

The Avocet

Volume VI Number 3

March 1959

A NOTE OF THANKS

The Society wishes to thank Dr. S.C. Woodward of Menlo Park for his gift of a slide projector. This was very thoughtful and most generous; it is greatly appreciated by the Society.

---Charlotte McBride, President

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY

State and federal laws provide maximum protection for such species as the bald eagle and the white-tailed kite. A collector is forbidden to take one within our state regardless of his scientific needs. Yet within one week the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History had the displeasure of receiving one immature bald eagle and two white-tailed kites which had been shot and left where they fell. Such disregard for the welfare of vanishing species is highly alarming. One would wonder when or if such violations will stop. The answer can only be that the violations will stop when or if the people want them to.

If you are somewhat riled or just plain angry as I am about this why not make a resolution to cooperate to the fullest with California Fish and Game personnel. They are very anxious to control wildlife violations. They can't, however, be everywhere at once. But with your cooperation, it would seem so to the violator.

Should an illegal action take place in your view, do the following:

1. Write down the violator's description.
2. Write down the violator's car license number.
3. Immediately phone Fish and Game authorities giving all information pertinent to the offense, your name and address.

Remember you were the one who saw the violation. It is your responsibility to see that something is done about it -- that is, if you care.

---Vern Yadon

The Sanderling, Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society Jan. 1959

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Sat. Mar. 7	9:00 a.m.	Villa Montalvo
Tues. Mar. 10	8:00 p.m.	Morris Dailey Auditorium San Jose
Wed. Mar. 11	8:30 a.m.	Wood Acres on Skyline
Mon. Mar. 16	8:00 p.m.	Palo Alto Junior Museum
Sat. Mar. 21 through)		Audubon Convention
Tues. Mar. 24)	Asilomar
Wed. Mar. 25	8:30 a.m.	Villa Montalvo



March CalendarRegular Meeting:

Monday, March 16, at Palo Alto Junior Museum, 8:00 p.m. We will see the Sierra Club film by David Brower, "Wilderness Alps of Stehekin". This marvelous area in the Northern Cascade Mts. of Washington should be protected -- preferably with National Park status. The film is enjoying very wide distribution -- incidentally gaining many friends for the project.

Screen Tour:

Tuesday, March 10, at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College, 8:00 p.m. G. Harrison Orians of Toledo, Ohio, will present "Great Smoky Skyland". Purple mist, towering trees and sky-high ridges. The village names tell the story: Balsam, Skyland, Boone, Chimney Rock, Highlands, Lake Lure, Little Switzerland, Mount Airy, Pocahontas. One of our greatest remaining wilderness areas. Birds and other wildlife, scenic beauty, hidden wildflowers and primitive civilization of mountain folk -- an unforgettable color motion picture Screen Tour. Tickets at 90¢ are available at the door.

Field Trips:

Saturday, March 7, 9:00 a.m. to Villa Montalvo. Meet at the Villa parking lot (off Saratoga-Los Gatos Road). Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gorej (DA 5-8847).

Wednesday Morning, March 11, to Wood Acres on the Skyline Boulevard. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the shopping center near the junction of Skyline Blvd. (State Highway 5) and the La Honda-Woodside Road. Leader: Mr. Curt Dietz (DA 2-1209).

Saturday, March 21, through Tuesday, March 24, Audubon Convention at Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula. Roger Tory Peterson will be the featured speaker, and every moment is filled with a variety of planned activities. If you cannot stay more than a day, go down anyway -- it will be worth it, and the birding nearby is always a pleasure.

Wednesday Morning, March 25, to Villa Montalvo, near Saratoga. The entrance gate is on the Saratoga-Los Gatos Road, 4/10 mile from the center of Saratoga, on the west side of the road. The Villa is about one mile in from the gate. Meet at the parking lot to the right of the Villa at 8:30 a.m. Leader: Miss Emily Smith (EL 4-2494).

--- Emmanuel Taylor, Field Trip Chairman

Hi, West Coast Schooler!

We're all set! -- With dates and locations for summer of 1959.

June 14 - 20	Sequoia National Park
June 21 - 27	Mammoth Lakes
June 28 - July 4	Cambria Fines

We hope that you plan to be with us as you have been in the past, and of course we'd like to have you bring your friends. In order to let more people know about our West Coast School, we'd like to ask your help.

We will provide the supplies for you, such as bulletin board exhibit, printed publicity release for teachers' or other bulletins, and the West Coast Nature School film. For details and reservations, write a postcard to Gertrude W. Cavins, Director, San Jose State College, San Jose, California.

President's Report

Certainly it would seem logical for all Audubon Branches throughout California to give their support to the program for the protection of the California Condors. This takes more than mere words stating that we are behind such a program. The cost is \$6,000 a year -- one-half of which is paid by the National Audubon Society and the other half by the Federal Government.

This project is in our own backyard, so to speak, and yet only one branch (Golden Gate) has helped the National Audubon Society defray this expense with a yearly donation. Why? Is it too close to home?

It now looks as though the Condors were holding their own, but this help must continue if they are to increase. Let's get them into a real upswing in population. The Audubon Societies and their friends have been able to do this before, and certainly we can do it again.

Mr. William Goodall, our Pacific Coast Representative, has asked all members of the west coast societies to cooperate in the Wading Bird Survey. This survey is being made by Robert F. Allen, Sandy Sprunt, IV, and Alexander Sprunt under the direction of the Research Department of the National Audubon Society. We are asked to work as individuals and watch for all nesting activities. This information should be sent to Sandy Sprunt, Clewiston Inn, Clewiston, Florida. Forms may be obtained from the National Office in Berkeley. Mr. Edwin Pickett of the Sacramento Society asked the California Fish and Game for their help in this research, and they have promised their cooperation.

At the January 10th workshop at Mills College a great deal of interest was shown in our questionnaire that was sent to the membership last September. Mr. Goodall asked that twenty copies be sent to him, and these were sent in turn to those who were interested.

I have a report which shows we have had a drop in Junior Clubs this year. In 1956-1957 there were 27. The year 1957-1958 shows 29, but this year we have dropped to 20.

At the February Board meeting a report was given by Mr. Harley Bothwell concerning a permanent Bulletin Board at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, as suggested by Captain Nesbit. The material for the board will cost around \$100, and Mr. Bothwell has offered to construct it for us. He may need the help of a work party later on. The Board voted the money be spent and gratefully accepted Mr. Bothwell's generous offer.

A scholarship was given to the West Coast Nature School for the annual Death Valley trip, and \$10 was donated to the wildflower program of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce. This is in connection with the new park that is to be purchased in the hills near Palo Alto.

Our new identification cards will soon be a reality. These are to be worn on field trips and at meetings and should help us all to become acquainted. They are to be 2" by 3" and enclosed in a case which will fasten on a coat, etc. The name of the Society and our picture of the Avocet will be printed on the card. This still leaves room for the member's name. We have seen the cards used by the Sacramento Society, Monterey Peninsula Society and the Santa Cruz Bird Club. They were all most attractive.

A great deal of time has been spent on the proposed changes in the By-Laws, and much progress has been made. Also coming up for the same kind of planning will be a set of Working Rules.

____ Charlotte McBride

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Miss Joyleen Joy	460 North Second Street	San Jose 12, California
Mr. Henry Toonisaka	654 West Rincon Avenue	Campbell, California
Mr. Robert T. Fisher	76 Spartan City	San Jose 12, California
Mr. F. J. Freeman	16749 Hicks Road	Los Gatos, California
Master Warren Clarke	20269 Argonaut Drive	Saratoga, California

Notes from Afield

First the field trip reports. The January 28 trip to Alum Rock Park had a total of 33 species that included two birds not seen there on the Christmas count: White-throated Swift and Dipper. Leader Dorothy Smith also reports Canyon Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a Myrtle Warbler. The field trip to Chesbro and Calero Reservoirs on February 8, led by Charles and Fanny Zwaal, had the high total of 56 species. A highlight was the White-tailed Kite that harried one of the two Golden Eagles seen over the upper end of the reservoir. Other birds were Common Gallinule, 12 Wood Ducks, six Starlings.

Harriet Masson reports seeing six Short-eared Owls on January 4 between 2 and 3 p.m. hunting over the marshes near the Palo Alto garbage dump. At the yacht harbor nearby, Sid Harrison saw on January 10, during a high tide that covered parts of the paved road, two Clapper Rails, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Yellowthroat, and Osprey. A pair of Wood Ducks on Mud Lake in Portola Valley were seen by Stoner Haven on January 4. Kay McCann had six Black-necked Stilts on February 8 in the Society's bay sanctuary. The first sizable flock of Band-tailed Pigeons to be reported, about 40 of them, was seen by Joyce Todd on February 20 in Barron Park.

White-throated Sparrows are reported by several persons. The Wittgensteins' bird, seen at their Saratoga feeding tray during November and December, was found to be still present when they arrived home in mid-February from a trip to South America. Catherine Lintot of Los Gatos has had a White-throat coming to her feeder since December 23, and another resident of Los Gatos, Alberta Edell, reports having an adult bird through most of January. It was last seen on January 20; on February 18 another, duller bird appeared. Miss Edell also has had an adult male Black-headed Grosbeak coming daily to her feed tray since December 21.

Miss Wilma Harris' fourth grade Audubon Junior Club at Parkway School near Santa Clara has enjoyed watching a flock of 25-30 Water Pipits feeding on the school lawn during February. Once they saw a Red-winged Blackbird on the lawn.

Vasona Reservoir in Los Gatos is evidently a good location for heron-watching. Catherine Lintott observed at least 20 Common Egrets, 2 or 3 Snowy Egrets, and an occasional Great Blue Heron feeding there during December and January. Emily Smith reports a Green Heron there on December 3 and at least 15 Black-crowned Night Herons roost in sycamores that still stand in the reservoir.

Bob Wood "send in" several reports: December 28, Long-billed Marsh Wren and Common Gallinule at the pond across Portola Road from Searsville Lake, six Whistling Swans at Crystal Springs Reservoir (seen both earlier and later by other observers); January 1, at least 500 Killdeer on a school athletic field in Half Moon Bay (each time a Killdeer picked up a worm it was pursued by a Ring-billed Gull, usually with success); January 5, Red-shouldered Hawk, and January 14 a Chipmunk, both in Portola Valley; January 26, nine Common Egrets perched atop live oaks in the meadows adjacent to Page Mill Road just west of El Camino (also seen by other persons around the same time).

Starlings seem to be getting on more bird-lists this winter than in previous years. On the December 21 Christmas Census the Alvisosector had 103 while the Alum Rock sector saw seven. Bob Wood saw several at Moss Beach on January 1 and on January 31 Fanny Zwaal and others saw 200-plus in a field near Calero Reservoir where six were seen by the February 8 field trip.

This is also a good Varied Thrush year, if the numbers of dead individuals are any indication. At least half a dozen have been brought into the Palo Alto Junior Museum and several others have been found personally. Most have been window casualties, but several were found beside the road and one was picked up on the ground in a redwood forest. A happier record is the bird I watched on my lawn devouring one of those too-common gray slugs.

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

Editor's Notes

Trees are making headlines these days. Groups in San Bruno, Sausalito, New York City have fought to save their magnificent mature trees from "progress" - and have usually won. Palo Alto has an especially fine planting program, which has attracted attention throughout the state. The city is searching, through its Area Beautification Committee, for fine old trees in the older parts of town. (A tremendous Colorado spruce was recently moved from my neighbor's land to the Palo Alto City Hall grounds - a three-day struggle, climaxed with supporting stakes, wires, vitamins, and considerable faith on the part of everybody concerned.---J.T.)

---Elinor V. Cogswell,
Palo Alto Times, 12/11/58

A bold plan to save Santa Clara County's valuable farm land has been unveiled by county staff planners. In a slim brochure entitled

"Green Gold", the writers foresaw legislated conservation of agricultural open space as a way to set aside permanent agrarian reserves which won't be taxed into subdivision use. "The farmer", the staff study asserts, "retains incentive to manage his land and keep it in a high degree of productivity. The public at large gains the assurance of open space and a continuing food supply." "These orchards...are some of the nation's finest. There are deep alluvial soil built up over many thousands of years. We have traded much of this heritage of fertile acres for the asphalt-covered acres of urban sprawl. But fortunately we still have vast acreages of fine farms and orchards which could serve our population both as a source of food and as breathing space." County Planner Karl Belser said the valley already has 50,000 acres under greenbelt zoning, which is a sort of holding action. He said threatened farm land may be preserved by the federal government as it has set aside national parks and forests.

---Palo Alto Times, 12/23/58

California has more wild burros roaming its great Southern Desert than any other state. They are protected by the state, which has established a sanctuary for them. The first ones came here with the Spanish Conquistadores, and either broke loose or were turned free. Others escaped from more recent desert prospectors. A permit from the State Department of Agriculture will allow you to capture one as a pet or pack animal, but only six or so have been taken, so wild and fleet are the little animals.

--- Jerry Harrell,
Palo Alto Times, 1/59

I have a lavish brochure on Caribbean Wildlife Tours, endorsed by the Froward Audubon Society, leaving from Miami, Florida on KLM Airlines through April 30. If our travel-minded members would like to see a Black-throated Mango Hummingbird, a Smooth-billed Ani, or a White-shouldered Water Tyrant, let me know. It sounds fascinating - and expensive!

---J.T.

Trumpeter Swans have successfully nested for the first time at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon. Discovery of the rarest and largest of North American waterfowl with a pair of cygnets raised on the vast 14,000-acre Malheur Lake marsh came as a result of an airplane survey. There are now some 735 birds in the United States - the highest number since special conservation efforts were established 30 years ago.

---Audubon Warbler (Oregon) 11/58

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