

The Avocet

Volume III Number 3

May-June 1956

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Both for birds and for bird-watchers, spring is a busy season. A glance at the ambitious calendar at the bottom of this page will serve as illustration. Certainly our Field Trip Committee has done a superlative job this year, for which high praise is due its co-chairmen, Manette Wittgenstein and Dorothy Smith.

Two working groups occupy key positions in the operation of your Society. One is the Field Trip Committee, and the other is the Editorial Committee. Certainly we all appreciate the high standards of quality which have been established for publication of our journal, The Avocet. Our debt to Wilbur Luick, who implemented those standards the past few years, can never be adequately expressed.

Publication standards for The Avocet will continue to reflect credit to our society, thanks to the willingness of your Vice President, Dr. Dick Mewaldt, to assume the responsibilities of its editorship. The Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge this important service to the Society and to the community. It seems appropriate here to remind all committee chairmen and contributors having publication materials, to get them to Dr. Mewaldt early in June, in time for the July-August issue of The Avocet. Field trip leaders should submit their reports to Miss Mary L. Meehan promptly.

We can look forward to a productive close to this fiscal year, culminating at the annual meeting in June. Do plan to come, to participate in the election of your new officers for the coming year, and to hear reports of our long range projects and plans for the future. The Junior Museum staff is arranging an interesting--and somewhat unusual--program for us. See you there.

John P. Harville

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Meetings:

- May 14 8:00 p.m. Regular Meeting at San Jose State College
- Jun 11 7:30 p.m. Annual Meeting at Alum Rock Park

Field Trips:

- May 9 8:15 a.m. Harvilles
- May 12 8:00 a.m. Montalvo
- May 20 9:00 a.m. Wool Ranch
- May 23 8:00 a.m. Searsville Lake
- May 26-27 Russian Gulch State Park
- Jun 2 9:00 a.m. Mt. Hermon
- Jun 6 8:00 a.m. Castle Rock Ridge
- Jun 10 9:00 a.m. Salinas
- Jun 11 4:00 p.m. Alum Rock Park
- Jun 20 8:00 a.m. Gilroy
- Jun 24 10:00 a.m. Point Lobos



MAY-JUNE CALENDAR

MEETINGS

- Regular Meeting: Monday, May 14 at 8:00 p.m., in Room S210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College. A program centered around two excellent conservation films is planned.
- Board Meeting: Monday, May 14 at 7:00 p.m., in Room S210, Natural Science Building, San Jose State College.
- Annual Meeting: Monday, June 11, at the San Jose - Santa Clara County Junior Museum at Alum Rock Park.
- 4:00 p.m. A no-leader field trip. Meet in front of the Junior Museum.
- 5:30 p.m. No-host picnic supper at tables near the Junior Museum; each member should bring his own food; coffee, cream, and sugar will be provided by the Social Committee; bring your own cup.
- 6:30 p.m. Board meeting in the Junior Museum.
- 7:30 p.m. Annual meeting in the Junior Museum. Annual reports of officers and committee chairmen. Nomination and election of Board of Directors and Officers for 1956-57. The program will be presented by Larry Moitozo and Sam Smoker ----- its subject matter won't be wearing feathers.

FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday, May 9, to the home of John and Virginia Harville on Ravine Road, where we found good birding a year ago. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at the Los Gatos Art Center, Austin Way; about halfway between Saratoga and Los Gatos (turn onto Austin Way at Quito Fire Station).

Saturday, May 12, a 3- or 4-mile (or shorter) walk over the trails of Montalvo with the Conservation Committee. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking area inside the grounds. The main entrance to Villa Montalvo is on Saratoga-Los Gatos Road, about half a mile from the center of Saratoga..

Sunday, May 20; a trip to the Wool Ranch and Calaveras Reservoir country. Meet Al Wool in Milpitas at the intersection of Highway 17 and Calaveras Road at 9 a.m. Bring lunch.

Wednesday, May 23, to Searsville Lake, west of Palo Alto. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at entrance gate near the junction of Sandhill and Portola Roads.

Saturday and Sunday, May 26-27, a trip to the Russian Gulch State Park in Mendocino County. This Park offers wonderful opportunities for studying birds and wild flowers. Camp sites are available in the Park and there are a few motels in Mendocino. Members interested in participating in this trip, please contact the Wittgensteins at Elgato 4-9420 one week ahead of time.

FIELD TRIPS continued

Saturday, June 2, Ester Ollis will lead a trio to Mt. Hermon where Red Crossbills were seen last year. Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of State Highway 17 and Mt. Hermon Road. Bring lunch.

Wednesday, June 6, to Castle Rock Ridge. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at parking area on Saratoga Gap, where the Saratoga-Big Basin Road (State Highway 9) crosses the Skyline Blvd.

Sunday, June 10, a trip to the Hatton Ranch with Charles and Viola Anderson as leaders. We have invited the Santa Cruz Birding Society to be our guests on this trip. Meet at 9 a.m. on the Salinas-Monterey Highway Bridge three and one half miles south-west of Salinas. Bring lunch.

Monday, June 11, a no-leader trip in Alum Rock Park prior to the Annual Picnic and Annual Meeting. Meet in front of the Junior Museum in Alum Rock Park at 4:00 p.m. (see page 15).

Wednesday, June 20, a new trip to a pond and creek-side on an interesting cattle ranch west of Gilroy. Mrs. Etta Waddington Smith is planning the trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in Gilroy at the junction of Monterey Highway (U.S. 101) and the Hecker Pass Road (State Highway 152). Bring lunch if you want to bird in the afternoon.

Sunday, June 24, visit to Point Lobos, "the greatest meeting of land and water in the world." Meet at the entrance of Point Lobos Reserve State Park at 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

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

WILBUR F. LUICK RESIGNS

The Board of Directors has accepted with regret the resignation of Wilbur F. Luick from his posts as Editor of The Avocet, Chairman of the Editorial and By-laws Committees, and Member of the Board of Directors. L. Richard Mewaldt has accepted appointment by the Board of Directors as Editor of The Avocet for the balance of the year, effective with the current issue.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Three fifteen dollar scholarships to the Death Valley session of the West Coast Nature School in March or this year were granted by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Selections were made by the Scholarship Committee on the basis of need and on indication of intent to use the knowledge gained in the public interest. Recipients, all students at San Jose State College, were Marvin A. Kuentzel, of Vallejo, Richard G. Rose, of Saratoga, and Robert Wasley of Oakland. They were selected from a number of very deserving applicants.

A scholarship for fifty dollars to this summer's session of the Audubon Camp of California was advertised during April with the deadline

SCHOLARSHIPS continued

for applications set for April 30. The grant will pay for half of the fee for a two-week session at Sugar Bowl Lodge at Norden, California.

The scholarship committee consists of Dr. Matthew F. Vessel, chairman, Mrs. Eva McRae, Dr. John F. Harville, and Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt.

INTERIM APPOINTMENT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Goraj have accepted a joint interim appointment to a vacancy on the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. On occasions when Frank cannot attend, because of demands of his job, Jane will serve as official member of the Board.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

All comments reaching this desk on the format and content of the recent issues of The Avocet have been more than favorable. Therefore, as the new editor takes over, no changes in editorial policy are anticipated. However, as always, our readers' suggestions are not only welcomed, but are solicited to help us keep The Avocet abreast of the times.

Miss Emily Smith has just returned from her trip to Florida and many of those interesting points in between. She reports a most profitable and instructive trip, having seen such animals as Limpkins and Whooping Cranes. We are all anxious to hear more about the long "field trip." Because of her very recent return, the section "Seasonal Observations" could not be prepared in time to go to press.

HARVILLE WINS DEGREE

On April 7, Stanford University conferred upon John P. Harville, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Doctor Harville's 84-page thesis, titled "Ecology and Population Dynamics of the California Oak Moth Phryganidia californica Packard (Lepidoptera: Diptidae)", was published in its entirety in Microentomology (Volume 20, Part 4, Pages 83-166). It has already received very favorable comment from entomologists and ecologists from coast to coast.

RECENT LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE by Mary Ferguson Cole. 1954. 94 pages, paper bound, 5 x 7 inches. American Book Institute, 427 West 5th Street, Los Angeles 13, California (price \$1.50). Mary Coble has put on paper answers to hundreds of questions which come to the minds of amateur and professional ornithologists alike. The principal section of the book is devoted to the pronunciation and derivation of the scientific

RECENT LITERATURE continued

names of birds of western United States. For example, the generic name of the Avocet is Recurvirostra which is from the Latin "recurvus, bent (back) plus rostrum, beak." There are sections which enumerate and translate Latin and Greek words used as the basis for scientific terminology. Subjects of the sections include structural characteristics, color, habitat, food, places included in scientific names, and persons for whom birds are named.

BIRD NAVIGATION by G. V. T. Matthews. 1955. vii plus 141 pp. Cambridge University Press, New York, N. Y. (price \$2.50). Doctor Matthews has here provided a readable synthesis of our present knowledge of how birds find their way over long distances. He discusses most modern theories, and concludes that no "theory of the physical basis of bird navigation remains . . . except that involving the sun." For those with an interest in bird migration, this book will provide much food for thought and for discussion.

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Because the editor will leave San Jose for about 6 weeks beginning June 16, it is requested that all copy for the July-August The Avocet be in his hands on or before June 11, the day of the annual meeting.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS
1956

Wednesday morning, March 7th, seven members of the morning birding group enjoyed a beautiful, tranquil morning in a secluded area in Los Gatos. The birds were pairing off and there was a good deal of song. The following birds were observed by the group: Turkey Vulture; red-tailed hawk; Valley Quail, calling; Anna Humming-Bird; Acorn Woodpecker; Crow, calling; Scrub Jays; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Bush-tits, in pairs; Wren-Tit, singing; Western Mockingbird, singing; California Thrasher, singing; Robin; Audubon Warbler; Townsend Warbler, pair in oaks; Meadowlarks; House Finches, singing; American Goldfinch; Spotted Towhee; Brown Towhees, Junco, singing; Golden-crowned Sparrows, singing.

Dorothy L. Smith and Elspeth Rose

Wednesday morning, March 21st, to 64-acre estate of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Menlo Park, 14 members attending. Toward the end of the trip we were joined by two of the nuns and 40 enthusiastic students. Clyde Prusman with his spotting telescope proved to be "the man of the hour." We trust that two junior Audubon groups are in the making. We were invited to examine the graphic botanical chart of the grounds, a survey of the trees and shrubs from 32 different countries. It was with great ease we noted the following 32 species: Brewer's Blackbird; Red-winged Blackbird; Bush-Tit; Chickadee; Mourning Dove; Common House Finch; Purple Finch; Scrub Jay; Steller's Jay; Oregon Junco; Western Meadowlark; Western Mockingbird; Slender-billed Nuthatch; Black Phoebe; Band-tailed Pigeon; California Quail; Western Robin; Golden-crowned Sparrow; Song Sparrow; White-crowned Sparrow; Violet-green Swallow; California Thrasher; Hermit Thrush; Varied Thrush; Titmouse; California Brown Towhee; Spotted (red-eyed) Towhee; Audubon's Warbler; Townsend's Warbler; Acorn Woodpecker; Bewick's Wren; Wren-tit;

Marjorie Davis and Mary Meehan

Editor's Note: These are the only reports (of eight possible) received by the Field Trip Editor for March and April. We urge the Field Trip Leaders, or their designated representatives, to submit their reports promptly.