

The Avocet

Volume IV Number 5

September--October 1957

CONSERVATION NEWS

We should be proud of our help toward the recent passage in California of the MacBride Bill, AB 2831. The portion of the bill of particular interest to the Audubon Society is the section protecting all species of hawks and owls. There are no more "birds of prey". The terms "predatory mammals" and "predatory birds" are obsolete--in line with modern findings on the balance of nature.

Support is nation-wide and bipartisan for the Wilderness Bill introduced by Senator Humphrey of Minnesota. The bill is the most important in scenic-resource conservation since the National Park Act of 1916. It will (1) establish a National Wilderness Preservation System--giving Congressional recognition and added protection to the best of our vanishing wilderness and (2) establish an Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission to watch future needs for parks and wildlife preservation. The National Audubon Society urges you to help pass this bill. Letters to your congressmen are an important influence.

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Regular Meetings:

Mon. Sept. 16	8:00 p.m.	San Jose State College
Mon. Oct. 14	8:00 p.m.	Junior Museum, Palo Alto

Board Meetings:

Preceding regular meetings	7:00 p.m.
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Screen Tour:

Wed. Oct. 30	San Jose State College
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Field Trips:

Sept. 14	8:30 a.m.	Dumbarton Bridge Salt Marsh Sanctuary
Sept. 18	8:30 a.m.	Stevens Creek Canyon
Sept. 29	9:00 a.m.	Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
Oct. 13	8:30 a.m.	Searsville Lake
Oct. 16	8:30 a.m.	Westridge area
Oct. 27	8:30 a.m.	Calaveras Reservoir

Special Event:

Sept. 10	7:00 a.m.	Santa Cruz Offshore Trip (Reservations required.)
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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

Regular Meetings:

Monday, September 16, 1957

8:00 p.m. Room 258 (second floor North End) of the new Science Building, San Jose State College, San Jose, California. The building (opened August 1) is located at the corner of South Fourth and San Antonio Streets. Lots of parking is available one short block west at South Third and San Antonio Streets. Dr. Henry G. Weston, San Jose State College, will discuss "Plant and Animal Names, Scientific versus Common".

Monday, October 14, 1957

8:00 p.m. Junior Museum, Palo Alto, California. Dr. James P. Heath of San Jose State College will present an illustrated talk on "Tidepools".

Screen Tour:

Tickets will be available soon to the five screen tours listed in the July-August bulletin. Illustrated folders with complete information will be mailed directly to members well before the first tour on October 30. The prices:

General Admission Season Ticket	\$3.00
Student Season Ticket	\$2.00
Family Season Ticket	\$5.00
(10 admissions good at any performance)	
Single Admission Ticket	\$.85
Student Ticket	\$.50

Season tickets will be sold at the college and also at the door on the night of the first performance. Single admission and student tickets are sold at the door only.

Field Trips:

Saturday, September 14, to the Dumbarton Bridge Salt Marsh Sanctuary and elsewhere in that area. Meet at Hiller's Helicopter plant on Willow Road (the west approach to Dumbarton Bridge) at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Les Sleeper (DA3-9370).

Wednesday Morning, September 18, to Stevens Creek Canyon, in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mts., southwest from Cupertino. There should still be some water in the reservoir, and the county park farther up the canyon is an interesting place to explore. Meet at 8:30 a.m., at the parking area at Stevens Creek Reservoir. Leader: Mrs. Langford W. Smith (EL4-4674).

Sunday, September 29, to the Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. Meet at the Park parking area -- just south of Felton on Highway 9-- at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Fanny Zwaal (CY2-2060).

Sunday, October 13, to Searsville Lake. Meet at the entrance gate, near the junction of Sandhill and Portola Roads at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Entrance fee is 25 cents. Leader: Harriet Mundy (DA5-1192).

Wednesday Morning, October 16, to Westridge, southwest from Palo Alto-- an area of oak-covered hills and wooded ravines. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Merryvale Antique Shop, 3249 Alpine Road, about 2 miles from junction of Alpine Rd. with Santa Cruz Ave. and Junipero Serra Blvd. Leader: Mrs. Shepard S. Tucker (DA2-9457).

Sunday, October 27, to Calaveras Reservoir area. Meet at Calaveras Rd. and Oakland Highway (No. 17) at Milpitas at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch and walking shoes. Leader: Al Wool (AM2-2577).

Special Event:

Tuesday, September 10, twelve miles offshore from Santa Cruz. A Stagnaro sport fishing boat will take 40 people for a 5-hour trip sponsored by Leavitt M. McQuesten of Santa Cruz. Meet at Santa Cruz wharf at 7:00 a.m. Tickets are \$1.50 and may be obtained from Joyce Todd (DA2-1787). Money will be collected at the wharf on the morning of the trip, but the ticket is your reservation.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome most cordially these new members who have joined since May 1, 1957:

Mrs. H. H. Eaves	675 Benvenue Ave.	Los Gatos
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Hopkins	1185 Ruth Drive	San Jose 25
Mr. Ted Humphrey	12660 Robleda Ave.	Los Altos
Mrs. John C. Wells	11900 Terrace Drive	Los Altos
Dr. George C. Muench	17292 Jena Ave.	Los Gatos
Mrs. Thomas A. Taylor	1310 University Ave.	Palo Alto
Miss Mary Jane Duckworth	1049 Thornton Way	San Jose 28
Mr. Brooking Tatum	3980 El Camino Real	Palo Alto
Miss Alice Allen	143 Acacia Street	Stockton
Miss Jodie Taulbee	980 Matadero Ave.	Palo Alto
Mr. E. G. Kern	25451 O'Keefe Lane	Los Altos

THE AVOCET

Publication is now resumed following the January-February issue (Volume IV, Number 1). Since then have appeared

Vol. IV	No. 2	Coming Events April 1
Vol. IV	No. 3	Calendar for May and June, 1957
Vol. IV	No. 4	July-August, 1957

We have a new Circulation Manager--Miss Elsie D. Hodck of San Jose. Mimeographing will be done by Mr. Emmanuel Taylor of Santa Clara, and Mrs. Taylor will assist with folding and mailing.

The Editor would appreciate a large member-participation. Do feel free to make any suggestions concerning The Avocet. At the end of Miss Emily Smith's "Notes from Bird Watchers" you will read what sort of observations can add to scientific knowledge of birds as well as to your pleasure in them. Send your notes directly to her. To the Editor please send notes of new books, articles in current periodicals, broadcasts, TV programs, etc., of interest to Audubon readers. I can also use information about any conservation problem, or legislation concerning it.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN
for 1957-58

Auditor	Dr. Marion Kirkwood
Nominating	Miss Harriet Mundy
Membership	Mrs. Angelina Snow
Program	Dr. Henry Weston
Field Trips	Francis Goraj
Editorial	Miss Emily Smith
Publicity	Jane Goraj

Very recently appointed chairmen of other committees will be announced later.

THE PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Now that some patterns have been set by the successful aspects of the publicity work for 1956-7, the Publicity Committee knows a little more what it is doing. But, in order to function, we need the following people: (1) three who can type, to send out once a month notices to the newspapers of our Field Trips and Meetings; (2) one or two more who can type to send out releases on the Audubon Screen Tours (five during the year) and any special event like the arrival of our Warden, John O. Larson, Jr., to patrol the new Salt Marsh Sanctuary. We also need anyone who is interested in writing to help write releases. And anyone who is just interested is welcome, too! The Publicity Committee has a good time; we enjoy our occasional meetings and telephone conversations. If you'd like to join us, please contact Jane Goraj, Chmn., 675 Florales Drive, Palo Alto (DA5-3847).

NEW PACIFIC COAST FIELD RECORD CARDS

The Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society (2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, California) has mailed to the local society sample copies of the new revised Audubon Field Record Card for the Pacific Coast (California, Oregon, and Washington). The cards could be used conveniently for field trip reports or by any individual on a birding trip. Mail orders from the Pacific Coast Office will be handled promptly. Prices follow:

25 cards (minimum sale)	\$1.25
50 cards	\$2.00
100 cards	\$3.50

CURRENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON NATURAL HISTORY

- Blackford, John L. Western Wonderlands. New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1956.
- Brown, Vinson. California Wildlife Regions. San Martin, Cal.: Naturegraph Co., 1957. (\$2.00 paperback)
- Griscom, Ludlow and Sprunt, Alexander (Jr.) (eds.) The Warblers of North America. New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1957. (\$12.50)
- Pallister, John C. "Beauty on the Wing", Sports Illustrated, August 12, 1957, p. 32.
- Stegner, Wallace (ed.) This is Dinosaur. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955.
- Thomas, Arline. "We Run a Hospital for Birds", Saturday Evening Post, August 10, 1957, p. 20.

- Warham, John. The Technique of Bird Photography. London and New York: The Focal Press, 1956.
- Welty, Carl. "The Geography of Birds", Scientific American, July, 1957, p. 118.

NOTES FROM BIRD WATCHERS

Occasional faint rumbling sounds in a fireplace chimney in Los Gatos, first heard on April 19 of this year, finally proved to be the beat of bird wings. On July 16 Grace Tomlinson noticed that the "rumble" in the chimney was followed by chippering sounds just above the closed damper. At first she was not sure that it was baby birds being fed, because there was a snakelike hissing quality to the chippering. But when she went outdoors and watched, a Vaux's Swift suddenly appeared and dropped down into the chimney, wings fluttering. Two weeks later Gladys Record reported that the chimney of another house in Los Gatos had been occupied by swifts during July. The feeding of young birds was no longer being heard in the chimney, and so we assumed that they had been successfully fledged. Thinking the family might return to the chimney at nightfall, we watched on the evening of August 5. It was getting dusky, although only five minutes past official sunset time, when a swift dropped in, almost faster than the eye could follow it. Soon there was another, and then two together; and finally six in all had gone to roost in the chimney. Ordinarily the Vaux's Swift builds its nest inside a hollow tree, unlike its eastern relative, the Chimney Swift, which commonly nests in chimneys. Perhaps a shortage of hollow trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains is partly responsible for Vaux's Swifts utilizing these and other known chimneys in the Los Gatos area in recent years.

Hearing by chance the song of the Hooded Oriole (which, according to Hoffman's Birds of the Pacific States, is seldom heard "even in the height of the breeding season") led to the discovery of its nest in Los Gatos. This oriole, a common summer resident in southern California, was first reported in Santa Clara County in 1930 by Gayle Pickwell. Since then it has gradually become a not uncommon nesting bird in this area, most reports of its presence coming from San Jose and Palo Alto. This summer a pair nested in a fan palm next door to Emmanuel and Mary Taylor's home in Santa Clara. In San Jose Grace Brubaker saw Hooded Orioles sipping nectar from Abutilon flowers in her garden during July; and Fanny Zwaal, on the other side of town, watched a pair in her backyard the morning of July 7. But no one to my knowledge has ever reported a Hooded Oriole in Los Gatos. On July 25, a month after the song was heard, both parents were seen feeding clamorous young birds in a closely woven, basketlike nest of palm leaf fibers, hung close to the underside of the leaf of a tall fan palm. The male, a first-year bird, looked much like its dull-colored mate, except for the black chin and throat. It will be another year or two before he takes on the bright orange color which is expected of an adult male Hooded Oriole.

With the end of summer, Vaux's Swifts and Hooded Orioles and the other migratory birds which have nested in our area will be gone, most of them to spend the winter south from California. We shall know they are gone only when we suddenly realize that we have not seen them for some time. But bird watchers who are keeping notes--even if nothing more than jotting down on a calendar whenever a Black-headed Grosbeak, a Bullock's Oriole, a Western Flycatcher is seen--can obtain some "last dates" for summer residents which I would be glad to receive. Also "first dates" for White-crowned Sparrows and other winter visitants

which will be arriving in September and October will be welcome. In the case of "first dates" it is important to note whether there is only one bird or several. "Peak dates"--when the bird is present in largest numbers--are important, too; and any notes about weather could be significant. Also send me observations of interesting bird behavior and the occurrences of unusual birds. And please do not forget to give date and place of your observations.

Emily D. Smith
19, 651 Glen Una Drive
Saratoga, California

LEGISLATION PENDING

The Council of Conservationists, Inc. is asking support for the Bill in the United States Senate (S-2577) making Dinosaur National Monument our thirtieth National Park. It was introduced by Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado. Letters of encouragement to him (Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.) and letters to California Senators expressing interest in the Bill will help now as well as later, when the Bill is being considered by Committees. The Bill is backed also by the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Trustees for Conservation, National Parks Association, etc.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Sunset magazine for September, 1957 in "September Travel--in and Beyond the West" recommends the "Albatross Expedition"--the Santa Cruz offshore trip previously mentioned in this issue. Many beautiful seabirds (and possibly some quite rare ones) can be expected.

Elinor V. Cogswell, in her column "EVC at bat", Daily Palo Alto Times, Tuesday, July 2, 1957, mentions something better than sprays and baits to combat the grasshopper plague common in rural areas of Palo Alto and Menlo Park this summer. A resident was appalled to see thousands of grasshoppers spreading from her driveway all over the garden. In an instant a flock of English Sparrows swooped down and began eating. The number of grasshoppers seemed endless, but the sparrows ate them all in a few days.

A Bakersfield, Calif. parakeet owner has started a lost-and-found service for budgies. She describes the birds and includes the legband number. New homes are found for those not claimed. Although it was thought lost parakeets could not survive more than 48 hours, she found one very much alive who had been lost for 9 days. (Your Editor observed one this summer in a Los Altos orchard--very plump and happy. It ate quantities of weed seeds and flew high into a tree occasionally to sing.)

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