

The Avocet

Volume IX Number 5

May, 1962

President's Message

I'd like to have the members do a bit of thinking, in advance of the annual meeting, as to how big they really want our branch of the society to grow. During the past two years we have gone to a new and larger place in San Jose, and a change in our Palo Alto meeting place this May is necessary because we outgrew the junior museum facility.

Other branches have been putting on "membership drives", some with notable success. From an over-all national point of view it is helpful to have a lot of members, more money, spreading the conservation influence, more power in politics. I would like to have the members think about this aspect and set it off against what personal preference they may have as to the other more personal and social feeling they may have in regard to the group's activities. I have a hunch that many want to stay small and may want to be heard. Total membership has grown by a third to a half recently.

--- Charles Williams

THE GOLDEN EAGLE BILL, H.J. Res. 489, passed by unanimous consent in the House April 2. No member raised an objection to it. The measure has yet to be cleared by a Senate committee and passed by the Senate. Conservationists are asking the Senate Commerce Committee, of which Senator Warren G. Magnuson (Wash.) is chairman, to schedule early action on H.J. Res. 489 or similar S.J. Res. 105. Official and documentary proof that bald eagles are being slaughtered for the feather trade along with the unprotected golden eagles was established by U.S. Game Management Agent Robert C. Kinghorn and state conservation officers March 1 when they arrested two New Mexico men on charges of illegal possession of bald eagle parts. Later Louis Whitten and his son, Louis Arnold Whitten, of Cimarron, N. Mex., paid fines of \$100 each on pleas of guilty. The Whittens, who did a local and mail-order business in eagle feathers, were found to have in their possession (in addition to unenumerated golden eagle parts) the whole skins of five bald eagles, all of immature birds, and twelve separate tails of bald eagles, two of which were white.

---Audubon Conservation Guide
4/2/62

Coming Events At A Glance

Sun. May 6	9:00 a.m.	Wool Ranch, La Honda
Mon. May 7	8:00 p.m.	Palo Alto Community Center
Wed. May 9	8:30 a.m.	Castle Rock
Mon. May 14	8:00 p.m.	Los Altos Hills
Sat. May 19	9:00 a.m.	Hoover Ranch, Davenport
Wed. May 23	8:30 a.m.	Duveneck Ranch, Los Altos
Sun. Jun 3	9:00 a.m.	Point Lobos State Park
Mon. Jun 18		Municipal Wharf, Santa Cruz



MAY CALENDAR

Regular Meeting: Monday, May 7, 8:00 p.m. in Room R of the Palo Alto Community Center. Bill Goodall will again show National Audubon's Bald Eagle film. (Note change in usual time and place of regular meeting.) So few of the Palo Alto members saw the film in San Jose that there was much interest in running this fine film again closer to home.

Board Meeting: Monday, May 14, 8:00 p.m. at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Wolcott, 26511 Elizabeth Ave., Los Altos Hills (948-6821).

Field Trips:

Sunday, May 6, to the Al Wool ranch in La Honda. Meet at the cross roads at the La Honda Store at 9:00 a.m. If you don't know how to get to La Honda from where you live, get a road map. We will go to Skyline Blvd., proceed to the La Honda turnoff and turn west from there. Bring lunch. Leaders: Dorothy & Al Wool.

Wednesday Morning, May 9, along the summit of the Santa Cruz Mtns., in the vicinity of Castle Rock. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Saratoga Gap, at the junction of Highway 9 and Skyline Blvd. (Highway 5). Leaders: Mrs. John Henderson (UN 7-4304) and Miss Emily Smith (EL 4-2494).

Saturday, May 19, to Rancho del Oso (The Hoover Ranch), Davenport. Meet at Waddell Beach, Highway 1 near Santa Cruz-San Mateo County line at 9:00 a.m. Joint trip with Santa Cruz Bird Club and Monterey Audubon Society. Bring lunch and be prepared for hiking. For information call Dr. Case (AX 6-2410).

Wednesday, May 23, to the Duveneck Ranch on Noddy Road, Los Altos. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Leader: Kay McCann (DA 4-1380).

Sunday, June 3, to Pt. Lobos Reserve State Park. Meet at the entrance at 9:00 a.m. This year we will visit a new area, a delightful and easy Nature Trail from the Entrance to "Coal Chute Point", overlooking "The Pit", on the east side of Whaler's Cove. Then we will drive to the large parking area, from where we will take another Nature Trail past The Veteran Cypress, through "The Pass" to East Grove, overlooking Bluefish Cove. The Pass is one of the most remarkable spots in the Reserve. The East Grove area includes nesting sites of Pigeon Guillemots, Cormorants, Chickadees, Pigmy Nuthatches. An ancient Indian camp-site is also to be found there. Lunch-stop will be at the Picnic Area at the southern end of the paved road. After lunch there will be ample time for a walk to the point overlooking Bird Island with its pelicans and cormorants, plus the gulls' nests usually found alongside the trail. Leaders: Lloyd and Eve Case (AX 6-2410).

Special Event:

Monday, June 18, 7:30 a.m., Mr. Leavitt McQuesten's annual offshore birding trip, leaving from Stagnaro's Landing, Municipal Wharf, Santa Cruz. The boat (U.S. Coast Guard inspected) will return about 11:30 a.m. the same day. Come warmly dressed; bring blanket,

overcoat, binoculars, camera and lunch (and some bread to feed the birds). If you want to take seasickness prevention pills, plan to arrive at the landing on-half hour early. I still have tickets. Call Joyce Todd (DA 2-1787).

(Two 14-year old students, members, who live on Granada Court in Santa Clara, have reserved tickets in the hope that someone who is going on the trip (and lives somewhere near) can provide transportation. Any volunteers?...J.T.)

New Members

(Mrs. Irving Snow, our Membership Chairman, was injured in an automobile accident recently and will be in O'Connor Hospital, San Jose, for several weeks yet. I'm sure she'd love to have letters and visitors during this long stay....J.T.)

We welcome the following new members:

Mr. Thomas J. Dalton	129 Dana St., Apt. 5, Mountain View
Miss Elizabeth F. Gamble	1431 Waverley Street, Palo Alto
Mrs. Norman R. Zabel	225 Narmona Drive, Menlo Park
Mr. & Mrs. Laurence S. Sanset	828 University Ave., Palo Alto

A Statement of Audubon Philosophy

We believe in the wisdom of nature's design.

We know that soil, water, plants, and wild creatures depend upon each other and are vital to human life.

We recognize that each living thing links to many others in the chain of nature.

We believe that persistent research into the intricate patterns of outdoor life will help to assure wise use of earth's abundance.

We condemn no wild creature and work to assure that no living species shall be lost.

We believe that every generation should be able to experience spiritual and physical refreshment in places where primitive nature is undisturbed.

So we will be vigilant to protect wilderness areas, refuges, and parks, and to encourage good use of nature's storehouse of resources.

We dedicate ourselves to the pleasant task of opening the eyes of young and old that all may come to enjoy the beauty of the outdoor world, and to share in conserving its wonders forever.

National Audubon Society
1130 Fifth Avenue
New York 28, N.Y.

Hummingbird Food Formula: Catherine Lintott obtained this formula for hummingbird feeders from Alex Isenberg:

1 part honey or raw sugar or brown sugar (never refined sugar)
8-10 parts water

To each quart of mixture add either 6 drops ABCDE vitamins or one level teaspoon Thompson's multipurpose vitamin syrup.

---Bob Fuller

POISON OAK
Rhus diversiloba forma quinquifolia

A 5-leaflet poison oak is growing on the south side of Woodland Avenue, Menlo Park, about 150 feet west of the Newell Road bridge across San Francisquito Creek. Most of the plant's leaves have the normal three leaflets, but some have five. The terminal leaflet has no stalk on most of the 5-leaflet leaves.

On a few of the 3-leaflet leaves, the terminal leaflet is cut so deeply that the leaf appears to have four leaflets. However, these leaves are so unsymmetrical that, in my opinion, they do not qualify as 4-leaflet leaves. Therefore, I have listed "4-leaflet" in quotation marks in the following list of quantities of leaves on this plant:

<u>Type of Leaf</u>	<u>Approximate Percentage</u>
3-leaflet	70
5-leaflet (terminal leaflet without stalk)	25
5-leaflet (terminal leaflet with stalk)	4
"4-leaflet"	1

--Ray McCann
783 Garland Drive, Palo Alto
April 10, 1962

National Audubon Western Conference
Asilomar, April 6-9, 1963

A year early does seem a long time ahead, but if you plan to attend the Conference (always a stimulating occasion), why not put your name on the Priority List in order to receive an early October mailing of the official registration form? Bill Goodall writes, "For the past several Conferences, we have had to turn people away because they had waited too long before registering". The meetings are open to both Audubon members and friends. If you'd like to enter the third Nature Photography Salon, held at the conference, you can secure details now from the president (Charles Williams). A picture you take this summer may win one of the three Grand Prizes.

National Audubon Society
1000 North Durfee Ave.,
El Monte, California

Tule Elk Again Threatened

The Tule Elk, one of the world's rarest mammals (there are only 313 extant), is about to be pushed further down the road toward extinction. A hunt to kill 60, or one-fifth of the entire Tule Elk population, is being planned for Fall by the California Fish and Game Commission. The reason given for this incredible shortsightedness is the usual nonsense that the herd needs to be thinned and that they eat too much grass and over-browse the range. Nothing is said, of course, about the fact that Owens Valley, a strip 70 miles long and nine miles wide, is public land and leased at a very nominal rent to livestock herdsman. Each year the ranchers want the elk herd killed off so they can have the use of the range for their cattle. You can do something if you ACT NOW! Write a strong letter of protest to the California Fish and Game

Commission, demanding that the plans for the hunt be cancelled. This protest mail must reach the Commission before May 25, 1962. The address is 722 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, California. The Tule Elk, one of the world's rarest mammals, should have complete protection. You can help give it to him! PLEASE WRITE TODAY!

---Defenders of Wildlife
4/62

If you wish further information about the Tule Elk, we suggest you write to Mrs. Beula Edmiston, Secretary, Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk, 5502 Markland Drive, Los Angeles 22, California. This Committee was organized to secure a sanctuary and complete protection of the Tule Elk. They need the assistance and help of all persons interested in preserving our vanishing wildlife species.

Editor's Lone Note for May

A polaris missile, unarmed, stands outside the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building. In its base a dove has chosen to build her nest.

---Palo Alto Times
4/20/62

FIELD NOTES: HOW AND WHY

Human memory is a remarkable faculty, but it is unreliable for the long time retention of factual detail. A written record is the best insurance against the loss of interesting and important observations. Every student of natural history, no matter how casual his observations may be, should keep written notes. The importance of an observation cannot always be assessed at the time of its occurrence. Often, however, it becomes important in relation to subsequent happenings and, if it was not recorded originally, may be totally lost. Furthermore, it is repetition which indicates patterns of animal behavior. Only by recording each observation of a particular behavior pattern can the true significance be determined. It is surprising (and frustrating) how often persons interested in birds report that they have observed a certain species, or activity, at some past time--but when asked for the date or for some details, cannot supply them. Following are some suggestions for the recording of field notes.

There are four items which should accompany any record, namely, (1) the name of the animal (WHAT), (2) the date of the observation (WHEN), (3) the locality of the observation (WHERE), (4) the name of the observer (WHO).

What should be recorded? Anything and everything! The more you try to record about an animal the more you will see and learn. The nature of the environment in which the animal is observed (i.e. the trees, shrubs, topography, etc.); mannerisms; voice; behavior; reactions to danger; mating actions;---in other words, where each species is found, how it looks and acts, and what it does. Put down your observations at once, as made. Do not depend upon memory---it's treacherous.

The above may sound like quite an undertaking---so start out simply and let your notes develop as your ability to see and record develops. A simple list of species seen in a certain locality on a certain date is of value. Add the number of each species seen, you now have a census and hence a clue to population. Try keeping daily lists of the

species in your own yard and see how quickly the notes become valuable to you. Add numbers, or a brief (one line) note to the list. For example, "Cedar Waxwing. Flock of 20 feeding on pyracantha berries". In that little note is contained data on occurrence, numbers, habits (flock) and food. Start out with What, When, Where, and Who----add How as you see opportunity to do so.

The form in which the notebook is kept is not vital, but some suggestions may be of interest. A looseleaf notebook is most convenient with the 6x9 inch size preferred. A larger size is cumbersome to carry afield, a smaller size gives too little room per page. Use ink, and use a permanent ink (you may drop it in a creek sometime!). Strongly recommended is Higgins "ETERNAL" Black. A fine pen point is most legible---the #1550 or #9550 Esterbrook pen points are excellent. The Esterbrook is an ideal fountain pen for the purpose and is very inexpensive (about \$2.00 including point). Write small and legibly---fill each line and each page so that you do not give housing space to a lot of blank paper.

The field notebook will grow with the experience of the observer and will finally become important. It is not only a record of the activities of birds but will also indicate the development of the student's ability to observe, to record accurately, and to infer correctly from what is seen and heard.

--Charles G. Sibley - May 1952
Professor of Ornithology
Cornell University
(Past Editor SCVAS Bulletin)

Notes From Afield

My apologies for having missed last month's deadline. A two-day business trip to New Hampshire stretched out day-by-day into a three-weeks' trip.

2/28 and 3/4 Wolcott Ranch Trips

These two trips, led by Kay McCann and the Wolcotts, were beset by cold, rainy weather. Nevertheless, a total of 25 and 28 species, respectively, were logged on the trips and scouting forays. The highlight of the 2/28 trip was an opportunity to study the YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER for an extended period. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, WRENTITS, and BEWICK'S WRENS were among the species observed.

3/14 Trip to Vasona Reservoir and the Lintotts'

Eleven birders met with Catherine Lintott and observed forty-eight species (about 170 individuals). These included: PIED-BILLED GREBE, GREEN HERON, WOOD DUCK, RING-NECKED DUCK, COMMON SNIBE, thirty-odd BAND-TAILED PIGEONS, BLACK PHOEBE, a pair of WRENTITS, and Catherine's wintering WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.

3/28 Trip to Marthen's Ranch

Virginia Bothwell led this trip and she and her company observed forty-five species. These included the WHITE-TAILED KITE, COOPER'S HAWK, BAND-TAILED PIGEON, both the HAIRY and DOWNEY WOODPECKERS, SAY'S PHOEBE, VIOLET-GREEN and CLIFF SWALLOWS, WESTERN BLUEBIRD, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, WARBLING VIREO, and LARK SPARROW.

4/7/Dumbarton Trip

Les Sleeper led an enthusiastic group of 35 birders on this very productive trip. BONAPARTE'S GULLS and WATER PIPITS welcomed the group at the meeting place and were life birds for the newer participants. A pair of highly colored Cinnamon Teal were seen in the grass. Just east of the channel, the group walked to the railroad bridge and observed the shorebirds on the exposed flats, it being low tide. A harbor seal was feeding in the channel. About 250 SCOTERS, predominantly COMMON and SURF, were busily diving, apparently dining on fish stirred up by the seal. Les, who regularly birds this area, was surprised to see so many scoters here, particularly this late. The Sanctuary beyond the railroad was surveyed and more birds than usual were seen there. Three CLAPPER RAILS were observed. One obligingly bathed quite publicly in a nearby slough. About 500 AVOCETS, in breeding plumage, were visible north of the KGO towers.

Post Script: On the 20th the SCOTERS were still present in about the same quantity. DUNLINS were more abundant--quite strongly tinted and with their black belly patches. Two large colonies of CLIFF SWALLOWS were beginning nest construction at the eastern end of the highway bridge and at the sheds by the railroad bridge. The colony by the railroad mounted a spirited attack on this watcher and provided opportunities for close-ups of ruffled swallows.

4/11 Searsville Lake Trip

Virginia Bothwell led this trip which turned up 39 species including: GREAT BLUE HERON; COOPER'S HAWK; VIOLET-GREEN, BARN, and CLIFF SWALLOWS; PURPLE MARTIN; ORANGE-CROWNED, YELLOW, AUDUBON'S, and WILSON'S (PILEOLATED) WARBLERS; and the YELLOWTHROAT.

4/22 Trip to Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam

Mark Massie of Fresno led this trip. PURPLE MARTINS were seen overhead, the OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER and the BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK were observed, and the group was treated to the spring son of the WINTER WREN. Of greater interest than the birds were the unusual wild flowers which are to be found in the protected watershed area: MECONELLA, ROMANZOFFIA, BLEEDING HEART, BITTER CHERRY, FRINGE CUP, and an unusual abundance of MEADOW RUE. The trip also afforded the opportunity to see the third largest California Laurel tree in the state.

Miscellaneous Observations

IMMATURE BUTEO 3/7 Sawyer Camp Road Had a large grey squirrel. K&RM, LC's
MARSH HAWK 2/14, 2/15, 2/16 at home feeder! Two. ML
SPARROW HAWK (female) 2/22 With freshly-caught mouse. ML
QUAIL Covey Daily at home feeders. CL, ML
VAUX'S SWIFT Since 4/6 Two Roosting in chimney. ES
WHITE-THROATED SWIFT 2/25 One Wolcotts'. LC's
ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER Since 4/15 One Checking nest box. CL
VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS 2/22 About fifty. Crystal Springs Reservoir K&RM, LC's
BARN SWALLOW 3/25 Can you remember when you first saw this sleek, colorful species? Pat Malone added it to his life list on 3/25 in a Sunnyvale orchard. FM
BROWN THRASHER (male) 1/30 Returned to yearly nesting tree by house. ML
Wintering HERMIT THRUSH. Departed on 4/13 ES

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER 3/6, 3/14 One each Santa Clara garden EC
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD 4/8 One At birdbath HM
HOODED ORIOLE 3/23 & thereafter Pair Palo Alto DT
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE 3/29, 3/31, 4/1, 4/3, 4/4, 4/5 Observations through-
out San Jose EH, F&CZ
SPOTTED TOWHEE One Daily at feeder since 2/7 ML
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW 4/18 One At feeder ES
CL's wintering one still present on 4/23
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS 4/21, five present. 4/23, one remaining and
wearing band put on in '57 by ES. ES
FOX SPARROW Several wintering ones departed on 4/13. ES

Share---May will be an active month. Please send your more interesting observations to me at 835 Webster Street, Palo Alto, or telephone DA 5-9575, if you prefer to dictate.

Warning: If a lady answers, be careful. Oliver Allen's Peregrine Falcon became "two green falcons"!

---Bob Fuller

Key to Observers' Initials

CL	Catherine Lintott	HM	Harriet Mundy
DT	Dorothy Taylor	K&RM	Kay and Ray McCann
EC	Eve Case	LC's	The Luther Cisnes
EH	Elsie Hoeck	ML	Margaret Leach
ES	Emily Smith	PM	Pat Malone
F&CZ	Fanny & Charles Zwaal		

