

The Avocet

Volume XI Number 1

January, 1964

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: SOME PRELIMINARY REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Driving east on McKee Road at 7 a.m. December 22 en route to the Mewaldt residence: Pink glow over eastern hills, heralding the approach of sunshine and a perfect day.

At Mewaldt residence -- Mrs. Mewaldt already presiding over fragrant pot of coffee. Birders arriving to start day's activities. 'Teen age group activity well under way -- they started at 4 a.m. in Alum Rock Park where they took census of owls. These early risers: Richard Sandkuhle, Dan Schmoltdt, Jim Ratzliff, Franklin Sunzen and Michael Brokenshire.

By 8 a.m. well under way toward the southwest sector, two expert birders with me: Mrs. Angelina Snow, sector captain, and Mrs. Richard Shore. It soon develops we're a good team -- Brokenshire and Shore on the liberal side -- Snow conservative enough to keep the count about right.

Next to highest point of the day for this trip: flashing glance from car window toward east side of 101 Freeway near Loupe Avenue. Quick stop and exclamations from all hands. Not pheasants after all, but somewhat off course industriously probing for food, there they were: Marbled Godwits, 15 in all -- one of the few categories, it later turned out, in which the southwest sector team led all others.

Highest point of the day: luncheon stop at home of Mrs. Adele Maynard. Congratulations from all hands to Captain Snow for good judgment in having niece who dispensed hospitality and hot coffee in gracious abundance.

Back to Mewaldt home, 4:30 p.m., with 58 others, to pleasant confusion of coffee, Christmas cookies, bird counts, conversation and final tabulation. Grand Central Station never busier nor much noisier -- and in justice to Dr. Mewaldt and his family it appears that annual Christmas bird count has outgrown the capacity of his home -- or anyone's home -- and that next year the thing to do will be to take over a hall, at least for the tabulation climax of the day.

Pending the usual complete report from Dr. Mewaldt, here are some highlights of the day's activities:

New high for number of birds counted, 61,000, as compared to 57,845 in 1958 and 56,676 last year.

New high for number of birders, 61 as compared to 56 in 1961 and 41 last year.

New high for weather -- nothing less than perfect.

Number of species counted, 134, exceeded only by 139 in 1961.

Starlings continue explosive increase, with tally of 4105, more than double the 1806 of last year. First showed up in count with 110 in 1958.

Two species in count for first time: osprey, large fish-eating hawk; and gnatcatcher, tiny, slender creature, like a mockingbird in miniature.

Robins more abundant this year than last, 565 compared to 49, but far below 1961's record Robin count of 3058. Fluctuation is due to variation from year to year in the availability of food and severity of the winter in areas to the north.

-- J. R. Brokenshire



Coming Events at a Glance

Wed.	Jan.	8	8:00 p.m.	Palo Alto
Sun.	Jan.	12	9:00 a.m.	Point Reyes
Tues.	Jan.	14	8:00 p.m.	San Jose State College
Wed.	Jan.	15	8:30 a.m.	Saratoga
Fri.	Jan.	17	4:15 p.m.	Stanford University
Sat.	Jan.	25	9:00 a.m.	Stockton Delta Area
Sun.	Feb.	2	9:00 a.m.	Richardson's Bay

January Calendar

Regular Meeting:

Wednesday, January 8, in Room R, Palo Alto Community Center on Middlefield Road at 8:00 p.m. Roxana Ferris, former Curator of the Dudley Herbarium at Stanford University, will speak about the Herbarium and will give an illustrated talk - "Desert Plants and Wildflowers and their Adaptability". She is a specialist on native California members of the sunflower family and completed Volume IV of Abrams' monumental work "Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States".

Field Trips:

Sunday, January 12, a visit to Point Reyes will be led by enthusiastic Stan Picher of Marin Audubon Society. Meet at the Post Office at Inverness at 9:00 a.m. Wear warm clothing. Bring lunch.

Wednesday Morning, January 15, to the Pike Estate, Saratoga Hills Rd., in Saratoga. The large estate includes both wooded and open country. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Saratoga, in parking area at corner of Big Basin Way and 6th Street (where the Catholic Church used to be). Leader: Mrs. John Henderson (UN 7-4304).

Saturday, January 25, to the Stockton Delta area as guests of the Stockton Audubon Society. Anyone staying Saturday night and planning to bird on Sunday can cover areas we won't have time for on Saturday. Areas will be suggested for specific birds. Meet at the Lincoln Shopping Center on Pacific Street in Stockton at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Entering Stockton from Tracy on Highway 50 you will find yourself on El Dorado - a one-way street northbound. Turn left on Harding, then right on Pacific. The Lincoln Shopping Center is on the left. It probably will be cold there, too! For further information call 243-2467 (7:00 a.m. or mealtime).

Sunday, February 2, to Richardson's Bay. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the service station on the right side of the road just north of Richardson's Bay Bridge. Take the Strawberry Drive turn-off. The Bridge is about 6 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge on Highway 101. Bring lunch. Leader: R.T. Trullinger (854-4201).

(Mrs. Virginia Bothwell has resigned as a Wednesday field trip planner, and Mrs. John Henderson succeeds Miss Emily Smith on Wednesday field trip planning.--J.T.)

Screen Tours:

Tuesday, January 14, at 8:00 p.m., Main Gym, San Jose State College, Edgar T. Jones will present "Alberta Outdoors". The Canadian Province of Alberta is a land of great beauty and contrast. Mountains, prairies, and vast wilderness areas provide homes for many different birds and animals - - among them, the Canada lynx, moose, elk, the

great gray owl, the ruffed grouse, and the goshawk. This sparkling new color film produced and narrated by Edgar T. Jones, photographer-naturalist from Edmonton, Alberta, will delight those who enjoy nature and the out-of-doors. Tickets are available at the door.

Friday, January 17, at 4:15 p.m. in Cubberley Auditorium, Education Bldg., Escondido Road and Lasuen St., Stanford University, Edgar T. Jones will present "Alberta Outdoors".

New Members

We are glad to welcome the following new members:

Mr. Dennis Cornell Patt	2436 Cottle Ave., San Jose
Mr. Joseph W. Bingaman	346 N. Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View
Mr. & Mrs. Vernon E. Ross	P.O. Box 31, Eagle Creek, Oregon

-- Angelina Snow
Membership Chairman

CONSERVATION NOTES

With the deplorable death of John F. Kennedy, not only did the nation lose its leader, but the cause of conservation lost a sympathetic and energetic friend. If Mr. Kennedy had lived it is very probably that his administration would have become a "Third Wave" in the history of conservation, its achievements comparing with, if not even surpassing those of the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In his introduction to Secretary Udall's new book, The Quiet Crisis, Mr. Kennedy wrote: "...the race between education and erosion, between wisdom and waste, has not run its course...Each generation must deal anew with the raiders, with the scramble to use public resources for private profit, and with the tendency to prefer short-run profits to long-run necessities. The nation's battle to preserve the common estate is far from won...The crisis may be quiet, but it is urgent. We must do in our own day what Theodore Roosevelt did sixty years ago and Franklin Roosevelt thirty years ago; we must expand the concept of conservation to meet the imperious problems of the new age....".

Mr. Kennedy's concept of conservation was clearly stated in his Message to Congress (1962): "...Conservation...can be defined as the wise use of our natural environment; it is, in the final analysis, the highest form of national thrift - the prevention of waste and despoilment while preserving, improving and renewing the quality and usefulness of all our resources...".

This concept calls to mind Aldo Leopold's statement that "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." (Sand County Almanac.)

Other Losses: During the recent weeks conservation has lost two other prominent and internationally recognized leaders.

Dr. Carl O. Gustafson, a member of the Board of Directors of National Audubon Society, was killed in a crash of his private plane.

Dr. Olaus J. Murie, recipient of the Audubon Medal in 1959, died after a period of illness in his home in Wyoming. A naturalist well known for his scientific achievements, a leader for wilderness preservation, an author, Dr. Murie was, at the time of his death, chairman of the Council of The Wilderness Society. Be sure to read the article about

this unusual man in the Nov.-Dec. "Audubon Magazine".

Also, be sure to read, if you possibly can, the thrilling and stimulating book, "Two in The Far North", written by his wife. You will live with them on two trips up the Yukon, the Upper Koyukuk, and to headwaters of the Sheenjek River, at the very foot of the Brooks Range in Northern Alaska, where Dr. Murie made scientific studies of the caribou populations and migrations, - with numerous other "chores" thrown in for good measure. (The book can be borrowed from our library.)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MIAMI CONVENTION:

OF COURSE, all of you will read all about the Convention, but here are a few important highlights that I want to be sure you do not miss:

In his Opening Day address, Secretary Udall called for a "new wave" of organized conservation effort. He quoted Francis Bacon's statement: "We cannot command nature except by obeying her".

PRESIDENT BUCHHEISTER in his Opening Day address, called for a redoubling of our efforts to make Audubon Societies vital forces in our own communities, and for expansion of our conservation, education and research programs. He criticised the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for continuing use of poisons which are contaminating food chains and the total environment, and urged local groups to "keep hammering away at this problem". Other important items in his address included: prediction of the passing of a wilderness conservation bill next year; a call for new National Seashore areas, and for legislation strengthening the federal water pollution control program; commendation of Representative Dingle (Mich.) for his predatory mammals conservation bill (HR 9037); endorsement of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill (HR 3846); and particularly pleasing, the announcement of the Society's purchase of 112 acres of highly valuable land on Big Pine Key and the Society's willingness to lease them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an addition to the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge on Big Pine Key.

DR. WALTER R. SPOFFORD, (State Univ. of New York), leading authority on the golden eagle, estimated the total North American population as not exceeding 10,000 birds, and stated that the species could not withstand a resumption of the hunting from airplanes that was halted by federal law this year.

DR. ROGER TORY PETERSON, during a lively panel discussion of government outdoor recreation policies and the effect of recreation pressures on wildlife refuges and wilderness areas, warned that irreplaceable wildlife habitat and rare wilderness resources must not be destroyed in an unthinking rush to provide the trappings for mass recreation on every piece of public land.

(SANTA CLARA COUNTY SUPERVISORS
and CITY PLANNING COMMISSIONS, PLEASE NOTE!)

The 1964 Convention (November 7-11) will be in TUCSON, ARIZONA! That is close to home, -- so LET'S GO!

-- Lloyd N. Case
Conservation Chairman

Notes from Afield

Searsville Lake Trip, November 20:

The day was cloudy, temperature 65° - 70°, no wind and wet from Tuesday's rain; 58 species were observed:

Pied-billed Grebe (5)	White-breasted Nuthatch (40)
Great Blue Heron (6)	Brown Creeper (2)
Mallard (51)	Wrentit (7)
Gadwall (4)	Bewick's Wren (6)
American Widgeon (3)	Long-billed Marsh Wren (6)
Ring-necked Duck (1)	California Thrasher (8)
Canvasback (2)	Robin (2)
Lesser Scaup (4)	Western Bluebird (5)
Ruddy Duck (2)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (5)
California Quail (5)	Cedar Waxwing (9)
American Coot (6)	Loggerhead Shrike (4)
Killdeer (8)	Hutton's Vireo (4)
California Gull (5)	Audubon's Warbler (3)
Ring-billed Gull (6)	Yellowthroat (3)
Band-tailed Pigeon (58)	Western Meadowlark (2)
Rock Dove (4)	Redwinged Blackbird (30)
Mourning Dove (3)	Brewer's Blackbird (1)
Anna's Hummingbird (7)	House Finch (7)
Belted Kingfisher (7)	Pine Siskin (20)
Red-shafted Flicker (7)	Lesser Goldfinch (3)
Acorn Woodpecker (4)	Rufous-sided Towhee (6)
Downy Woodpecker (8)	Brown Towhee (5)
Black Phoebe (9)	Oregon Junco (1)
Violet-green Swallow (8)	Golden-crowned Sparrow (9)
Steller's Jay (7)	White-crowned Sparrow (8)
Chestnut-backed Chickadee (1)	Fox Sparrow (1)
Plain Titmouse (2)	Song Sparrow (10)
Common Bushtit (9)	

On the November 15 scouting trip 60 species were seen. Those seen only on the scouting trip:

Common Goldeneye	Hermit Thrush
Rufous Hummingbird	Myrtle Warbler
Hairy Woodpecker	Purple Finch
Western Flycatcher	

Leader: Mrs. Luther Cisne

Alum Rock Park Trip, November 24:

We met at the parking lot near the Youth Science Institute, where we grouped into three cars to drive to Cherry Flat Reservoir. We were fortunate in gaining permission to enter this area, since it is not open to the public. In beautiful weather we walked completely around the reservoir, observing 38 species:

Pied-billed Grebe	Common Crow (1)
Common Egret (1)	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
American Widgeon	Plain Titmouse
Ring-necked Duck	Whitebreasted Nuthatch
Ruddy Duck	Wrentit
Bufflehead (3)	Hermit Thrush

California Quail
American Coot
Greater Yellowlegs (1)
White-throated Swift
Belted Kingfisher (1)
Red-shafted Flicker
Acorn Woodpecker
Nuttall's Woodpecker (1)
Black Phoebe
Steller's Jay
Scrub Jay

Western Bluebird
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Cedar Waxwing
Myrtle Warbler
Audubon's Warbler
House Finch
Rufous-sided Towhee
Brown Towhee
Oregon Junco
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow

Huddart Park Trip, December 11:

The weather was cold with frost, but clear - very cold in the shadows, but warm in the sheltered places. We went through the Park and walked down Greer Road, enjoying many mushrooms, including shaggy manes. On the scouting trip and the regular trip 21 species of birds were observed in all:

California Quail
Downy Woodpecker
Steller's Jay
Scrub Jay
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Plain Titmouse
Common Bushtit (Scouting)
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-breasted Nuthatch

Bewick's Wren
Robin (Scouting)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Many)
Pine Siskin (Small flock)
American Goldfinch
Brown Towhee
Oregon Junco
Golden-crowned Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Song Sparrow

Leader: Virginia Bothwell

Dumbarton Area Trip, December 14:

This trip was attended by 15 people on a chilly morning. We met at the west end of Dumbarton Bridge where we birded awhile before driving to the east end of the Bridge. Here we walked along the dike to the sanctuary on the south side of the railroad bridge. The outstanding observation of the day was a Clapper Rail at very close range walking on logs. There were 33 species seen:

Horned Grebe (1)
Eared Grebe (5)
Western Grebe (est. 9)
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Common Egret
Snowy Egret
Pintail (2 small flocks)
Greater Scaup (several)
Lesser Scaup (thousand)
Clapper Rail (2)
American Coot
Killdeer
Long-billed Curlew (15)
Willet (several hundred)
Greater Yellowlegs (1)

Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
Western Sandpiper
Marbled Godwit (500-600)
American Avocet (50)
Black-necked Stilt
Northern Phalarope
Western Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Belted Kingfisher (1)
Water Pipit (several)
Audubon's Warbler (1)
Western Meadowlark
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Leader: Les Sleeper

From John and Mrs. Cisne:

August 8, Marbled Murrelet - One each at Pescadero and Pigeon Pt.
October 17, White Pelicans, 1,000 plus, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor.
Birds came in in a huge "V"-shaped straggling formations from the south.
Seemed to be trying to decide to land around Dumbarton area.

November 2, off the Pescadero Coast - slender-billed Shearwater,
Sooty Shearwater, Fulmer, Black Petrel, Cassin's Auklet.

Horned Larks - 5 - Palo Alto Yacht Harbor - Have kept records on
them for a year and a half. Two nesting this year:

- 1st nest - 4 young reared;
- 2nd nest - 3 young reared.

Red-necked Grebe - One - Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. First seen on
December 5, last seen on December 11. (This is a first for this area
to my knowledge - R.Trullinger.)

From Harriet Mundy:

December 7, Lesser Yellowlegs - 2 - Palo Alto Yacht Harbor
December 17, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, 2 Green-winged Teal, many
Cinnamon Teal and Shovelers, Flock of 25 Long-billed
Curlews overhead, 1 Common Goldeneye.
December 17 and the week preceding this date - Nashville Warbler,
one at 757 Tennyson Ave., Palo Alto.

From Margaret Henderson: 21215 Sullivan Way, Saratoga:

December 18 - I have two White-throated Sparrows at our home this
winter, One is an adult and the other a first year bird. Emily
Smith was up to see them yesterday with Mrs. Case and Mrs. Lintott.

From Emily Smith:

A Golden-crowned Sparrow which I banded in December, 1957, has been
a frequent visitor this month to my feeder. This makes it at least six
years old, in spite of the hazards of annual migrations from nesting
grounds far north of California (very likely north of the United
States) to California for the winter.

From R. Trullinger:

Red-breasted Nuthatch - one in Alum Rock Park near the Youth Science
Institute on November 24 - not listed on the field trip because I saw
it after everybody else had left. Had many good views while observing
it for at least a steady five minutes.

Starling - one - December 20, was with several Brewer's Blackbirds.

(Note: For their protection, we do not publish reports on eagles,
hawks, and owls. - J.T.)

Send observations to:

Ralph Trullinger
1960 Santa Cruz Ave.,
Menlo Park 94026 (Tel.: 854-4201)

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

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
John R. Brokenshire	President	102 So. 23rd St. San Jose 27	293-6209
Dr. Evelyn H. Case	Vice-Pres.	2506 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara	243-2467
Mrs. Eva McRae	Secretary	55 Manning Ave., San Jose	258-3011
Mrs. Fanny Twaal	Treasurer	470 Clifton Ave., San Jose	292-2060
Dr. H.T. Harvey	Director	716 Garner Court Santa Clara	243-6956
John Henderson	Director	20570 Canyon View Dr Saratoga	867-4304
Ralph Trullinger	Director	1960 Sant Cruz Ave= Menlo Park	654-4201
Claude Smith	Director	P.O. Box 409, Saratoga	867-3629
Miss Wilma Thompson	Director	758 Pollard Road Los Gatos	378-4333
Mrs. Joyce Todd	Director	945 Hatadero Ave. Palo Alto	326-6904
Warren H. Turner	Director	646 Alvarado Row Stanford University	325-7777
<u>Education Committee Chairman:</u>		Mrs. Diane Conradson 255 Edlee Avenue, Palo Alto.	327-2512
<u>Membership Chairman:</u>		Mrs. Irving Snow 21441 Roaring Water Way, Los Gatos	EL 4-1811

Conservation Resource Center
National Audubon Society
2426 Bancroft Way
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Office of Western Representative
National Audubon Society
1000 North Durfee Ave.
El Monte, California

The Avocet

Our publication appears monthly except July and August. It is \$2.00 a year for non-members. Copy, preferably typed, is requested by the 20th of each month.

Editor: Mrs. John E. Todd
945 Hatadero Ave., Palo Alto (326-6904)

Circulation
Manager: Miss Elsie Ebeck
1311 Cristina, San Jose 25 (CY 3-5668)

Typists: Mrs. Jane R. Castner
Miss Carol C. Rulofson
112 Murray Court, Redwood City (366-2514)

Linocographers: Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor
14311 Suito Road, Saratoga (DR 9-3424)