

# The Avocet

Volume V Number 6

June, 1958

## SUPPORT THE WILDERNESS BILL

The Revised Wilderness Bill, S 1176, now before Congress, urgently needs your help. Address wires or letters to Senate (or House) Office Building, Washington 25, D.C. Thomas H. Kuchel, California, is one of the members of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs sponsoring the Bill. The Senate Chairman of this Committee is James E. Murray, Montana; the House Chairman, Clair Engle, California. The present (we hope, final) revision is supported both by the Forest Service and the Park Service. The fact that the ultimate protection of our finest wild country lies in the hands of a few governmental staff people is not reassuring. The Wilderness Act will create a system which will receive congressional sanction. Any change in the wilderness status will be decided by an individual Act of Congress. This means you, as a citizen, will be able to say whether you want roads and dams and development, or stillness and beauty in your mountains. Please help now to preserve wilderness values; they cannot ever be replaced.

----Joyce Todd

## COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Mon. June 9	7:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting Alum Rock Park
Wed. June 11	8:30 a.m.	Sharon Estate, Menlo Park
Sun. June 22	9:00 a.m.	Sharon Estate
Sun. June 29	9:00 a.m.	Westridge Area



JUNE CALENDARANNUAL MEETING:

Monday, June 9, Alum Rock Park east of San Jose. There will be an informal bird walk for members who can arrive early - 4:30 to 5:00. Bring all your family and friends for a picnic supper. The open business meeting at 7:00 p.m. will include reports by committee chairmen, the Auditor, Avocet Editor, and election of officers for the 1958-9 year. The Natural History Museum will be open, and at 8:00 p.m., Larry Maitozo, Museum Director, and students will tell us about their projects.

----Dr. Henry Weston, Program Chairman

FIELD TRIPS:

Wednesday Morning, June 11, to the Sharon Estate. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the estate gates at the end of Avy Avenue, a block off Alameda de las Fulgas, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north of Sand Hill, Willow Road intersection. Leader: Miss Marjorie Fraser (EI 6-6846).

Sunday June 22, to the Sharon Estate. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the estate gates. Follow directions for trip above. This is probably our last chance to visit this lovely area - soon to be subdivided. Leader: Joyce Todd (DA 2-1787).

Sunday June 29, to Westridge area southwest of Palo Alto, an area of oak-covered hills and wooded ravines. Meet at 9:00 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. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Neil Dickin-son (EM 6-7661).

----Frank Goraj, Field Trip Chairman

THE AVOCET

There will be only one issue for both July and August this year. Please send Field Trips, Regular Meeting and Board Meeting Notices, Financial Reports, Notes from Afield, news clippings and observations of interest to the Editor by June 20. I will be away and cannot be responsible for material received after that date. Please send me everything for the September issue by August 15. Thank you very much.

----Joyce Todd, Editor

MONTALVO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Work on the nature trail, done entirely by Audubon members (with the occasional help of Boy Scouts) has been completed and sign posting should be completed in one to two months. Anyone may enjoy the trail at any time during daylight hours. Plans for maintenance of the trail, publication of a map and bird list will be discussed shortly. We are all most grateful to our more active members, particularly Frank Goraj, for the success of this big job.

---- J. T.

NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to welcome these new members to our field trips and meetings:

Mr. Walter T. Baker	72 Heather Drive Atherton
Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Scarlott	150 Stonegate Rd. Menlo Park
Mr. John Macnie	19,535 Bainter Ave. Los Gatos
Mr. William Buse	141 Loma Alta Rd. Los Gatos

----Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership Chairman

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

Applications for scholarships may be obtained from

Mrs. Charlotte McBride  
25,441 Crescent Lane  
Los Altos (WH 8-2335).

The scholarships are offered from Audubon Screen Tour proceeds, and include up to six \$50 scholarships to Audubon Camp at Norden, California and up to six \$15 tuition scholarships to the West Coast School of Nature Study at Mt. Lassen, Yosemite or Asilomar.

Encourage your teacher friends and other youth leaders you may know to apply. We need many more applicants - and soon.

---- J. T.

LIGHTS OUT - FOR THE BIRDS!

Fishman Realty & Construction Co., Inc., with an approving nod from the National Audubon Society, today (Tuesday, April 15) announced postponement of plans to illuminate for the first time the "tower of light" atop the recently-completed Fishman Building at 666 Fifth Avenue in New York City.

A battery of high intensity reflector lamps located on the 10th and 15th floor setbacks of the skyscraper was to have been turned on this Thursday evening (April 17) in a brief ceremony. When a spokesman for the society advised Norman Fishman, president of the real estate concern, that the spring bird migration season begins this week and that the "dazzling effect of the lights" would cause the death of thousands of birds, the decision was made to postpone the ceremony until June 4.

"This is for the birds," Mr. Fishman said, in making the announcement.

He explained that his company's action in delaying the illumination of the Fishman Building was taken in the interest of the various species of birds to which lights powered by millions of candle power are fatally attractive.

The lights on the Tishman Building have a total of 9.7 million candle power. When illuminated, they will be reflected from the 39-story aluminum-sheathed building and will be visible from many points miles away from Fifth Avenue.

"Once within the beams, the birds become helpless and mill around in the air, crash into each other or into buildings and then fall to the street," the Audubon Society noted.

Apprised of Mr. Tishman's decision, John K. Terres, editor of the magazine published by the society, said, "We want to thank Mr. Tishman for his cooperation in keeping the lights turned off during the bird migration season. For his thoughtfulness, he will have the gratitude of a vast number of people."

The ceremony at which the lights will be illuminated has been rescheduled for three days after the end of the migration season. Thereafter, an automatic time clock system, synchronized seasonally, will turn the lights on and off each evening.

----Bernard Relin & Associates, Inc.  
News Release.

AUDUBON CAMP OF CALIFORNIA:  
A LOCAL MEMBER'S REACTION.

As I encircled my age group on my application form for Audubon Camp I breathed a sigh of real relief. This would be an end to all the "pros and cons" - an end to long months of indecision.

My wish to see a water ouzel had created this intense interest. So when I was told that the High Sierra was the place to look for this shy grey bird - I felt Audubon Camp was a good place to go --- truly it was the very best place to go.

Before I found that bird I found a lot of other things: a meadow with its many complete and separate worlds - high places with only the sky above; the firs and pines; dark snowsheds and rocks with loosened outside shells. I found friendly people who loved the same things I did, and teachers who loved what they were doing.

In just two weeks I amassed a life-time treasure of memories. Station-wagon rides to new destinations; bountiful mealtimes shared with new companions; answers to so many questions. Then at night, rest in a comfortable bed with a prospect of a full day ahead.

In that brief time a stark unadorned lodge standing in the sun became a cherished shelter, and a meadow became a gateway to new adventures.

Fill out that form now, and you will find more than you searched for at Audubon Camp.

----Virginia Bothwell

(Virginia neglects to add that she did see water ouzels (two) near the very end of the session - in the little creek running through the camp. ----J. T.)

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Summer must be nearly here for I recently saw a buckeye, its leaves brown and drooping, and a large flock of Linnets feeding in a patch of low weeds. Reports continue to come in, though, of spring arrivals and of last dates of winterers.

The latest record of Band-tailed Pigeons is May 17 when three were seen at Jasper Ridge west of Menlo Park (Bob Wood). A Screech Owl was heard in Barron Park on April 30 (Anna Richardson) and a Horned Owl in Los Trancos Woods on May 11 (Wood). A single Vaux's Swift in a flock of Violet-green Swallows was seen by the members of the Stevens Creek Park field trip April 23. Four more were seen in Saratoga flying swiftly northward (Emily Smith) while others were first heard on April 27 in a chimney where they nested last year (Grace Tomlinson).

On May 17 a Hairy Woodpecker was advertising its presence by rapping noisily on a metal band at the top of a telephone pole in Los Trancos Woods (Wood). Ash-throated Flycatchers were reported from Evergreen on April 15 and from Saratoga where one was seen to investigate a bird house on May 10 (both Smith). A Wood Pewee was noted April 22 at Montalvo (Smith), another on the following day by the Stevens Creek Park field trip.

A minimum of four grown but "helpless" young Scrub Jays was present at the Palo Alto Community Center during the week of May 12 (Wood). One of them was found dead below a window on the 16th, evidently having tried to fly through it. An older but interesting record is of two Ravens that were seen in a Barron Park street for several days in December 1956 (Richardson).

The Saratoga Red-breasted Nuthatch that came to a suet feeder during the winter and spring was last seen on May 3 (Wittgenstein). A House Wren and a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were observed nest-building on April 23 by the Stevens Creek Park field trip. May 11 is the earliest reported date for a Swainson's Thrush - one, in Saratoga (Smith); one was heard in Los Trancos Woods on the 17th (Wood). The last date for Cedar Waxwings is May 10, a flock of 23 (Smith). The Stevens Creek Park field trip on April 23 reports a singing Solitary Vireo and at least two singing Western Tanager. Several male Audubon's Warblers in full nuptial plumage, also singing, were seen in Evergreen (Smith).

Both Hooded and Bullock's Orioles were observed around the home of Fanny Zwaal in San Jose. The Bullock's arrived in mid-April and a female was building in a cedar on April 26. She seemed to be doing all the work of gathering fibers from the leaves of a palm tree. On the same day a male Hooded Oriole was seen feeding on the blossoms of an abutilon shrub. Two days later a female was at the same plant. Los Gatos was host to another pair of Hooded Orioles; on April 27 the female was building in the group of palm trees used by a pair a year ago (Lawrence Earle).

A nest-building Black-headed Grosbeak was observed by the Stevens Creek Park field trip on April 23. The latest date reported

for White-crowned Sparrow is April 27, two, and for Golden-crowned Sparrow is April 30, one, both records by Emily Smith in Saratoga.

A Badger was picked up May 10 by the Menlo Park poundmaster sleeping on a lawn near El Camino Real and given to the Palo Alto Junior Museum. It promptly escaped but was captured, again while sleeping, and returned by the Palo Alto animal shelter to the museum where it may be seen. (Unless it escapes again!) It seems docile enough to have been someone's pet but its many ticks make it more likely that it had just arrived from the foothills.

Does anyone have later dates for White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Band-tailed Pigeon, or Hermit Thrush? Any Lazuli Buntings yet??

----Bob Wood  
1007 Los Trancos Rd.  
Menlo Park (UL 1-1237)

#### EDITOR'S NOTES

Miss Emily Smith, our favorite bird expert, left May 12 for Finland to attend an international ornithologists' meeting - the exact title of which I do not know. She should be able to add many birds to her Life list - which already is the envy of most Audubon members.

On a recent Sunday, the Golden Gate Audubon Society initiated two unusual field trips - one for Owling (beginning at 4 a.m.) at Inverness, where the rare Spotted Owl has been observed; the second trip, Birding by Ear, beginning at Tomales Bay at 7 a.m. Identifying birds by call alone is, I suppose, every bird-watcher's dream - and it can be done, with perseverance.

The May publication, San Diego Audubon Society, notes that another baby Whooping Crane has been hatched by Josephine and Grip in the New Orleans zoo. This is their third in less than a year, with another expected to hatch any time, to increase the population of its species in captivity to seven. Again we hope the wild flock reaches safely its summer breeding grounds in the North.

Elinor V. Cogswell in her column "EVC at Bat" (Palo Alto Times, March 29, 1958) writes an hilarious account of the trials of a bird-watcher. Although bird-watching has been recommended as an antidote to the tensions and frustrations of modern life, she found the activity anything but relaxing. The bird jumped about incessantly, refused to sing, and did not correspond to any picture or description in the book. It was impossible to see what he ate, and he had no mannerisms of note. Our sympathies to Miss Cogswell, and an open invitation to come along on Field Trips!

----Joyce Todd

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