

# The Avocet

Volume VII

April, 1960

## John O. Larson - Audubon Warden

For at least six months of the year John and Jean Larson can enjoy all the advantages of wilderness life with none of the discomforts. Larson, an employee of the National Audubon Society, and his family are winter residents on the Richardson Bay bird refuge, one of the beauty spots of Marin. Their home is the bright yellow, turreted Victorian showplace which was moved last year from Strawberry Point to its present site on the Tiburon Highway, where it stands as a memorial to ornithologist Donald Dickey.

John Larson, a vigorous man who speaks with the easy drawl of his native Texas, acquired this enviable assignment after a lifetime of service in the cause of conservation. He inherited the job of Audubon Society warden from his father who, until his death at 82, held a similar post at the Green Island bird sanctuary on the southernmost tip of Texas. The Larsons still maintain a home at Harlingen, Texas, where they were childhood sweethearts. From there, it is 40 miles by car and four more by boat to Green Island, where the Larsons stay for three months each summer while he protects the waterfowl from molesters.

For the past four winters Larson has hitched his 14-foot boat behind the family station wagon to make the long drive to the Bay Area. He reaches here with his family just before the migratory birds arrive on their flight south, and remains until spring, when the birds return to the north.

For three years the Audubon warden was assigned principally to bird sanctuaries in the southern end of San Francisco Bay. This year, however, he will remain at Tiburon both to protect the birds and to do an educational job for the Marin Conservation League, which led the successful campaign to preserve the wildlife refuge.

In return for rent-free quarters in the beautifully restored Donald Dickey house, the Larsons are hosts to hundreds of school children who tour the bird sanctuary each week. There they can see many varieties of waterfowl in a natural setting, and learn about the importance of conservation in an age of burgeoning population.

---Claire Leeds, San Francisco  
(reprinted in Sacramento  
Observer, 3/60)

### Coming Events at a Glance

Sun. Apr. 3	9:00 A.M.	Alum Rock Park
Sat. Apr. 9	8:30 A.M.	Montalvo
Mon. Apr. 11	8:00 P.M.	Los Gatos Art Assoc. Bldg.
Wed. Apr. 13	8:30 A.M.	Morshead Estate
Sun. Apr. 17	9:00 A.M.	Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam
Wed. Apr. 27	8:30 A.M.	Stevens Creek Canyon
Wed. May 4	8:30 A.M.	Halls Valley and Smith Creek



April CalendarRegular Meeting:

Monday, April 11, Los Gatos Art Association Building, 8:00 P.M.  
Robert Rowe, a Stanford student, will present color slides he took in Australia and New Zealand. The Art Association Building is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile off the Saratoga-Los Gatos Highway. Turn at fire station.

Field Trips:

Sunday, April 3, to Alum Rock Park east of San Jose at the end of Alum Rock Avenue. Meet at the first picnic ground on Penitencia Creek Road at 9:00 A.M. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Pillow.

Saturday, April 9, Montalvo nature trail work party. Meet at 8:30 AM at the parking lot to the right of the Villa. Bring work clothes, shovels and mattocks. Leader: Frank Goraj (Da 5-8847).

Wednesday Morning, April 13, to the Morshead Estate in Portola Valley. Meet at 8:30 A.M. at the Portola Valley Shopping Center. Leaders: Rear Admiral and Mrs. Charles D. Williams (Da 3-0787).

Sunday, April 17, to Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam on the San Francisco Watershed. We are able to visit this beautiful area through the courtesy of Mr. John E. O'Marie of the San Francisco Water Company. Meet at the Los Fulgas Water Temple on Canada Road about 5 miles north of Woodside at 9:00 A.M. Bring lunch. Leader: Mark Massie.

Wednesday Morning, April 27, to Stevens Creek Canyon, in foothills of Santa Cruz Mts., southwest of Cupertino. Meet at 8:30 A.M. in parking area at Stevens Creek Reservoir. Leaders: Eve Case (Ch 3-2467) and Connie Hinds (Yo 8-4361).

Wednesday, May 4, to Halls Valley and Smith Creek, in Mt. Hamilton Range. Meet in Halls Valley at Junction of Mt. Hamilton Road and Quimby Road. Leaders: Edith Wirtanen (Cl 8-9061) and Ruth Burmester Krohncke.

New Members

We welcome nine new members this month. We hope to see you soon at meetings and field trips.

Mrs. Melville H. Hodge, Jr., 12505 Woodside Court, Saratoga  
 Mrs. James L. Weaver P.O. Box 337, Palo Alto  
 Mrs. Walter T. Baker 72 Heather Drive, Atherton  
 Mr. Lloyd N. Case 2586 Hamstead Road, Santa Clara  
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip Landsdale 584 Mountain Home Rd., Woodside  
 Mr. John A. Theakston 296 North Fifth St., San Jose

--- Mrs. Irving Snow  
 Membership Chairman

Editor's Notes

Bob Wood's bird observations will appear next month, augmented by what he sees while snowshoeing this week around Crater Lake, Oregon. Please collect for him any pictures, announcements, clippings, etc. that you feel would look well in our new bulletin board at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. Such material may be left for him at the P. A. Junior Museum. It can be loaned and returned, if necessary. Thank you!

---J.T.

The Richardson Bay Wildlife Refuge has a more than usually curious cat. He jumped on the back of a feeding Pintail who promptly headed for sea, leaving the cat to turn back, splashing as best he could and land!

---Redwood Log 2/60

State Senator Fred Farr will introduce a bill in the 1960 Legislature for a special appropriation to buy LITTLE SUR for a State Park. The Senator says he does not like special appropriations, but, because of the cutbacks in state tidelands funds for state park acquisition, there is only \$450,000 available for land purchase in Monterey County and this is earmarked for buying Salinas River Beach and the enlargement of Big Sur State Park. Little Sur not only includes the beach, but the forested banks of the stream for several miles inland.

---California Thrasher (Paso Robles)  
 2-3/60

The first Eskimo Curlew that has been seen since 1945 was observed closely between April 5 and April 26, 1959 at Galveston Island, Texas. The bird was reported last October in the Auk. He was studied intensively with a 30 x telescope at a range of as little as 200 yards, and was compared with Long-billed Curlews and Whimbrels feeding in the same field.

---Audubon Warbler  
 Oregon, 3/60

The Post Office Department's rural letter carriers long have been of value to wildlife agencies. Because of a great interest in the outdoors, letter carriers have collected concrete scientific information by tabulating roadside wildlife counts, observing movements

of birds and mammals, and, on occasion, reporting game and fish law violations. The National Rural Letter Carrier, published weekly in Washington, D.C., is carrying information about National Wildlife Week.

---Conservation News,  
March 1, 1960

"Obsessed with the idea of his own completeness because of his technologies, man does not admit that by violating and adversely disturbing the processes of nature he will suffer from the consequences. Civilized man is not the child of the earth that he once was; far too many human beings today do not come in contact with the soil and the raw products of the soil."

---Ernest Swift, Exec. Dir.,  
National Wildlife Fed.

Pack trips this summer through wilderness country in Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming are being offered by Don Clauser in cooperation with the Wilderness Society. Call the Editor (DA 2-1787) for more information.

---J.T.

The Marin Conservation League is concerned with the establishment of The Golden Gate Beach State Park which will preserve the majestic, scenic, natural and historic entrance to Marin County and to the entire Bay Area. The region should be saved in its natural state because of its scenic, geologic, historic and recreational value. The area extends on both sides of the Golden Gate. On the Marin side, it comprises Forts Cronkhite, Barry and Baker, parts of which have already been used for recreation by permission of the military authorities. On the San Francisco side, it includes a ribbon of shoreline extending from the Marina to Sutro's. The Governor's budget for 1960-61 includes \$250,000 for initial acquisition of the region on both sides of the Bay. All told, the proposed park would cover 40,000 acres, with more than ten miles of ocean and bay frontage.

---J.T.

Bird nests are sometimes found in Hawaii made from threads of spun volcano glass which birds pluck from droplets.

---P.A. Times, March

Guatemala has taken the lead among the countries of Central America in conservation by the recent preservation of an important aquatic habitat--Lake Atitlan. The action was reported at the 1959 American Ornithologists Union meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. This conservation project also assures protection for all waterfowl on the lake including the Giant Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus gigas*) which occurs nowhere else.

---Nature Conservancy News  
2/60

Swimming will be safer at Stevens Creek lake when 44 acres of shore line become part of the Santa Clara County park system, county parks director Bob Amyx has reported. His statement was made to the board of supervisors who voted to condemn the property. The acquisition will provide more gradual slopes for swimmers, Amyx said, than

those now available on the other public lands. All told, the park covers 450 acres and the county has the right to use the 100-acre reservoir and its fringes under agreement with the Santa Clara Valley water conservation district.

---P.A. Times, 2/25/60

At the moment, Senator Thomas Kuchel, who is in the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and therefore directly concerned with the Wilderness Bill, is supporting the bill more vigorously than Senator Clair Engle, who says (letter of 3/4/60), "While I favor the basic objectives of this legislation, I am concerned about some of the specific provisions and am hopeful that improvements will be adopted." Let us hope there is something left of the bill.

---J.T.

Thank you, Carole Brost, for your quick and effective response to our March Avocet plea to help save the virgin redwood forest adjoining Big Basin State Park, and including Berry Creek Falls. Miss Brost is an Audubon member and loves Sunset Trail, which crosses the proposed area of desecration. She is also State Secretary of the California Young Republicans. Clark Bradley, our 28th District Assemblyman replied to her letter on 3/4: "Senator Dolwig has agreed to put in a bill to try to get this property for the State Park Department. You may rest assured that it will have our wholehearted support." According to the Palo Alto Times, 3/22/60, the Senate Finance Committee approved on that day 2½ million dollars for special state park work at Squaw Valley and "to buy land in the heart of Big Basin Redwood Grove on Waddell Creek". Senator Donald L. Grunsky (R-Watsonville), who placed the additional item before the committee, said it could be used as a stop-gap measure to keep the redwoods in the area from being destroyed by planned logging operations. Should the million dollars be approved, however, the land would be purchased outright from the private owners there. More than 1,000 acres are involved. We should write follow-up letters urging outright purchase to:

Senator Richard J. Dolwig  
Senate Chambers  
State Capitol  
Sacramento 14, Calif.

Assemblyman Clark L. Bradley  
4148 State Capitol  
Sacramento 14, Calif.

---J.T.

The controversy over the ultimate disposition of Stanford University's 9,000 acre holdings adjacent to Palo Alto has aroused very strong feelings indeed. If those lovely hills could be scraped off and dumped to fill the low bay lands, more industry could be accommodated more cheaply. The theme song is, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills - whence cometh my REVENUE".

---J.T.

THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
1959 - 1960

- President - Mrs. John L. McBride (WH 8-2335)  
25441 Crescent Lane  
Los Altos
- Vice-President - Dr. H. T. Harvey (CH 3-6956)  
716 Garner Court  
Santa Clara
- Secretary - Miss Lola Erickson (CY 7-3086)  
95 Duane Street, Apt. 3  
San Jose 10
- Treasurer - Mrs. Charles J. Zwaal (CY 2-2060)  
478 Clifton Ave.,  
San Jose 28
- Field Trip Chairman - Mr. Emmanuel Taylor (FR 8-3219)  
14311 Quito Road  
Saratoga
- Membership Chairmen:  
Northern: Mrs. R. Wesley Wright (DA 3-3809)  
540 Fletcher Dr.  
Atherton  
Southern: Mrs. Irving Snow (EL 4-1811)  
21441 Roaring Water Way  
Los Gatos

Pacific Coast Office  
National Audubon Society  
2426 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Local meetings are held on the second Monday evenings of the month at 8 p.m. at various locations.

In general weekend field trips are held on the first and third weekends in the month either Saturday or Sunday.

Usually the week-day field trips are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. and are usually half day trips.

Our publication is the Avocet, price \$1.00 per year. It appears monthly, except for the summer when there is only one issue published.