

THE AVOCET

Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this issue the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society bulletin starts a new year under its new name. Your president extends greetings to all Society members and hopes that successful summer vacations have left you primed for the many interesting birding adventures scheduled for the months ahead.

Local members' dues are now due and payable. These are \$1.50 for 1954-1955 and should be sent to the new treasurer: Mrs. Charles Zwaal, at 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose 28, California. (Note: members who pay the \$5.00 yearly dues for national membership should be sure to mention that they wish their local membership also taken out of that check. National Audubon remits \$1.50 to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society when so requested. National membership dues are sent directly to: National Audubon Society, 1130 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N.Y. and entitles you to receive Audubon Magazine)

At least two SCVAS members attended Audubon Camp at Sugar Bowl, near Donner Summit in the Sierras, this summer. Their reports are so enthusiastic that others will certainly be encouraged to include it in next year's plans for their holidays.

A one day conference and workshop is scheduled by National for Saturday, October 9, at Mills College. The conference is for officers of all the Northern California Audubon Societies; the workshop is for people interested in Junior Audubon Clubs or as in the case of our group which has a Student Group, for those whose interest and activities center around young people. Call me at Cy. 5-1410 evenings for reservations. Luncheon will be served between morning and afternoon sessions. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A recent picture and news story in the San Jose Mercury (Aug. 4, 1954) highlights a bird problem frequently encountered, especially by householders with double chimneys. A baby robin was trapped in the chimney of the Frederic Winninger home in San Jose. After fluttering unsuccessfully to escape for three days, it was rescued by Mr. Winninger who chiseled through brick for hours to open an escape hatch. Screens covering chimney openings effectively prevent this sort of avian disaster- and the inconvenience entailed by the sympathetic home owner.

Election of officers for 1954-55 was held at the annual meeting on June 14. With the exception of Mrs. Eva McRae who resigned her post as treasurer, all the incumbent officers were reelected. Mrs. Charles Zwaal, former circulation manager, is replacing Mrs. McRae who assumed the office when our membership was only 43 and has seen it grow to its present approximate 200. Our most sincere appreciation goes to her on behalf of the entire organization for faithful service generously given.

Elsie D. Hoeck

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

MEETINGS:

Board Meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 7, at 8 p.m. Room 216 in the Science Building, San Jose State College.

Regular Meeting: Monday, Sept. 13, at 8 p.m. in Room 201 in the Science Building, San Jose State College.

The program for the evening is "Highway by the Sea" a sound motion picture put out by the Ford Motor Company. The film takes the observer over the famous scenic route (US101) from San Diego north to the tip of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, with excursions to Monterey and the Columbia River Gorge. Guests are welcome.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, Sept. 18, to various mud flats, marshes and salt ponds in the Dumbarton Bridge area, with Les Sleeper. This will be an especially interesting trip for shore bird enthusiasts. During the fall migration the rarer transient species of shore birds are recorded here. They are easily studied as they probe in the mud or rest on the dikes. Meet at Palo Alto S.P. Station at 8 a.m. Bring lunch.

QUILLS AND PINFEATHERS

Our bulletin is now the namesake of the jaunty shore bird with the upturned blue bill and gaily striped black and white plumage so familiarly seen in our marshes and sloughs during migration and breeding seasons. The feathered Avocet is a distinctive individual that wades and runs on slender, stiltlike legs and is sociably undisturbed by visitors, except during periods when his family's demands are paramount. In going about his business of gathering tidbits and associating with his neighbors he provides birders with considerable entertainment. In this last respect he sets an example that this ink and paper Avocet will try to follow.

The Avocet editors will welcome contributions from you- bird interest stories, reports of field trips and announcements- and love and cherish them dearly-if they arrive before deadline date which is the 20th of every month.

OFFICERS

President: Miss Elsie D. Hoeck, 55 6th St., Apt. 105, San Jose,
 Vice-president: Dr. Malcolm Miller, Stanford University
 Secretary: Miss Lynn Robbins, Dept. of Anatomy, Stanford University
 Treasurer: Mrs. Charles Zwall, 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose
 Membership Ch: Mrs. Irving Snow, 21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos

Board members: Mrs. George Bottini, Frank Cantu, John Harville, Dr. H.B. Humphrey.
 Bulletin Editor: Mrs. Charles Doe, 70 Kirby Place, Palo Alto
 Assoc. Editor: Miss Christine Tapley, Kingscote, Stanford University
 Circulation manager: pro tem. Mrs. Charles Zwaal, 478 Clifton Ave.

STUDENT GROUP ACTIVITIES

Field Trips:

On Saturday, July 10, student leader Jim Hodgen, led a trip which he reports: "The day was rather chilly as we approached San Mateo Memorial Park although it was warm later in the day. The trip was conducted by the Plowmans. At the start of the trip we found two dead lampreys. The birds we saw were: Red-tailed Hawk, Pileolated Warbler, Steller's Jay, Oregon Junco, Winter Wren, Belted Kingfisher, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Pigmy Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Acorn Woodpecker, Robin, Western Flycatcher, Greenbacked Goldfinch,

Yellow Warbler, Linnet, Brewer's Blackbird, English Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Scrub Jay, and a Mockingbird."

On June 12, the Student Group followed Jeanne Plowman to Huddart Park. Pat Donaghey reports: "The day was moist and windy with rain in the morning. We started at the Old Woodside Store and walked up Greer Road. The birds seen were: Robin, House Finch, Spotted Towhee, Brown Towhee, Scrub Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Allen's Hummingbird, Song Sparrow, Oregon Junco, Yellow Warbler, Pileolated Warbler, (carrying nesting material) Plain Titmouse, Bushtit, Pine Siskin, Downy Woodpecker, Rufous Hummingbird, Wrentit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Wood Pewee, Steller's Jay, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Bewick's Wren, Hutton's Vireo, Western Bluebird, Ring-necked Pheasant, Black-headed Grosbeak. Later we went to see the nature trail in Huddart Park. It was a fine trip."

FIELD TRIP REPORTS FOR JUNE

June 12, to Lazy Day Ranch: Harriet Mundy led the last trip of spring and writes: "Awakening to the sweet music of heavy rain on the roof, I turned over wishing I could stay and listen to the welcome sound. However, having undertaken to lead my first bird walk, I arose with a prayer that no one would turn up! However hard on my heels at Merryvale was Dr. Kindschi and five minutes later Dr. and Mrs. Wittgenstein. We waited until 8:45 and decided that lacking quantity we sure had "quality." Before leaving Merryvale we inspected a Brown Towhee nest in one of the vines.

We had a lovely, wet walk at Lazy Day Ranch through the fields, along the irrigation canal and to the shores of Felt Lake. Some of the high spots were the Black-headed Grosbeak singing from the top of a tree, the Violet-green Swallows which skimmed the ground below us so that we could really see them, two Ash-throated Flycatchers almost within reach and a Caspian Tern fishing in the lake and very low and close to us. Families of Bluebirds (who says there is no color unless the sun hits them?) and one of Sparrow Hawks in the top of pine trees which we later saw up on Westridge were also interesting. Either seen, usually very close, or heard were: Spotted and Brown Towhee, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, California Quail, Acorn Woodpecker, Oregon Junco, Mourning Dove, Meadowlark, Scrub Jay, Violet-green Swallow, Robin, Linnet, Western Bluebird, Black Phoebe, Black-headed Grosbeak, White-breasted Nuthatch, Plain Titmouse, Song and English Sparrows, Western and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Brewer's Blackbird, Caspian Tern, Killdeer, Scaup, Turkey Vulture, Shrike, Anna's Hummingbird, Red-shafted Flicker, Green-backed Goldfinch, Wrentit, California Thrasher, Sparrow Hawk. Not bad-34 in all, but didn't I say we were "quality"? I might take another walk there for those who stayed in bed listening to the rain."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Audubon Society announces the opening of new and larger quarters for the Pacific Coast Office at 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, California, Telephone THornwall 8-4042.

William N. Goodall, Pacific Coast representative and Alexander Sprunt, IV, Assistant Pacific Coast representative cordially invite members to visit the new offices any time after September 15, 1954.

The Junior Museum staff at Alum Rock Park is pleased to receive donations of natural materials for exhibit. For example, Miss Lilian Gorham prepared a chickadee nest for display, which contained seven eggs abandoned by the mother bird.