

# The Avocet

Volume 11 Number 10

December 1963

THERE'S A MESSAGE FOR VETERANS OF ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT  
AND THOSE WHO HAVEN'T JOINED US YET BUT WHO PLAN TO THIS YEAR.

## President's Message

Our message this month is for those who usually take part in the Christmas bird count and to those who haven't yet but who plan to. If you're not in either of these categories--well, this issue of the Avocet must have gotten into your hands by mistake.

This year for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society the annual count will be on Sunday, December 22, from daylight until dusk. The first thing to do is to decide whose team you want to be on, then call the team's leader and volunteer. It's as simple as that. If you can count and write, there'll be some kind of job for you. Even if you can't, maybe you can drive with reasonable facility, and chances are you'll still be welcome.

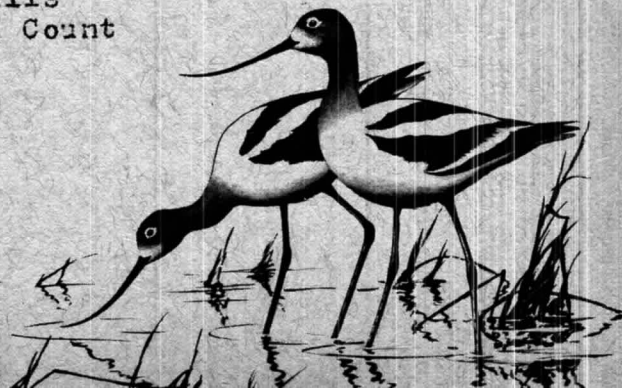
64th Year. This year's count will be No. 64 in the now venerable history of this event. Dr. Frank M. Chapman, dean of American ornithologists, is credited with devising the Christmas Count technique and putting it into practice for the first time in the year 1900. At the time he was editor of Bird Lore, the publication which we now know as the Audubon Magazine. These first year reports were received from 27 observers in 12 states and two Canadian provinces. Since then the undertaking has become the world's largest wildlife survey, probably also the world's largest single cooperative effort. Last year 15,000 watchers took part, scanning 672 census areas. Reports came from all 50 states, eight provinces of Canada and the District of Columbia.

## Coming Events at a Glance

No Board Meeting, Regular Meeting,  
nor Screen Tour in December

### COME ON THE COUNT!

Tue. Dec. 11	9:00a.m.	Muddart Park
Sat. Dec. 14	9:00a.m.	Dumbarton - Coyote Hills
Sun. Dec. 22	7:30a.m.	Annual Christmas Bird Count
Tue. Jan. 8	8:00p.m.	Falo Alto





How It's Done. It's an 8-hour, dawn to dusk operation. The eight hours can be any day of the Christmas fortnight. Census areas are circles 15 miles in diameter--for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society the center of the circle is the junction of Haybury Road and Capitol Avenue, appropriately within a stone's throw of the residence of Dr. L. Richard Newaldt. It's at his home teams meet at 7:00 a.m. for a second cup of coffee and final instructions--and it's at his home where all teams gather at the end of the day to tabulate the count.

Five Sectors. There are five leaders, each in charge of a sector of the big circle. Sectors are identified as Alviso, Southwest, Evergreen, Alum Rock and Calaveras. Leaders deploy their personnel into various areas of their sectors in fashion calculated to spot the maximum number of birds. Scouts have been known to case areas in advance (pun unintentional and apologies to Lloyd and Eve). Every one takes lunch, and team leaders usually help out at noon time by confiscating a home with hospitable occupants, a warm fire and hot coffee.

Some Results. Last year the group led by Ornithologist Allan D. Cruickshank at Cocoa, Florida, was first for number of species identified, 197. Tomales Bay, California, was runner-up with 166 species. Santa Clara Valley last year totalled 126 species, the year before 139. Altogether, the count usually tabulates more than 500 species.

Last year's notable California sightings included a Cattle Egret in Orange County, the first time this Old World species has been seen in California, and a Trumpeter Swan at Tomales Bay. More than a million Starlings were recorded at Portland, Oregon. In our own count this not very popular species reached a new high, 1006, as against 202 the preceding year, 255 in 1960, and 90 in 1959. It's not unlikely they'll increase to thousands within the next few years. Two Bald Eagles and six Ravens, neither seen very frequently in this area, were included in the local count last year.

Total number of birds counted is usually above 50 million--the local count with a full crew on a good day can be expected to count more than 50,000.

For Audubon Society folk, the big count is as traditional at Christmas time as Santa Claus.

Merry Christmas--and good counting!

J.R. Brokenshire

#### Calendar

No Board Meeting, Regular Meeting, nor Screen Tour in December

#### January Meeting:

Wednesday, January 3, in Room 3, Palo Alto Community Center on Middlefield Road at 8:00 p.m. Roxanne Ferris, former Curator of the Dudley Herbarium at Stanford University will speak on "Flowers of China." She is a specialist on native California members of the sunflower family and completed Volume IV of Abrams' monumental "Illustrated Flora of the Pacific

States." More information in the January issue.

Field Trips:

Wednesday, December 11, to Waddart Park for birding, mushrooms and to explore new trails. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Park on King's Mt. Road (turn right at Woodside Store.) Leader: Virginia Bothwell (742-1209).

Saturday, December 14, to Lumbarton-Coyote Hills area. Lesland Nellie Sleeper will lead the trip. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the west end of Lumbarton Bridge, using parking strip on north side of road.

Sunday, December 22, Annual Christmas Bird Count. Meeting place: East San Jose, at the home of Frances and Richard Newaldt, 4150 Golf Drive (CL 3-7491). Everyone be there at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Reconvene at 4:30 p.m. SHARP at the Newaldt'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 Haybury 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 (356-5996)
- B. Southwest: Mrs. Angelina Snow, 21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos (314-1811), Mrs. Dannie Swaal, 470 Clifton Ave., San Jose 20, (672-2060).
- C. Evergreen: Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Pillow, 675 Orange Ave., Los Altos, (WH 3-1300).
- D. Alum Rock: Mr. Phil Gordon, 37750 Almore Ct., Fremont (799-6991).
- E. Calaveras: Albert J. Wool, Box 60, La Honda, (415-EE 7-0917).

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 before-hand how many observers (and cars) he can count on for his sector. If you have further questions, call Eve Case (Ch 3-2467), Howard Volcott (WH 3-5021) or one of the section leaders.

### Records:

One person in each group will act as a 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, 2173: (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)

Give percentage of time spent in each habitat.

Howard Volcott,  
Field Trip Chairman

### New Members

We extend a cordial welcome to the following new members:

Mrs. Cynthia F. Fisher	P.O. Box 390, Mission San Jose.
Mr. Garland L. Minke	577 Cheyenne Dr., Sunnyvale
Jeanette Adleson	3675 La Calle Ct., Palo Alto.
Mrs. Ernestine Putnam	397 Live Oak Ave, Apt. 2, Menlo
Mr. & Mrs. Robert B. Jordan	1122 Golden Way, Lost Altos, 940
Mr. Marinus Verbrugge	10915 Sienna Dr., San Jose 20
	---Angelina Snow, Membership Ch

### RESOLUTIONS ON USE OF PALO ALTO BAYLANDS

WHEREAS, the recently published report of the Institute of Governmental Studies of Berkeley by Dr. Mel Scott of the Institute staff on the use of San Francisco Bay and its tidelands confirms concern of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society that the San

Francisco Bay and its tidelands confirms the concern of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society that the San Francisco Bay and its tidelands are threatened by encroaching commercial development projects:

AND WHEREAS, this report emphasizes the value of the preservation of the bay in essentially its present form and recommends an immediate two-year moratorium on bay filling;

AND WHEREAS, the Palo Alto Mayor's Citizen Advisory Committee on Parks and Recreation has recommended that a portion of the Palo Alto baylands be preserved in their natural state for the protection of plant life and native and migratory shorebirds and wildfowl;

AND WHEREAS, the sub-committee of the Palo Alto Mayor's Citizen Advisory Committee on Parks and Recreation, the sub-committee on Palo Alto Baylands, both in its action of October 1, 1962 and October 29, 1963, recommends the Bixbee Park acreage of approximately 1,700 acres, with certain exceptions, be broadly designated Bixbee Park and used for recreation purposes now and in the future and improved for those purposes, including the observation of wildlife preserves;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY:

1. That the Palo Alto Mayor's Citizen Advisory Committee on Parks and Recreation and its sub-committee on Palo Alto Baylands be commended for their zeal in resisting plans for the use of baylands incompatible with the preservation of these lands in their natural state; and

2. That the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society urges the Palo Alto City Council to support the recommendation of the Mayor's Citizen Advisory on Parks and Recreation to create a wildlife sanctuary of a portion of the baylands area, and to support the recommendation of the sub-committee on Baylands for the development of Bixbee Park as originally intended; and

3. That copies of these resolutions be distributed to the governmental agencies and committees concerned and to others interested in the movement to save San Francisco Bay and the wealth of unique and irreplaceable plant and animal life it supports.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, AT

REGULAR MEETING MONDAY EVENING, NOV. 4, 1963.

#### Conservation Notes

During the calendar year that is drawing to a close, conservationists have been successful in many projects, accepted compromises in others, and suffered defeat in quite a few. In the December issue I hope to give a "Box Score" of the projects in which the National Audubon Society has been particularly interested.

This month I wish to present a list of Conservation Projects



for your consideration. Each of these is important, nationally as well as locally. Although some of them are not so "local" in nature, they still may effect us, as individuals, in our travels and vacation trips.

These vital issues are:

- 1) RECREATION NEEDS: More areas and facilities to meet the growing demand.
- 2) WATER POLLUTION: Increased and expanded controls; improved enforcement of laws.
- 3) WETLANDS: Maintaining wetlands essential to our waterfowl and our water supplies.
- 4) WILDERNESS: Establishment of a Wilderness Preservation System for suitable federal lands.
- 5) WILD RIVERS: Preservation of undeveloped streams with superior recreational values.
- 6) MULTIPLE USE: Administration of public lands for multiple use, recognizing recreational needs.
- 7) HIGHWAY DAMAGE: Protection of streams and natural areas from loss due to construction of highways and/or freeways.
- 8) PESTICIDES: The minimizing of wildlife losses from indiscriminate use of chemicals.
- 9) PRESERVATION OF NATURAL BEAUTY: Control of advertising and litter along highways, waterways.
- 10) ESTUARINE AREAS: Preservation of tidal lands and waters.
- 11) ENDANGERED WILDLIFE: Protection of species of wildlife in danger of extinction.
- 12) OWNER-USER RELATIONS: Improvement of relations between landowners and recreation users.

If we try to pick out one of these projects as being the "most important", we find, as it always is in nature: "when we try to pick out and isolate any one thing, we find that it is connected to everything else in the universe."

Nevertheless, I hope that every member of our chapter will take time to consider each of these issues, and to pick out one (or two, or three) that seem to be most important. I wish that I could have presented this in a "Ballot Form," but none of us want to cut out any portion of our AVOCET, so I am just hoping that some of you will be sufficiently interested to drop me a line, or a post-card, expressing your opinion. I sincerely hope that enough of you respond so that I can get enough opinions to be able to express the consensus of The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society to other conservation organizations with whom we are cooperating. No one organization can possibly win all of the battles on all of the conservation issues, and for that reason we should have a definite opinion as to the relative importance of the issues, as we evaluate them.

With this information we can much more effectively cooperate with the other conservation organizations, such as the neighboring chapters of the National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, National Parks Association, Nature Conservancy, Save-The-San Francisco-Bay-Association, National Wildlife Federation, American Forestry Association, and a number of other conservation organizations with which we are affiliated.

In addition, we shall have knowledge of the issues in which you are most interested, and I can perhaps do a better job of

reporting the conservation picture to you in each AVOCET.

Please, can you take time to let me know your opinion?

Lloyd N. Case  
2506 Homestead Road  
Santa Clara, Cal.

Notes from Afield

Marthen Ranch Trip, Oct. 23

We birded along a country lane near the intersection of Alpine and Arastradero and later on the grounds of the Marthen Ranch. The morning was warm and sunny. Thirty-one species were observed.

Calif. Quail (4 or 5)	Wstrn Bluebird (4 or 5)
Band-tailed Pigeon (small flock)	Ruby-crwn'd Kinglet (1)
Mourning Dove (1)	Audubon's Warbler (20-25)
Anna's Hummingbird (4)	House Sparrow (several)
Red-shafted Flicker (2)	Meadowlark (sev)
Acorn Woodpecker (at least 6)	Brewer's Blackbird (3)
Steller's Jay (2 or 3)	House Finch (20-25)
Scrub Jay (many)	Lser Gldfnch (sev. small groups)
Chestnt-b'ked Chickadee (5 or 6)	Rufous-sided Towhee (1)
Plain Titmouse (3 or 4)	Brown Towhee (6 or 7)
Common Nuthatch (flock approx 20)	Oregon Junco (5 or 6)
White breasted n'thatch (1)	Gldn-crowned Sparrow (several)
Bowick's Wren (1)	White crowned Sparrow (several)
Mocking bird (1)	Song Sparrow (1)
Calif Thrasher (2)	

On the October 16 scouting trip several other species were seen: Say's Phoebe (1), Wrentit (1 heard), House Wren (1), Robin (5 or 6), Pine Siskin (flock of at least 50), Lark Sparrow (1).

Leader: Carol Zabel

San Francisquito Creek Trip, Nov. 9

This trip was attended by 19 observers on a day that turned out to be perfectly beautiful. We met at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor duck pond, assembled into as few cars as possible and then proceeded to the end of O'Connor St. in East Palo Alto. Here we went on foot along the dike on the north side of San Francisquito Creek to its mouth at the Bay. Birding was done both at the duck pond while assembling and along the creek. A separate ~~pond list~~ list will follow for each area. 35 species were observed.

Duck Pond Area (other than those seen along the creek)

Snowy Egret (1)	Killdeer (1)
White-fronted Goose (1)	Glaucous-winged Gull
Mallard Duck (many)	Ring-billed Gull (many)
Pintail (7)	Bonaparte's Gull (Several)
Lesser Scaup (1 male, 3 female)	Brewer's Blackbird (many)
American Coot (many)	

Along the creek and at the duck pond if indicated:

Pied-billed Grebe (1)	Western Sandpiper (many)
Great Blue Heron (3 on distant towers)	Marbled Godwit (many)
Common Egret (1)	American Avocet (sev. flocks).
Ruddy Duck (1 plus few in the dk.pd.)	Forster's Tern (several).



Blk-bellied Plover (2 + few at dk pd.) Belted Kingfisher (1)  
 Ruddy Turnstone (1) Loggerhead Shrike (2)  
 Long-billed Curlew (4) Yellowthroat (1 heard)  
 Willet (many) Western Meadowlark (sev.)  
 Least Sandpiper (many + 4 at dk pd.) House Finch (sev)  
 Dunlin (many) Savannah Sparrow (sev)  
 Dowitcher (many) Gldn-crowned Sparrow (heard)

For those interested, the spiral conical shell we were observing belongs to the California Horn Snail (*Cerithidea californica*). These are the most abundant snails on the mudflats and are slurp feeders living on the film of things growing on the mud.

Leader: Ralph Trullinger

Robert Taylor Ranch Trip, Nov. 13

Leaders were Mrs. Robert Taylor, Catherine Lintott, Emily Smith. The weather was overcast with some sprinkles. Since the three of us scouted on the 12th, we are combining the results of the two trips:

California Quail (6)	Robin (several flying over)
Band-tailed Pigeon (6 Or 8 fly. over)	Varied Thrush (6)
Mourning Dove (21)	Hermit Thrush (1)
Anna's Hummingbird (1)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1)
Flicker (2)	Audubon's Warbler (1)
Acorn Woodpecker (sev)	Townsend's Warbler (1)
Hairy Woodpecker (1)	Brewer's Blackbird (10)
Downy Woodpecker (1)	Purple Finch (2)
Steller's Jay (sev)	Fine Siskin (hundreds in flocks)
Scrub Jay (1)	Lesser Goldfinch
Chestnut backed Chickadee (sev)	Rufous-sided Towhee (2)
Plain Titmouse (1)	Brown Towhee (1)
Common Bushtit (flock)	Oregon Junco (many)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (2 calling)	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Wrentit (2)	Fox Sparrow (2)
Bewick's Wren (1)	Song Sparrow (2)
California Thrasher (1)	

From Maurice Barnhill:

I have seen a few birds in the last two months that may be of interest.

Eared Grebe (1), Nov. 3, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor  
 Pintail (2), Nov. 3, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor  
 Red-head (100 est.), Nov. 9, Twin Lakes Beach, Santa Cruz  
 Surfbird (6), Nov. 9, Bean Hollow Beach  
 Ruddy Turnstone (4), Palo Alto Yacht Harbor,  
 Short-eared Owl (1), Nov. 3, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor.  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch (2), Oct. 22, Menlo Park  
 Hermit Thrush (1), Nov. 9, Stevens Creek Park  
 Starling (1), October 28, Stanford Campus  
 Fox Sparrow (1), Nov. 7, Stanford Campus.

From Eve Case: November 12

Flock of Pine Siskins have been feeding in my redwoods and birches for three weeks. There are fewer the last couple of days.

I've seen only one Fox Sparrow here but have a pretty good number of Audubon's Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows and Golden crowned Sparrows. Five flocks of Cedar Waxwings (about 25 each)



came briefly, but did not stay to feed.

From Harriet Lundy: Oct. 27.

At least 2 red-breasted Nuthatches have been here, 757 Tennyson, Palo Alto, since Oct. 14 coming regularly to suet stick. Very tame.

Today a flock of about 25-30 Pine Siskins appeared in my birch trees with American Gold Finches.

American Widgeon - Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, Nov. 5 and 6.

From Joe Wissel:

Pectoral Sandpiper (1), Drakes Bay Beach, Oct. 20.

From Ralph Trullinger:

Cedar Waxwing - several flocks throughout November at various places in Menlo Park, mostly feeding on pyracantha berries.

1960 Santa Cruz Ave.  
Menlo Park (854-4201).

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Branch of  
National Audubon Society  
1963-1964

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