.

Birds observed were: Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, White-throated Swift, Belted Kingfisher (heard) Acorn Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Nuttall Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Stellar Jay, Scrub Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Titmouse, (heard), Bushtits, White-breasted Nuthatch, Wrentit, Dipper, Winter Wren, Bewick Wren, California Thrasher, Robin, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton Vireo, Audubon Warbler, California Purple Finch, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Song Sparrow.