

The Avocet

Volume X Number 1

January, 1963

President's Message

Society Membership:

A year ago the Society directors voted for "natural" growth of our Society membership, as compared to "artificially stimulated" growth. In other words, growth just for the sake of larger numbers was not considered desirable. The right kind of growth comes from people wanting to join our organization because we have a good "product".

Our directors this year are favorable to a further step; namely, bringing our "product" more into public view by means of Education Committee programs and more field trips for the general public in the Santa Clara Valley area. We are trying to give more public service so that a larger number of perceptive people may enjoy the beauty of nature and share in its wise use.

It may be some months before our efforts will show tangible results, but we are working at it----hard.

Education Committee:

This committee, guided by Mrs. Diane Conradson, is increasingly busy. One week in November Mrs. Virginia Bothwell, assisted by Rebecca Turner, took 26 Girl Scouts for an hour's nature walk around the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor---Director Claude Smith gave a butterfly talk to a San Jose Garden Club---Director Bob Fuller showed a few 35 mm slides and addressed a large group of Cub Scouts and their families. Mrs. Conradson has made 4 nature talks during November.

The committee is now working out details with Howard Wolcott for a conservation program to be given to the Palo Alto Kiwanis Club. If this proves successful, other service clubs will be contacted.

The committee is also sponsoring weekly field trips in the Palo Alto area. These are bird and nature walks open to the public. These walks will start December 8 and, if successful, will be continued weekly for three months or more.

Gifts Received:

Three volumes of the BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA by William Leon Dawson were given the Society recently. These are handsome books and this gift will be enjoyed by many people. The donor's name will be shown on the "AVOCET" name plate inserted on inside covers and the books will be in the care of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Case and may be borrowed from them by Society members.

Our Society was given \$30 for the purchase of "excellent bird 35 mm slides" to replace the present "unrealistic" slides. The donor wishes to remain anonymous. This gift is a kind act to help the Education Committee.

A gift of \$100 has been received to be used toward purchase of 16 mm color and sound moving picture film to be owned by the Society and used with our new projector. This gift is timely because the Society directors have put off buying two chosen 27 minute films, costing \$200 each, hoping that gifts would make the purchase possible.

---Warren Turner



January Calendar

Regular Meeting:

Monday, January 7, at 8:00 p.m. in Room R, Palo Alto Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Dr. Howard L. Cogswell, Professor of Ornithology at Mills College will speak on "Weather, Migration, and Bird Finding in Central California".

(Note: After the last meeting in Palo Alto a lady called to know why we had not had the meeting, because she had waited at the Children's Museum until 8:30 p.m. and no one came!)

Field Trips:

Saturday, January 5, to Richardson's Bay. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at service station on right side of road just north of Richardson's Bay Bridge (near Mill Valley). This bridge is approximately six miles north of Golden Gate Bridge on Highway U.S. 101. Bring lunch. Leaders: Ralph Trullinger and John Brokenshire (293-6289).

Wednesday Morning, January 9, to Alviso to see how the salt marsh plants and the birds which frequent the salt marshes in that area are faring in these days of "Progress". Meet at 9:00 a.m. in front of George Mayne School on San Jose-Alviso Road, which is an extension of San Jose's North First Street into Alviso. Leader: Miss Emily Smith (EL 4-2494).

Sunday, January 20, to Dumbarton Bridge area. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the west end of the bridge. Bring lunch. Leaders: Les and Nellie Sleeper.

Wednesday Morning, January 23, to Searsville Lake. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the entrance (with 25¢ admission). We'll go to a new area, so be prepared for a bit of hiking. Leader: Mrs. Norman Zabel (DA 5-5939) or call Virginia Bothwell (322-1209) for information

Saturday, February 2, to San Juan Bautista. Meet at the Mission Plaza at 9:00 a.m.. Bring lunch. Leader: Wilma Thompson (FR 8-4333).

--- Field Trip Chairman:
Howard Wolcott (948-6821)

Screen Tours:

Friday, January 25, at 4:15 p.m. at Cubberley Auditorium, Education Building, Escondido Road and Lasuen Street, Stanford University. Robert C. Hermes will speak with his color film "Nova Scotia - Land of the Sea". Explore the heart of the majestic spruce and hemlock primeval forests of the lovely Canadian province of Nova Scotia. Travel with Robert C. Hermes of Homestead, Florida from the woodland source of a tiny stream along its fascinating passage to the sea, where beautiful lapse-time photography brings in the famous Minas Basin tides with a variety of sea life. Enjoy this trip through colorful Nova Scotia. Tickets are available at Tressider Union Ticket Office.

Friday, January 25, at 9:00 p.m. at Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College. Robert C. Hermes will present "Nova Scotia - Land of the Sea". Tickets are available at the door.

New Members

We give a hearty welcome to the following new members. Several of them have been National members for years, but have never affiliated with a branch. We hope they will enjoy the local activities and will be glad that they are now Joint Members.

Miss Louise Holdahl	101 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto
Mrs. John C. Almack	683 Alvarado Row, Stanford
Dr. R. Curtis Lee	802 Goodwin Ave., San Jose 28
Mr. & Mrs. Horace R. Laughlin	2631 South Court, Palo Alto
Mr. & Mrs. Del C. Winninger	7400 Tiptoe Lane, San Jose 29
Miss Ruth Havir	3440 Warburton Ave., Apt. 9B, Santa Clara
Mrs. Douglas A. Fuchs	P.O. Box 644, Saratoga
Mrs. Paul M. Sturm	P.O. Box 243, Los Altos
Mr. & Mrs. Vernon H. Gallichotte	18,931 Hargrave Way, Saratoga

--- Membership Committee Chairman:
Mrs. Irving Snow

Interior Department proposes to permit
Continuation of Aerial Eagle Slaughter

(Telegram or air-mail letter before January 6.)

Proposed regulations under the Golden Eagle Act (Public Law 87-384) of Oct. 24, 1962, were published by the Department of the Interior in the Federal Register Dec. 7. Interested persons were invited to comment within 30 days, or by January 6, 1963.

The regulations as drafted in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife do set up firm legal bars against the marketing of eagle feathers, which was one of the principal purposes of the new law. They contain this flat prohibition: "No bald eagle or golden eagle, or their parts, nests, or eggs may be purchased, sold, traded, or bartered, or offered for sale, trade, or barter in the United States or in any place subject to its jurisdiction".

An equally important objective of the legislation, as supported by conservationists in the last Congress, was to halt the gunning down of birds from airplanes flown by professional hunters. Surprisingly, the proposed regulations would permit this kind of killing to continue under the following provisions:

"Paragraph 11.7 Applications to take from aircraft
"Applications for authorization to take gold eagles from aircraft must be submitted by the pilot and must include his name, address, and age, the number of golden eagles proposed to be taken, the State and area where taking is to be done, the name and address of the livestock owner or owners for whom such eagles are to be taken, the pilot's Federal Aviation Agency flight certificate number, and the type, color, and registration number of the plane to be used in such operation."

Aerial killing by paid hunters is the other kind of savage commercialism that has decimated the species. According to the claims of these airmen, who hire themselves and planes by the hour to groups of ranchers, their take of eagles has run into the thousands. No one can check on them - the dead birds fall in inaccessible and unknown places - and no one knows what other kinds of hawks and vultures have fallen to their guns and been counted into their eagle "scores". It is in the interest of their grisly business, of course, to convince the ranchers the skies are full of sheep-eating eagles.

The National Audubon Society will offer no objection to regulations that permit ranchers or their employees to use guns or other methods from the ground to kill eagles that are attacking their livestock. We cannot agree to a continuation of the indiscriminate, non-selective slaughter by the flying hunters who do it for money.

Audubon Societies, other groups, and individuals who wish to comment on the proposed regulations should time their letters or telegrams to reach Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall prior to January 6, 1963. His address is Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D.C. Unless you are heard from, the aerial slaughter may continue.

-- NAS Conservation Guide 12/15/62

Dr. Kenneth A. Phelps Joins Board

Bob Fuller, until recently our "Bird Notes" editor, has found it necessary to resign as director of our Society because of the serious illness of his wife. We are very sorry to have him leave.

In his place and subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, I have just received Dr. Kenneth A. Phelps' willingness to serve in Bob's place. Dr. Phelps was an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist practicing in Minneapolis until retirement. He was a member of the Minneapolis Audubon Society and knew Mr. Morrison and Mr. Breckenridge the last two Wildlife film lecturers - very well. He is a good golfer, a member of Rotary, and goes on many of our field trips. He and his wife live at 1850 Willow Road, Palo Alto, and they have been members of our Society for more than 2 years.

---Warren Turner

Avocet Deadline

The Editor appeals once again for all material on or before the 20th of the month. This is particularly important in months like January and February where the little paper must be mimeographed and mailed on the following week-end. The time and busy schedules of some ten people are involved. Thank you. ---J. Todd.

TRANSPLANTED CROWNED SPARROWS RETURNED

The following report from Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt, Dept. of Biological Sciences of San Jose State College, was released for publication December 1, 1962. Studies of this nature point up the need for accurate observing, recording, and reporting from all of us in all seasons, all places.

"During the winter and spring of the 1961-62 season, 412 White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows banded with numbered U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands were displaced by commercial jet aircraft from a bird-banding station in San Jose, California to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. L. Richard Mewaldt, principal investigator on the project, reports that by December 1, 1962 sixteen of these native migratory sparrows had found their way back the more than 1800 miles from the east bank of the Mississippi River in Louisiana to the banding station only a few miles from San Francisco Bay in California. These birds, which normally nest in northwestern Washington and in Canada and Alaska, and spend their winters in California, perform their annual spring and fall migrations at night. Scientists now think that these birds may use a form of bi-coordinate celestial navigation similar to that proposed for certain European birds by Dr. Franz Sauer now of the University of Florida at Gainesville. The number of birds returning, of those which

normally survive from one year to the next, make it highly unlikely that they returned by random search. The precision with which adult birds return year after year to the same few acres to spend the winter is one of the objects of this study supported in part by the Office of Naval Research and San Jose State College. The very interesting possibility that some of the younger birds returned to the vicinity of Baton Rouge, instead of San Jose, is being explored also.

Dr. Robert Newman of Louisiana State University is cooperating on the phase of the program involving the shipments of the 1961-62 season to Baton Rouge. He and Mr. Stuart Warter released 50 of the California birds at Baton Rouge in each of October, December, and February, and 262 in April of the 1961-62 season. Attempts to trace their movements from Baton Rouge by dyeing their feathers bright colors yielded inconclusive results.

One bird was captured on its way north. A White-crowned Sparrow released on April 14 was trapped on June 24 at the San Jose Banding Station. This bird, known to be more than seven years old, then presumably proceeded to its breeding grounds in Canada and returned to San Jose on October 27. This bird and twelve others of the sixteen which have returned from Baton Rouge have been displaced again during October and November of this year.

Dr. Mewaldt has airlifted them and 340 additional birds of the same species to Dr. Chandler Robbins at the Patuxent Research Center, which is mid-way between Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. This is more than 2400 miles east of the normal north-south migratory route taken by these small birds. This time in 1963 they should know if these native sparrows can "home" from the Atlantic across the continent of North America to the Pacific." --The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society 12/62

Notes From Afield Past Field Trips

November 28 - Marthen's Ranch - used instead of the Webb Ranch which was freshly plowed and rain soaked - 18 birders led by Mrs. Luther E. Cisne saw 30 species on a crisp clear morning.

December 2 - Los Banos Waterfowl Management Area. A train of 32 cars of birdlookers from many societies led by Carl Sather toured the refuge to see 46 species. A young golden eagle chased by a white-tailed kite and two sandhill cranes square dancing were special treats.

Observations

BUFFLEHEAD - Over 120 in one salt pond west of Dumbarton Bridge November 25 - Earl Albertson.

GOLDEN EAGLE - This month it was an immature golden eagle that was flying low among the flushed ducks and geese looking for a dead, sick or injured bird to eat - Merced National Wildlife Refuge where there has been "a pair" hanging around for several years - December 1.

BLUE GOOSE - Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge - December 8.

OLDSQUAW - 1 male - Salinas River mouth - December 13 - Capt. Elgin B. Hurlbert and Dr. Ron Branson.

RED-NECKED GREBE - 2 - channel by rock jetty of Moss Landing - December 15, 16.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - 1 preened itself while the observer squatted in front of it four feet away. They seem to be very gentle and have almost no fear of humans. Rock jetty of Moss Landing - December 16.

ROYAL TERN - 1 Monterey harbor - December 16.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD - 1 Bay Farm Island, Alameda - November 15 to present writing (Dec. 23) - Elsie Roemer. You may still be able to see it at Godfrey Park next to the golf course.

WESTERN KINGBIRD - 1 Bay Farm Island - occasionally during this same period - a more rare occurrence than the tropical kingbird this late in the fall.

PUGET SOUND race of WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW - During the past six days (prior to Dec. 23) this race has greatly increased in numbers at the banding station of Don McLean in Willow Glen. They have arrived in well-fed condition, though tired, indicating to him that they have recently left the northwest well fed. Maybe fall migration has started from there!

This past year has been a poor one for birds. Has it been the mild weather or insecticides? However, it has been an exceptionally good fall for eastern warblers on our coast.

In the San Diego area, mostly in the Tijuana River basin, 24 species of warblers were seen. Guy McCaskie saw 2 BLACK-and-WHITE, 7 TENNESSEE, over 35 VIRGINIA, 1 PARULA, 3 BLACK-THROATED BLUE, 1 BLACK BURNIAN, 7 PALM and 12 AMERICAN REDSTARTS. (Someone else saw a MAGNOLIA WARBLER.)

Also in this area he saw 1 RED-EYED VIREO, 5 TROPICAL KINGBIRDS, 1 EASTERN PHOEBE, 1 ORCHARD ORIOLE, 2 SCARLET HEADED ORIOLES, 3 PAINTED BUNTINGS, 1 SWAMP SPARROW, 1 LOUISIANA HERON, 1 VERMILION FLYCATCHER, 1 OLD SQUAW DUCK, 1 BLUE-WINGED TEAL, 1 EUROPEAN WIDGEON and several FERRUGINOUS HAWKS. ROYAL TERNS are fairly common.

January Attractions

This month is the time of year to be looking for ducks and geese rather than woodland birds.

BODEGA BAY is good for an occasional rare specie but you probably will find the common ones closer just as readily.

TOMALES BAY area including McClure Beach for possible HARLEQUIN and OLD SQUAW; Pt. Reyes, Abbott's Lagoon, where the TRUMPETER SWAN stayed for a while last January; and the entire eastern shore of the bay where you may find OLD SQUAW among the large flocks of scoters during the herring runs.

BOLINAS LAGOON has perhaps the largest number of species of duck which can be seen at close range from Highway 1. BLACK BRANT and KING-FISHER are plentiful. Loos for an eastern BRANT.

BAY FARM ISLAND, ALAMEDA - Leave Nimitz Freeway at High Street, drive to northwest end of High at waterfront. Turn left, cross bridge to golf course. Beyond the course is the park and beyond that, Bay Farm, which is an excellent shore bird area.

MONTEREY area for pelagic species, though November is the best month in a normally stormy year. Watch the harbor by the wharves, the water along the Pacific Grove shore and the lighthouse pond at Ft. Pinos.

CARMEL RIVER mouth is sometimes a haven from storm for rare species of duck and even woodland birds.

PANOCH VALLEY is still good for FERRUGINOUS HAWK. This high, arid valley, now irrigated and planted, has good possibilities for dry area birds.

SCHWAN LAKE of Twin Lakes Beach State Park, Santa Cruz is an excellent place to watch ducks from the service road along the northwestern shore. Good for REDHEAD DUCKS.

HOODED MERGANSER may be seen at Marsh Banks near Walnut Creek or sometimes on the golf course pond, Orinda or the St. Mary's College pond, Moraga. Last January there were five females on the Freedom Pond near Watsonville. Light is much better in the morning.

Watch all ponds and lagoons along the coast - you may be rewarded with rare species.

-- Oliver I. Allen
490 Orange Ave., Los Altos
948 - 5639

Editor's Notes

Local Audubon members who spend considerable time birding around S.F. South Bay have been asked by the Dept. of Fish & Game to report during the coming year on numbers and species of waterfowl and shorebirds. Single, mimeographed blue sheets containing report columns and a numbered grid map to indicate the exact areas of reports may be picked up (or mailed from) the National Audubon Conservation Center, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, or at the Region Three Office of F & G, Room 3000 Ferry Building, San Francisco 11. These contributions from afield may help to save some of our marsh and tideland areas by furnishing specific facts and figures on the importance of these areas to waterfowl and other natural resources.

--The Gull
Golden Gate Audubon Society 12/62

The California Highway Commission has shelved its fiercely controversial plans for a "scenic freeway" along the Marin shore and has thereby earned the gratitude of Marin residents and the commendation of all Californians.

By meeting the wishes of Marin officials and of numerous architects, planners and conservationists, the Commissioners have counteracted much of the criticism which, whether or not "unwarranted" as alleged by the Director of Public Works, has been both forceful and abundant.

A prime objection brought against the commission's selection of a route for the coastal freeway at this time was founded on the circumstance that county planners are now drafting a master plan for Western Marin; it was argued, not unreasonably, that the proposed road should conform to the master plan and not vice versa. It was also argued that the State plans called for a high-speed, straight-line roadway, whereas the terrain and other considerations call for a more leisurely, curving "scenic road".

In the one case, it now devolves upon the Marin planners to bring forward a route and design that will meet the requirements they and the State highway engineers can agree upon. It is beyond dispute that the area needs roads and will develop even greater needs as the Point Reyes National Seashore develops.

In the second case, it has been eloquently argued that no standards of design have yet been formulated for the kind of State roadway that has been designated "scenic". Establishment of such standards, it appears, is the urgent duty of the Legislature. In the present instance the Highway Commission has shown itself responsive to public opinion, but future Commissioners may be less amenable.

One of the most unusual parks in the California State Park System, Angel Island is 640 acres of rugged terrain and the largest island in the Bay. The park is a naturalist's delight; plant life is abundant, birds are plentiful. There are docking facilities for sail and power

boats at Hospital Cove's main dock.

The State Park is open daily between 8 a.m. and sunset. The admission charge is 25 cents for adults and children over 12 years of age. For the non-boat owner there are excursion boats that make regularly scheduled runs from docks in Tiburon, Sausalito and San Francisco on Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

-- J.T.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
Branch of
National Audubon Society

1962 - 1963

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