

THE AVOCET

Bulletin of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Inc.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENT

JANUARY

Audubon Screen Tour, Wednesday, January 25th, at 8:00 p.m., at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College. The third event in the tenth annual series will bring Cleveland P. Grant and his film, "American Birds and Big Game," a composite of the best sequences from twenty years of skilled photography. The lecturer and his wife, Ruth, rank with the best among those who create and present wildlife motion pictures. Shots of myriad migrating snow geese; revealing and humorous sequences on the courtship of the ruffed grouse, prairie chicken, and redhead duck; family-life interviews with blue-winged teal and shoveler ducks; and, a rare sequence on a wild red fox vixen with her eight puppies---portray in beautiful color the annual cycle of changing instincts. The second part of the Tour is on North American big game whose pictures were taken by Mr. Grant on a horseback trek along that portion of the Continental Divide that forms the boundary between Alberta and British Columbia. There, armed only with a camera, he hunted the remaining great caribou herds and fierce grizzly bears. General admission and student single performance tickets will be on sale at the Morris Dailey Box Office the evening of the Tour.

MEETINGS

JANUARY

Regular Meeting: Monday, January 9th, at 8:00 p.m., at the Louise Van Meter Elementary School, Los Gatos. Richard Warner will discuss "Studies of Lives and Habits of Wild Birds in Captivity." Mr. Warner was instrumental in the capture of more than eighty birds of several species for the studies of Dr. Charles Sibley at Cornell University. The Louise Van Meter School is located at 16445 San Jose-Los Gatos Road. It is a low, modern building, trimmed in stone, and is flood-lighted at night.

Board Meeting: Monday, January 9th, at 7:00 p.m., at the Louise Van Meter Elementary School, 16445 San Jose-Los Gatos Road.

FEBRUARY

Regular Meeting: Monday, February 13th, at 8:00 p.m., in Room 210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College. Dr. Frank A. Pitelka of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California at Berkeley will present an illustrated program. He will show slides of and discuss the Alaskan Eskimos, making special reference to whaling and other hunting activities. Dr. Pitelka has spent parts of several years in Alaska.

Board Meeting: Monday, February 13th, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College.

Dick Mewaldt
Chairman of the Program Committee

JANUARY-FEBRUARY CALENDAR

FIELD TRIPS

JANUARY

Wednesday Morning, January 4th, to Menlo Park and the woodsy garden of Mrs. Ransome Davis at 1140 San Mateo Drive. Many interesting birds enjoy Mrs. Davis' hospitality. Meet at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 8th, to Lagunita and Searsville Lake, with Mrs. W.A.Hillebrand as leader. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the S.P.Depot in Palo Alto. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, January 18th, to Los Gatos and the garden of Mrs. Arthur Jones at 15850 West Road. Last year we saw a White-throated Sparrow here. Meet at Los Gatos Art Center, Austin Way, at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 28th, to the coastal area in the vicinity of Santa Cruz, with Herbert Wittgenstein as leader. Meet in front of the Lyndon Hotel in Los Gatos at 8:30 a.m. The caravan will proceed to the coast, and the trip will start at the Natural Bridge State Park. Mr. Wittgenstein will lead the group in a southerly direction to visit Twin Lakes, with a lunch-stop at Sea Cliff State Park. Bring lunch.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday Morning, February 8th, to the Stanford University campus, with Mrs. H.B.Humphrey. Birding is customarily interesting in this area. Meet at the S.P.Depot in Palo Alto at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 12th, to Hall's Valley in the Mt. Hamilton area, with Fanny and Charles Zwaal. During the winter the pond in Hall's Valley is a favorite haunt of ducks, geese, and, occasionally, swans. Meet at San Carlos and 5th Streets in San Jose at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, February 22nd, to Santa Clara and the garden of Mrs. William McCormick on Scott Lane. Meet at the corner of Scott Lane and El Camino Real at 8:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 25th, to the Alviso area, where leader Ann Peterson has selected points of interest for the trip. Mrs. Peterson will take us to the Chinchon Ranch where a surprise will be awaiting us. Meet at the S.P.Depot in Agnew at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

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

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

The seasonal observation concerning the pair of handicapped thrashers, printed in the September-October, 1955, issue of THE AVOCET, has a sequel which focuses on one of their offspring. And what happened to the young bird points up the dependence of bird-banders on the general public for their "recoveries" (reports of finding the birds they have banded) and the need for spreading the word about bird-banding.

While the female was incubating her second set of eggs last May, her mate looked after their first brood. In my notebook I find it was May 4 when I first saw the fledglings on the lawn with their stump-legged father. On the 13th two were still following him, although he had apparently ceased to feed them. On that same day one of them unwarily entered my banding trap and had a numbered band put on its left "leg." The banded young bird remained in his parents' territory for about three weeks before leaving to find a territory of his own.

SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

A month later and a mile away the banded thrasher wandered into a garden tool house and was caught by a grammar school boy whose displaced Latvian parents came to this country only a few years ago. Nikolai Zelneronok was curious about the band and read the inscription on it: "Notify F. and W. Serv. 523-49208." Because he did not know what it meant, he asked his teacher, who suggested telephoning the sheriff. The sheriff gave him the name of our game warden, who told him about bird-banding and what to do. After recording the band number and releasing the bird, still wearing its band, Nikolai notified the Fish and Wildlife Service (Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Md.)

In due course of time I received a pink carbon copy of the form letter which the Banding Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service sent Nikolai, thanking him for his report. The form gave him the name of the bird; and where, when, and by whom it was banded. It also gave the careful data which Nikolai had supplied: full number of band; and date, location, and manner in which the bird was obtained--all of which was of interest to the bander and for which she was grateful. The Office also sent Nikolai a band, like the one on the thrasher, to keep as a souvenir.

White-tailed Kite, Dec.1, two hovering over field on Story Rd. near Jackson St., just east of San Jose, Etta Smith.

Florida Gallinule, Dec.11, one by pond on Boronda Farm, near Menlo Park. We had come from Crystal Springs Lakes to Boronda Farm for picnic lunch and afternoon birding, and were watching ducks, coots, and a Pied-billed Grebe on the pond when Emanuel Taylor saw the gallinule working behind cattails at the edge of the pond. Finally it came out and gave us a wonderful view of a bird rarely seen in our area.

Flickers. On Nov.13 Edith Buss carefully watched a flicker getting ants at edge of her driveway in Palo Alto. It was red-shafted and had red "mustaches," but on the back of its neck was the bright red stripe of a Yellow-shafted Flicker! A hybrid between our Red-shafted Flicker and the Yellow-shafted Flicker? On Dec. 1, in Pacific Grove, Grace Brubaker, Fanny Zwaal, and I saw another flicker with a bright red stripe on its nape. It was sunning itself on a sign post, with its back to us and the sun. Suddenly we saw the central shaft of a wing feather gleam yellow in the sunlight. Just then the flicker flew and showed yellow-shafted wings! We ran after it to get another look at the yellow, and to see if the "mustaches" were black, as in the Yellow-shafted Flicker. But when we found the flicker again, unfortunately there were no cheek stripes (Female and immature flickers lack the "mustaches"). Was it a Yellow-shafted Flicker, in pure form, which rarely strays into California?

Golden-crowned Kinglet, Oct.29, at least one (clear view) in flock of Bushtits, in San Jose, Grace Brubaker. Mrs. Brubaker also saw at her home a Townsend Warbler on Dec. 12.

Evening Grosbeak, Nov. 21, four (one an adult male), at my home, near Los Gatos. Across the road Jo and Bill Ouder Kirk saw them at their bird bath daily for a week, beginning Dec.2.

Fox Sparrow. The banded bird on my feed tray Sept. 29 came regularly until October 11. No Fox Sparrows again until Nov. 21 when two appeared and soon after two more (three of them now banded). Roberta Wright reports that the first Fox Sparrow she ever saw on her feed tray, in Atherton, appeared Nov.21; and Fanny Zwaal in San Jose reports the same thing, except that it appeared on the 20th. There must have been an influx of Fox Sparrows into our area just at that time.

Emily D. Smith
Seasonal Observations Editor

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

HAWK AND OWL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS REPORT

November 28, 1955: Letter sent to conservation chairmen or special chairmen for Hawk and Owl Campaign or presidents of the Branches and Affiliates of the National Audubon Society in California. The purposes of the letter were (1) to review the need for revision of California's protection laws for Hawks and Owls; (2) to summarize what various Branches and Affiliates had undertaken to date in separate actions; (3) to enlist support for a coordinated plan of action; (4) to inform concerning the next step scheduled in laying the groundwork for the campaign.

December 9, 1955: Mr. William N. Goodall, Pacific Coast Representative of the National Audubon Society, Mr. E. R. Pickett of the Sacramento Audubon Society, and your editor conferred in Sacramento for two and one-half hours' time with Mr. Seth Gordon, Director of the California Department of Fish and Game, and members of his staff. The attitude of the key people with whom we discussed the problem and our objectives was favorable toward revision. The Department of Fish and Game volunteered to chair a February meeting called for the purpose of examining the need for revision of protection laws for all birds and mammals. To this conference will be invited representatives of a number of organizations interested in conservation legislation.

December 21, 1955: There are now twenty organizations working with the Coordinating Conservation Chairman of the California Audubon Societies and Affiliates.

THE WHOOPING CRANE

THE ALERT, a cooperative inter-club publication of the Conservation Information Service, carried the following information in its November 8th issue: "Plans have been abandoned by the Air Force to make a photoflash bombing range next to the winter home of the last 26 whooping cranes in the world, in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. The bombing ranges would have been located within half a mile of the Refuge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says that the best way to break up large concentrations of ducks and other waterfowl is by this type of bombing. Conservation groups throughout the country protested the move as sure to lead to prompt extinction of these rare birds. The Canadian government protested to the State department against establishing the bombing range, reminding the United States that cranes are protected by the Canadian-American Migratory Bird Convention."

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND AND LEADER

During October, 1955, the death of Dr. H. B. Humphrey of Los Altos saddened many of his friends and associates in our Society. The contributions of the alert and vigorous octogenarian to the growth of our Society will inspire our future leaders. Dr. Humphrey served a term as president during 1952-1953, and served several terms as a member of the Board of Directors thereafter. It was during his administration that the major revision of our governing rules was undertaken. Members of our Society who had not previously served as leaders accepted his and Mrs. Humphrey's invitation to participate. Let us take this opportunity to salute the memory of a true friend and creative leader who will long be remembered among us, Dr. H. B. Humphrey! And, we extend our heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Humphrey in the personal loss of her beloved husband.

 Publication Staff

Editor - Will F. Luick, 1027 Camino Ricardo, San Jose 25 - CYPRESS 2-1758
 Circulation Manager - Mrs. Lester H. Brubaker, 191 Mountain View Avenue, San Jose -
 CLayburn 8-2289
 Production Manager - Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt, 4150 Golf Drive, San Jose -
 CLayburn 8-7491