

THE AVOCET

Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, California

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Best wishes for a very happy holiday season and a successful New Year are extended to all our members, by the officers and the board of directors of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

We hope that your Christmas stockings were overflowing with pleasant surprises, and that among your New Year resolutions will be found one to treat yourselves to a session at the National Audubon summer camp at Sugar Bowl in the Sierras, this year. This is also a pleasure to share with others, through making a contribution to the Audubon Camp Scholarship fund.

One of the projects of our society for 1955 will be to give assistance, through these scholarships, to such qualified persons as teachers, youth workers and community leaders interested in nature and conservation. We are enriched by their influence for good among the children of our communities.

Congratulations of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society are extended to the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society on their publication, "The Quail".

Elsie D. Hoeck

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning with this issue, the AVOCET will be published bi-monthly. The change has been made in the interests of economy; and to announce the schedule of field trips, meetings and screen tours earlier than has been possible in the past, for the greater convenience of the members.

Field trip committee chairman, Manette Wittgenstein, will welcome suggestions from the members about new areas to visit. She is also eager that members who have not already led field trips should call her to share ideas with her. Leading a field trip is fun and easy. You don't need to be an authority on birds to do it. Just interest and enthusiasm are required. Mrs. Wittgenstein's address is 15355 Bellecourt Drive, Los Gatos. Telephone: El Gato 4-9420.

Following a heavy discussion of the pros and cons of recording field trip reports in the AVOCET, it was decided that in the future these reports will be read at the regular meetings. Please mail your field trip reports directly to Mrs. Wittgenstein, at the above address, from now on.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Meetings:

JANUARY 1955

There will be no regular January meeting. The Screen Tour on January 12, Wednesday, in the Morris Dailey Auditorium in San Jose State College at 8 p.m. will substitute (as provided in the recent change in the by-laws).

Board meeting: the necessary business of the board of directors will be conducted following the Christmas Bird Count which will be held on Jan. 2, at 4:30 at 160 N. Third Street, San Jose.

FEBRUARY 1955

February meeting: Monday, February 14th, 1955, 8:00 p.m.

(Please note new meeting place)

Los Gatos High School - Little Theater. The program will be presented by a member of the staff of the Saratoga Horticultural Gardens. We will hear a talk illustrated by slides on the objectives and work of this interesting organization. Since tree and shrub plantings determines what birds are attracted to an area this should be a subject pertinent to our bird studies.

February Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 8, 1955, 8 p.m., Rm. 210, Science Building, San Jose State College.

FIELD TRIPS:

JANUARY

Sunday, January 16, 1955, Charles and Fanny Zwaal will lead us to the Johnson Ranch, where we hope to get a close look at wood ducks. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at 5th and San Carlos in San Jose. Members from Los Gatos may join the group at the Almaden School on Almaden Road at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

Saturday, January 29, 1955, a trip to Moss Landing with Charles and Viola Anderson as leaders. The Andersons always have an interesting feature in store for us. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Construction Road, about 1 mile north from the Pacific Gas & Electric Company steam plant at Moss Landing. The construction road turns off west from State Highway 1 between Watsonville and Castroville. Bring lunch.

FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 13, 1955, Mrs. Snow will lead us on a walk in the vicinity of Aldercroft. At lunchtime we will enjoy the many birds coming to the feeding tray near the house of the Snows. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in front of the Lyndon Hotel in Los Gatos. Bring lunch.

Saturday-Sunday, February 19-20, a weekend trip to Tomales Bay. Our leader, Mr. Sather, will meet us on the 20th of Feb. in the Point Reyes Station Hotel. Members who start out early on Saturday morning will meet Saturday at the entrance of Stinson Beach State Park on State Highway 1 in Marin County, at twelve, noon. From there we will proceed along highway 1 (good birding) to Point Reyes Station. In the afternoon we will take a short ride along the east side of Tomales Bay. Be sure to reserve rooms at the Point Reyes Station Hotel. Mr. Sather advises rugged shoes and hiking clothes because of rough terrain and the possibility of chilling winds.

Manette Wittgenstein

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD TRIPS:

JANUARY

January 12, to Stanford University campus where there was such good birding on the trip a year ago. Meet Dr. and Mrs. H. B. Humphrey at the south entrance to campus, on El Camino Real (Highway 101) at Embarcadero Road at 8:30 a.m.

January 26, to the Ormondale Ranch, through courtesy of Mrs. MacDonough. On the ranch, just off the Portola Road, there is a pond, a creek, and other interesting bird habitats. Meet at S. P. Station in Palo Alto at 8:30 a.m., or at entrance to ranch at 8:45.

FEBRUARY

February 9, to the Alviso salt marshes, with Mrs. Etta Smith who keeps good track of the birds of that area. Meet at the Alviso Grammar School at 8:30 a.m.

February 23, to Mrs. Arthur H. Jones garden, 15850 West Road, about halfway between Saratoga and Los Gatos. By this date it should be possible to find bushtits and hummingbirds nest-building. Meet at the Quito Fire Station on Saratoga-Los Gatos Road at Austin Way, at 8:30 a.m.

SCREEN TOUR:

On Wednesday, Jan. 12, Charles Mohr presents "Outdoor Almanac", a masterpiece complete with musical score and sound effects track, produced and directed by Karl H. Maslowski, and narrated by naturalist Leonard Hall of Possum Trot Farm, Caledonia, Missouri. A sweeping panorama of nature's animal cycle: weasel and gray fox on the winter trails; sleepy maple buds warming in spring sunshine; a fawn growing into summer buckhood; and autumn with ducks in migration.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The early damp of Wednesday, Dec. 9, failed to discourage seven birders from visiting the Davis' garden. As the overcast burned off, we were rewarded by views of most of the garden residents and by many visitors. A large flock of bush-tits were accompanied by two kinglets and two Hutton vireos, who stayed near enough for us to study their close resemblance. Two white breasted nut hatches joined them and in a birch nearby, American and green-backed goldfinches fed with several more pine siskins. The cones of a small redwood grove attracted a flight of fifty or more pine siskins and a few gold finches. At another spot, a hermit thrush and a purple finch fed on the ground, while a house finch sang from a tree. Many of the birds were in good voice. Four song sparrows were singing; two having one song pattern and two another. A ruby-crowned kinglet, robins, and several hermit thrushes were identified by their voices, as well as a Townsend warbler which was heard by Miss Emily Smith. Five bluebirds flew over the garden, but this was not one of their favorite haunts. There were pairs of brown towhees; also spotted towhees, white-crowned sparrows, golden-crowned sparrows, fox sparrows, and English sparrows; a cedar waxwing, mockingbird, thrashers, California jay and redshafted flicker were also sighted.

Marjorie Davis.

On Saturday, Dec. 11, two cars of birders scouted the edges of Crystal Springs Lakes. Numerous water birds were observed, ranging through the lists of ducks, coots sandpipers, grebes, and gulls to the Canada geese. These were the outstanding event of the morning - both flying in formations above the inlet at Upper Crystal Springs Lake and grazing like cattle on the winter grass at the head of Lower Crystal Springs Lake. The Wittgensteins had brought a 'scope along, which brought the birds into close range without disturbing them. The early fog blew off by 10:30, the day was bright and cold and the visibility excellent.

Mimi Doe

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