

# The Avocet

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## The Conservation Reserve U. S. Department of Agriculture

An important part of the Nation's normal farm plant no longer produces burdensome and costly surplus crops. This land is in the Conservation Reserve. It is being protected by grass, trees, or wildlife plantings, or is being used to conserve water. The Conservation Reserve stores land and its productivity, instead of storing surplus products. It stops farm surpluses at the source by enabling farmers to reduce voluntarily the number of acres in production. Through this program, the Nation's agricultural plant will be reduced in 1960 by approximately 28 million acres, or about 6 percent of the Nation's cropland. The Conservation Reserve is a program in which a farmer voluntarily signs a contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to retire cropland from production and devote it to conservation uses for 3 to 10 years. In turn, the Department makes an annual rental payment to the farmer and pays part of the cost of establishing the agreed-upon conservation use on the land. During the life of the contract no crop is harvested from land in the Conservation Reserve. The land is not grazed. More than half of all cropland in the 1960 Conservation Reserve Program is in the 10 Great Plains States, heart of the Nation's serious wheat surplus problem. Here, along with the Department's regular soil and water conservation programs, the Reserve is helping to stabilize agriculture in a region beset by recurring, disastrous droughts. Much Great Plains cropland subject to severe wind erosion is being returned to grass. Land formerly cropped but now in grass or tree cover feeds and shelters wildlife. Land in Conservation Reserve cover is protected from erosion and other damage. The cover (together with more than 6,000 ponds built under the Conservation Reserve) increases the amount of water that soaks into the land. This reduces run-off, contributes to flood prevention and steady stream flow, and replenishes the water table.

---U. S. Department of Agriculture, Jan. 1960

### Coming Events at a Glance

Wed. May 4	9:00 a.m.	Halls Valley and Smith Creek
Mon. May 9	8:00 p.m.	Palo Alto Jr. Museum
Sat. May 14	9:00 a.m.	Davenport
Wed. May 25	8:30 a.m.	Castle Rock Ridge
Sun. May 29	9:00 a.m.	Point Lobos State Park



May CalendarRegular Meeting:

Monday, May 9 at 8:00 p.m. in the Palo Alto Jr. Museum, Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Dr. Eliot Blackwelder, Professor Emeritus of Geology, Stanford University, will lecture on "Geology for Birdwatchers". He will help us understand the earth changes that have created our environment and that of the wildlife we love to observe.

Field Trips:

Wednesday, May 4, to Halls Valley and Smith Creek, in Mt. Hamilton Range. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Halls Valley, at junction of Mt. Hamilton Rd. and Quimby Rd. Bring lunch because this will be an all-day trip - not just a morning trip which is customary on Wednesdays. Leaders: Edith Wirtanen (CL 8-9061) and Ruth Burmester Krohncke.

Saturday, May 14. A trip to Rancho del Oso (Hoover Ranch), Davenport, California. Meet at Waddell Beach, Highway 1 near Santa Cruz-San Mateo County line at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Be prepared for hiking.

Wednesday Morning, May 25, to Castle Rock Ridge in Santa Cruz Mountains. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Saratoga Gap, at junction of Saratoga-Big Basin Road and Skyline Blvd. (Highways 9 and 5). Leader: Roberta Wright (DA 3-3809).

Sunday, May 29, to Point Lobos State Reserve Park, 1 mile south of Carmel on Highway 1. Meet at the entrance to the park at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor (Tel: FR 8-3219).

Flower Show Benefits Northern  
Coast Range Preserve

Plans are well on their way for another beautiful spring flower show, to be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L.H. Price, 260 Oak Grove Ave., Atherton. It will be open to the public Friday, May 20, Saturday May 21, Sunday May 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 9 p.m. The show is sponsored by the Garden Club of Palo Alto. The proceeds from the show are to be given to the "Nature Conservancy", to be applied to purchase of the Northern Coast Range Preserve (Eel River). The donation price of each ticket is \$2.00, children under twelve, \$.50. There will be available post card announcements we hope you will send to friends to interest them in the show.

---Harriet Mundy  
757 Tennyson St.,  
Palo Alto (DA 5-1192)

New Members

We extend a cordial welcome to Mr. and Mrs. C. I. Van De Vere of 12321 Woodside Drive, Saratoga, California.

---Angelina W. Snow  
Membership Chairman

1960 Audubon Scholarships  
Awarded from Screen Tour Funds

Audubon Scholarships to the West Coast School of Nature Study were issued to the following:

Hashimoto, Fusi Violet, a Junior at S.J.S.C., a graduate of the Monterey High School. She is studying to obtain a General Elementary credential, and is working part-time to help pay her way through college. An honor student.

Takaura, Naoko, a Junior, Nursing and Home Economics major. She is a graduate from the Tokyo Woman's Christian College and is here at San Jose as an Exchange student. She plans to be a missionary nurse.

Clement, Robert, a Senior with a major in life sciences. He plans to teach in high school. He graduated from the Santa Cruz High School. Has a good scholastic record.

Larson, Mrs. Gloria, a Sophomore working toward a General Elementary Teaching credential. According to instructors who had known her in class, an outstanding person.

The Audubon Camp Scholarship was awarded to Mrs. Charles Scull, 745 La Para, Palo Alto - an outstanding elementary school teacher. (I have been with her on Sierra Club hikes and was as pleased as her students would be the next day with the bits of nature she gathered for teaching purposes.---J.T.).

---Mrs. Eva McCrae  
Scholarship Committee

National Audubon Convention  
March, 1961, Asilomar

Enclosed you will find an announcement concerning next Spring's convention in Pacific Grove. This priority request for reservation involves no money. Since last year's session was oversubscribed, sending in the bland now gives you first chance next year. Let's not put it off!

---J.T.

Field Trip Reports

I have always felt, along with many other members, that it would be fun to read more detailed field trip reports. Probably there can never be enough room for details of all trips in a given month, but whenever a leader has the enthusiasm and the time to write what the group saw, he or she should certainly be encouraged! Thank you, Kay McCann and Mark Massie, for the following pictures of Spring 1960:

Thirty-nine hardy Audubon members and friends met at Duveneck's Hidden Villa Ranch for a field trip on Sunday, March 27. The weather was cool, and intermittent rain did not succeed in soaking anyone. It was scarcely noticed in the wooded areas.

The group split into three sections. One was led by Mr. Frank Duveneck who showed the grounds of his ranch and his unusual plantings from all over the world. A second section took a more strenuous hike over the mountain and back by the creek bed. A third group walked up the creek bed to the mountain hike cutoff.

Among the interesting things seen were many salamanders out for a spring hike, too. We saw two Black Phoebe nests on barns. There were many strange mushrooms, lichens and liver worts to study due to the dampness. The following wild flowers were seen: Falso Solomon Seal, Star-flowered Solomon Seal, Buttercup, Sessile, Trillium, Hound's Tongue, Indian Warrior, Toothwort, Filaree, Speedwell, Gooseberry and Mission Bells.

---Mrs. W. R. McCann

On Easter Sunday, April 17, forty-seven members and friends met at Las Pulgas Water Temple to take a trip into Pilarcitas Reservoir and Stone Dam on the San Francisco Water Company's property - as guests of Mr. John E. O'Marie of that company. The day was a mild, sunny one, nearly windless, except in a few spots.

After several hours of driving and some hiking in the watershed area, we had a picnic lunch near a small lake and drove on to Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam where we spent two pleasant hours in a wooded and unspoiled area.

One highlight of the trip was the discovery of a Band-tailed Pigeon's nest with a downy young in it, plainly seen from the road. Also in the wooded area many winter wrens were heard singing. Thirty-nine species of birds were counted in all.

Among the profusion of lovely spring flowers in bloom were the large areas of Bleeding Hearts, Romanzoffia, Fringecups, and Woodland Satr at Stone Dam. Another rarity seen on the way was Orabanche or Cancer-root with its single blue tiny flower. Some other interesting species of flowers were Wind Poppy, Stone Crop, Purple Sanicle, Wild Valerian, Blue Larkspur, Blue Wild Iris, Blue-eyed Grass, Bird's Eye Gilia, Blue Dicks, Chia, Zygadine, Mission Bells, Bee-plant, White Forget-me-not, Pitcher Sage, Columbine, Meadow Rue, Yellow Violet,

Bitter Cress, Indian Warrior and Hound's Tongue.

Some of us, under Miss Emily Smith's tutelage, studied the turret spider's nest and some intriguing mosses and liverworts, all on a cliff.

---Mark Massie

### Notes From Afield

Records of spring arrivals are few and far between this year. Bob Row has supplied the majority of them: at Searsville Lake a Black-headed Grosbeak on April 2, Tree Swallow on the 6th, two Myrtle Warblers on the 9th, a Solitary Vireo on the 16th; on San-hill Road in the same area a Western Kingbird on the 6th. He also had a Caspian Tern at the lake on the 9th. He is compiling bird records of the Searsville - Jasper Ridge area and would appreciate any you may have. His address is 727-A Waverley, Palo Alto.

Emmanuel Taylor saw a Calliope Hummingbird at his home in Saratoga on February 27. It was attacked and struck on the head by an Anna's Hummingbird, giving an opportunity to compare the size of the two birds. A male Rufous Hummingbird had a fatal encounter with a window at the Williams' place on Jasper Ridge in late March. Bob Wood's first Western Flycatcher was heard on April 6 at Los Trancos Woods. A pair nesting in a honeysuckle on a retaining wall at his hom had two eggs on the 23rd. Bullock's Orioles were recorded in San Jose on March 19 at Grace Brubaker's and on the 21st in Santa Clara by Evelyn Case. Fanny Zwaal had her usual Hooded Oriole on the 26th. A male, it visited the abutilon at her home in San Jose. Better plant your abutilon now so you will have orioles next year!

Earl Albertson writes that he saw a Burrowing Owl on March 6 along the road to the Palo Alto yacht harbor, opposit the golf course. He also reports seeing thousands of Sooty Shearwaters from several points between Monterey and Point Lobos State Park on April 16th. The following day from Moss Landing he estimated they were moving past at the rate of 50 birds per second.

A flock of 400 to 500 Cedar Waxwings, some of which alighted to feed on sycamore seeds, was observed by Emanuel Taylor on January 10th in Saratoga. Mrs. Taylor saw a Slate-colored Junco on February 20th in Saratoga. Also reported were a pair of courting White-tailed Kites at Chesbro Dam and 70 Starlings at Calavero Dam, both on February 28.

The Turners' field trip to Searsville Lake on February 21 saw a total of 45 different birds, among them being Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Thirty-one birds were listed by the Felt Lake trip on February 24, led by Virginia Bothwell. Three Common Snipe, White-throated Swift, and Say's Phoebe were among those seen. At Alviso on March 6 Harriet Mundy's group saw ten species of shorebirds, including Black-bellied Plover, Long-billed Curlew, and Marbled Godwit. Their total list was 35.

On March 16 Catherine Lintott led a field trip to Vasona Reservoir, recording 47 species. They had a Lewis' Woodpecker, four Black-crowned Night Herons, two Golden-crowned Kinglets, and, at the leader's residence, a White-throated Sparrow. Kay McCann's March 23

Duveneck Ranch trip found 16 different birds that included Warbling Vireo, Western Flycatcher, and two nesting Black Phoebes. In the two hours before a deluge of rain finished birding, the March 30th field trip to the Palo Alto yacht harbor listed 42 species. Among them Harriet Mundy reports three herons, seven ducks, two hawks, two owls (Burrowing and Short-eared), a Clapper Rail, ten shorebirds, four gulls and terns, and three swallows. She adds that "in the past few trips 46 water, marsh, and shore birds and 32 species of land birds have been observed within one half mile of the yacht harbor". While you are observing the varied birds in that area, take time to see the Society's new bulletin board, built by Harley Bothwell, at the edge of the duck pond.

Bernice and William Pillow report a total of 34 species seen on their field trip to Alum Rock Park on April 3. Their list included White-throated Swift, Western Flycatcher, Rough-winged Swallow, Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned, Myrtle, Audubon's, and Wilson's Warblers, Hooded and Bullock's Orioles, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. The April 17th trip to Crustal Springs Reservoir and Pilarcitos Lake, led by Kay McCann, saw Winter Wren, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bufflehead, Eared Grebe Grebe, and a nesting Band-tailed Pigeon with one young, and 34 other different birds.

---Robert Wood  
1007 Los Trancos Road  
Menlo Park  
(UL 1-1237)

\*\* NO EDITOR'S NOTES THIS MONTH - (Please watch for your contributions next time!).

---J.T.