

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETYBULLETIN

Vol. 1 No. 7

May 1954

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the afternoon session of the Audubon Conference at La Honda, on April 3, 1954, Mr. Carl W. Buchheister, vice-president of the National Audubon Society, addressed the group on the program and aims of the Society. He stated that the desperate need of our national, state and local conservation programs is an EDUCATED PUBLIC.

The Society has already done much in the area of education. For children there are the Audubon Clubs where an awareness of Nature is initiated. For adults there are the Audubon Camps where detailed study is made available under most attractive conditions. For all ages, there are presented Screen Tours, Sanctuary Programs, Wildlife Tours and Art Tours.

It is through education that we must awaken people to the extent of our natural resources (wildlife, plants, soil and water) and to the need of conserving these things for our own survival. In proportion as this education succeeds will the difficulty of securing protective legislation diminish. Each of us, as individuals, can advance this cause by sharing our enthusiasm with non-member friends and by interest ing them in the programs and the aims of the Society.

Elsie D. Hoeck

MAY CALENDARMEETINGS:

Regular Meeting, Monday May 10 at 8:00 p.m. in the Junior Museum at Palo Alto Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Rd. An interesting and seasonable program on our local wildflowers will be presented by Mrs. Roxana Ferris, assistant curator of the Dudley Herbarium at Stanford University. Mrs. Ferris will illustrate her talk with slides and living plants.

Board Meeting, Monday May 10 at 7:15 p.m. at the Junior Museum at Palo Alto Community Center will precede the regular meeting.

Field Trips:

Sunday, May 2, Al Wool will lead a tour of the Calaveras area. It will include wooded and open hillsides and the lakeshore of the Calaveras Reservoir. Wildflowers as well as birds should be on parade. Meet at Calaveras Rd. and Oakland Highway (highway 17) at Milpitas at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch and wear walking shoes.

Wednesday Morning May 12, to Stanford campus with Dr. and Mrs. H. B. Humphrey. Meet at corner of El Camino Real (101) and Embarcadero Rd. at 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 16, Herbert and Mannelle Wittgenstein will conduct the group over the Isenberg Ranch on Skyline Blvd. San Jose area members will meet at the Saratoga Summit and Skyline Blvd. parking

area at 8:30 a.m. Palo Alto area members may approach the Isenberg Ranch by driving to the junction of La Honda and Skyline roads, turning left onto Skyline and driving exactly four miles south. Watch for the name sign. Meet at ranch gate at 8:45 a.m.

Saturday May 22, a visit to Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam on the San Francisco Water Company property.. Meet the leader, Mimi Doe, at the Pulgas Water Temple, about 5 miles north of Woodside on Canada Rd. at 8:30 a.m. The trip offers excellent birding and a glimpse of hills and small valleys where wildflowers, ferns, trees and wild life have been protected since 1862. The water company gives us permission to visit the preserve knowing we will observe their rules and leave no trace of our having been there. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, May 26, a bird trip in the Glen Una area, between Saratoga and Los Gatos. Meet at the new home of Mr. and Mrs. William Ouderkirk, 15355 Bellecourt Ave., at 8:30 a.m.

BULLETIN NAME CONTEST

THE WINNER* Mrs. Eva McRae's entry, The Avocet, has been adjudged the winning title by members of the Society voting by preferential mail ballot to select a name for the Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

Balloting commenced with receipt of the March bulletin and closed April 15th. Choices included four names selected by the Editorial Committee from seventeen entries submitted by members prior to Feb. 15. These were: The American Kestrel, (Sparrowhawk) submitted by Jerry Buzzell; the Chat, proposed by Manette and Herbert Wittgenstein; the Kite, suggested by Janice Luick and the Avocet, by Mrs. McRae.

The Editorial Committee will present a copy of Olin Sewall Pettingill's book, "A Guide to Bird Finding West of the Mississippi," to Mrs. McRae at the annual meeting of the Society in June.

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all the members who participated in the contest. Not as many members proposed names or cast ballots as had been hoped for although the subject precipitated vigorous discussions on the field trips and at meeting.

As many of you know, preferential balloting in which all the entries are rated, enables a group to realize a decision with a single ballot. Voting where the simple majority rule is in effect often results in run-off balloting before a winner can be determined. Choosing by the preferential method is generally more satisfactory than the plurality vote system since the voters seem to examine the slate more comprehensively and know their votes have been decisive in the selection.

Results of the preferential mail ballot for each of the entries is as follows: LOW SCORE WINS IN THIS TYPE OF VOTING.

- THE AVOCET- 1st place voted-6 (6 points)
- 2nd place votes --2 (4 points)
- 3rd place votes- 7 (21 points)
- 4th place votes- 0
- total- 31 points
- THE CHAT- 1st place votes- 4 (4 points)
- 2nd place votes- 4 (8 points) total- 36 points
- 3rd place votes- 4(12points)
- 4th place votes - 3 (12 points)

AMERICAN KESTREL- 1st place votes-5 (5 points)
 2nd place votes-2 (4 points)
 3rd place votes-2 (6 points)
 4th place votes-6 (24 points)
 total-39 points

THE KITE- 1st place votes-0
 2nd place votes-7 (14 points)
 3rd place votes-2 (6 points)
 4th place votes-6 (24 points)
 total- 44 points

The results will be verified to the Board of Directors at the May meeting and a recommendation will be presented that Section 11 of Article VIII of the By-Laws and the Publication Standing Rules be amended to provide official record of the contest.

Will Luick, chairman

HELP-PLEASE HELP!

WANTED- a home is urgently needed for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's mimeograph machine and paper supply. Location preferred- San Jose- but other sites will be considered if the person offering a home can operate the machine, (which is a simple mechanism). Stencils will be cut and delivered to you. The Society is not accustomed to paying a member rent for housing nor remuneration for running the machine but personal use of the machine is offered in return for free home and free operation of the mimeograph. If you want to help your Society keep its publication costs down- write to Will Luick, 1027 Camino Ricardo, San Jose 25, as soon as possible.

Will Luick, chairman
 Editorial Comm.

STUDENT GROUP ACTIVITIES

FIELD TRIP:

On Saturday, March 27, leader Jim Hodgen reports: " The day was clear down at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. We saw many interesting plants and field mice were found in abundance. The Marsh Hawk and the American Bittern highlighted the trip. Other things seen were: Pied-billed Grebe, Ruddy Duck, Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Clapper Rail, Avocet, Willet, House Finch, Song Sparrow, Great Blue Heron, Meadowlark, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-plamated Plover, Western Sand Piper, Forster's Tern, Hudsonian Curlew, Dowitcher, Killdeer, Barn Swallow, Turkey Vulture, Sparrow Hawk, Red-winged Blackbird, Mockingbird, Yellowthroat, Violet-green Swallow, Loggerhead Shrike, Flicker, Audubon Warbler. Dr. Miller is teaching us quite a bit about plants."

FIELD TRIP REPORTS FOR APRIL

George and Bernice Bottini led a group of about 40 people to Stevens Creek Dam and the De Wolf Ranch on a cool and dull March 28th. They said they were rewarded many times with scenes of unusual interest- such as having Wren-tits almost within their grasp and a Great Blue Heron diving near the Dam. The birds recorded were: Golden Crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, California Woodpecker, Robin, Brewer and Red-winged Blackbirds, Anna's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Kingfisher, Audubon Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Turkey Vulture, House Finch, Purple Finch, California Flicker, Western Bluebird, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black Phoebe, Western Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Merganser, California Quail, California Thrasher, Brown Towhee, Spotted Towhee Titmouse, Bush-tit, Red-tailed Hawk, Song Sparrow, Oregon Junco, Chick

adee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Warbling Vireo, Meadowlark, Cooper's Hawk and Green-backed Goldfinch. The trip terminated at the De Wolf Ranch where they had lunch and watched the hummingbirds feed at the feeders set up near the house. While they were there Mr. De Wolf also fed his pets which included many chickadees, a California Thrasher, Tit-mouse and a Spotted Towhee.

Clyde and Agnes Prusman report that on March 31 the weather was partly cloudy for their bird walk at Villa Montalvo. A group of about 15 met at the gate where a pleasant 3 hours was spent. The following species were seen nest building: Bushtit in live oak; House finch and Green-backed Goldfinch in Italian cypress; Pine Siskin high in a Monterey Pine. An Anna's Hummingbird was incubating in her nest in a Boston Ivy vine which had crept in under the roof of a portico back of the open air theater and a pair of Chestnut-backed Chickadees were feeding nestlings in a tree hole. Other species observed were: California Quail; Allen's Hummingbird, Red-shafted Flicker, Black Phoebe, Violet-green Swallow, Plain Tit-mouse, Wren-tit, Robin, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton's Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Audubon Warbler, Pileolated Warbler, Purple Finch, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco and Song Sparrow.

Charles and Viola Anderson said that of the six members who planned to spend Saturday night, April 11, in the Pinnacles National Monument only the Sathers stayed to weather it out with an encampment of Boy Scouts!

The group met on schedule at the checking station on Sunday and by caravan took the road to the quarry. From there the trail to the old caves was explored on foot. The day was exceptionally warm and clear. The identification of birds, plant life and even horned toads and beetles took up the morning. Lunch was enjoyed in the picnic area after which a short walk was taken along the Chalone Peak trail. The continuous song of the Canyon Wren and the clean, fresh odor of the spring growth, noticeably fragrant ceanothus, enhanced the day. The check list of birds found in the monument: Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk; Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, California Quail, White-throated Swift, Nuttall Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Western Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Scrub Jay, Plain Titmouse, Bush-tit, Wren-tit, House Wren, Bewick Wren, Canyon Wren, Hermit Thrush, Western Bluebird, Western Gnatcatcher, Shrike, Hutton Vireo; Cassin Vireo, Warbling Vireo; Lutescent Warbler, Audubon Warbler, House-finch, Green-backed Finch, Brown Towhee, Oregon Junco, White-crowned Sparrow and Golden-crowned sparrow.

SPRING FANCY TURNED?

Mrs. Charles Mueser writes of an amusing and unsuccessful romance observed from her kitchen window late in March.

"A male English Sparrow was trying to flirt with a female but she would have none of him. She tried to tell him in no uncertain terms. I watched her little beak snap open and shut and could almost hear her say- you go about your business and leave me to mine. When he persisted, she caught him by the throat in her bill and held him dangling helplessly in the air. When she dropped him, he fell straight down. I couldn't see how far before he righted himself and flew away, which I assume he did as there was no dead bird on the patio."

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Few people realize the size of a bird's eye. It is so large that it fills all the forward part of the skull, pushing the brain far to the rear. The telescopic property of many bird's eyes is almost beyond belief. A hawk half a mile in the air is able to see a small bird or mouse on the ground. The feathers, too, are wonderfully adapted for flight. Wing feathers are so light and yet so strong and flexible that they enable a bird to manœuvre and to power dive with a speed hard for the eye to follow, and stop within a few feet for a perfect landing. Feathers that cover the body serve chiefly to prevent the loss of body heat and few substances are equal to them for insulation. (William L. Lloyd, "Impressions of a Nature Hobbyist" Western Tanager) from the Pacific Newsletter.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDS

Unless Congress acts soon to provide sufficient funds to modernize and expand them, the wholesale closing of national forest camp grounds in California was foreseen here this week by Wes Spinney, supervisor of Eldorado National Forest.

Echoing a report by C.B. Morse of San Francisco, manager of the National Forest Recreation Association, Spinney revealed that closing of some grounds was almost inevitable for reasons of sanitation and fire prevention unless funds are forthcoming.....

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Bulletin Editor: Mrs. Charles Dow, 70 Kirby Place, Palo Alto
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