

The Avocet

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It's Time for a Reappraisal

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has grown quite a bit in recent years--thanks in large part to the top-calibre work of our former Publicity Chairman, Jane Goraj. With that growth has come not only pride and pleasure, but a few problems. An occasional field trip has been too big--the birds fled before the approach of 35 or more seekers. Response to calls to maintain our Sanctuaries (Dumbarton and Montalvo) has not been adequate--too few must do all the work. New field trip leaders are needed. Our social side has been neglected--new and old members often don't know each other. Temporarily, we have no President. It is time to re-examine the purposes of the organization--so that it may grow and prosper, and be what its members want it to be.

WOULD YOU PLEASE TAKE FIFTEEN OR TWENTY MINUTES NOW TO FILL OUT THE ENCLOSED QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT BY SEPTEMBER 15? A committee will tabulate the results and report to the membership either at a regular meeting or in the Avocet. THANK YOU! THE OFFICERS AND BOARD APPRECIATE THE TIME AND THOUGHT YOU HAVE GIVEN TO HELPING US PLAN THE NEW AUDUBON YEAR.

****Joyce Todd

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Mon. Sept. 8	8:00p.m.	Palo Alto Junior Museum
Wed. Sept. 10	9:00a.m.	Palo Alto Yacht Harbor
Sun. Sept. 14	9:00a.m.	Stanford Campus
Mon. Sept. 22	7:00a.m.	Santa Cruz Wharf
Wed. Sept. 24	9:00a.m.	Alviso
Sun. Sept. 28	9:00a.m.	Henry Cowell State Park



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Regular Meeting: The first meeting of the Society will be held at 8 p.m. on Monday, September 8, at the Palo Alto Junior Museum on Middlefield Road. Members will show Kodachromes of their summer travels with emphasis on their bird-watching experiences. Please contact Robert Wood, ULmar 1-1237 or 1007 Los Trancos Rd., Menlo Park as soon as possible if you have slides you would like to show. Depending on the number of exhibitors, six to ten slides per person will probably be about the maximum.

Board Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Palo Alto Junior Museum.

Field Trips:

September 10, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. Meet by the duck pond in Bixbee Park at the end of Embarcadero Rd. Leaders: Dr. and Mrs. M. R. Kirkwood (DA3-7395).

September 14, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. Stanford Campus. Meet at the corner of Pine Avenue and Lasuen Sts. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bothwell (DA2-1209).

September 24, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to Alviso salt marshes and ponds. Meet at the Alviso Elementary School on San Jose-Alviso Road. Leaders: Emily Smith (EL4-2494) and Alberta Edell (EL4-4979).

September 28, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. Henry Cowell State Park near Felton on Highway 9. Meet at the Park parking lot. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zwaal (CY2-2060).

-----Emmanuel Taylor, Field Trip
Chairman

ANNUAL OFFSHORE TRIP

Leavitt McQuesten of the Santa Cruz Bird Club has planned an "Albatross Expedition" for Monday, September 22. A sport fishing boat will leave the Stagnaro landing on Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf at 7:00 a.m. and take the participants 12 miles offshore to where Black-footed Albatrosses are usually seen. An added attraction at that spot will be the activities of the cod fishermen. The boat will return to Santa Cruz about noon. Mr. McQuesten conducts these trips annually for those who enjoy observing Albatrosses, Alcids, Shearwaters, and other pelagic birds.

Many Santa Clara Valley members have enjoyed these trips in previous years. They will remind you to bring binoculars and wear warm clothes. Tickets (ten of them) may be had from Joyce Todd (DA2-1787). Phone to reserve them before Sept. 15 or pick them up at the Sept. 8 regular meeting.

-----Viola Anderson, Salinas, Calif.

OUR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

Sunday, July 20, 1958, was a red-letter day for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society: the Montalvo Nature Trail at long last became an established fact. Thirty-one signs were posted on that day, identifying trees, flowering plants and other interesting natural phenomena. We hope and expect that the community will soon begin to avail itself of this new resource, which should be a helpful teaching adjunct as well as a recreational facility.

Many thanks are due the following members and friends: Mr. and Mrs. Harley Bothwell, Bill Buse, Peter Da Silva, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Hinds, Mr. Bennett Lancaster, Mr. Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Ray McCann, Mr. and Mrs. Prussman, Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Francis H. Goraj. All of them worked with a will and did a fine job. There were some other friends present whom, we regret, we did not meet and so cannot acknowledge their help properly.

More work needs to be done. The Wildlife Sanctuary at Montalvo should be the Society's project for the coming year.

We invite all members and friends to visit Montalvo and walk the loop trail to see the handsome signs for themselves. Then answer the call for the next work party at Montalvo!

-----Francis and Jane Goraj

NEW MEMBERS

The Society wishes to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mrs. H. T. Harvey	716 Garner Court	Santa Clara
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Pillow	675 Orange Avenue	Los Altos
Mrs. Ella Gibson	912 Forest Avenue	Palo Alto
Mr. Alec C. Martin	P.O. Box 362	Saratoga
Mrs. D. Morrison	293 Grant Street	Redwood City
Mrs. Herbert Wittgenstein	15355 Bellecourt	Saratoga

(changed from local to national membership)

-----Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership Chmn.

EXPENSES FORCE FIRST DUES INCREASE SINCE 1905

Fifty-three years ago, when the National Audubon Society was organized, the membership dues were set at \$5.00. Since then the minimum dues were never raised. But, as everyone knows, operating costs have grown enormously since 1905. Membership organizations of all kinds have increased their dues, most of them several times. The Board of Directors, in recognition of the urgent needs in financing the Society's growing program, has voted new rates applying to all renewals after Sept., 1958. A Regular Membership is now \$6.50, and Regular (Husband and Wife), \$10. Under the branch plan, dues received from joint memberships are divided equally between the National Society and the branch, after deducting \$2.50 for the Audubon Magazine.

-----National Audubon Society,
John H. Baker, President

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Those of you who are following the yearly reports of the nesting of a pair of Black Swifts in a sea cave on the Santa Cruz County coast will be glad to know that so far the birds are successfully raising their single offspring. On August 17 the young swift, covered with black down and almost sparrow-size, was seen on its sparse seaweed nest on the same ledge where young swifts have been raised other years.

It is time to visit your favorite mudflats again for the shorebird season is here. If you live near Palo Alto you can park your car on the channel bank behind the harbor master's residence at the yacht harbor and watch the godwits and curlews and other shorebirds feeding close by. If you manage to get there on a falling tide, a good variety of birds can be seen. They come trooping right past your parked car as they advance to each newly-exposed mudbank. On August 6 at low tide there were still a few Willets, Hudsonian Godwits, Black-bellied Plovers, and a single Ring-necked Plover to be seen but most of the shorebirds had followed the receding tide to the bay. Several of the Black-bellied Plovers were still in their breeding plumage as was a Dowitcher seen there on August 12. Harriet Mundy reports a number of shorebirds along the new section of the Mountain View - Milpitas road, just south of Alviso, on July 21: Avocet, Dowitcher (breeding plumage), Black-necked Stilt, Greater Yellowlegs, and Willet. Emily Smith, Mrs. Langford Smith, and Robert Wood observed six Northern Phalaropes and the unusual combination of both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, one of each, feeding together in and around a puddle on the shore near Santa Cruz on August 17.

On the same day, we three visited the summer home of Miss Lelah Miller in Mount Hermon. After a short wait, during which chipmunks, Pygmy Nuthatches, a Wrenit, and other birds visited the feeding trays, a young male Red Crossbill flew in for water. Emily Smith writes that "Crossbills (small flocks) have been seen at Mount Hermon off and on, and any season of the year, during the last 10 years. I first heard of them (and saw them at a bird bath) the fall and winter of 1947-48. Then they were there the summer of 1951, summer and fall of 1954, spring and summer of 1955, last fall, and now this summer. The ponderosa pines at Mount Hermon are probably one reason for their coming." Seems that the next step is for someone to find a nest.

-----Robert Wood
1007 Los Trancos Road
Menlo Park

(Please send in your observations; we appreciate them all.)

EDITOR'S NOTES

The July, 1958, Holiday magazine was devoted entirely to "Natural America", with many full-page photographs in color and chapters devoted to the wild animals, mountains, deserts, rivers, birds, plains, shorelines, and forests of the United States.

----J. T.

The revised Wilderness Bill has been reintroduced with new numbers: S4028 in the Senate, HR13013 in the House. In response to my recent wires, Sen. Kuchel and our 10th Dist. Rep. Charles Gubser wrote letters pledging their enthusiastic support when the bill comes to a vote. There may not be time for the present Congress to pass the bill before adjourning, but it should pass, with your help, next session. It is the product of constructive, cooperative effort by conservation organizations and government agencies--the beginning of an enduring national program. ----J. T.

Landscapes of Alaska: Their Geologic Evolution (edited by Howell Williams) is a timely new book--a fine introduction to the beauties of our new state. It is filled with dramatic photographs and was prepared by expert geologists in language understandable by an interested layman. Five dollars from the University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California. ----J. T.

Five specialists who have found in nature photography both hobby and profession offer their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm in "Hunting With the Camera" (New York: Harper & Brothers, 215 pp., 40 illustrations, \$4.50). Subtitled "A Guide to Techniques, and Adventure in the Field", the book's editor is Allan D. Cruikshank, official photographer for the National Audubon Society, who contributes chapters on bird and mammal photography. ----J. T.

You may have a chance to see the documentary film "Death Valley the Year 'Round" by Ranger Naturalist Ralph Welles. One of the features of the film record is the desert big-horn sheep, rarely seen by human beings. Welles is under contract to the National Park Service as a research scientist on big-horn sheep. ----J. T.

Modjeska Canyon, near El Toro, Calif., has one of the most interesting bird sanctuaries in the United States. It is primarily for hummingbirds, 6 species have been identified there, but it also harbors some 140 other species of birds. The Tucker Sanctuary was a gift from B. F. Tucker, Long Beach philanthropist who purchased the site in 1916 for his wife, a great lover of birds.

----Palo Alto Times 5/27/58

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Act has been passed by Congress. Its purpose is to survey our present facilities and see what our recreation needs will be many years from now--with parks and playground areas inadequate already and a rapidly growing population. Only 240 miles of the 3,700 mile Atlantic Coast are open to the general public, and the U.S. coastline has become prime real estate.

----Palo Alto Times 7/5/58

Senator Paul H. Douglas (Illinois) has introduced a bill (S 3898) seeking federal protection for the "last four miles" of the famous Indiana Dunes. Their preservation is especially important because they are in the heart of a very heavily populated and industrialized area. It is a natural botanical preserve--containing plants from all life zones.

----Council of Conservationists, Inc.
5/26/58

Charlotte McBride, Past President, Los Angeles Audubon Society, and Conservation Chairman of our Santa Clara Chapter led the Nature Study Group this summer at Barron Park School, south of Palo Alto. The school and parents are very grateful for the four hours a week she gave them and for all the information, ideas, and attitudes those especially fortunate children will carry with them. ----J. T.

Mary Meehan of our Society recently reported nesting activities at Rickey's Studio Inn--lush restaurant-hotel on El Camino Real, Palo Alto. The principals are two proud black Australian swans, imported at great expense to swim about in the lake beneath the newest hotel unit--and both purported to be males. A nest containing 5 beautiful large eggs was built, tended by devotion by both swans--but (P. A. Times, 8/19) there will apparently be no cygnets this summer. They seldom reproduce in captivity, and even the egg carefully removed to an incubator has not hatched. The head gardener, it is said, can make the female sing for him--so perhaps such optimism will be rewarded next year. ----J. T.

From Newsweek for 6/30/58 Manette Wittgenstein clipped a frightening article--featuring a photograph of a wretched female eating a meadowlark sandwich. Mrs. Wittgenstein knew of the wholesale slaughter of songbirds by the Italian people before 1920, but thought such practices had been stopped completely. Enraged bird lovers throughout Europe charge that Italians have killed millions of birds while they winged northward to spring feeding grounds--with the help of mist nets and electronic bird calls. Italian Foreign Ministry officials contend that in the land of St. Francis of Assisi, the greatest bird lover of them all, there are refuge areas totaling 5 million acres and laws protecting "useful" birds. The president of the Italian Hunting Federation, however, says the real tragedy for hunters is that there is no game left to shoot at in Italy except birds, and the birds themselves have become "incredibly smart" at flitting away just out of shotgun range. ----J. T.

May I suggest to members that they pick up a 50¢ signet paperback book, Birdman of Alcatraz--The Story of Robert Stroud, by Thomas E. Gaddis. This amazing convict bird doctor has spent 42 years in solitary confinement--longer than any living man. It can be said of him what Ernest Hemingway wrote of an imprisoned poet: "whatever this man once did, he has suffered enough". If you agree after reading the book, please act on the suggestion in the Publisher's Note (3/31/58). ----J. T.

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