

The Avocet

Volume V Number 9

October 1958

NOTICE

If you have not already done so, please mail in your questionnaire (included in September Avocet). We have had very good response, indeed, and do appreciate and will use the excellent ideas contained therein. Tabulation cannot begin for a short while, so please record your thoughts and be counted. Thanks! -----J.T.

BOB AMYX RELEASES \$9,000,000 PARK RECREATION PLAN FOR SANTA CLARA CO.

Mr. Amyx, S. C. County Parks and Recreation Director has proposed that the following 19 projects be completed over a period of 10 years: (1) Duveneck Ranch, Los Altos Hills, nearly 2000 acres running almost to the Black Mt. summit (2) North County Valley Floor Park, 200 acres not yet pinpointed between Palo Alto and Sunnyvale-Santa Clara area (3) Cultural Project--space in North Co. Valley Floor Park should be set aside for museums, art galleries, historical exhibits, arboretums, etc. (4) Stevens Creek Park Expansion--including swimming improvements (5) Baylands Recreation Areas--involving some 1000 acres of shoreline (6) Mt. Madonna Park Expansion--including one of the most southerly groves of coastal redwoods (7) Calero Reservoir--near Coyote, popular as a boating spot (8) Anderson Reservoir--500 acres on the northwest shore (9) Vasona Reservoir--near Los Gatos (10) Eastern Hills Area Park--in the Evergreen-San Felipe Valley area, some 500 acres (11) Coyote Creek Park Chain--several 20 acre parcels about two miles apart extending from Anderson Dam to San Jose (12) Santa Teresa Park--the former Fitzgerald Ranch near Edenvale (13) Coyote Lake--good shoreline terrain for picknicking and camping (14) Airport Reservoir Area, in northeast portion of the county, or Calaveras Reservoir, both offering a cool retreat from a hot valley floor (15) Mt. Hamilton Area--a site in Hell's Valley, rather than higher up along the poor road (16) Guadalupe Creek Area--Between Los Gatos and Almaden (17)--picknicking and camping along Pacheco Creek among native sycamores and oaks (18) Bicycle Trails--"a natural opportunity to develop something different" exists in the service roads following water conservation canals, Amyx said. ---Palo Alto Times 9/18/58

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

Wed. Oct. 8 9:00a.m. Searsville Lake
Sun. Oct. 12 8:00 or 9:45a.m. Mt. Madonna Park
Mon. Oct. 13 7:00p.m. Board 8:00p.m. Regular Meeting
Spring Valley Golf Course
Wed. Oct. 22 9:00a.m. Stevens Creek Park
Sun. Oct. 26 8:00a.m. Calaveras Reservoir



OCTOBER CALENDAR

Board Meeting: Monday, October 13, 7:00p.m. Spring Valley Golf Course Clubhouse.

Regular Meeting: Monday, October 13, 8:00 p.m., Spring Valley Golf Course Clubhouse on Calaveras Rd. Come early for golf if you can. The meeting will feature Eric Thorssen's very beautiful color films on wildlife--notably birds of prey. A county map will help you--or call Al Wool (AM2-2577) for directions.

Field Trips:

Wednesday, October 8, to Searsville Lake. Meet at the entrance gate on Sandhill and Portola Rds. at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Lee Ellis. (DA3-0562).

Sunday, October 12, to Mt. Madonna Park. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Almaden Union School, Almaden Rd. and Downer Avenue, or at 9:45 a.m. at Valley View Sign in Mt. Madonna Park. The park entrance is near the summit of Hecker Pass (Highway 152) and the Valley View sign is 3/4 mile within the park from the entrance. Bring lunch and warm wrap, since the weather is sometimes cool and foggy. Leader: Elsie Hoeck (CY3-5658).

Wednesday, October 22, to Stevens Creek Park. Meet at the park parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Leader: Mrs. Catherine Lintott (EL4-9664).

Sunday, October 26, to Calaveras Reservoir. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Calaveras Road and Oakland Highway 17 in Milpitas. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Albert J. Wool (AM2-2577).

---Emmanuel Taylor, Field Trip Chmn.

HELP!

Special new cloth signs have just arrived from National Audubon H.Q. for posting on the South San Francisco Bay Sanctuaries (their official name). These resist considerably better than the present metal signs any corrosion from salty winds and fogs. The cloth must be attached to a wood backing, hence these urgent requests:

(1) Please call Frank Goraj (DA5-8847) if you have the electric saw equipment necessary to cut up backing boards and would be willing to use it for a short time to complete the job. Thanks!

(2) Please call Frank (DA5-8847) if you can join a work party to put up the new signs. The date will be set to suit the convenience of you who can come. Usually, a hot lunch is part of your reward. Again thanks!

--- Jane Goraj

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome these people to our organization:

Mrs. Oliver F. Hitchcock	15060 Kennedy Rd.	Los Gatos
Mr. and Mrs. Warren M. Turner	646 Alvarado Row	Stanford Univ.
Mrs. Grace Brubaker	191 Mt. View Ave.	San Jose 27
(changed from local to national membership)		
---Mrs. Irving Snow		
Membership Chairman		

LOCAL AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Pamphlets describing in detail the screen tours for this year, prices of tickets, etc. will be mailed to all members. However, a summary of dates is helpful, and each tour will be mentioned in the Avocet before it is due, for anyone who may have missed seeing the pamphlet:

Monday, November 3, Robert C. Hermes, Ranch of the Purple Flowers
 Friday, December 5, William H. Wagoner, Jr., A Touch of the Tropics
 Wednesday, February 11, Leonard Hall, Waterway Wildlife
 Tuesday, March 10, G. Harrison Orians, Great Smoky Skyland
 Tuesday, April 14, Arthur A. Allen, East and West from Hudson Bay

Tickets: (Five Audubon Screen Tours)

General Admission Season Ticket	\$7.00
Family Season Ticket (10 Admissions, good at any Tour)	5.00
Single Admission	.90
Student Season Ticket	2.00
Student single Admission	.50

Tickets are obtainable from: Audubon Screen Tours
 221 Science Bldg.,
 (Phone CY4-6414, Ext. 250) San Jose State College

or on night of performance at Morris Dailey Box Office, San Jose State.
 ---J. M.

HORNED OWLS IN LOS ALTOS

During the past summer months a pair of Great Horned Owls have brought a single young Owl onto our property each night. This pair has used our T.V. aerial for a hunting pole for the last two years. This aerial is not the standard size, but is much larger and much higher than average.

Things have gone about like this---

July 29th--Bright moonlight night. -- Young Owl on aerial. Got up at 1:15 a.m. and watched until 2:05 a.m.

- (2) Cries with a rather harsh screeching cry, like an off key Barn Owl.-- Cries every 8th count--except when an adult is approaching with food, when the count changed to every 2nd count and becomes more plaintive.
- (3) Adult bird arrives and feeding takes place on aerial.
- (4) Adult bird leaves aerial and flew to Oak tree near my window. As it landed a second bird arose from the same oak and flew away. It had not made a sound so I judged it was an adult.
- (5) Young Owl joined the adult bird that had fed it. They both remained in the tree for a while then both flew to property on hill slightly above me and sat side by side on the top bar of a children's swing and slide.

July 30th--Young Owl arrived on aerial and started to cry at 10:10 p.m. Very bright moonlight. Took food from the ground and walked around like a big chicken. Watched until 12:25 a.m. Still crying when I fell asleep.

- (2) All this is still going on at this date (Sept. 10th).

Aug. 27th--He some how became trapped on the outside porch, where I had the Bamboo Blinds rolled down. Finally found his way out after sitting on the step that leads into the living room for about five minutes. Flew back and forth on porch and against Bamboo Blinds.

I have been very fortunate to be able to observe them for so many nights and to make notes on the actions and behavior of all three birds.

---Charlotte McBride

(We in turn are fortunate to have a hawk and owl expert in our Society. I think most of us could use a good solid, thorough lecture on the recognition of hawks, especially, in the field.--J.E.)

A TINY PATIENT

Recently a young male Anna's hummer was injured somehow in flight and fell at my husband's feet in our driveway. My husband picked him up and put him in a little basket on the kitchen floor. When I came in, the hummer was out of the basket, one wing a little bent. He could not fly, so propped himself up on his wings and tail.

I fixed some honey and sugar in water and picked him up, offering the food. He took two or three big swallows, then struggled in my hand, getting some of the sticky fluid on his feathers. As best I could I wiped the little thing off and tried feeding him again. He accepted the food at once, and I put him on the edge of the basket where he perched quietly 'til morning. The next day he still looked

bedraggled and sick, but accepted food willingly and showed considerable spirit for so small a bird. More often than not, he permitted me to pick him up without struggling and did not show fear.

The next day he was still alive, so my husband made him a little wire perch with another wire holding a tube of sugar and water where he could reach it. He fed himself from the tube, moved back and forth on the perch and slept there at night. From time to time he would exercise his wings and try to take off--always landing on the floor.

When he got stronger, I gave him a good bath to remove all the sticky fluid from his feathers that he had gotten from feeding at one time or another and immediately he was dry, he looked alertly about, took a long drink from the tube, squeaked his little call, and then took off in a jaunt about the kitchen, flying slowly like a butterfly. He made two not-too-bad landings and then lay still from his efforts. I put him back on his perch where he went to sleep for the night. Often I went in to take a look at him at night. He seldom woke up, but perched with his eyes closed and his feathers fluffed out--sleeping quietly.

The next day he seemed quite normal and I knew it would soon be time to release him. He flew more surely, faster, and with better control--and began looking for a way outdoors. I fed him once more by hand, took him outdoors, and opened up my hand. He sat on my palm for a moment looking about and then without hesitation or haste flew almost straight up to perch on a twig of an oak overhead. He moved once more to a perch higher up and was immediately attacked by another male hummer--a resident of our garden. The little one took off a little ahead of the larger bird and we did not see him again, but he seemed well and strong so perhaps he found another garden. In any event it was the first time I have been able to nurse a young bird back to health without seeking a foster mother and a nest. My husband and I developed a real affection and respect for the young hummer for his courage in so strange a place, and we miss him and wish him well. (8/26/58)

(Thank you, Mrs. Weeks. You would make a fine bird-hospital director!
----J.T.)

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Interesting observations and records have been received from several persons this month. The prize for reporting the bird farthest from its usual habitat should go to Kay and Ray McCann who watched three Yellow-billed Magpies walking about Lafayette Square in San Francisco on August 24. The McCanns also saw a flock of Northern Phalaropes, estimated at 500, on August 31 at the western approach to Dumbarton Bridge.

Emily Smith sends in several records of last appearances at her Saratoga home: August 23, Black-headed Grosbeak; August 28, Wilson's

Warbler; September 9, a male Western Tanager "that had completed its nuptial molt and showed only a tinge of red on its throat"; September 11, Swainson's Thrush. Two other last dates were produced by the September 14 Stanford Campus field trip led by Harvey and Virginia Bothwell, when they recorded a Western Flycatcher and Yellow Warbler. A pair of California Quail with a late brood of seven small downy chicks was seen by Emily Smith on August 29, also at her home in Paratoga.

Joyce Todd discovered a Bewick's Wren sleeping on her back porch in Palo Alto in late August. That brings up a subject worth thinking about. How many species of birds have you observed at night while they were asleep? I can report one, a Red-shafted Flicker, that I first noticed at dusk clinging to the trunk of a black walnut tree directly beneath a medium-sized branch. It was still there about ten p.m. when I returned with a flashlight. Mrs. Todd also reports four Red-shouldered Hawks (Red-bellied) in Portola Valley on Whiskey Hill Road on August 31 and nine Burrowing Owls, at least five of which were young ones, on September 1 behind the Eastman Kodak plant on Hansen Way in Palo Alto.

The earliest reports of White-crowned Sparrows come as a tie, both in time and place. Charles and Emma Scarlott noted two birds at their home in Portola Valley on September 14. On the same day and within a quarter of a mile, I found an immature bird dead on the road. On September 19 just before these notes were to be typed and passed on to the Avocet editor, I found two newly-arrived Golden-crowned Sparrows hopping about my yard in Portola Valley. That's really getting in under the wire!

---Robert Wood
1007 Los Trancos Road
Menlo Park
ULmar 1-1237

NEW BOOKS

1. Paul L. Errington, Of Men and Marshes (Macmillan, \$4.50). From first-hand experience the author describes the beautiful marshes of the Middle West, Far West, and Southwest.
2. Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (\$7.50). This book traces the roots of the conservation movement and is lavishly illustrated.
3. Aretas A. Saunders, The Lives of Wild Birds (Nelson Doubleday, \$1.49)--a good help to novice bird students. How to identify birds, how to observe their life cycle, how to record your observations, etc.

4. Sigurd F. Olson, Listening Point (Knopf, \$4.50). Justice William O. Douglas writes: "This book has prose that is close to poetry... Sigurd Olson is our modern Muir and Thoreau."
5. George W. D. Symonds, The Tree Identification Book (\$10)--an important new book on trees, with over 1500 photographs showing every detail necessary for identifying a tree at any season.

---J. T.

EDITOR'S NOTES

A good spot for observing wading birds (at least at low tide) is found at the end of Old Bayshore Highway, just south of San Francisco International Airport. Drive north on Bayshore to the Burlingame-Broadway overpass; turn right as if to go onto the overpass, but instead continue straight ahead. Turn left on Old Bayshore Highway (past Holland Boat Works) and go along the shore to the end.

Corrections and Omissions Department: On the questionnaire mailed last month, under type of monthly meetings, one very important category was omitted. It should have read "Formal Program"--lecture with professional slides or movies". Many of you caught this error and expressed a desire to know more about birds from experts.

The price of the Santa Cruz Offshore trip tickets was \$1.50--a bit of vital information I neglected to mention. This did not, however, affect the sale. They were all gone in a few days.

Three baby Whooping Cranes have been spotted in their northwestern Canada breeding grounds (Wood Buffalo National Park), boosting the known population of the rare species to 35. Since 1945, when their number had been reduced to 17, efforts have been made to preserve the Cranes in Canada, where they winter. The 35 now living include six in captivity. ---Palo Alto Times 9/2

Our Audubon Warden, John C. Larson, will arrive with his family about October 1 to patrol the South San Francisco Bay Sanctuaries during duck-hunting season. If you know of a small house or apartment for them in the Mountain View school district to rent for three months, please phone Mary Meehan (WH8-4949).

The September, 1958, issue of Life magazine contains "Darwin, Part II"--a study of Darwin's visit to the Galapagos Islands. It includes a comparison of the birds of that day, especially the finches some 100 years ago, with those found now.

Manette Wittgenstein sent a clipping about the recent classification of raccoons as game animals, not predators. The "sport" consists in killing the coons at night in the woods with the aid of lights. This night hunting is an invitation to poaching. The Fish and Game Commission's meeting next January would be a good time to initiate changes in the law.

A couple of high ridge trails are in the recreation plans for Santa Clara County. Bob Amyx, County Parks and Recreation Director, recently revealed a couple of riding-hiking trails along the eastern and western hills and along Coyote Creek. The Planning Commission unanimously backed his plan, which, if passed by County Supervisors, will go to the State Division of Beaches and Parks for implementation.

---Palo Times 8/21

Mr. B. F. Tucker, who established the Tucker Sanctuary mentioned in the last Avocet, died Sept. 11 following an automobile accident. The Sanctuary will continue to be maintained by the California Audubon Society, recently affiliated with National Audubon.

Argentina and Chile have agreed to quit feuding over a bleak little island near the tip of South America and leave it to the birds. Both nations have held unsettled claims to Snipe Island since 1881. Chile recently began building a lighthouse there. Argentine Marines destroyed it Aug. 9 and stationed a detachment there. Chile angrily withdrew her ambassador from Buenos Aires. A communique issued in both nations' capitals last night said they had agreed to leave the island unoccupied and without lighthouses or buoys.

---Palo Alto Times 8/19

San Mateo County Supervisors today approved purchase of the 430-acre Sam McDonald Regional Park in La Honda. The board voted to pay a price of \$67,000 for the land, most of which is covered with lush virgin and second growth redwood timber. McDonald, who dies last year at the age of 73, was one of the best known of Stanford University figures. He was officially the superintendent of athletic buildings and grounds, but was informally the adviser and friend to thousands of undergraduates during his half century at the university. He had long used his La Honda property as a recreation area for students. County Manager E. R. Stallings said sale of the property as a public park "is in keeping with Mr. McDonald's fondest hopes". The county, Stallings said, is "very fortunate to have the opportunity to buy this property". It is a third again as large as Memorial Park, and more accessible. The McDonald property is just outside La Honda, at the intersection of Alpine-Pescadero Rd. and San Gregorio roads.

---Palo Alto Times 9/16

-----Joyce Todd