

The Avocet

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The President's Message

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society was well represented at the National Convention this year. There were Miss Emily Smith, who also attended the A.O.U. Annual Meeting, Dorothy and Al Wool, and I. Among the four of us I am sure we have absorbed all that delegates are expected to take back to their respective Societies.

Every three or four years the National Society asks each of its Department Heads to give a brief report on the activities of his department. In this way the Branches and Affiliates are kept up to date on any changes : how our National Society is run, why things are done as they are, and the result of various programs.

The most important topic for discussion this year was Insecticides and the Fire Ant control program of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in the southern states. This is a frightening program and one which you are forced to wonder about. We must all watch and at the proper time write our protest and cut off further funds. National will give us the alert on this but in the meantime the word must be spread to others. The Audubon Magazine will print the reports and talks given to bring us up to date. Richard Fough suggested from the floor that pictures be taken of the stacks of dead wildlife, livestock, chickens, dogs and cats and that these should go out with all the printed material. Of course we must not forget the extensive report "On The Wading Birds Survey" by Robert Allen, Sandy Sprunt and Alexander Sprunt, Jr. This is sponsored by the Research Dept. of our National Audubon Society. This also frightens you when you see all the area going in one way or another.

It is always interesting to talk with people from other Societies. We all have more or less the same problems and it is most enlightening to exchange ideas and find out how others have solved their difficulties.

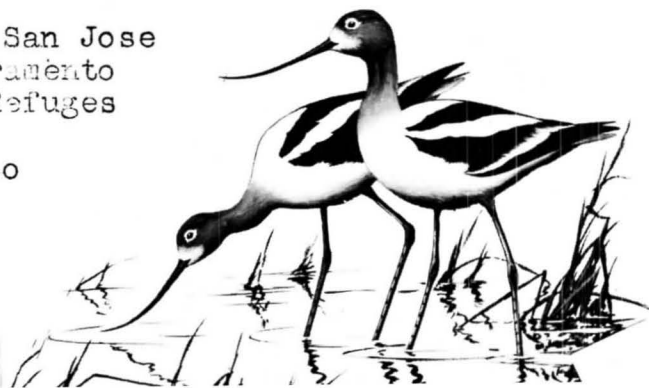
The highlight was, of course, Al Wool's film, "Ranch and Range". The compliments that were given both to the film and the way in which Al presented it were beyond anything a speaker could hope for. Mr. Baker told me at an informal get-together: "Do you know that Al Wool has turned out to be one of our best Screen Tour Lecturers?"

So now we have one more Convention behind us, and we hope more experience and knowledge that can be put to good use as time goes on.

-----Charlotte McBride

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Wed. Dec. 3	9:30 am	Los Gatos Park
Fri. Dec. 5	8:00 pm	<u>A Touch of the Tropics</u> , San Jose
Sat/Sun. Dec. 6/7	10:00 am	Grey Lodge ; Sacramento Waterfowl Refuges
Sun. Dec. 7	7:00 pm	Los Ranchos Game Refuge
Mon. Dec. 8	7:00 pm	Board Meeting, Palo Alto
Sun. Dec. 21	7:30 am	Christmas Bird Count



December Calendar

Regular Meeting : None in December. Come to the Screen Tour and the Christmas Bird Count instead!

Board Meeting : Monday, December 8, 7:00 pm at Palo Alto Junior Museum. This will be a long and important session. Don't miss it.

Screen Tour : Friday, December 5, 8:00 pm at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose. A Touch of the Tropics will be presented by William H. Wagoner of Homestead, Florida. The Everglades...only region of its kind in all North America...where jungle meets swamp, where bay touches island, key and sunken reef. Shadowy aisles formed by moss-draped cypress trees are the habitats of alligators, ibis and egret; below-surface coral reefs of Florida Bay the haunts of many tropical sea creatures. Mr. Wagoner presents a color motion picture alive with wildlife of this subtropical area.

Field Trips:

Wednesday, December 3, to Los Gatos Park with Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Prusman. Drive down University Avenue, Los Gatos, turn right at the end and meet in the park at 9:30 am.

Saturday & Sunday, December 6 and 7. Meet at 10:00 am Saturday at Grey Lodge State Waterfowl Refuge, southwest of Gridley. This is a joint trip with the Mt. Diablo and Golden Gate Audubon Societies. After the tour, members will return to Willows or Gridley for the night. If you can't make it Saturday, meet Sunday at 9:30 am at Sacramento Federal Waterfowl Refuge, seven miles south of Willows on Highway 99W. Make overnight reservations now. You will be competing for rooms with innumerable hunters. Leader: Harry Adamson (AT3-2164) or call Mary Meehan (WHS-4949) locally for details.

Sunday, December 7, to the Los Banos Game Refuge with the Santa Cruz Society. Meet at Tiny's Restaurant in Los Banos at 9:30 am (Come earlier and let's have breakfast together). Charles and Viola Anderson of Salinas will lead.

Wednesday, December 17. Cancelled. Save your time and energy for the big Count next Sunday.

Sunday, December 21, Annual Christmas Bird Count:

MEETING PLACE: In East San Jose, at the home of Frances and Dick Mewaldt, 4150 Golf Drive (CL8-7491). Everyone be there at 7:30. Bring lunch. Tally of the count will be at 4:30 pm at the Mewaldt's. Refreshments will be served during the tally.

CCUNT AREA: Same as in past years--a circular area, 15 miles in diameter. The center is northeast of city limits at junction of Mabury Rd. and Capitol Avenue.

SECTORS: The count area will be divided into five sectors, as follows:

- A. Alviso Sector, bounded on east by State Highway 17 (old Oakland Highway) and on south by Bayshore Highway. Bayshore Highway inside this sector.
- B. Southwest Sector, bounded on north and east by Bayshore Highway. Bayshore Highway, south of Alum Rock Ave., inside this sector.
- C. Evergreen Sector, bounded by Bayshore Highway, Alum Rock Ave., and Mt. Hamilton Road. Mt. Hamilton Rd. inside this sector.
- D. Alum Rock Sector, bounded on south and west by Mt. Hamilton Rd., Alum Rock Avenue, and Bayshore Highway; on north by Capitol Ave. and Sierra Rd. Alum Rock Ave., Bayshore Highway and Oakland Highway, and Capitol Ave. are all inside this sector.
- E. Calaveras Sector, bounded by Sierra Rd., Capitol Ave., and old Oakland Highway. Sierra Rd. and Oakland Highway inside this sector.

SECTOR LEADERS:

- A. (Alviso) Dr. Henry Weston, 349 N. Richlee Drive, Campbell (FR8-3836).
- B. (Southwest) Mrs. Angelina Snow, 21,441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos (EL4-1811), Mrs. Fannie Zwaal, 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose 28 (CY2-2060).
- C. (Evergreen) Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor, 14,311 Quito Rd., Saratoga (FR8-3219).
- D. (Alum Rock) Mr. Robert Wood, 1007 Los Trancos Road, Menlo Park (UL1-1237).
- E. (Calaveras) Albert J. Wool, Rt. 2, Box 728, San Jose (AM2-2577).

Each leader is responsible for planning the itinerary within his sector. (If you know where there is good birding in a sector, let the leader know.) At the meeting place, on the day of the count, the assembled bird counters will divide into groups and go with whichever sector they wish. If you know now which sector you want to join, phone or drop a card to the leader. It will be a big help in planning the itinerary if the leader knows beforehand how many observers (and cars) he can count on for his sector. If you have further questions, call Dr. Mewaldt (CL8-7491).

RECORDS: One person in each group will act as scribe, to record the counts of each species of wild bird positively identified. In making estimates of large numbers, indicate the probably error, for example: Coot, 2000+300. If unable to estimate degree of

accuracy, record estimate as: Coot, 2000 est. In adding estimates to actual counts in final tally, indicate accuracy in this way: Coot, 2137 (2000 + 300, 173). This shows that of the total number of Coots reported (2173), 173 were actually counted and the rest estimated.

Record hours and mileage spent on foot and by car by each group in the sector. As weather conditions can affect results, keep record of weather (minimum and maximum temperatures, wind direction and approximate velocity, cloud cover, etc.). Because habitats are important in evaluating species counts, record habitats visited (salt marsh, canyon stream, oak woodland, grassland, golf course, etc.) and percentage of time spent in each habitat.

----Emmanuel Taylor,
Field Trip Chairman
(FR8-3219)

WESTERN NATURE
PHOTOGRAPHIC SALON

All members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society are invited to enter a Black and White (monochrome) print in the Western Nature Photographic Salon to be displayed at the Audubon Convention at Asilomar, March 21-24, 1959.

A panel of 3 judges (including Roger Tory Peterson) will select the winner in each of the 10 categories as well as designating the winner of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grand Prizes.

Conditions of Entry:

1. Prints must be at least 5"x7" (preferably larger) and mounted on cardboard backing to facilitate display.
2. All subject matter must depict NATIVE WESTERN WILDLIFE or PLANT LIFE.
3. The TEN categories to be presented are: Birds, Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians, Insects and other Arthropods, Marine Life, Photo Micrographs, Wildflowers, Trees, Shrubs, and Fungi.

Entries will receive every care but the Society cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Winning photographs will be displayed at the Pacific Coast Headquarters of the National Audubon Society, before being returned.

---J.T.

NEW MEMBERS

We are glad to welcome the following new members:

Mrs. John Macnie, 19536 Bainter Way, Los Gatos,
Mrs. John McQueen, 1140 Arbor Road, Menlo Park.
Mrs. Francis Goraj, 675 Florales Dr., Palo Alto
(Changed from Local to National Membership)
Miss Mary Duncan, P.O. Box 1413, Stanford, Cal.

Note: Dues for local members only will be \$200 beginning in January.

---Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership Chmn.

Nov. 19, 1958

Last spring when I suggested that the SC Audubon Society send out a questionnaire to discover what the wishes of the members were and who would be interested in helping, I did so in a spirit of "quiet desperation"! I am now happy to report my desperation has changed into "quiet elation". The response from the members has been stunning in view of the fact that the "experts" feel that 15% in returns is about what can be expected! Due largely to the fine response, the Society now has a President and let's not disappoint or discourage her by failing to follow up words with action.

At the time the questionnaire went out our membership totalled 301. Ninety-eight responses were received, just short of one third. Sixty-eight replies indicated a willingness to help on one or more committees, indicating a nucleus of almost 23% willing to be active. This is also a high percentage for a group of this kind.

The rundown went as follows:

1. Reasons for belonging to Audubon:

Financial support - 63; to go on Field Trips - 57; to attend monthly meetings - 32; to meet people of congenial interests - 51. Twenty-six people gave other reasons falling into three categories - to learn about birds, etc., because they are interested in conservation, and to develop a hobby.

2. It was amazing to find that only 20 members had belonged to other Audubon Societies and of these only 9 had been active members. Of the nine, five are active in our society and 2 others are active, one in Sequoia and one couple in Monterey. These 9 (two of whom do not live in Santa Clara County - so that really leaves only 7 in our county) represent just over 2% of the membership. What untapped resources! As we have had almost 100 new members in 3½ yrs. it has been difficult to know them, much less to use them. If any of you have not sent in your questionnaires or wish to make complaints or have active urges to DO something please contact me or send the questionnaire to me. We would like to keep it up to date and see that every new member receives one.
3. As mentioned above, 68 replies indicated a willingness to serve on committees. I will not tabulate the individual committees but will conclude this report with what happened in one field.
4. Fourteen suggestions were made for birding areas.
5. Thirty-seven people indicated one or more choices for meeting night, but Monday won hands down with 27 indicating it on the list.
6. Eighty-three percent of the replies favored a monthly, rather than quarterly, meeting. Forty-nine people indicated the type of meeting desired. Many wanted variety, 42 desiring the informal type, 25 a semi-social type and 10 indicating a formal program. Unfortunately, when the questionnaire went to press the formal meeting was omitted by error so those who indicated that choice wrote it in. However, it seems to me that the informal type meeting is the one to strive for. Some commented that we were "unsociable". There

again, the difficulty lies largely in our too sudden growth and the difficulty of getting to know the members. I wish that EVERYONE when he comes to field trips and meetings would wear his name pinned in full view so that at least we can look at the name and the face and eventually the imprint may be made on the brain. In my case it needs to be pounded in like Hitler's lies!! If you are a new member don't be bashful. We don't mean to cut you dead!

7. Twenty indicated that they had talents and hobbies to share.
8. Thirteen thought they might be able to rope in some of their friends with talent.

NCW - if you have got this far I would like to give you one tangible result of this Herculean labor.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Goraj have taken on the joint chairmanship of the Education Committee. The names of 12 members who had indicated a willingness to be active on such a committee were invited to a preliminary meeting on Sunday, Nov. 16th. Of these 12, one had indicated that she could not be active at present and one, John Harville, is going to be away for a year and a half starting in February. So there were really ten people available. Nine showed up, one of them bringing another member of his family, making ten. One other member who was interested but had not indicated that interest on the questionnaire was also present. The report is that the meeting was lively, interesting and covered a wide range of possible future activity. Some present wanted to work in the adult field, some with elementary ages and some with youth groups. If this should happen in other Committees the Santa Clara Audubon Society is a going concern. More power to US.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Mundy, Analyzer. Whew!

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Has anyone seen a Varied Thrush yet? Anyone, that is, besides Chuck and Emma Scarlott of Fortola Valley whose record of two on November 9 is the first to come to my attention. Cedar Waxwings arrived some time ago. The Sequoia Audubon Society saw them at Golden Gate Park on September 14, Joyce Todd reports them in Barron Park on October 18, and they have been seen several times a week around the Palo Alto Community Center since the last week of October. Harriet Mundy saw her first waxwing of the season on November 5, on the same day and in the same tree as the preceding year.

Joyce Todd also sends in several other records of interest: October 19, a Common Snipe at Crystal Springs Reservoir; October 26, a Horned Owl at dusk west of Palo Alto on Page Mill Road; November 8, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker eating a fig and being pestered by an immature House Finch in Barron Park.

Two Canyon Wrens and two Golden-crowned Kinglets were seen by Grace Brubaker in the upper picnic area at Alum Rock on October 18. When she returned the next day to check up on the kinglets she found 12 to 15 of them feeding in the oaks with a few chickadees, nuthatches, bushtits, and a Nuttall's Woodpecker.

The following lines are from Lynn Robbins and are additions to our notes on birds' sleeping habits. "A chickadee sleeps atop a post on the open porch of a friend of mine in Los Trancos Woods. Once a Black Phoebe elected to sleep on the clothesline in the corner of my open porch in Los Altos. However, I often went out on the porch at night and this frightened him off into the dark so I purposely encouraged him to find a quieter spot. I think a chickadee sometimes sleeps in one of my nesting boxes in the off season."

Field Trip Results: Elsie Hoeck, leader of the October 12 trip to Mount Madonna Park, reports a total of 34 species of birds seen by 22 species of Homo sapiens, subspecies audubonensis. Their list includes 12 Band-tailed Pigeons, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 1 Townsend's Warbler, 4 Fox Sparrows. Harriet Mundy saw 7 Black-necked Stilts and 60 White Pelicans on the November 9 Dumbarton Bridge field trip. According to leader Al Wool, the highlight of the trip to Calaveras Road and vicinity on October 26 was a partial albino Red-tailed Hawk. (This bird is undoubtedly the same one as was seen on last year's Christmas census and shown in Eric Thorsen's movies at the last meeting.) Among the 50 different birds seen were Marsh Hawk, Band-tailed Pigeon, Barn Owl, Canyon Wren, and both Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

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

EDITOR'S NOTES

"Lament of the Bald Eagle" is the heading of an article in Newsweek of July 14, 1958 in which the eventual extinction of our national bird is predicted, due to sterility produced by DDT and other insecticides used near lakes and ponds. Charles L. Broley estimates that 80% of Florida's eagles are sterile. ---J.T.

"Driving south of Ensenada, Baja California, we saw ahead of us an animal lying in the road stretched out dead. Two ravens were circling near him. We stopped and watched knowing that ravens are carrion eaters. The ravens alighted, walked around the carcass, which we recognized as a coyote. Suddenly the coyote sprang at a raven, grabbed him and carried him off into the brush."

Dr. E. B. McGregor,
Whittier Observatory 10/58

The Revised Edition of "Field Guide to Western Birds" by Roger Tory Peterson, so long awaited by birders, is rumored to come out soon. From my vantage point in Peninsula Book Shop, Palo Alto, I will let you know when the first copy comes through. ----J.T.

The California Roadside Council, main office in San Francisco, is promoting support for limitation of highway advertising in accordance with the Federal Highway Act of 1958. This Act allows a federal cost-sharing 'bonus' to states which enact adequate billboard control legislation applying to interstate highways. In the case of California this 'bonus' would amount to \$15,000,000! This offer is good only until 1961 and, therefore, concerted action on the part of all conservation groups is most necessary. Our Society will, of course, be actively engaged in furthering billboard control legislation and details will be forthcoming as to how individually we may support any proposed regulatory measures.

Western Tanager, 10/58