

The Avocet

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PRECAUTIONS DEVELOPED IN THE FIRE ANT PROGRAM

The Departments of Agriculture and Interior have made significant progress in setting up procedures to guard against losses of fish and wildlife from extensive applications of chemical insecticides being used in the fire ant control program throughout the southeastern United States. Biologists have urged that precautions be followed in applications of the chemicals which are to be employed in treatment of 20 million acres in the southeastern states said to be infested by this destructive insect. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists and the Department of Agriculture's plant pest control specialists have been meeting regularly to develop investigations and procedures that will provide safeguards. Assurances have been given by the Department of Agriculture that spraying treatments will not be carried out near streams or bodies of water where damage to fish and other animal life can be extreme. In a number of test areas, study plots are being set up to check wildlife population trends before and after treatments with chemicals. The fire ant program calls for establishment of state advisory groups which will coordinate the efforts of local, state and federal agencies in coping with serious infestations of the insect. Spokesmen in the Department of Agriculture indicate that representatives of the state fish and game agencies are being requested to participate in these groups. The state and wildlife agencies and the Fish and Wildlife Service personnel are also reported to be meeting with the insect-control field men to study effects of applications.

Current public concern over the treatment of millions of acres of lands with various chemical pesticides is resulting in a growing awareness of this problem by members of Congress. The Senate Subcommittee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries will hold a public hearing on a bill to authorize \$280,000 worth of research annually on the fish and wildlife effects of chemical pesticides. A similar measure is pending in the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Conservationists will be working to cement relationships between insect control teams and the federal and state wildlife agencies through cooperative endeavors in connection with the present fire ant investigations. The passage of the above bills would permit an expansion of the cooperative effort to collect the badly needed basic information as to the full effects and repercussions from use of these chemical controls. At this point, with widespread concern over losses from these agents, there is little alternative to such an effort if public indignation is to be avoided by those who are using the pest killers.

----Conservation News

National Wildlife Federation, 2/15/58

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- 1 5-12 8 pm Reg. Mtg., Art Ass. Bldg., Los Gatos
- W 5-14 8am Horshead Estate
- S 5-17 9am Costa Ranch
- S 5-25 9 am Filarcitos Lake & Stone Dam
- W 5-28 8am Yerba Buena Ranch



MAY CALENDAR

Regular Meeting:

Monday, May 12, at Art Association Building, Los Gatos, at 8:00 p.m.

Dr. Henry Weston, Program Chairman, will present a color film on natural history. The Art Bldg. is located about half-way between Los Gatos and Saratoga, just off the Los Gatos-Saratoga Rd. Turn on Austin Way (at County Fire Station); the Art Bldg., standing by itself, is about one block beyond the station.

Board Meeting:

Monday, May 12, Art Association Bldg., Los Gatos, at 7:00 p.m.

Field Trips:

Wednesday Morning, May 14, a return trip to the Horshead Estate for all those who missed it in December because of bad weather. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Portola Valley School on Portola Rd. (1½ miles from the intersection of Alpine and Portola Rds.). Leader: Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker (DA2-9457).

Saturday, May 17, to Costa Ranch in the San Felipe Creek area. Meet at Mr. Tourtillot's "Coon Hollow". Drive south to Keyes Road in San Jose, then west across Bayshore. Continue west on King Rd., then south on King. Continue south to Silver Creek Rd., then to San Felipe. Drive south on San Felipe to Metcalf, then east on Metcalf to Mr. Tourtillot's (Route 5, Box 440). Meet at 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch and prospective bird-watchers. Call Frank Goraj (DA5-8847) if you have any questions about directions. This is a beautiful spot--one of the best field trips in our Audubon year.

Sunday, May 25, to Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam on San Francisco Water Company Property. Meet the leader, Mark Massie (DA5-6859) at 9:00 a.m. at the Las Pulgas Water Temp'e, about 5 miles north of Woodside on the Canada Road. Bring lunch. This area has been completely protected for about 100 years, and might be called the loveliest bit of unspoiled nature on the Peninsula. The Audubon Society is one of a very few groups permitted to enter once a year.

Wednesday Morning, May 28, to Yerba Buena Ranch at the far end of Yerba Buena Road just south of Evergreen. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the V. & J. Market on White Road on the north edge of Evergreen. Bring lunch if you would like to make it a more leisurely outing. Leader: Mrs. Edward M. Lintott (EL4-9664).

----Frank Goraj, Field Trips Chairman

NOTE: ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY WILL BE HELD JUNE 9 AT ALUM ROCK PARK. Plan now to attend this most important gathering of the year. Details in your next Avocet.

WEST COAST NATURE SCHOOL

West Coast Nature School was founded in 1931 by the Natural Science Department at San Jose State College. The department hoped to present a more educational study of the natural sciences by observing

nature, unmarred, in California's many natural wonderlands.

For twenty-seven years this outdoor field program has proved its educational value. Here you are taught in an informal way without the strain of books, tests or homework. So that learning conditions are as ideal as possible, the teaching consists mainly of lectures along the trail. Trail groups, led by a member of the Natural Science Department start out every morning from camp and study the natural habitat of birds, insects, wildflowers, mammals, and geological formations found in each area.

One semester unit of upper division credit is given for each five-day trip. Students register for one or all trips and receive one to three units. Tuition fee is \$15.00 for each session.

This year's sessions will be held at:

LASSEN NATIONAL PARK	June 15 - 21
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK	June 22 - 28
ASILOMAR	June 29 - July 5

Living accommodations are the responsibility of each person, but the school attempts to make reservations for everyone and offers a wide variety in types of accommodations. Excellent camping situations are available and students are encouraged to live in the out-of-doors as much as possible.

In the afternoon, trips are taken to special scenic and historical points of interest. In the evening there are educational, social, and recreational programs conducted for the students' enjoyment.

Further information is available upon request. Write:
Dr. Gertrude Cavins, West Coast Nature School, San Jose State College,
San Jose 14, California.

NEW ASTRONOMY AND GEOLOGY COURSES AVAILABLE

Non-technical courses in astronomy and geology for the layman will be given in San Francisco this summer by University of California Extension. The course in geology will also be offered on the Berkeley campus of the University.

"Astronomy for the Layman" begins Tuesday, June 3, at 7 p.m. in Room 110 Richardson Hall, San Francisco Extension Center, 55 Laguna Street. Charles F. Hager, assistant manager and assistant curator of Morrison Planetarium will teach the course which will deal with the solar system, star identification, man-made satellites and space travel. Telescopes, slides, working models and field trips to Morrison Planetarium will supplement lectures.

"Geology for the Layman" is a survey course, with particular reference to California. Discussion topics will include the nature of earthquakes and volcanic activity; development of the land surface; geological occurrence of petroleum and ore deposits; and study and identification of common rocks and minerals.

The San Francisco class begins Thursday, June 5 at 7 p.m. in Room 201 Richardson Hall. The Berkeley class meets Tuesday, June 3, at 7 p.m. in Room 105 Bacon Hall.

Further information about these courses may be obtained from any University of California Extension office, or by calling ASHberry 3-6000, local 8221.

SANCTUARIES - HELP ESTABLISH THEM NOW!

The Golden Gate Audubon Society has announced a Spring House and Garden Tour on May 16th-17th as a fund-raising benefit for its Sanctuary Fund. Several gardens and homes of the Piedmont-Montclair section of the Eastbay, all outstanding for beauty and character of design, will be open to guests during this tour. Tickets at \$1.25 each may be obtained at the Pacific Coast Office of the National Audubon Society, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley; from the Tour Treasurer, Mrs. A. G. Zimmerman, 29 Blackford Ct., Oakland; or from Paul F. Covel, President, 2860 Delaware St., Oakland.

Fast vanishing wildlife habitat in the Bay Region has prompted the Golden Gate Audubon Society to step up efforts to acquire some valuable area of sanctuary land -- the exact nature of which is as yet undetermined. Such action will help to carry out the pattern which began with the acquisition by lease of salt-marsh sanctuary at the south end of San Francisco Bay through joint efforts of the National Audubon Society, Golden Gate, Santa Clara and Sequoia Audubon branches and Sierra Club -- and continues with current negotiations by the Marin Conservation League and Audubon Society to acquire a portion of Richardson's Bay and adjacent shores as wildlife refuge.

Those who participate in this tour will have the choice of either Friday the 16th or Saturday the 17th between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to visit homes and gardens listed on the tickets, where hostesses will greet them. Tour sponsors include many well-known friends of Conservation in both the Eastbay and San Francisco.

----Paul F. Covel, Pres.
Golden Gate Audubon Soc.

1951 AUDUBON BIENNIAL CONVENTION

At the last convention in 1957, we had to turn down over 100 persons who requested reservations and participation because of limited housing and kitchen accommodations. The maximum possible attendance is about 450.

Therefore, we are recommending that persons NOW planning to attend write us a card asking to be placed on the priority list to receive the OFFICIAL registration blank that will be mailed late this Fall. NO MONEY AT THIS TIME.

The dates: March 21 - 22 - 23 - 24

The place: ASILCMAR, Pacific Grove, California

The theme: OUTDOOR INTRODUCTIONS

Banquet Speaker: ROGER TORY PETERSON

----Wm. N. Goodall, Pacific Coast Rep.
National Audubon Society
2425 Bancroft Way
Berkeley 4, California

WHO WILL TRY CARING FOR OUR INJURED BIRDS?

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society badly needs someone who will volunteer to care for an occasional injured bird, or who will raise lost baby birds until they can be released. Usually patience, time, and a bit of know-how are all that one needs, although professional veterinarians are often most kind and helpful in the event of a puzzling problem. No one can hope to save all the birds brought in for help, but a large percentage do respond to affectionate care and would be lots of fun to have around home for awhile. If you would care to try, please call Bob Woods (UL1-1237) or Joyce Todd (DA2-1787). I have a copy of the August 10, 1957 Saturday Evening Post which contains the article, "We Run a Hospital for Birds", by Arline Thomas. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, of Long Island, New York, care for birds locally referred to them by National Audubon Society. The article contains ideas for treating the birds, proper foods to use, feeding times, etc. I will gladly give this magazine to any one who will try the job. I wish I had had the article before I tried raising a baby Brown Towhee. He died because I didn't know he must be fed every half-hour during the day! When someone volunteers, we will try to set up a referral program and some means of getting professional advice for the "Bird Hospital".

----J. Todd

NOTES FROM AFIELD

A number of people have reported their observations of spring arrivals, late winterers, nesting records, and such. More information is much desired so that it will be possible eventually to refer to the Avocet of previous years to determine what birds one may find at a given time. We aren't entirely partial to birds; notes on mammals and other creatures are welcome.

An Osprey was seen at Searsville Lake on April 12 (Bob Row) and a Cooper's Hawk on April 14 in Los Trancos Woods (Bob Wood). The latter bird evidently nests in that area and has been seen for two consecutive years occasionally flying with a Nighthawk or Short-eared Owl type of wing-flapping similar to that reported in The Wilson Bulletin, vol. 69, No. 1. A pair of Clapper Rails has been seen and heard calling at the Palo Alto yacht harbor on several occasions in early April (John and Joyce Todd). Probably all of us have noticed the abundance of Band-tailed Pigeons in the past few months. At least 50 were seen at Searsville Lake on March 17 (Row); "more than usual" were reported from the Menlo Park-Atherton area (Dorothy Weeks); a flock of 200-plus was observed in Los Gatos and Saratoga during March and April taking advantage of a heavy olive crop (Emily Smith).

A screech Owl was heard calling at Stanford on April 8 (Stoner Haven) and a Barn Owl roosts regularly in a palm tree behind the . . .

Stanford biology building and can be seen easily (Wood). Burrowing Owls, at least a pair, have been observed in the Stanford Industrial Park behind the Levinthal Electronics building (Todds). A group of about 25 early Vaux's Swifts was seen at Stanford on March 18 (Row) and a migrant Rufous Hummingbird at Skippers Park near Scarsville Lake on the 17th of that month (Row).

Flycatchers are here. First reported records are: Ash-throated Flycatcher on April 19 at Los Trancos Woods (Wood), Western Flycatcher on April 13 in Los Gatos (Gladys Record), Wood Pewee on April 14 at Los Trancos Woods (Wood), Olive-sided Flycatcher on the same day in Los Gatos (Smith).

On April 12 at Scarsville Lake six Rough-winged Swallows and two Barn Swallows were noted (Row). Stanford's Cliff Swallows arrived about three days prior to March 19; on that day about 30 were engaged in nest-building behind the biology building (Todd Newberry). Incidentally, many of these records are contributed by members of the Stanford Ornithology Club, whose project it is to compile information on the birdlife of that campus.

A Red-breasted Nuthatch was recorded in Los Gatos on April 14 (Wittgenstein) and at Jasper Ridge near Scarsville Lake a Brown Creeper was observed nest-building under the bark of a redwood on April 13 (Newberry). On April 12 a Long-billed Marsh Wren was seen at Scarsville Lake (Row). California Thrasher fledglings were being fed by parents on April 4 in Menlo Park (Marjorie Davis) and on the 8th in Saratoga (Smith). Twenty to thirty Varied Thrushes were still in the Woodside area on March 19 (Row) and a Hermit Thrush remained in Saratoga until April 9 (Smith). The earliest Gnatcatcher record on hand is for April 12 at Scarsville (Row).

On April 12 a Solitary Vireo was seen at Los Trancos Woods (Wood) and a Warbling Vireo and Orange-crowned Warbler on March 19 in Woodside (Row). Several Yellow Warblers were singing at Scarsville on April 12 (Row) while a Myrtle Warbler was noted at Los Trancos Woods (Wood) on the same day. The marsh across Portola Road from Scarsville hold a Yellow-throat on March 17 (Row).

The earliest record of a Bullock's Oriole, a male, was in San Jose on April 3 (Will Luick). Los Gatos has the first reported Black-headed Grosbeak on April 8 (Record). On March 24 three Pine Siskins were seen at Stanford (John Dearborn). Several "last" dates are: White-crowned Sparrow in Saratoga April 13 (Smith), White-throated Sparrow in Los Gatos March 30 (Wittgenstein), Fox Sparrow in Saratoga April 12 (Smith).

One mammal record of interest - a Weasel, running across the road behind the Stanford Shopping Center on April 10 (Wood).

----Robert Wood
1007 Los Trancos Rd.
Menlo Park (ULL-1257)

EDITOR'S NOTES

Perhaps the last of the vast heritage of plants bequeathed by Luther Burbank is one introduced this year. The azalea-flowered nectarine, lost for several decades, has been rediscovered by Theodore Payne. It is fitting that this 86 year-old pioneer of California plantsman should crown his lifetime of plant introductions with one obtained indirectly from the great Burbank.

"The history of the azalea-flowered nectarine dates back to 1904, when an agricultural writer, visiting Burbank, was given a seedling nectarine with beautiful flowers, discarded because the fruit was worthless. Joseph A. Johnson planted it at his home on Sunset Blvd. (Los Angeles) where it grew and blossomed for many years. A few years ago, it was brought to the attention of Payne, who describes it as 'the most beautiful flowering tree I have ever seen'. Propagated plants have blooms 2 to 2½ inches across of rosy white shading to deep pink, with a wavy margin much like azaleas. In fact the plant in bloom resembles a tree full of azaleas.

"The (nectarine) has been named ALMA STULTZ in honor of the Director of the Audubon Center, daughter of Joseph Johnson, who planted the original tree given him by Luther Burbank more than 50 years ago. Plants are available now at local nurseries in 3 to 5 foot sizes in bare-root condition but available after April in containers."

----Los Angeles Times
Sunday, March 23

Inquiries about nurseries stocking the plant can be addressed to Audubon Center, 1000 North Durfee Avenue, El Monte, California.

On March 21 the State Parks Commission approved a plan which Santa Clara County officials believe will clear the way for joint county-state development of a park around Anderson Reservoir, three miles east of Morgan Hill. Land purchased will probably exceed 500 acres.

----Palo Alto Times, March 22

Another 500 acres of the proposed Butano State Park is in escrow and is expected to be acquired by the state in about 60 days, officials of the State Division of Beaches and Parks announced. It will complete purchase of half of the proposed park of 2,433 acres. The last major hurdle in acquiring the property was cleared when the Union Oil Co. gave up its lease to oil rights on the land. Still left for purchase are the virgin stands of redwood timber--the "showcase" of the park--located in steep canyons best reached by hikers. These last 750 acres are held by the Pacific Lumber Co. and Associates, and again oil rights complicate the purchase.

----Palo Alto Times, April 2

Questions concerning the 1958 sessions, Audubon Camp of California, can be answered by Pacific Coast Office, National Audubon Society, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 4, or by your Editor. First session begins June 22.

----J. T.

Miss Helen E. Crumpton, 450 Lowell, Palo Alto, is observing an ordinary red-brown Thrasher turning white. He has been doing this gradually over a period of 2-3 months. Some ten weeks ago he looked much like all Thrashers, except that some of the feathers on his head and neck were white. Later, the white spread down his back. Now there are only a few dark feathers on back and wings, and the breast is also turning white. Miss Crumpton, an experienced bird-watcher, thinks the bird may have been ill. For a time it seemed unable to fly, and the other birds in the garden kept away from it, as if it were an untouchable. Now, however, it seems to have no difficulty in gaining altitude, and is no longer ostracized by its feathered companions

----Palo Alto Times, April 16

Can one of our more erudite members explain what has happened to this poor Thrasher?

The 574 acres of the storied Sharon Estate (west of Menlo Park) was recently sold to a real estate firm for some 4½ million dollars. The famous mansion on the property will be converted into a country club, and residential development will begin June 1. Lots will range from ¼ to 1 acre size.

----Palo Alto Times, April 16

Perhaps our local Audubon Society can arrange a last Field Trip into the area in early June. We probably can't convince the hawks and meadow larks they should stay, but we can hope most of the smaller birds will.

----J. Todd

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

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