

THE AVOCET

Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FAIR BOOTH

Plans for our booth at the County Fair are progressing well, thanks to the separate efforts of a number of people. We will share space with the Junior Museum, and can profit by their experiences over the past several years.

The Berkeley office of the National Audubon Society has prepared display materials for us, as has the Audubon Camp of California at Sugar Bowl Lodge. Bud Applegarth and Matt Vessel have worked up an information sheet on the Screen Tours for distribution to all interested persons. We should have effective promotion of our programs through all these efforts.

A group of us, including Jim Peterson as general chairman, will install the exhibit Saturday, September 10th. The booth will be attended afternoons and evenings from Monday, September 12th, through Sunday, September 18th, by volunteers from our Society membership.

Would you like to help? Call John Harville, Elgato 4-4429. We need more volunteers! (free passes)

John P. Harville

1955-1956 AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

November 2 - Wednesday - "Rhapsody in Blue Grass" - Walter Shackleton
 December 8 - Thursday - "Into the North Woods" - Tom and Arlene Hadley
 January 25 - Wednesday - "American Birds and Big Game" - Cleveland P. Grant
 March 8 - Thursday - "A Trip to Newfoundland" - Dick Bird
 April 16 - Monday - "Wings and Talons" - Harold M. Hill

A more extensive announcement of the 1955-1956 Audubon Screen Tours, scheduled for Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College, will be published in the next issue of THE AVOCET. Members of the Society will soon be mailed one of the program brochures. Again, season tickets can be ordered by mail by writing to Audubon Screen Tours, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College, San Jose 14.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What will be the fate of the Butano? Will it be preserved as a living monument to intelligent foresight, an oasis of beauty and tranquility only a few minutes away from Peninsula cities? Or will it be logged off for today's profits in board feet of lumber, leaving scarred hills and broken trees as bitter reminder of the tragic phrase, "too little, too late?"

A few Sundays ago, a group of us stood at the edge of Big Basin State Park, looking out upon the ravaged remnants of a redwood forest. Logging operations of a number of years ago had clawed deep scars in the land, littered the area with debris, and left behind only a few scarred and shattered trees--truly a shocking contrast to the majestic beauty of the forest cathedral behind us. Only we few observers shared this devastated area with the chipmunks and the woodpeckers. Yet, at the same moment, in the stately groves of giant trees behind us, hundreds of men, women, and children played or slept, hiked or sat--all in their own ways enjoying their moments of relaxing freedom from the smog and hurry and endless nerve-tightening tensions of city living.

Conservation has been defined as the wise use of natural resources, to provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Most certainly do we need

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

lumber--trees must be cut to provide the redwood so characteristic and so desirable for California homes. Yet, no construction need is so great as to justify the desecration of the Butano. Millions of people live within easy driving range of this last great forest in our area, and millions more are coming in years ahead. In today's hurry-up world, outdoor recreation is as vital to mental health as is bodily exercise for physical vigor. Surely the greatest good for the greatest number demands the establishment of the Butano as a permanent preserve for the inspiration, relaxation, and healthful recreation of all the generations to come.

For the first time in weeks, I have hope that much of the Butano can be saved. Apparently Governor Knight has emergency powers which can be invoked in order to acquire the land that is still untouched. True, some of the finest is gone, but this must not deter us from saving the rest.

I believe the Governor will act in this matter if enough of us let him know how we feel about it. As your President, I have written him in behalf of our Society, urging his use of these emergency powers. However, even when it represents a group such as ours, one letter is not as effective as would be ten from individuals in that group. If you believe as I do--that this issue is worth working for--will you write Governor Knight too? Just a short letter will serve, stating in a paragraph why you feel it imperative that the Butano be saved. Every letter reaching the Governor's desk may equal a redwood tree saved. Will you write a letter to save your tree?

John P. Harville

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Santa Clara County Fair, September 12th through September 18th. An exhibit in the Schools tent, adjacent to the exhibit of the Junior Museum, commemorating the Golden Anniversary of the National Audubon Society, and, bringing to the citizens of the County information concerning the objectives and program of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

Work Session for the 1955-1956 Audubon Screen Tours to address envelopes and insert program brochures into envelopes for the mailing list, 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 27th, Room 220, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College campus. Refreshments will be served by the Social Committee to the members who volunteer and help.

OCTOBER

Third Annual Planning Conference for Audubon Branches and Affiliates, sponsored by the Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society, Saturday, October 8th, at Mills College, Oakland. Officers, Board members, and Committee chairmen and members are especially invited to attend!

MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER

Regular Meeting: Monday, September 19th, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College campus.
Program: Dr. Dick Mewaldt will discuss the question:
"How Do Animals Find Their Way Over Long Distances?"

Board Meeting: Monday, September 19th, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College campus.

24
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

MEETINGS

OCTOBER

Regular Meeting: Monday, October 10th, at 8:00 p.m., at Palo Alto Junior Museum. Program: Al Wool will present a 30-minute film and commentary, "Wildlife of the Mount Hamilton Range." Al is selecting some of the best of his excellent footage for this showing.

Board Meeting: Monday, October 10th, at 7:00 p.m., at Palo Alto Junior Museum.

FIELD TRIPS

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday Morning, September 7th, to visit an interesting garden located in the outskirts of Santa Clara, with Dr. Evelyn Case and Miss Lillian Gorham. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Homestead Nursery, 446 Homestead Road. The Road is a continuation of Lexington Street in Santa Clara, and meets the Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road at the Mariana Packing Plant, Cupertino.

Sunday, September 18th, to Bayfarm Island, with Carlyle Sather. This is the time of the shore bird migration, and Mr. Sather will lead us into a territory new to most of us. Time permitting we shall also visit Lake Merritt. Meet at 12:30 p.m. at Santa Clara and High Streets in Alameda.

Sunday, September 25th, for a surprise tour of a redwood grove owned by Remig Schneider in the Santa Cruz Mountains, with Angelina Snow. This beautiful stand of trees contains all types of redwoods, including the dawn redwood; also, very old madrona trees. Meet in front of the Lyndon Hotel at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, September 28th, to Dr. Russell Lee's Boronda Farm, with Mrs. R. Wesley Wright and Mrs. S. S. Tucker. Boronda Farm is located off Los Trancos Woods Road, which leads off Alpine Road. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Merryvale Antique Shop, 3249 Alpine Road, about 2 miles from junction of Santa Cruz, Alpine, and Junipero Serra roads.

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 8th, to Elkhorn Slough, with the Andersons of Salinas. After a two months' "absence from birding," the Andersons will lead this trip to see the wintering water birds before the start of the shooting season. We have invited the members of the Monterey Society to join us. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Construction Road in Moss Landing. Bring lunch. N.B. SEE PAGE 28 FOR TRIP CHANGE!

Wednesday Morning, October 12th, to the new water conservation dam on Llagas Creek in the Morgan Hill area, with Mrs. McLaurin Goodwin. There should be magpies and various seed-eating birds along the creek. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at San Jose Avenue and Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos.

Sunday, October 23rd, to Alum Rock Park, with Grace Brubaker, to search for returning winter visitants and to enjoy the autumnal beauty of the park. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the corner of Miguelito Road and Alum Rock Avenue. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, October 26th, to Felt Lake on Stanford University land, with Dr. and Mrs. M. R. Kirkwood, who have arranged for a special permit to guide the group in quest of water birds. Meet at the S.P. Station in Palo Alto at 8:15 a.m.

Dorothy Smith and Manette Wittgenstein
Co-chairmen of the Field Trip Committee

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

A pair of California Thrashers, whose territory includes our garden, successfully raised two broods this their fourth nesting season since they were banded in February, 1952. A pair across the road on the Ouderkirks' place raised a second and a third brood after they had bad luck with their first in a hedge. For their second nest they chose a tall pine. The third nest was being built high in another pine on June 14, and on July 9 they were busily feeding nestlings.

Both birds of the pair on our place are handicapped, the female blind in one eye and the male with a stump leg. Without any apparent awareness of their handicaps, they successfully fledged their first brood on April 12. After the female started incubating their second brood, about May 7, the lame father took over all care of the fledglings. By the last week in June the second brood was ready to fend for themselves. As is customary with thrashers, the parents finally ran the juveniles out of their territory. Then it was time for the annual molt, which was first noticed in the female on July 13. The two middle tail feathers were gone and in their place two new, darker feathers were beginning to show. Since then both birds have looked ragged at times as fresh feathers have been replacing all the old, worn ones. Even now, August 22, the birds are not yet trim again.

A pair of banded Song Sparrows in Marjorie Davis' garden in Menlo Park safely fledged two families this season. August 2, Mrs. Davis wrote that "Himself seems to have lost his tail feathers!" In my garden, also, two banded Song Sparrows, in the process of molting, became bobtailed, the female on July 25 and her mate ten days later. Also an unbanded intruder. And other summers I have noticed hasty shedding of tail feathers by these brisk little sparrows. Normally tail feathers are shed gradually so that the bird is never without its starting gear. Has any one else observed bobtailed Song Sparrows in midsummer?

- Pied-billed Grebe, May 24, adult with one downy chick (others hidden?) on pond on the Woods' ranch in hills east of Milpitas. Al Wool.
- Cinnamon Teal and Wood Duck, July 8, with nearly grown young (the teal with 6 and the Wood Duck with 3), pond on cattle ranch near Gilroy. Etta Smith.
- White-tailed Kite, June 29 and July 8, on new nest in oak where pair raised two young earlier this season (fledged about May 10), near Los Gatos. Emily Smith.
- Osprey, July 10, pair brought fish to much built-up nest on a tall tree snag, near Bodega, but young not seen; Aug. 18, one voracious nestling seen. Elsie Hoeck.
- California Quail, Aug. 17, a dozen downy chicks with 2 adults ran across Summit Rd., Santa Cruz Mts. Lina Snow also reports large coveys at Aldercroft this year.
- Northern Phalarope, July 27, about 300, Leslie salt pond, Alviso. Etta Smith, who was still counting Snowy Plover nests out that way--14 in all this season.
- Belted Kingfisher, May 16, feeding young in hold in bank, Arroyo Honda. Al Wool. (Al flushed an early nesting Dipper from its nest in Arroyo Honda on Feb. 27).
- Ash-throated Flycatcher, June 26, fledglings left bird house, Mt. Hermon. Same day young Violet-green Swallows were being fed in nearby bird house. Adist Boylan.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch, Aug. 5, at Ouderkirks' bird bath and Wittgensteins' suet feeder, near Los Gatos. Jo Ouderkirk and Manette Wittgenstein.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, July 17, young being fed in the nest we saw being built on the June 19 field trip, Soda Springs Rd., Santa Cruz Mts. Frances Dieterich.
- Mockingbird, August 24, feeding nestling, San Jose. Mildred Cianciarulo.
- Bullock's Oriole, July 31 and Aug. 2, two juveniles eating apricots on tree, San Jose. Fannie Zwaal. (Orioles in our fig tree Aug. 13 and earlier. Emily Smith).
- Red. Crossbill, June 19, female and juvenile? (duller and streaked) at bird bath, Mt. Hermon. Lelah Miller. (Apr. 27, in Mt. Hermon, Adist Boylan saw 3 young crossbills in Douglas Fir fed fir seeds and saw parents get seeds from cones.)
- Spotted Towhee, Aug. 20, female feeding 3 fledglings, Los Gatos. Gladys Record.

Today, August 22, I heard the food calls of young pewees which I have seen and heard since August 14. Also I heard a Black-headed Grosbeak and a Western Tanager. Two days ago there was an Allen's Hummingbird at the Fuchsia blossoms. Soon these

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

summer residents will be on their way south, and in September we shall be looking for the crowned sparrows and other visitors from the north.

For the next issue of THE AVOCET, send us your last dates for summer residents and first for winter visitants; and any careful observations of even our commonest resident birds, with dates and place of observation.

Emily D. Smith
Seasonal Observations Editor

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

NEWS FROM AUDUBON CAMP

Miss Lillian E. Gorham, one of our Los Gatos members, attended the August 21st-September 3rd session at Sugar Bowl Lodge, in the High Sierras. The Society looks forward to her report at one of our fall meetings.

RETURN OF A FRIEND

Off and on through the years our beloved Miss Emily has edited Seasonal Observations for the bulletin of the Society. The editor is happy to announce that, commencing with this issue, Seasonal Observations will be a regular feature of THE AVOCET, and that Miss Emily D. Smith has accepted appointment as editor of this department. All of you are urged to read carefully her instructions for reporting your seasonal observations. Her address is 19651 Glen Una Drive, Los Gatos.

SHOULD CALIFORNIA REVISE ITS PROTECTION LAWS FOR HAWKS AND OWLS? - Part 2

In the July-August issue of THE AVOCET the first of a series of editorials examined the California law protecting some of our hawks and owls, and compared California law with that of other states. Further, the long-standing recommendation of the National Audubon Society, that every state enact a conservation law which provides protection for all hawks and owls, except where a land occupant can justify claims of predation on poultry by these birds, was cited. And, a call was sounded for our Society to take a stand on this issue, and encourage our Conservation Committee and the Society to determine a course of action to achieve the desired objective in California.

Reaction to the first editorial has been favorable, and several well-known members of our Society have expressed their opinions to the editorial question, as follows:

John P. Harville, President, says: "Protection of predators against widespread and indiscriminate destruction is urgently needed for two important reasons:

First, predators are most interesting animals in their own right, and should not be exterminated simply because their way of life involves the killing of other animals for food. For centuries, mankind has been inspired by the beauty and courage of animal predators. It is through no accident that our national emblem is an eagle. Athletic teams call themselves Lions, Tigers, Bears, and Cougars. Cub Scouts strive eagerly to earn their achievement badges--called Bobcat, Wolf, Bear, and Lion. Surely we should not exterminate the models for such symbols, even though they may require control at times to protect human interests.

Second, and even more important biologically, indiscriminate predator control is ecologically indefensible. No good farmer tries to grow every cabbage that sprouts in a row, or raise every chick that hatches from eggs in his incubator. He knows that the weaklings must be destroyed to provide room and food for the strong--otherwise there

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

SHOULD CALIFORNIA REVISE ITS PROTECTION LAWS FOR HAWKS AND OWLS? - Part 2

is not enough to go around and the entire group is weakened as result. So too must nature operate to maintain the essential balance between food and feeder. Predators are the natural forces which cull the weaklings from the flock and prevent the overpopulation of the area. Hawks catch the sick quail, mountain lions pull down the diseased or crippled deer. Such is not only a law of nature; it is ecological good sense. Removal of these predators permits survival of the unfit, degradation of the quality of entire populations, and eventual destruction of the food supply."

Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt, Vice-President, says: "California should adopt suitable laws to protect all hawks and owls (i.e. all Falconiformes and Strigiformes). The layman hunter does not distinguish the species of hawk or owl he fires upon. As a result, most of those he kills are the more conspicuous, presently protected species. Provision should be made to permit a land-owner to remove individual birds which molest domestic animals. Even more important, minimum punishment should be specified for offenders. Under present laws, very few offenders are arrested or tried because of the paucity of convictions. A workable set of regulations will encourage enforcement officials to extend the protection to hawks and owls which vertebrate ecologists agree is desirable."

Miss Elsie D. Hoeck, Secretary and former President, says: "We should revise our thinking about predation.

When we go out for wholesale killing of any species of wildlife because we call it a predator, we upset a natural balance between predator and prey which will be established if left alone.

Hawks and owls need a large number of rodents and insects for their food, and, in turn, act as a natural control on the numbers of rodents and insects.

It does not seem to me we can justify our attempts to destroy totally or lessen the numbers of a bird or animal because the members of that species eat another kind of wildlife for food.

The farmer whose flocks or crops are being preyed upon by an individual bird or animal should be allowed some means of protecting that flock or crop, but the wholesale killing by anyone of all members of a species that he is able to destroy just doesn't seem sensible or practical to me."

A bulletin issued by the National Audubon Society August 16th brings information that Maine is the most recent state to enact legislation giving hawks and owls a new lease on life. The bill which became law was sponsored by the Bangor Bird Conservation Club and was supported by the Augusta Nature Club, the Maine Audubon Society, and the Federation of Garden Clubs of Maine.

Passage of the hawk and owl protective law in Maine follows a nation-wide trend toward better protection of the birds of prey, the National Audubon Society points out. The Society has recently made a survey of state bird protection laws which reveals that only six states now fail to protect any hawks and owls. States that have extended total or additional protection to these birds include Indiana, Idaho, New Hampshire, and Michigan.

An editorial repetition is in order! The time is now for our Society to begin the campaign for a change in California's protection laws for hawks and owls!

SHOULD CALIFORNIA REVISE ITS PROTECTION LAWS FOR HAWKS AND OWLS? - Part 2

Let us in the next issue discover how extensive is the local persecution and what groups are the chief offenders. Also, let us determine where we can look for support in our campaign, i.e. support from other Branches and Affiliates and/or allied-interest groups.

EXHIBIT OF ORIGINAL BIRD PAINTINGS BY ROGER TORY PETERSON

If any member of the Society expects to be in the vicinity of Santa Ana during September, remember that an exhibit of original bird paintings by the eminent artist, author, and scientist, Roger Tory Peterson, can be seen at the Charles Bowers Museum, 2002 North Main Street. This exhibit, "Western Birds," is offered by the Orange County Bird Club and Audubon Society.

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

FIELD TRIPS

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 8th, to Lakeside in the Santa Cruz Mountains, with Agnes and Clyde Prussman. Because of an early start of the hunting season this year, it has been necessary to change the trip originally scheduled with the Andersons. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on the Los Gatos-Santa Cruz Highway (17) at Black Road. Bring lunch.