

The Avocet

Volume VIII Number 10

December, 1961

President's Christmas Message

Christmas is a good time for the President and the Board of Directors to forget, briefly, the business and administrative problems and to think of the members as Christian people, looking forward to Christmas. They are good people for, somehow or other, the ideals that Audubon stands for bring good people together. So we say to you good people: "Merry Christmas and may you all have the best in comfort, health and happiness in the coming year".

---Charles D. Williams

Butano State Park - a Gift to the Future

(September 16, 1961 marked the) dedication of Butano State Park in the extreme southern tip of San Mateo County. Preservation of Butano Forest has for 37 years been the objective of conservationists, planners and interested citizens. It has been a long, hard pull, but the dream of saving the forest, or at least part of it, is becoming a reality. Interest in Butano Forest was stimulated in 1924. However, the depression delayed its acquisition. In the middle 1930s interest was revived when nationally known figures and planners toured the forest. A timbering cruise started in the early 1940s once again stimulated action to preserve the virgin redwood groves. Conflict of state policy delayed acquisition. Steps were taken to raise funds, but the returns were insufficient for acquisition. A drive in 1950 raised \$1 million in cash and matching funds. Alas, in 1955 the funds were returned due to a change in the proposed acquisition site. Legislation was introduced for \$1 million but the measure failed to pass. Then in 1956 an appeal was made to the governor and acquisition of the present site resulted. Original plans were to acquire 5,000 acres. With the passing of the years, the acreage has been cut to 1,955. This wilderness area of redwoods and conifers will be developed into a state park. (After the dedication, the area was) closed again until permanent roads and permanent facilities, campgrounds and picnic areas can be provided. This will take from one to two years. Congratulations go to those who have worked for so many years to preserve this stand of redwoods. Their work will benefit Californians of our own time and the future.

-- Palo Alto Times 9/15/61

(The site is about one mile off State Highway 1, just south of Pescadero near the Santa Cruz County line. ---J.T.)

Coming Events at a Glance

No. Board Meeting nor Regular Meeting in busy December. Sign up for the Annual Bird Count!

Wed. Dec. 13 9:00 a.m. Mount Hermon Field Trip.

Sat. Dec. 30 Annual Christmas Bird Count - 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fri. Jan. 19 Screen Tours at Stanford and San Jose State. Details in January Avocet.



December Calendar

Regular Meeting: None in December. Let's concentrate our efforts on the Saturday, December 30, Annual Bird Count. If most of us come out, the species count and total count can break records.

Field Trips:

Wednesday Morning, December 13, to Mount Hermon, in the Santa Cruz Mts., on the chance the Clark's Nutcrackers are still there among the Ponderosa Pines. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking area near the Mount Hermon Post Office. The Los Gatos-Santa Cruz Highway (17) now bypasses Scott's Valley and the Mount Hermon Road at Camp Evers. Look for exit to Scott's Valley after passing Santa's Village. Leaders: Mrs. Adist Boylan (ED 5-4995) and Miss Emily Smith (EL 4-2494).

Saturday, December 30, 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 the Mewaldt's. 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:

- A. Alviso Sector, bounded on east by State Highway 17 (old Oakland Highway), and on south by Bayshore Highway. Bayshore Highway is 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, Capitol Avenue, and old Oakland Highway. Sierra Road and Oakland Highway inside this sector.

SECTOR LEADERS:

- A. (Alviso) Dr. Henry Weston, 14700 Golf Links Dr., Los Gatos (356-5936)
- B. (Southwest) Mrs. Angelina Snow, 21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos (EL 4-1811), Mrs. Fannie Zwaal, 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose 28, (CY 2-2060)
- C. (Evergreen) Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor, 14311 Quito Rd., Saratoga (DR 9-3424)
- D. (Alum Rock) Mrs. Grace Brubaker, 191 Mountain View Ave., San Jose (CL 8-2289)
- E. (Calaveras) Albert J. Wool, Box 68 La Honda (PI 7-0317)

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 wish to join, telephone 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 Eve Case (CH 3-2467), Howard Wolcott (WH 8-6821) or one of the section leaders.

RECORDS:

One person in each group will act as recorder and will 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 \pm 300.

If unable to estimate degree of accuracy, record estimate as: Coot, 2000 est.

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

Record (1) hours and (2) mileage spent on (1) foot and (2) by car, by each group in the sector.

As weather conditions can affect results, keep record of the weather:

minimum and maximum temperatures;
wind direction and approximate velocity;
cloud cover, - % of sky occupied by clouds;
additional pertinent notes, as fog, rain, sun, etc.

Because habitats are important in evaluating species counts, record the habitats visited, such as: salt marsh, canyon stream, oak woodland, grassland, golf course - (don't include your score) -, etc.

Give percentage of time spent in each habitat.

---Howard Wolcott,
Field Trip Chairman

1961 - 1962 Board Members

1. Mr. John R. Brokershire	San Jose
2. Dr. Evelyn Case	Santa Clara
3. Dr. Thomas Harvey	Santa Clara
4. Mr. Claude E. Smith	Saratoga
5. Mr. Warren M. Turner	Stanford
6. Mr. Charles D. Williams	Menlo Park
7. Mrs. Howard Wolcott	Los Altos Hills
8. Dr. S.C. Woodward	Menlo Park
9. Mrs. Fanny Zwaal	San Jose

New Members

We are happy to welcome the following new members:

Mr. Jan Cook	345 Stockbridge Ave., Atherton
Miss Virginia West	246 Harding Ave., Los Gatos
Mr. Ronald Bishop	650 Palm Haven Dr., San Jose 25
Miss Sandra Saxon	650 Palm Haven Dr., San Jose 25
Mr. V. Richard Eales	204/5 Stanford Village, Stanford
Miss Lila Wessels	3409 Greer Road, Palo Alto
Mrs. R. T. Orth	12540 Roble Ladera Dr., Los Altos
Mrs. Petra S. Lee	3521 Bryant St., Palo Alto
Miss Anne Hazen	2121 Bryant St., Palo Alto
Miss Mira Keen	2241 Hanover St., Palo Alto
Mrs. Naomi Gill	1510 Portola Ave., Palo Alto

With sadness we announce the passing of two long-time members, whose devotion to the Society has meant much to us all - Mr. Charles Anderson of Salinas and Mrs. E. J. Miller of Palo Alto.

---Mrs. Irving Snow,
Membership Chairman

What is Saved Now is All That
Ever Will be Saved

The Wilderness Bill has been passed by the Senate but now it must be passed by the House next spring or all is lost and we have to start all over from the beginning again. We are so near to winning, let's all write letters again, and if the Act passes I promise not to bother you with the Wilderness Protection problem at least for a little while. Meanwhile there are other issues which need our help, or at least consideration: Ft. Reyes and other national seashores, North Cascades and other new national park and wilderness areas, the terrible problems of pesticides, oil pollution of the ocean and pollution of our inland waters, billboards, the new problem of motorized transport in wilderness areas -- motor boats and trail "goats"; closer to home we must worry about threats to the Tule Lake Refuge, private inholdings in Joshua Tree and other parks, the despoilation of the Sacramento River levees, the threatened bridge across the mouth of Emerald Bay, the Big Sur coast; and right on our doorstep we must keep a vigilant eye on Big Basin, Crustal Springs, Ano Nuevo Island and our own Baylands.

If any of these issues particularly interest you, please contact the Conservation Committee. We would be so grateful for additional help. You don't have to know anything about the problem, we'll get you started.

Most important, write now to Congressman Wayne Aspinall, Chairman, House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, New House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C. Urge that the Wilderness Act be promptly and favorably reported out of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee so that it may come to a vote early in the session. A letter should be sent to either Representative Charles S. Gubser (S.S. County) or J. Arthur Younger (San Mateo Co.) urging their support of the Act once it reaches the floor of the House.

Representative John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania says, "Congress will pass the Wilderness Bill if enough of you tell your Congressmen you want it passed".

-- Lynn Robbins (WH 8-5910)

Christmas Giving

Don't forget to consult your Audubon gift catalogs for Christmas. There are all sorts of wonderful gift books this year, plus everything you can imagine to interest a lover of nature. If you can, visit or 'phone the West Coast Office in Berkeley - 2426 Bancroft Way.

THANKS TO THE SEVERAL MEMBERS WHO SENT ME NEWS. IT WILL HAVE TO APPEAR NEXT MONTH ---J.T.

Notes from Afield

FULMAR 10/11, 10/12 100 est Monterey Harbor near piers. Also many in flight near Pt. Pinos. EA
 GREEN HERON 11/3 1 Chesbro Dam. ET (Note: Twin Lakes is a "sure bet" for green herons.)
 WHISTLING SWAN 11/10 7 McCluskey Slough (near Moss Landing). EA
 CANADA GOOSE 11/18 400 est Foraging in fields adjacent to Calaveras Reservoir. ES EMcR FZ GB
 BLACK BRANT 11/1 2 In flight near Pt. Pinos. EA
 GADWALL 11/10 2 Moss Landing. EA
 REDHEAD 11/12 1 Alviso. TH (Common at Twin Lakes.)
 COMMON GOLDENEYE 11/23 3 P.A. Yacht Harbor. EA
 HOODED MERGANSER 11/18 13 Walnut Creek. 1 (fem) Scott Creek north of Davenport. OA
 WHITE-TAILED KITE 11/23 1 Field near Freeway & Embarcadero. EA
 11/19 2 Bean Hollow Beach Plateau. OA
 GOLDEN EAGLE 10/19 1 Ridge east of Watsonville. RM
 PIGEON HAWK 11/2 1 Felt Lake. Observed for fifty-eight minutes during which it pounced on and devoured a Savannah Sparrow. OA
 BLACK OYETERCATCHER 11/11 2 17-Mile Drive, Cyprus Pt. EA
 AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER 11/11 1 17-Mile Drive, rocky shore near Pt. Joe. EA
 COMMON SNIBE 11/23 1 P.A. Dump. EA
 KNOT 11/10 6 Moss Landing. EA
 SHORT-EARED OWL 11/23 1 P.A. Yacht Harbor. 1 Dumbarton. EA
 11/8 2 or 3 P.A. Yacht Harbor. OA 11/18 Several Bean Hollow Beach Plateau. OA
 LEWIS WOODPECKER 10/20, 10/30 2 Alongside Page Mill Rd. about 1 mile NE of Alpine Rd. KMcC
 CROW 11/2 250 est Evergreen. ET
 CLARKE'S NUTCRACKER 11/19 20 est Pine Flat, Mt. Hermon. ES
 EMcR FZ GB 11/18 Twin Lakes, during field trip. HW
 RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH 9/30, 10/1, Occasionally since 11/1. 1 in vicinity homes of ES and HW, Saratoga. ES HW
 BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS 11/12 30 Pasture 1 mi. SE Pescadero. EA
 CASSIN'S PURPLE FINCH 11/13 1 Monte Sereno. CES
 MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD 11/14 1 Hills behind Ryan Lab., Stanford. OA
 LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH 11/16 5 Santa Clara (in bath). EC
 RED CROSSBILL 11/19 12 Pine Flat, Mt. Hermon. ES EMcR FZ GB
 WHITE-THROATED SPARROW 11/10 1 (Imm) Palo Alto. HM

10/28 Field Trip at Isenberg Ranch on Skyline, led by Carl Isenberg: PB GREBE, GB HERON, RUDDY DUCK, T VULTURE, RT HAWK, SPARROW HAWK, CALIF QUAIL, COOT, BT PIGEON (c 250), ANNA'S HMNGBRD, RS FLICKER, ACORN WDPKR, B PHOEBE, S PHOEBE, STLR'S JAY, SCRUB JAY, CB CHICKADEE, C BUSHTIT, WRENTIT, BWK'S WREN, H THRUSH, W BLUEBIRD, RC KINGLET, AUD WARBLER, TWNSND'S WARBLER, W MEADOWLARK, RW FLACKBIRD, PURPLE FINCH, HSE FINCH, RS TOWHEE, BRN TOWHEE, OREGON JUNCO, WC GC FOX & SONG SPARROWS. (36 species)

Additions to the Santa Cruz list published in October: Some on previous list have departed. Most of the additions were observed during the 11/18 field trip led by Dr. and Mrs. Wittgenstein. The field trip party saw 56 species: WSTRN GREBE, DC CORMORANT, GRN HERON, REDHEAD, GRN-WNGD TEAL, AM WIDGEON, LSR YELLOWLEGS, MRBLD GODWIT, AVOCET, RRG-BLD SHRT-BLD BONAPARTE'S & HEERMANN'S GULLS, RS FLICKER, SAY'S PHOEBE, STLR'S JAY, CLARKE'S NUTCRACKER, PLAIN TITMOUSE, BUSHTIT, ROBIN, BWK'S WREN, AUD WARBLER, TWNSND'S WARBLER, HSE SPARROW, W MEADOWLARK, OREGON JUNCO, WC GC SPARROWS.

November additions for Dumbarton & Baylands: Mrs. James Masson scouted on 11/24 and led a field trip in the P.A. Yacht Harbor area on 10/25. She and her party observed 43 species. Les Sleeper led a trip on 11/5 in the Dumbarton area, and reported an unusually large volume of birds were observed. He called attention to the absence of NORTH-ERN PHALAROPES, and he advised that the WILSON PHALAROPES present in July had departed in August. Additions to species published in October & November are based on these two field trips and reports from EA, ES, OA, SH, and RF: HERRING GULL, BLK TURNSTONE, BURROWING OWL, SHRT-EARED OWL, STARLING, AUD WARBLER, AM GOLDFINCH, WC SPARROW.

General Interest Items

Quantities of BONAPARTE'S GULLS, SHOVELLERS, EGRETS, and STILTS are reported to be unusually large in the Dumbarton area. CLS, EA, ES.

Reports still come in about the relatively great numbers of FOX SPARROWS, HERMIT AND VARIED THRUSHES. CES, ES, and others. This may be a good omen as Claude Smith recalls that the last time thrushes were extraordinarily abundant we had a wet winter.

Not a good omen, however, is the increase in STARLINGS. EA and SH have provided multiple reports of flocks of 5 to 15 at the P.A. Yacht Harbor area. On 11/4, during a trip to the coast, EA found only 3 and 8 in the vicinity of Pescadero. On 11/10, EA observed starlings at 8 or 10 points between Palo Alto and the coast.

The Taylors report CEDAR WAXWINGS, QUD WARBLERS, and LSR GOLD-FINCHES were abundant in the Evergreen area by 11/4. They surveyed the Paradise Valley area on 11/3 and found the birding very poor in that area.

The Wittgensteins report a HOUSE SPARROW, Phoenix-like, flew out from their lighted fireplace apparently unsinged, but allegedly dissuaded from further mimicking of the swift. HW

Reports from Way Out

Mr. & Mrs. Homer Petersen enjoyed exciting birding in the Morro Bay area on 11/12. They saw CLARKE'S NUTCRACKERS, BLK-CPD CHICKADEES, both PELICANS, 41 GRT BL HERONS, a BLD EAGLE, and 19 other species.

The following species were observed by Oliver Allen during his far-ranging bird trips throughout the state in November: BLUE GOOSE, EUROPEAN WIDGEON, BLD EAGLE, PRAIRIE FALCON, 200 SAGE GROUSE, ROCK SANDPIPER, GRAY JAY, BOHEMIAN WAXWING*, LAPLAND LONGSPUR, SNOW BUNTING. (*Oregon. Any recent observations in this part of California?)

Key to observers' initials:

CES	Mr. Claude Smith	HM	Miss Harriet Mundy
CLJ	Mr. & Mrs. Les Sleeper	HW	Dr. & Mrs. Wittgenstein
EA	Mr. Earl Albertson	K McG	Mrs. W. R. McCann
EC	Dr. Eve Case	OA	Mr. Oliver Allen
E McR	Mrs. Eva McRae	RF	Mr. Robert Fuller
ES	Miss Emily Smith	RM	Mr. Rex E. Marsh
ET	Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor	SH	Mrs. S. P. Harrison
FZ	Mrs. Charles Zwaal	TH	Dr. Tom Harvey
GB	Mrs. Grace Brubaker		

PLEASE send me your monthly observation records for ALUM ROCK, DUMBARTON & BAYLANDS, and SANTA CRUZ. Also please send accounts of your observations of the less common species, seasonal arrivals, late-stayers, and unusual behaviors.

---Bob Fuller
835 Webster St., Palo Alto
DA 5-9575

Datelined: Cape Hallett, Antarctica
November 14, 1961

Dear Joyce,

Here are some "Note From Afield" for the Avocet. I hope they arrive promptly - mail service isn't too swift. There will be a plane in here this afternoon that will take mail to McMurdo, the main U.S. station in the Antarctic. From there it goes to Christchurch, New Zealand, and eastward.

Had about a week in New Zealand on the way here. Saw 35 birds that included such familiar ones as Canada Goose, Calif. Quail, Mallard, Starling, English Sparrow. Two of the better birds were Skylarks, singing everywhere in the open fields, and one Kea, the mountain parrot. Spring was just commencing there - the Starlings were speckled and had bright yellow bills.

I'm having the time of my life. Hope everything goes well with you and SCVAS,

Sincerely,

Bob

Notes From Afield

Cape Hallett, Antarctica
November 14, 1961

Here on Seabee Hook, a glacial moraine that juts out from Cape Hallett on the Victoria Land coast, we are surrounded - on two sides by the frozen Ross Sea and Hallett Inlet, on the other two sides by a rookery of 150,000 or so Adelie Penguins. They squawk through the twenty-four hours of daylight, batter each other with their hard little flippers, and they smell.

When I arrived here two weeks ago the Adelies were also arriving, walking in long files over miles and miles of sea ice. Since then they have picked out a next site, often the same as of previous years, and lined it with small pebbles. Stealing pebbles from one's neighbor is a popular pastime even though suitable pebbles may be lying around in abundance. Although separated during the winter, a pair of Adelies will reunite if both return to the rookery. This has been determined by placing numbered bands around the base of the left flipper of many hundreds of birds. The first bird of the pair to return will often associate with another for several days until its previous mate arrives.

In most cases the second egg has been laid and now the penguin tide has turned. Little groups of females are filing back over the miles of sea ice toward open water to fatten on shrimp while the male's fast continues as he incubates the eggs. He will have been without food for about five weeks altogether when the female returns to take over incubation duties. By that time the eggs hatched the female has returned full of shrimp from her second trip to sea. In an average summer the sea ice has broken up enough so that these feeding excursions become shorter and shorter in distance, necessary to keeping the fuzzy chicks well-fed. In those summers when the break-up is late, many chicks do not survive.

Skuas occupy the niche here that gulls fill most everywhere else. They are scavengers and stealers of Adelie eggs and chicks. They are just beginning to establish territories on the perimeter of the penguin rookery. It won't be safe much longer to trespass, as a Skua defends his chosen area most energetically, unless one is quick to duck or wears a feather decoy above his head.

Hallett's third bird is the beautiful Snow Petrel. They have migrated past here by the hundreds on two recent occasions, both times in the late afternoon. They appear from the east around the cliffs at the tip of Cape Hallett, gain altitude over the Cape by spiralling upward much like a flock of gulls departing from Calaveras Reservoir for San Francisco Bay, then sail and flap westward across the mouth of Hallett Inlet and up the coast. These snow-white birds against a blue sky, headed toward glacier and snow-covered mountains are a spectacular sight.

Your Christmas census will see more species of birds but I'll bet I see five times as many individuals.

---Robert C. Wood
 USARP
 Navy No. 20, Box 31
 Fleet Post Office
 San Francisco, Calif.

(USARP stands for United States Antarctic Research Program. Letters are postmarked "Operation Deep Freeze". I'm sure Bob would like to receive letters from members to the above address.--J.T.)

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Branch of

National Audubon Society

1961 - 1962

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