

THE AVOCET

Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A CAMPAIGN IS LAUNCHED

At the Third Annual Planning Conference for Audubon Branches and Affiliates, sponsored by the Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society, October 8th, at Mills College in Oakland, the assembled delegates decided to organize a campaign to promote revision of California's protection laws for hawks and owls. Representatives from the Golden Gate, Mt. Diablo, Sacramento, Sequoia, and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Societies concurred in the action, and your editor was appointed as the Coordinating Chairman. It was agreed that the Pacific Coast Office would be the coordinating center and campaign headquarters.

Efforts are presently underway to contact the conservation chairmen of the California Branches and Affiliates, and a strategy meeting of key people will be called early in November. Later it is planned to invite allied organizations to join the campaign.

SHOULD CALIFORNIA REVISE ITS PROTECTION LAWS FOR HAWKS AND OWLS? - Part 3

In the concluding paragraph of the Part 2 editorial on this subject, it was proposed in the November-December issue to consider the extent of local persecution, and to learn what groups are the chief offenders. Another planned objective, that of determination of Branches and Affiliates and/or allied-interest groups from whom we can expect support and cooperation, seems to be partially realized.

Members of our Society familiar with the hunting habits of Santa Clara County and/or Northern California residents were contacted. Several community leaders known to be acquainted with the situation were interviewed. The consensus of opinions expressed points to the fact (1) that there is local persecution; (2) that the extent of the persecution is difficult to determine; (3) that youthful hunters, unable to identify species of hawk or owl and possessed with a desire to kill some animal, are the principal offenders; (4) that newspaper sports writers can instigate persecution by printing recommendations that certain species be destroyed for the good of hunting.

Dorothy and Al Wool describe their experience in halting the shooting campaign of a self-appointed "exterminator" who had been prompted to undertake his "missionary effort" in behalf of hunters because of a newspaper sports writer's opinion. The tragedy became obvious to the Wools when they discovered that the "exterminator" did not know what species he had been trying to shoot.

Al Wool stresses that one of the major problems is the hunter who will shoot at any living target-----if it can crawl, walk, run, fly, hop, glide, swim, roll, etc.

Larry Moitozo of the San Jose-Santa Clara County Junior Museum staff cites the parents of youthful hunters who provide weapons of destruction but not training in their proper use.

In fairness to the many hunters who are aware of the value of conservation, it should be mentioned that "problem hunters" are a concern to them, as well as to groups like our Society. We hope that sportsmen's organizations can be persuaded to join the campaign to promote revision of California's protection laws for hawks and owls in the interest of wise conservation and sound ecology.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FAIR BOOTH PAYS OFF

The Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society reports that a recent visitor at 2426 Bancroft way in Berkeley purchased approximately seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) worth of nature books and aids on sale there. To our Society the interesting part of the account is the fact that the visitor was from Santa Clara County and that she had learned of the Audubon materials at our September exhibit in the Schools tent at the Santa Clara County Fair. With that kind of business developing as a result of our first effort, naturally the Pacific Coast Office urges our Society to return to the County Fairgrounds in 1956.

It should be pointed out that any gift you buy at the Berkeley office is your gift to conservation, because the nature books, gifts, and aids are sold there to make a profit and to turn the proceeds to the direct support of Audubon activities. In stock you will find nature materials for children, for adults, for the family, for libraries, for teachers, for group leaders, for recreation leaders. Free lists are available on request, and individual and quantity mailings are handled promptly. If you are a joint member of National Audubon Society and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, you recently have received suggestions from the Service Department in New York. Any of these items can be obtained at the Berkeley office, 2426 Bancroft Way (Thornwell 8-4042).

THE FACTS OF THE EGRET MASSACRE

Many Audubonites were shocked to read in the October 13th San Francisco Chronicle David Perlman's account of the wanton slaughter of "several hundred magnificent white egrets" at their rookery on the Marin Islands in San Rafael Bay. Apparently Perlman's source of information was Frank Foppiano, caretaker for the vacation home of Tom Crowley, San Francisco tugboat operator. Foppiano is quoted to have said that he counted "at least three or four hundred bodies."

A telephone call to the Pacific Coast Office on October 23th brought forth the following facts:

- (1) A total of fifty-three (53) American and snowy egrets were killed by the unidentified hunter or hunters.
- (2) The islands' caretaker did not report the incident for several weeks' time after it had occurred.
- (3) The egrets have not returned to the islands since the shooting; whether they will is not known by Audubon authorities.
- (4) The United States Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service has only one man to enforce Federal laws in this region. Harry M. Lattimer is the agent.
- (5) The California Fish and Game Commission maintains a patrol in the area but does not authorize the patrol to stop unless some untoward action is observed.
- (6) Hunters will shoot living targets, Federal protection or not. Conservation enforcement agencies face an eternal vigilance.

A NEW PROBLEM ON THE HORIZON?

The San Jose Evening News reports an item in its September 30th issue furnished by Associated Press. "Writing in the magazine 'Family Doctor,' the London physician and researcher, Dr. J. Gordon Cook, said the sparkling advertising signs and street lamps of the British capital's West End make starlings more mature sexually than starlings living in the country."

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESKFIELD TRIP REPORTS' PUBLICATION TO BE RESUMED

Commencing with the January-February, 1956, issue of THE AVOCET, Field Trip Reports, a separate bi-monthly compilation, will be included in the envelope that brings you the Society's bulletin. The editor is happy to announce that Miss Mary L. Meehan has been added to the Publication Staff and will serve as Field Trip Reports Editor. Miss Meehan's address is 1014 Clark Avenue, Mountain View, and her telephone number is Whitecliff 8-4949. The Field Trip Committee plans to ask each leader to submit his report to a member of the committee, and the committee will supply Miss Meehan with the material for the publication by the twentieth of the month preceding the mailing date for THE AVOCET.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

We welcome as new members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Inc., the following persons:

Armstrong, Miss Eva - 2051 Coastland Avenue, San Jose 25
 Brokenshire, Mr.-Mrs. John R. - 102 South 23rd Street, San Jose
 Gorham, Miss Lillian - P.O.Box 51, Saratoga
 Heath, Dr.-Mrs. James P. - 1153 Pine Avenue, San Jose 25
 Kevesahl, Mr. Vincent - Dearfield Drive, Los Altos
 McCracken, Miss Anna M. - 1869 Stone Avenue, San Jose 25
 Rose, Miss Elspeth - 981 Broadway, Los Gatos
 Smoker, Mr.-Mrs. Samuel - 3027 Julio Avenue, San Jose 24
 Turner, Mr.-Mrs. Frank B. - 1610 Portola Avenue, Palo Alto
 Villafuerte, Mrs. Ruth A. - 1660 Lincoln Avenue, San Jose 25

Angelina Snow
 Chairman, Membership Committee

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

The first winter visitant noted at my home near Los Gatos was a White-crowned Sparrow. It was on the lawn at breakfast time, September 17, picking up baby chick scratch which I had scattered there in anticipation of its coming. At lunch time a first year bird appeared, with brown and tan crown stripes instead of the black and white of an adult. The next day there were two White-crowned Sparrows at one time, and on the 19th there were four. That same day White-crowned Sparrow song was heard for the first time, weak and incomplete. My first Golden-crowned Sparrow, perhaps from nesting grounds as far away as Alaska, appeared on the 20th. Three days passed before a Golden-crown was seen again, and September 24 before their plaintive song was heard. It was early October before more than a dozen crowned sparrows, mostly Golden-crowns, were seen at any one time on the lawn. Some of these had a Fish and Wildlife numbered aluminum band on one "leg." Of the four banded birds which hopped into my banding trap, two wore bands which I had put on three winters ago!

The majority of the migratory birds which nested in our area this season were on their way south before the first of September, most of them to winter in Mexico or farther south. Some of the stragglers which we saw during September (and earlier migrants) may have nested far north of California, such as the Pileolated Warbler and the Western Tanager whose summer ranges extend all the way to British Columbia. Gladys Record has dates in her tidy notebook for tanagers near her home in Los Gatos during the nesting season, one of them for a food-begging fledgling on August 9. Then she has entries for September 5, 10, 19, and 21. On the last date there were two tanagers, yellow enough for adult males but lacking bright red on the head, which is proper for male tanagers during fall and winter.

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

Late nesting among our resident birds was reported by Agnes Weseman. Much to her surprise, on September 1, she saw a Mockingbird carry food into a tall lilac bush in her garden in Mountain View. On investigating she found the nest, but too high to look into. In the days that followed the birds were so quiet she thought they were gone. Then Mrs. Weseman had a second surprise--two well developed fledglings being fed in her garden on September 19!

In the following observations the abbreviations in parentheses after each bird indicate its status in our area: SR, summer resident (migratory bird which nests in our area); WV, winter visitant; and R, resident in our area throughout the year.

American Egret (R), Sept.15, a group of 42 of these beautiful white birds in the salt marshes just north of Bay Rd., Menlo Park, reported by Les Sleeper. An equally enthusiastic report from Alberta Edell of at least 50 egrets, including some Snowy Egrets, scattered along the Leslie Salt dikes, near Alviso, on October 17.

Wood Duck ("essentially R"), Oct.8, 36 of these most beautiful of our ducks, at Lake Ranch Reservoir, where the field trip to Howell Reservoirs had a delightful surprise ending, Manette Wittgenstein.

Northern Phalarope (WV), Sept.25, 20 (hundreds earlier), reservoir on cattle ranch near Gilroy, Etta Smith. Also, Spotted Sandpiper (WV), same day and place.

Allen's Hummingbird (SR), Sept.8, brightly colored male chasing resident Anna's Hummingbirds from syrup feeder, Mt. Hermon, Adist Boylan.

Red-breasted Sapsucker (WV), Oct.9, clinging upside down to a cluster of Poison Oak berries, which bent and swayed as the bird picked off several dry berries, Llagas Creek, west of Morgan Hill, Gladys Goodwin. (Audubon painted a sapsucker getting elderberries in this same manner.)

Olive-sided Flycatcher (SR), Sept.26, perched on a television aerial, uttering its characteristic "pil-pil," near Los Gatos, Emily Smith.

Russet-backed Thrush (SR), Sept.29, responded again and again to Enid Austin's whistled "whit" at Hoover Ranch, north of Davenport.

Hermit Thrush (WV), Oct.8, and Varied Thrush (WV), Oct.17, near Los Gatos, E.S.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (WV), Oct.8, fluttered under cluster of wild honeysuckle berries and picked off a red berry, field trip to Howell Reservoirs, Dorothy Smith.

Cedar Waxwing (WV), Oct.16, small flock, near Woodside, Harriet Mundy.

Hutton's Vireo (R), Sept.28, a family of 4 or 5, the young birds, with soft call notes, flying after an adult, field trip to Boronda Farm, Elizabeth Tucker.

Warbling Vireo (SR), Sept.17, near Los Gatos; and Solitary Vireo (SR), Sept.6 and 10, in Los Gatos, both birds singing a little, Emily Smith and Gladys Record.

Audubon's Warbler (WV), Oct.1, one in drab winter plumage, Saratoga, Peg Gorham; Oct.8, four or five, field trip to Howell Reservoirs, near Los Gatos, Agnes Prusman.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (SR) and Pileolated Warbler (SR), Sept.4, in bird bath together and after they had left, a female Hermit Warbler (SR); and on Sept.5 a "gorgeous" Townsend's Warbler (WV) at the bath. This warbler report from Lelah Miller, on a week-end visit to her cabin in Mt. Hermon.

Pileolated Warbler (SR), Sept.19 and 20, one each day in Harriet Masson's garden in Palo Alto; Sept.27, one in Harriet Mundy's garden in Palo Alto (another without black cap, four days earlier); Sept.28, two or three, feeding in willows by pond, field trip to Boronda Farm; Sept.29, three or four (also a Townsend's Warbler and several Orange-crowned Warblers), seen by Enid Austin, along Waddell Cr. on the Hoover Ranch. (At Hoover Ranch that same day we saw two Western Tanagers together.)

Black-headed Grosbeak (SR), Sept.20, perched on telephone wire, giving its sharp "ik" call note, near Saratoga, Peg Gorham.

Fox Sparrow (WV), Sept.29, a banded bird on lawn, looking for cracked corn, along with the crowned sparrows (joined by an unbanded bird on Oct.8), near Los Gatos, Emily Smith; the day before, two Fox Sparrows on field trip to Boronda Farm.

Emily D. Smith
Seasonal Observations Editor

CURRENT IN THE PERIODICALS

For an account of one of the world's greatest examples of practical conservation, read "The Productive Guanay" in the Science Section (p.85) of the October 24th issue of TIME. If you want a fascinating report concerning night-time studies of owls, rats, and other nocturnal animals, Elsie Hoeck recommends "Nocturnal Animals" by H.N.Southern in SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY (p.89) for October, 1955. The November, 1955, SUNSET carries a valuable report on "The Migrating Monarchs" (pp.15-16), with information regarding the Pacific Grove fiesta in honor of the monarch butterfly. Suggested reading in the October, 1955, issue of THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE includes the following: "To the Land of the Head-hunters" by E. Thomas Gilliard (pp.437-486); "The Incredible Kangaroo" by David H. Johnson (pp.487-500); "Photographing a Volcano in Action" by Thomas J. Hargrave (pp.561-563). Be sure to see "Wealth and Wonder of Northern State Trees" by William A. Dayton-Walter A. Weber, in the November, 1955, issue of THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE (pp.651-692).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Society owes a vote of thanks to the many persons who helped to prepare and man our booth at the 1955 County Fair. These included Will Luick, Dick Mewaldt, E.M.Combs, Emily Smith, Fanny Zwaal, Elsie Hoeck, Grace Addison, Mary Meehan, Anne Peterson, Lillian Gorham, Dorothy Smith, Grace Brubaker, Mr. and Mrs. E. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. William Ouderkirk, and Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Prusman. Most important, special thanks are due Jim Peterson who served as special chairman of the project, and was in attendance throughout the week. We have had many favorable comments regarding the booth, and certainly brought the Society to the attention of many persons formerly unfamiliar with it and its programs. We also secured dozens of names of persons interested in the Screen Tours and in membership.

You may be interested in the response your President received from the office of Governor Knight regarding the Butano Forest preservation. Parts of this rather lengthy letter are quoted herewith:

"I have been deeply concerned with the importance of securing Butano Forest as a State Park in order to preserve its scenic and recreational value for the benefit of the people of this State.

"The purchase of this valuable forest was included by the Legislature in the last session, in an omnibus bill, S.B.1729, which I was forced to veto in the public interest, because some definitely undesirable projects were included in that bill. Butano Forest is one of the desirable projects.

"The omnibus bill appropriated \$15,932,500 for 18 different park and beach projects. As Governor, I did not have the legal power to eliminate any of these projects from the bill while allowing others to remain. Unless I approved the entire appropriation, including all projects, my only authority was to eliminate the appropriation in total, or reduce it There was no possible way of eliminating any item other than vetoing the entire bill.

" . . . The project which I shall include in my budget next March will comprise approximately 2400 acres, of which 600 will be virgin timber. I am sure that you will agree that this will provide an adequate Butano Forest State Park; and that everything possible has been, and is being, done to assure the earliest possible acquisition of this splendid recreational and scenic area for the benefit of the people of California."

(signed) Goodwin J. Knight
Governor

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Audubon Screen Tour, Wednesday, November 2, at 8:00 p.m., at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College. Opening the tenth annual series in San Jose will be Walter H. Shackleton, whom many will remember from his presentation of "Oddities in Nature." The glories and scenic contrasts of Kentucky will be depicted in "Rhapsody in Bluegrass"---ffom lowlands in the west, through the famous bluegrass region, to the mountain gorges of the Appalachians in the east. Owls, with their "windshield wipers"; tiny termite-eating ring-necked snakes hatching from their eggs; a rare example of albinism in the blue-headed bullfrog; old stone fences, ancient spring houses and mansions that are gems of classic architecture----are a few of the tonal features awaiting you in Walter H. Shackleton's film. Both general admission season tickets and single performance tickets, and student season tickets and single performance tickets will be on sale at the Morris Dailey Box Office the evening of the Tour.

Annual Conference of California Conservation Council, International House, Berkeley, Tuesday, November 15, Morning Meeting 10:00 a.m. Luncheon. Afternoon Session and Awards Dinner at 6:30 p.m. - Everyone welcome.

DECEMBER

Audubon Screen Tour, Thursday, December 8, at 8:00 p.m., at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College. Tom and Arlene Hadley present a dramatic motion picture film of wildlife, "Into the North Woods," accompanied by their actual tape recordings of the natural sounds of the birds and animals in the film. You will see an awesome spectacle of nature in some of its most violent and catastrophic moods: forest fire and tornado. Included in the film is Kirtland's Warbler, one of the rarest warblers in North America, which thrives in burned-over jack-pine woodland. All types of tickets again will be on sale at the Morris Dailey Box Office the evening of the Tour.

Twenty-fifth Christmas Bird Count, Monday, December 26, starting at 7:30 a.m., with the count to be tallied at 4:30 p.m. Please see the Field Trips section for a complete description of the major event.

MEETINGS

NOVEMBER

Regular Meeting: Monday, November 14th, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 112, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College. Program: Dr. Henry Weston, Assistant Professor of Zoology at San Jose State College, will discuss and show examples of "Techniques for Marking Birds in Life History Studies."

Board Meeting: Monday, November 14th, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 112, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College. Mr. William Goodall, Pacific Coast Representative of National Audubon Society, will meet with the Board.

DECEMBER

Regular Meeting: The second Audubon Screen Tour of the season, Thursday, December 8th, will replace the scheduled meeting. Please refer to Special Events section for details.

Board Meeting: to be arranged