

The Avocet

Volume V Number 4

April, 1958

INSECTICIDES ARE THREAT TO HUMANS AND WILDLIFE

The National Audubon Society has urgently recommended that the Department of Agriculture stop all insect control programs in which highly toxic chemicals are broadcast unless incontrovertible evidence becomes available that no serious damage to human and wildlife resources will result. The Society specifically requested the Secretary of Agriculture to stop the proposed control program for the imported fire ant (already under way) on some 20 million acres in nine southern states. At the same time, the Society warned the general public that all use of highly toxic modern insecticides, fungicides and so-called pesticides by government agencies, farmers, and other land owners, including gardeners, carries with it a much higher potential of harm to human beings and wildlife than is generally recognized.

"Insecticide hazards may well rank in seriousness of adverse effects with the dangers of radioactive fallout," said Mr. John H. Baker President of the Society. "The use of toxic chemicals for the purpose of protecting agricultural and forest crops has now skyrocketed to the point where cumulative secondary poisoning of human beings and wildlife, which already exists to some extent, may become catastrophic." Mr. Baker cited tests conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which reveal that in the second generation of exposure to insecticides in their diet, birds invariably become incapable of reproduction. "When you realize that these poisons may well have similar cumulative effect on the human system, it is unthinkable that widespread programs be undertaken in the absence of proof that there is no risk of such result," said Mr. Baker. "In any case, the burden of proof should rest on the agency employing the toxic substance, and not on the individual citizen," he said. "This proof should be available for public evaluation long before mass-spraying programs are undertaken." The Audubon Society recognizes the seriousness of the fire ant problem, but doubts very much if people would be eager to have their countryside doused with lethal chemicals if they knew the extent to which they, their livestock, and those who consume the crops of the area may suffer.

---N. A. S. Press Release

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Wed. April 9	1:00 p.m.	Falo Alto Yacht Harbor
Sat. April 12	9:30 a.m.	Montalvo Nature Trail Work Party
Mon. April 14	8:00 p.m.	Falo Alto Junior Museum Regular Meeting
Thurs. Apr. 17	8:00 p.m.	Screen Tour: Al Wool's <u>Ranch and Range</u>
Sat. April 19	9:00 a.m.	Montalvo Work Party
Wed. April 23	8:30 a.m.	Stevens Creek Canyon
Sat. April 26	9:00 a.m.	Montalvo Work Party
Sun. May 4	10:00 a.m.	Montalvo Sign Posting



APRIL CALENDAR

Regular Meeting:

Monday, April 14, at Palo Alto Junior Museum (Middlefield Road) at 8:00 p.m. Dr. Tom Harvey of San Jose State College will speak on Audubon Camp of California. He will show color slides of the Camp and answer questions anyone may have. Dr. Harvey was a staff member at Audubon Camp last year and will be there again this summer.

Board Meeting:

Monday, April 14, at Palo Alto Junior Museum, 7:00 p.m.

Screen Tour:

Thursday, April 17, at 8:00 p.m., Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College. Albert J. Wool will present his film "Ranch and Range". The Screen Tour originally scheduled--"Monsoon Mosaic" by Dr. Telford Work--was cancelled when Dr. Work cabled from India that a severe epidemic necessitates his remaining there. He is, in addition to being a great naturalist, one of the world's foremost epidemiologists. Al Wool owns and operates a 600-acre ranch near San Jose, and for the past several years has been producing color motion pictures about wild creatures. He is especially interested in the economic importance of California birds of prey; he is an authority on California wildlife and can prove its value--especially in relation to ranching. Mr. Wool is a Past President of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and his wife is current President. Members were privileged to see an earlier version of this film some time ago; we were impressed not only by the great beauty of the pictures but as well by the incredible difficulties overcome in taking the pictures. Don't miss this! Tickets are available at the door on night of performance: 90¢ general, 50¢ student admission.

Field Trips:

Wednesday Afternoon, April 9, to the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. Meet at 1:00 p.m. by the duck pond at east end of Embarcadero Road at Yacht Harbor. Please be prompt because of a locked gate on a private road--through which we must go in a group. Leaders: Dr. and Mrs. M.R. Kirkwood (DA3-7395).

Saturday, April 12. Come join Boy Scout Troop 54 from Palo Alto who will work on the nature trail at Montalvo. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the parking lot to the right of the Villa. Villa Montalvo is about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Saratoga on the Saratoga-Los Gatos Highway. Bring your work clothes, shovels and mattocks; conservation is more than a word! Hot lunch will be served by the Social Committee.

Saturday, April 19, work party at Montalvo. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking lot to the right of the Villa. Bring work clothes, shovels, mattocks, pruning shears, saws and other tools. This will be an all-out effort to establish the nature trail at Montalvo. Hot lunch will be served by the Social Committee.

Wednesday Morning, April 23, to Stevens Creek Canyon, reached by the Mountain View-Stevens Creek Road. Meet at the Stevens Creek Reservoir parking area at 8:30 a.m. The birding was good here on the trip last September and should be even better in April. Leaders: Clyde and Agnes Frusman (EL4-8191).

Saturday, April 26, Montalvo work party--same schedule as April 19 on preceding page.

Sunday, May 4, posting of the signs at Montalvo. All are invited; bring your lunch and interested friends. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the parking lot to the right of the Villa.

---Frank Goraj, Field Trip Chairman (DA5-8847)

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to the following new members:

Miss Betty Stoops	194 N. Third St.	Campbell
Mr. and Mrs. Chas. F. Mills	49 Faxon Road	Atherton
Miss Fern G. Miller	852 Hamilton Ave.	Palo Alto
Miss Lola Jean Erikson	95 Duane St., Apt. 3	San Jose 10
Mr. Mark Nassio	2001 Sharon Road	Menlo Park
Sister Mary Victoria	Notre Dame Convent	
	596 S. Second St.	San Jose

The last two have changed from local to national membership.

There have been many requests for information about the Audubon Society. This form should make it easy for members to help others learn about our work.

Please send me information about the National Audubon Society and details concerning membership:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Mail to: Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership Chairman
21,441 Roaring Water Way
Los Gatos, California

WHO WILL VOLUNTEER?

If you have wondered why you no longer see our Field Trip notices in San Jose and other mid-to-South-County newspapers, it's because we lack one person who can type. If you know of anyone, please let me know.

---Jane Goraj, Publicity Chairman
675 Florales Drive
Palo Alto, Cal. (DA5-8847)

AUDUBON CAR STICKERS

Samples of the elegant National Audubon Society emblem (blue and gold--with a flying white egret) have been received by the local society and are available five for \$1.00 from

Pacific Coast Office, National Audubon Society
2426 Bancroft Way
Berkeley 4, California.

These should be placed only where California law permits--in a 7-inch square in lower right windshield. They are not supposed to be placed on rear windows.

-----J. T.

ANOTHER ALERT

It behooves everyone interested in conservation and outdoor recreation such as fishing, boating, hunting, and hiking to write his State Senator and Assemblyman to request that the \$750,000 annually appropriated for the Wildlife Conservation Board be left in the budget. This money comes from the tax levied on horse race betting.

This must be done promptly to prevent the adoption of the proposal to the legislature that this sum be dropped from the budget. Here are some of the things for which the money has been spent in the past: the building of fish ladders to enable the salmon and steelhead to reach their spawning ground, to improve fish hatcheries, to provide access to good streams and lakes for both boating and fishing. There are about fifty areas under study at the moment which would provide this type of recreation for the public. We already have a five day work week, and it is probable that it will not be long until we have a four day work week. Proper recreational facilities must be provided now for the hundreds of thousands who will be looking for them in the out-of-doors.

It seems this is a small amount of money to allot toward such an important project. Please drop a post card to your State Senator and Assemblyman at once. Make it brief, as these men are busy, but make it strong. For those living in Santa Clara County, write to:

State Senator John L. Thompson
Senate Office Building
Sacramento 14, California

Dist. 28 (Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mt. View, etc.)
Assemblyman Clark Bradley
Dist. 29 (Santa Clara, San Jose, etc.)
Assemblyman Booth S. Allen

Those living in San Mateo County write to:
State Senator Richard G. Delwig
Senate Office Building
Sacramento 14, California

Dist. 25 Assemblyman Louis Francis
Dist. 26 Assemblyman Carl A. Britschgi
-----Charlotte McBride, Conservation Chairman

AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA

This beautiful High Sierra camp at Norden will be open this summer June 22 to August 30. The fee for each two-week session is \$103, which covers board, lodging, tuition, transportation on field trips, etc. A descriptive folder will be available at our next regular meeting. Naturalists at the camp will help you learn about bird, animal, and plant life in a lovely mountain setting. Any one of our members who has been there will tell you Audubon Camp is an experience you will always treasure.

-----J. T.

SCHOLARSHIPS TO AUDUBON CAMP AND TO WEST COAST SCHOOL OF NATURE STUDY

Net proceeds from our Screen Tours will again be given as scholarships for summer study. There are available up to six \$50 scholarships to Audubon Camp of California at Norden and up to six \$15 tuition scholarships to the West Coast School of Nature Study at Mt. Lassen, Yosemite or Asilomar. The purpose of these camps is primarily to provide teachers and other youth leaders with a variety of rich experiences in the out-of-doors, to demonstrate the best methods of good teaching and group leadership, to receive practical program aids, and to learn how wisser use of our natural resources contributes to human progress.

Encourage teachers and youth leaders you know (and students preparing for such leadership) to apply now for these scholarships. Write to:

Mrs. Eva McCrac
Dept. of Biological Sciences
San Jose State College
San Jose 14, California

She will mail information and application blanks. A descriptive sheet about the West Coast School of Nature Study will be available at our next regular meeting.

-----J. T.

AUDUBON CAMP REUNION--NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Relive your memories at the reunion Sunday, April 20, 1958. The time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The place: Henry E. Bothin Youth Center, SF Girl Scout Camp, Manor Valley, Fairfax. Go WEST on 4th St. in San Rafael, along Red Hill Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Blvd. The Youth Center turn-off is 2.4 miles west of Fairfax. Take your lunch and enjoy the planned program.

-----J. T.

NOTES FROM A FIELD

Last Sunday afternoon (March 16) I sat on a rock in the warm sun at Jasper Ridge west of Menlo Park. A Turkey Vulture and a Red-tailed Hawk sailed overhead and several Bluebirds and Lesser Goldfinches (formerly the Green-backed Goldfinch---Ed.) flew to and from a nearby tree. Indian warriors grew under the trees at the edge of the woods

twenty feet away. A male Allen's Hummingbird and, later, an Anna's Hummingbird busily probed the deep red blossoms. Farther back among the trees and thick scrub a Thrasher sang continually; several times a Bewick's Wren added to the chorus. Present, too, but unseen were Scrub Jay, Wrentit, and a flock of Quail, each one a regular citizen of any of our brushy hillsides. A tree frog's two-syllable call drifted uphill from the direction of San Francisquito Creek.

Quiet but also present was a flock of some thirty Juncos and Golden-crowned Sparrows feeding at the edge of the field near the Indian warriors. With them were a Robin and a brush rabbit. There were frequent alarms and for a moment no bird or mammal would be visible. First the Juncos would venture forth, then the rabbit, the Golden-crowns next, and finally the Robin. The Juncos not only recovered more rapidly than the others but also ventured farther away from the protection of the scrub.

Not all the wildlife on that pleasant afternoon was to be seen or heard from my vantage point. When I got up to leave I looked under the rock I had sat upon and added a few more creatures to my total: a couple of wood roaches, a three-inch blue-green centipede, and a black widow spider.

Several records of interest have been received from members; more will be appreciated. Lynn Robbins writes of a Red-breasted Nuthatch coming regularly to her suet feeder in Los Altos. She also reports five Wood Ducks (two males and three females) seen Jan. 18 at Coyote Creek near the road to Gilroy Hot Springs. A record of an Orange-crowned Warbler seen and heard singing on Feb. 23 in Saratoga comes from Emily Smith. Bob Wood reports seeing males of both Golden-eyes, Common and Barrow's, at the Palo Alto yacht harbor on Feb. 18.

The remainder of these notes all come from Saratoga. (Can it be that so many of our birds retire to that locality to raise their families?) White-breasted Nuthatches were working on a hole in a prune tree on March 1 and the next day were seen collecting bits of bark, one bird collecting the nesting material and passing it to the other who took it into the hole (Emmanuel and Mary Taylor). A female Wrentit was observed pulling fine strips of bark from a dawn redwood on March 8 (Emily Smith) and on the same day a California Thrasher was seen carrying away dead pine needles (Monette Wittgenstein). Emily Smith's nesting boxes were investigated by a pair of Violet-green Swallows on Feb. 22. A female looked into a box but didn't enter and the birds did not return. Unlike the swallows, a Plain Titmouse was ready to settle down. A female removed a last-year's swallow's nest from one of the boxes on March 2 and by the tenth was bringing in dry grass for her own nest.

Please send to me your observations on nesting, early arrivals and late departures, who-feed-on-what, or anything you think Avocet readers will find interesting.

Robert Wood
1007 Los Trancos Road
Menlo Park (UL1-1237)

(Editor's Note: The Avocet would like to thank Miss Emily Smith, retiring Bird Observations Editor, for her faithful and outstanding work. It is not often that such a small bulletin can boast work of a professional calibre. Perhaps she will have time to contribute special articles occasionally in the future. And on field trips she will continue to be a much better Field Guide than any book!

Mr. Robert Wood, Palo Alto Junior Museum instructor and Education Chairman of the Audubon Society, is Miss Emily's very able successor. We have much to learn from him. -----J. T.)

EDITOR'S NOTES

I have a copy of the Preliminary Shoreline Development Plan for Santa Clara County (obtained at a vociferous meeting of the Palo Alto City Council Recreation Committee--packed with sailing enthusiasts). Our south bay Audubon Sanctuary is in this area, and certainly Audubon interests in and about San Francisco Bay must be safeguarded. The plan is attractive, fantastically expensive, and possible only after a large tidal barrier and ship locks are built at the narrowest portion of the bay north of Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. I was surprised (and relieved) to see on the plan areas reserved for a sea lion rookery, wild life refuge, two fishing lagoons, camping area, wooded area, Junior museum, arboretum, nature trail, aquatic gardens--as well as the expected small boat basins, swimming areas, and golf courses. Certainly such a Marine Park, if carefully executed, would be more attractive than the present series of dumps along the shore, and water birds should appreciate the thought that hunting could hardly be permitted in such an area.

The San Francisco Chronicle for Jan. 12, 1958 reports that San Mateo Co. officials will "find out why the Division of Parks and Beaches is not able to proceed with the purchase" of virgin redwood territory for the Butano State Park. A million dollars was appropriated by the State Legislature to buy 2100 acres, but only 400 have been acquired. Ralph Shaw, County Recreation and Parks Supt. and President of Butano Associates has charged the State Dept. with "ignorance and stupidity" in not foreseeing troubles the Dept. blames for the delay. California will now have to acquire the privately owned mineral and oil rights on the property, since state law does not allow surface drilling in state parks.

Large numbers of waxwings and robins are still present on the Midpeninsula. They roost by the thousands in the foothills in and around Woodside and have been very busy eating everyone's berries. Robert Wood's injured waxwing, brought in two years ago to the Junior Museum, consumed 249 pyracantha berries in one day!

The latest Flying Egret (National Audubon Society publication) lauds our very own local idea for Field Trip baby-sitters. We should make more use of the services these fine people offer. Their names were published in a recent Avocet and to them should be added

Mrs. Ida A. Ferry
623 Middle Avenue
Menlo Park, Calif. (DA6-1232)

She is experienced and most willing.

After many vicissitudes, California is finally on the way toward purchasing Ano Nuevo Island, one-half mile off the coast of San Mateo County south of Pescadero. (Falo Alto Times, March 21) A request by Senator Dolwig of that County was granted for an additional \$20,000 to augment purchasing funds. On May 19 two hundred private bidders (high bid was \$100,000) tried to buy the island for a commercial resort, since the federal government approved its sale when the state did not support with cash its first option to buy.

The island is an abandoned lighthouse station, and if the state can obtain it, it will become a Wildlife Sanctuary for three kinds of sea lions (over a thousand of them) and many varieties of birds. It is also needed to protect the offshore aspect of the proposed Steele Beach State Park on the adjoining mainland. Clam, rock, and abalone fishermen will be permitted on the island--if they can manage the hazardous journey at low tide from the shore.

-----J. T.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

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