

The Avocet

Volume V Number 1

January, 1958

CONSERVATION IN 1958

Citizen conservationists will be looking to the 85th Congress for more action on natural resource legislation in 1958--according to the December 1, 1957 Conservation News, from the National Wildlife Federation. The coming session should be more productive--since considerable committee work has been completed, and an election year is a time to catch the notice of voters. Important bills carried over include:

(1) The Wilderness Preservation Bill (S1176). The philosophy of this bill is not to expand present areas or create more, but to hold in perpetuity those already existing within National Forests, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges. The act will see to exclusion of roads and other developments not in keeping with the natural character of wild country. Conservation-minded members of Congress--and that includes most of them--will probably join with popular demand in acting to safeguard the wilderness resource.

(2) Legislation to earmark Duck Stamp receipts or otherwise provide funds for acquisition of rapidly disappearing waterfowl marshes. HR8699 is pending in the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

(3) Chemical Pesticide Research (HR783)--to authorize a Fish and Wildlife Service Research program on the effects of chemical pesticides and on ways to use such materials without doing serious damage to fish and wildlife resources.

(4) Humane Methods of Trapping Animals and Birds on Federal Lands (S2489). Senators Neuberger, Humphrey, and Kefauver sponsor the bill. It must be passed to eliminate cruel practices too painful to detail.

--Joyce Todd

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Regular Meeting:

Mon. Jan. 13 8:00 p.m. Junior Museum, Palo Alto

Board Meeting:

Mon. Jan. 13 7:00 p.m. Junior Museum, Palo Alto

Screen Tour:

Wed. Jan. 15 8:00 p.m. Auditorium, San Jose State College

Field Trips:

Sat. Jan. 4 10:00 a.m. Redwood City

Yacht Harbor

Sat. Jan. 11 10:00 a.m. Redwood City

Yacht Harbor

Wed. Jan. 22 9:00 a.m. Montalvo Wildlife

Sanctuary



JANUARY CALENDAR

Regular Meeting:

Monday, January 13, 1958, Palo Alto Junior Museum, 8:00p.m.
(Community Center--Middlefield Road). Dr. Henry Weston, Program
Chairman, will present a color sound film on wildlife.

Board Meeting:

Monday, January 13, 1958, Palo Alto Junior Museum, 7:00 p.m.

Screen Tour:

Wednesday, January 15, 1958 at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose
State College, 8:00p.m. Cleveland P. Grant of Mineral Point, Wis-
consin, will present "Yukon Indian Summer"--a color motion picture.
Mr. Grant is a famed wildlife photographer who will take us on an ex-
pedition into the wilderness Yukon Territory. Animals along the way
include antelope, hairy marmots, moose, caribou, and grizzly bears.
An account of the Yukon Indian's culture completes the trip. Tickets
are available at the door--90¢ general admission; 50¢, students.

Field Trips:

Saturday, January 4, to Greco Island. This will be a boat trip limited to
25 persons per trip. John O. Larson, Jr., our Sanctuary Warden, will
lead the trip. Miss Mary W. Meehan, 1014 Clark Ave., Mountain View,
(WH8-4949) will take reservations. Meet at Redwood City Yacht Harbor
(turn east off Bayshore Highway 101 on Harbor Blvd. at Redwood City)
at 10:00 a.m. near the Sea Scout ship Fury. Bring lunch. There is
a donation of 50¢ per person to be collected to defray gasoline ex-
penses. This is a good opportunity to see your Sanctuary--the South-
ern San Francisco Bay Sanctuaries.

Saturday, January 11, repeat of January 4 trip above.

Wednesday Morning, January 22, to Montalvo Wildlife Sanctuary at Villa Mon-
talvo. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking area inside the Sanctuary.
The entrance is on Saratoga-Los Gatos Road, about a half-mile from
Saratoga. Leaders: Miss Alberta Edell (EL4-4979) and Miss Emily
Smith (EL4-2494).

NOTE: Additional Greco Island trips can be arranged if the demand warrants
it.

--Francis Goraj, Field Trip Chairman

THE 1957 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

A condensed report of the December 29, 1957 Bird Count will appear
in the February Avocet compiled by Dr. Richard Mewaldt of San Jose. De-
tailed results of the count from all sections of the United States are
sent to the National Audubon Society in New York every year.

THE AVOCET

There will be more Avocets in 1958. The bulletin will appear monthly instead of bi-monthly -- which should make more information available sooner to local Audubon members. This aid to easier planning and better reporting is made possible largely through the kindness of Mrs. Jane Castner and Miss Rulofson, 112 Murray Court, Redwood City (EM6-2514) who will cut the necessary stencils every month.

Again, the deadline for Avocet material is the 15th of each month. Please send articles from newspapers and magazines, anecdotes, book notices, anything you would like to share with other members.

Complaints that the Avocet fails to print field trip reports are becoming painfully numerous. Won't someone please volunteer to collect these and prepare them for the stencillers? A valuable service--and not a difficult or time-consuming one. Call Joyce Todd (DA2-1787).

---J.T.

NEW MEMBERS

Membership is joint with the National Audubon Society and includes a subscription to Audubon Magazine. Regular, \$5; Sustaining, \$10; Active, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Student, \$2.

We welcome these new people and value their support:

Mrs. Charles Weeks	Box 522	Menlo Park
Mrs. M.H. Hodge	12505 Woodside Ct.	Saratoga
Miss Effie Finley	3130 Riddle Road	San Jose 28
Mrs. Harry R. Reynolds	342 Kellogg Ave.	Palo Alto
Mr. & Mrs. C.F. Pintler	13261 Montebello Rd.	Cupertino
Mr. & Mrs. R.J. Murrell	910 Lafayette St. (Apt. 3)	Santa Clara
Mrs. C.E. Purviance	228 Seale Avenue	Palo Alto
Dr. S.C. Woodward	491 Middle Court	Menlo Park
Mr. & Mrs. B.E. Carlson	1117 Cowper St.	Palo Alto

--Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership Chairman

MONTALVO SANCTUARY NEEDS HELP

During the next two months we need to recruit work parties to help establish a nature trail at Montalvo before spring. Villa Montalvo is the 175-acre former estate of the late U. S. Senator James D. Phelan and is situated in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains above Saratoga. The entrance gate is about a half mile from the center of Saratoga on the Los Gatos Road. The grounds are open to the public during the daylight hours seven days a week. At the request of the Montalvo Association, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is planning to build and maintain a nature trail there. We need everyone who can help in any way--trail clearing, map making, spraying, repairing view sites, getting youth groups to help (Boy Scouts, Explorers, students), supervising work groups, and many other various duties. This is our chance to have a place where our children can learn and enjoy nature close to home. If you are interested, write or phone Francis Goraj, 675 Florales Drive, Palo Alto (DA5-8847).

---F. Goraj

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF FALCONRY

There has been considerable concern and some mis-information over the exact wording of the new regulation concerning the practice of falconry. A complete copy of these regulations from the Fish and Game Department will be available at local Audubon meetings, since it is too long to include here. One must now be licensed (\$15 a year) to hunt with a falcon. The bird may then be trained to capture small game such as rabbits and squirrels.

REUNION OF AUDUBON CAMPERS

Attention! Circle and Save this date for the reunion of Audubon Campers (1948 through 1957), their families and friends. For Northern California: Sunday, April 20. Full information and details later.

MORE DATES

Opening dates for the five two-week sessions at the Audubon Camp of California in 1958 will be June 22, July 6, July 20, August 3, and August 17. Ten Year Anniversary Season! Register now for the session of your choice.

Pacific Coast Biennial Convention -- Asilomar, California--will be held March 21-24, 1959.

THE URGENT NEED OF CALIFORNIA WILD FLOWER PRESERVES

Theodore Payne's article with the above title has been reprinted from Golden Gardens, September, 1957, for distribution to all California newspapers, magazines, libraries, and Chambers of Commerce. I quote from Gertrude Hawley, Editor of the Phainopepla (California Audubon Society, Los Angeles County): There is "...hope of arousing public opinion before it is too late to save our one-time large and beautiful fields of wild flowers. To quote one paragraph of (Mr. Payne's) article: 'What is needed is the establishing of a number of...."Sanctuaries" in different parts of the state. Areas should be selected where the stand of wild flowers is especially good and well representative of the flora of the district. The land should be acquired by purchase or gift if the owner is public minded enough to donate it. These areas should be made National Monuments, State Parks, County Parks,...'. Mr. Payne is in contact with a representative of 'Nature Conservancy ...' of Washington, D.C., who is now visiting the Southern California area, conferring with Dr. Muntz of Claremont and others in a position to know the best spots for such preserves." Mr. Payne is a member of the California Audubon Society, Los Angeles County.

-----J. T.

THANK YOU, FRANK!

When it was learned that John O. Larson, Jr., our Sanctuary Warden, would not be able to arrive here until mid-November, John H. Baker, President of National Audubon Society, asked Frank Goraj to act as temporary Warden. With the Sanctuary only in its second year, Mr. Baker felt it should be patrolled from the first day of hunting--Oct. 12. Frank could volunteer only week-ends and time he was not at work to the patrolling duties, but we are thankful to him for the conscientious effort he put in. John Larson arrived in time to join forces with Frank on Sunday, Nov. 10, and has been carrying on since then. We hope to have him and his fine family with us until mid-January this year.

-----J. T.

CURRENT BOOKS ON NATURAL HISTORY

The Ornithologists' Guide, H. P. W. Hutson. This book has been compiled to encourage the study of birds by pointing out their habits and characteristics and indicating where these may be observed. (Philosophical Library, \$10)

The Bird Watcher's Anthology, Roger Tory Peterson. Over 100 drawings, one color plate. The book traces the classic progress of a bird watcher from the first spark of interest to the thoughtful observations of the mature student. There are 85 selections from authorities on birds who are also superior writers. (Harcourt, Brace, \$7.50)

Your purchases (books, gifts, binoculars, teaching aids, educational games, records, bird feeders, etc.) from the Berkeley office--2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4--assist in supporting the wide conservation education program of the National Audubon Society.

-----J. T.

NOTES FROM BIRD WATCHERS

The autumn leaves on the apricot trees, so richly colored this year, had not yet fallen when a pair of House Sparrows started nest-building. They chose a bird house which we had set up under the eaves of our house, with the hope that Violet-green Swallows would nest in it. But on the first day of December a busy female House Sparrow, accompanied by her attentive mate, carried chicken feathers into the bird house to line the nest she was building. It remains to be seen whether this nest proves to be only a snug roosting place, like one built by House Sparrows in another bird house a year ago. Even so, the pair could prevent Violet-green Swallows from using it next spring, for that was what happened at the other nest last May.

Plain Titmice also start house-hunting before winter comes. A female is already roosting nights in the bird house in which she will build her nest this coming spring. She wears one of my yellow celluloid rings on her right foot and her mate has one on his left, and so in my notebook they are named "Right-Yellow" and "Left-Yellow". Both are newcomers to our garden, and the story of how they finally displaced Right-Red and Right-Blue, who nested in the same bird house this past season, is interesting but too long to tell here. The bird house was built by Lillian Gorham and hung up in our prune tree in October, 1954. Right-Yellow and her mate are the fourth pair of banded Titmice, in four seasons, to choose it as their "nest cavity". This is surprising because studies of the Plain Titmouse show that they are permanent residents and that they "tend to remain paired for life and defend their territories throughout the year" (Keith Dixon, The Condor, May-June '49).

Among our winter-visitant birds, the Cedar Waxwings are in good numbers this year. Anna Richardson writes from Palo Alto: "I have just now (Dec. 11) counted 131 Cedar Waxwings in our Chinese Elm trees, plus a few small flocks in flight that would not wait to be counted! I have not previously seen so many." Also in good numbers, and very welcome, are Varied Thrushes. On Dec. 6 when scouting the field trip to Morshead Estate, Elizabeth Tucker and Roberta Wright saw more than a hundred of these wary thrushes in a group of madrones and oaks. Also there was an unusual number of Hermit Thrushes and many Robins. Mr. Stanley Morshead told them that thousands of Robins are coming at nightfall to roost in the trees on his estate, which extends from Portola Valley up to the Skyline Boulevard. The madrones were loaded with berries this fall, and fruit trees and berry bushes also have good crops, which is all to the good for many birds.--Emily Smith, 19651 Glen Una, Saratoga

EDITOR'S NOTES

Have you seen the new Whooping Crane postage stamps? One hundred million have been printed (in three colors). They are beautiful and should attract public attention to the plight of these impressive birds.

Your editor, on November 29, observed two Red-shafted Flickers, one above the other and facing him, on a 2x4 leaned against a tree. They were close to the ground and appeared to be dancing without moving their feet. Both thrust out necks, nodded back and forth, and said something resembling "Squinch-em, squinch-em!" They were very serious and quite absorbed in each other. Can someone enlighten this relatively inexperienced bird watcher?

The November, 1957, Sanderling, bulletin of the Monterey Audubon Society, reports the strange occasional winter appearance of the Clark's Nutcracker on the Monterey Peninsula. If they come again this winter, a trip to see the noisy, busy birds is a must.

McCall's magazine for June, 1957, reports its visit to Audubon Society national headquarters--at the height of the bird-watching season. They were intrigued by some of the habits of birds, and by such devices as a leaky bucket hanging from a branch over a birdbath to attract birds. They were told in discussions about the Whooping Crane that duck hunters in the Central Flyway, which the 24 (now 26) Whoopers travel, are the only bird watchers who hope they don't see the magnificent large white birds. The ducks seem to know the Cranes must not be shot at; they wait for a brace of Whooping Cranes to convoy them into feeding grounds and out again--all birds safely away with no one, fortunately, daring to shoot.

----J. T.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.*BRANCH OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

President.....	Mrs. Albert J. Wool...	Rt. 2 Box 728, San Jose	AM2-2577
Vice-Pres.....	Dr. Henry Weston...	349 N. Richlee Dr, Campbell	FR8-3836
Secretary.....	Mrs. R. Wesley Wright,	540 Atherton Av. Atherton	DA3-3809
Treasurer.....	Mrs. Chas. J. Zwaal,	478 Clifton Av. San Jose 28	CY2-2060
Editor.....	Mrs. John E. Todd...	912 Roble Ridge, Palo Alto	DA2-1787
Circulation Mgr..	Miss Elsie Hoeck,	1311 Cristina, San Jose 25	CY3-5668
Membership Chmn.(S)	Mrs. Irving Snow,	21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos	EL4-1811
Membership Chmn.(N)	Mrs. Marion K. Kirkwood,	249 Lowell Ave., Palo Alto	DA3-7395