

The Avocet

Volume VI Number 11

December, 1959

President's Message

We wish to welcome the new Warden of the Salt Marsh Bird Refuge, Mr. John McMahon, and to thank John Larson, our former Warden, who has been transferred to Richardson Bay. Mr. McMahon is a 22 year old college student from San Francisco. He patrols on weekends, Wednesdays, and at irregular times the rest of the week.

Thanks are due also to Bob Wood, who has served the Society in several capacities, for accepting the Chairmanship of the Bulletin Board Committee. Any material, either pictures or printed matter, should be sent to him.

At the last Board meeting, a Budget Committee was appointed, consisting of Miss Lola Eriksen, Dr. H.T. Harvey and Mrs. Chas. Zwaal.

The Society has been presented with a problem concerning field trips, and the Board has decided that future policy shall be as follows:

(1) All individuals are welcome to our field trips, but organized groups must make arrangements with the Field Trip Chairman for specially arranged trips.

(2) Children accompanied by their parents are always welcome. However, all youth groups, Scouts, Campfire Girls, school and religious groups must contact either our Educational Committee or the Field Trip Chairman, and arrangements will be made for a properly conducted trip.

This will make for a more efficient and enjoyable outing and will enable the leader to prepare properly for the trip. We need more leaders for our trips. There may be those among the membership who could volunteer to lead an occasional trip, and there may be those who enjoy helping our youth groups. Certainly, we all recognize that the future of our wildlife and its habitat lie to a great extent in the hands of our young people. Please get in touch with Mr. Emmanuel Taylor, 14311 Quito Road, Saratoga (Franklin 8-3219), Field Trip Chairman, or with Mr. and Mrs. Francis Goraj, Educational Committee, 675 Florales Drive, Palo Alto (Davenport 5-8847).

--Charlotte McBride,
President

Coming Events at a Glance

Sun. Dec. 6	9:00 A.M.	Los Banos Game Refuge
Wed. Dec. 9	8:30 A.M.	Searsville Lake
Sun. Dec. 20	9:00 A.M.	Calaveras Reservoir
Sun. Jan. 3	7:30 A.M.	Christmas Bird Count



December Calendar

No regular meeting this month because of Christmas and the Christmas Bird Count very early in January.

Field Trips:

Sunday, December 6. We join with the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society and the Santa Cruz Bird Club in a visit to the Los Banos Game Refuge. Meet at Tiny's restaurant in Los Banos at 9:00 A.M. for breakfast and leave for the refuge at 10:00 A.M. Bring lunch. For more information call Emmanuel Taylor (FR 8-3219).

Wednesday Morning, December 9, to Searsville Lake, west of the Stanford University campus. Meet at 8:30 A.M. at entrance gate, near junction of the Sandhill and Portola roads. The entrance fee is 25 cents. Leaders: Mrs. Stanley C. Hall and Mrs. Virginia Bothwell (DA 2-1209).

Sunday, December 20, to Calaveras Reservoir area. Meet at 9:00 A.M. at Calaveras Road and Oakland Highway 17 in Milpitas. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wool (AM 2-2577).

Sunday, January 3. Annual Christmas Bird Count. Meeting place: East San Jose, at the home of Frances and Richard Mewaldt, 4150 Golf Drive (CL 8-7491). Everyone be there at 7:30 A.M. Bring lunch. Reconvene at 4:30 P.M. SHARP at Mewaldts'. Refreshments will be served during the tally.

Count Area: Same as in past years - a circular area, 15 miles in diameter. The center is northeast of city limits at junction of Mabury Road 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 Avenue, inside this sector.
- C. Evergreen Sector, bounded by Bayshore Highway, Alum Rock Avenue, and Mt. Hamilton Road. Mt. Hamilton Road inside this sector.
- D. Alum Rock Sector, bounded on south and west by Mt. Hamilton Road, Alum Rock Avenue, and Bayshore Highway; on north by Capitol Avenue and Sierra Road. Alum Rock Avenue, Bayshore Highway and Oakland Highway, and Capitol Avenue are all inside this sector.
- E. Calaveras Sector, bounded by Sierra Road, Capital Avenue, and old Oakland Highway. Sierra Road and Oakland Highway inside this sector.

Sector Leaders:

- A. (Alviso) Dr. Henry Weston, 349 N. Richlee Drive, Campbell
(ES 7-6384).
- B. (Southwest) Mrs. Angelina Snow, 21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos
(EL 4-1811), Mrs. Fannie Zwaal, 478 Clifton Avenue, San Jose 28
(CY 2-2060).
- C. (Evergreen) Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor, 14311 Quito Road,
Saratoga (FR 8-3219).
- D. (Alum Rock) Mrs. Grace Brubaker, 191 Mountain View Avenue, San
Jose (CL 8-2289).
- E. (Calaveras) Albert J. Wool, Route 2, Box 728, San Jose
(AM 2-2577).

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 (CL 8-7491).

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 probable 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 (FR 8-3219)

New Members

Mr. E.A. Albertson	Box 61	Palo Alto
Mrs. Therese P. Atwater	1836 Bryant	Palo Alto
Miss Vera E. Jackson	735 Lotus Street	Saratoga

--Mrs. Irving Snow, Membership
Chairman

Bird-Watchers - Important Notice

Southeast Arizona - the Chiricahua Mountains - has long been known among bird lovers as one of North America's most favored areas, perhaps the most favored. It is being made available to almost any age and condition of bird-watcher because of an unusual association with the Southwest Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History. You can camp or have cottage accommodations with private toilet and shower. You can saunter and observe from fixed positions or go far afield, as you desire. The area is eminently suitable for all categories of birders.

Besides, it is migration time - and, in the spring, nesting time.

The region is noted, too, for plants, animals, climate and history.

I believe you have members who would appreciate having the opportunities outlined in the enclosed brochure * brought to their attention.

Cordially yours,

Joseph C. Wampler
Box 45, Berkeley, California
(Wampler Trail Trips)

* Your editor has these and can give details. Phone J. Todd at
DA 2-1787

Notes from Afield

Curt Dietz reports that the Wednesday morning field trip to Stanford on October 28 saw a total of 26 different birds. They saw the usual permanent residents - Scrub Jay, California Quail, Meadow-lark, Brewer's Blackbird, Acorn Woodpecker, etc, as well as several winter visitors - Golden- and White-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Pine Siskin, and Audubon's Warbler. An interesting sidelight was the visit to Carnegie Institute's experimental gardens.

From Joyce Todd on Roble Ridge in Barron Park come two observations. On November 1 she watched a male Audubon's Warbler taking sap repeatedly from new holes in a tamarisk tree made by a Red-breasted Sapsucker. When the latter checked its holes later the same day, it found the pickings slim. On the 14th a dozen Cedar Waxwings and several Robins bathed and drank at her lawn sprinkler.

Have you noticed how some birds swallow a berry whole, while othersbirds extract the seeds and discard the pulp? At a cotoneaster in my yard it is interesting to observe their different actions. The Mockingbird and Hermit Thrush are swallows, the Golden-crowned Sparrow and Black-headed Grosbeak (a late one on November 8) are nibblers, and the Robins are neither. They just pick the berries and let 'em drop.

-- Robert C. Wood
1007 Los Trancos Rd.,
Menlo Park
UL 1-1237

Editor's Notes

The new record A Field Guide to Bird Songs is fun to listen to. Although it is designed to accompany Peterson's Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America, quite a number of the birds recorded can be heard here in the West. The quality of the recording is such that the bird seems about to fly into view from the inside of your loudspeaker.

-- J.T.

Don't forget to use for Christmas your gift booklet from National Audubon Society Service Department. They list handsome items for all ages in a wide price range. Especially attractive are the bird prints and ceramic water birds. -- J.T.

Massachusetts owners of cultivated blueberry crops - annually suffering 25% loss from birds - are now employing a device to foil the birds said to be 100% effective.

A plywood hawk is suspended on a rope pulley, connected to four 12-foot poles at the corner of each plot. The hawk is kept circling the plot during the usual feeding periods, his motion controlled by a $\frac{1}{2}$ h.p. motor.

-- Christian Science Monitor 11/59

(A few real, live, protected hawks might do the job as well!--J.T.)

The Wandering Albatross, by Wm. Jameson is a new little book about the "greatest seabird of them all". Let us hope the Navy can be stopped in its plan to wipe out an entire nesting ground of albatross at Midway. (See Nov.-Dec. Audubon Magazine - pp.248-9). Man, as a supposedly intelligent creature, should be able to devise some solution to his problems that does not involve the destruction of life whose habits were formed thousands of years before we came along to disrupt them. Apparently the albatross will not move to artificially established nesting grounds. -- J.T.

JUSTICE DOUGLAS RAPS OVER-GRAZING

U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas rapped over-grazing after a recent tour through the upper reaches of the Wind River primitive area in Wyoming. "That country should be made a wilderness area," the world traveler and writer commented. "What's happening there is really tragic. It is very over-grazed. Sheep and cattle should be kept out. Stock is just ruining the upper ridges." He then said there wasn't enough grass in some sections of the mountains

to feed the party's horses for one night. "We're going to have a desert if this keeps up," Justice Douglas declared. "I've seen it happen before," he added in reference to parts of the Middle East where he has traveled extensively. "It would take 10,000 years for it to come back."

-- Conservation News
October 15, 1959