

The Avocet

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President's Message

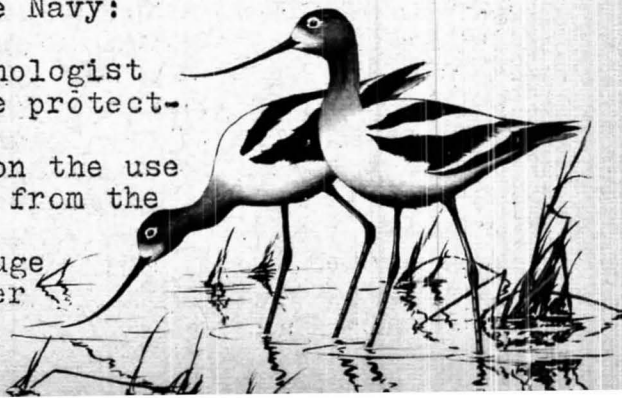
Congratulations Department: To Warren and Rebecca Turner for a highly successful "Newcomers" field trip Sunday, February 16, at Searsville Lake. Some 60 persons -- a goodly proportion of them bona fide "newcomers" -- had an enjoyable time and got acquainted with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and some of its most devoted practitioners.

And congratulations also to "Bill" Goodall, genial western representative of the National Audubon Society, for the highly successful biennial workshop session at Berkeley Saturday, February 8. Your Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society was well represented by a delegation of 14. They heard Carl W. Buchheister, national president, in an extremely interesting review of his visit, as a guest of the U.S. Navy, to Midway Islands in the Pacific, where air collisions with albatrosses have endangered planes and personnel. And they participated in six morning and afternoon workshop sessions as follows: (1) Presidents; (2) Wildlife Films; (3) Membership; (4) Programs, Field Trips, Leadership Training; (5) Nature Centers, Sanctuaries, Conservation Education, Audubon Junior Programs; (6) Publicity, Public Relations, Bulletins. Dr. Evelyn Case and Howard Wolcott, co-chairmen of our society's Field Trip Committees, were honored by being asked to serve as leaders of the session on programs, field trips and leadership training. The program will continue to pay dividends for a long time to come for those who attended and for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. The delegation your president was proud to head: Mrs. Luther C. Cisne, Mrs. Irving Snow, Mrs. Fanny Zwaal, Dr. A.G. Applegarth, Admiral Charles D. Williams, Dr. Thomas Harvey, Howard Wolcott, Dr. Evelyn Case, Mrs. Diane Conradson, Mrs. Joyce Todd, Mrs. Kay McCann, Warren Turner, Rebecca Turner.

More about Albatrosses: Mr. Buchheister went to Midway in January as the Navy was starting a bird-control project that involved killing some 20,000 of the 150,000 albatrosses estimated to nest on San and Eastern islands of the Midway group. Acting upon the advice of a government biologist, the Navy removed and killed nesters from 750-foot strips on either side of the runways used by the Navy's radar patrol planes. This was necessary because "site-conscious" albatrosses, having virtually no fear of man, if nests were destroyed and birds allowed to live, would hover in the vicinity and soar over the runways, thus increasing the hazard.

Mr. Buchheister's recommendations to the Navy:

1. Employ a full-time, resident ornithologist to seek solutions that would save birds while protecting planes and crews.
2. Continue research recently stated on the use of magnified sounds to keep albatrosses away from the airstrips on Sand Island.
3. Flag the network of guy-wires on huge antennae on Eastern Island, or find some other



means of preventing the loss of up to 100 albatrosses weekly that kill themselves by flying into the guy-wires.

4. Keep hands off the nearby Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge was established by executive order of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909 to protect unique birdlife. The refuge embraces a number of atolls and small islands lying between Midway and the principal islands of Hawaii. Protection of the refuge is necessary, Mr. Buchheister said, to preserve the Laysan albatross, a species which nests only in the leeward islands of the Hawaiian archipelago, including Midway. The refuge is also the home of several species, some nearly extinct, that are found no other place in the world. An effort is being made to get the federal government to relinquish control of the refuge, Mr. Buchheister said, to facilitate establishment of a commercial resort on one of the refuge islands.

--J. R. Brokenshire

Coming Events at a Glance

Tues.	Mar. 3	4:15 p.m.	Stanford University
Tues.	Mar. 3	8:00 p.m.	San Jose State College
Sat.	Mar. 7	9:00 a.m.	Dumbarton Bridge
Wed.	Mar. 11	9:00 a.m.	Alum Rock Park
Wed.	Mar. 11	8:00 p.m.	Palo Alto
Sat.-Sun.	Mar. 14-15	1:30 p.m.	Los Banos
Sat.	Mar. 21	9:00 a.m.	Los Altos Hills
Wed.	Mar. 25	9:00 a.m.	Palo Alto Yacht Harbor

March Calendar

Regular Meeting:

Wednesday, March 11, at 8:00 p.m. in Room R, Palo Alto Community Center, Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Mr. Robert Lassen, Game Management Supervisor of the California Department of Fish and Game, will discuss "The Fish and Game Future of San Francisco Bay". He is willing to answer questions that occur to members and friends.

Field Trips:

Saturday, March 7, at 9:00 a.m., to Dumbarton Bridge area. Meet at the west end of the bridge, parking on the left side of Willow Road. Leaders: Jane and Frank Goraj (DA 5-8847).

Wednesday, March 11, to Alum Rock Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking area of the Youth Science Institute. Signs of spring will be showing in the willow trees and in many ferns and mosses. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Prusman (356-3844)

Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15: Time has come again to announce plans for our annual overnight field trip to the Grasslands Area of western Merced County. This year we are a week earlier than last; consequently, we should see many more waterfowl before they depart to their northern breeding grounds. I am hopeful, too, we will be there before the bulk of the Sandhill Cranes leave. It will be interesting to see whether, at this date, the Black-necked Stilts have arrived in numbers to nest. They appear to follow the Avocets to these nesting grounds. Surely the rookery at San Luis Island will be overflowing with Egrets, Great Blues, and Black-crowned Night Heron. Last year there were some 1,500 birds nesting here on this five-acre rookery. There were Ibis, too, at the Los Banos Refuge. During the two days of

travel over some 45,000 acres of ponded gun clubs with side trips to Los Banos and San Luis Island, we will all be treated again to a natural phenomenon reproduced nowhere else in California or the Pacific Flyway. The trip details are these: On Saturday, March 14, we will meet at 1:30 p.m. in Los Banos at the Canal Farm Inn and then tour the south end of the Grasslands. That night we will have an informal dinner, and early Sunday morning we will take in the Los Banos Refuge and San Luis Island. You must make your own overnight reservations. Motels at Los Banos are the Canal Farm Inn, Motel Stardust, Motel Cinderella, La Faria Motel, and a number of others newly constructed. Some people prefer to camp. Camping facilities are available at Hatfield State Park on the San Joaquin River near Newman. Generally, they are not used this time of the year and require no advance reservation. We have contacted all Audubon chapters in California and have invited them to join with us. I expect we'll have close to a hundred people attending this year. This is a marvelous opportunity to spend a memorable weekend with a lot of wonderful people touring a vast wetland in its spring glory, disturbed only by birds and our presence. A warm invitation has again been given us by the Grasslands Water District to trespass over their lands and view their contribution to the conservation of our wildlife. If you plan to attend or have any questions concerning this outstanding field trip, contact Howard Leach, Sacramento Audubon Field Trip Chairman, 3828 French Avenue, Sacramento 21 (phone 489-1618). He would like to know how many people to expect.

Saturday, March 21, at 9:00 a.m., to the Wolcott's "Fair Hill". Go out Page Mill Road to Altamont, turn left on Altamont, go one mile to intersection of Elizabeth and Taaffe. Watch for "Fair Hill" sign at 26511 Altamont. Bring lunch. Leaders: Margaret and Howard Wolcott (948-6821).

Wednesday, March 25, at 9:00 a.m., to Palo Alto Baylands. Meet at the Yacht Harbor Duck Pond. Leader: Mrs. Luther Cisne (321-3195)

(New Wednesday field trip planners are Margaret Henderson of Saratoga and Catherine Lintott of Los Gatos, succeeding Emily Smith.--J.T.)

Screen Tours: (Apologies for the error in February Avocet concerning Emerson Scott's presentation at San Jose. It is "Our Changing Heritage", not "Pika Country", which latter he will show at Stanford the same afternoon.--J.T.)

Tuesday, March 3, at 4:15 p.m., Cubberley Auditorium, Education Building. Escondido Road and Lasuen Street, Stanford University. Emerson Scott will present "Pika Country". No tickets at door. The little rabbit-like pika is one of the leading characters in a stirring film of the majestic northwest, photographed in color and narrated by Emerson Scott of Caro, Michigan. Audubon audiences, guided by an experienced and dedicated naturalist, explore vast wilderness areas, inhabited by trumpeter swans and ptarmigan, magpies and pine squirrels, elk, moose, and black bear. "Pika Country" is an enriching experience in nature discovery.

Tuesday, March 3, at 8:00 p.m., in Men's Gym, San Jose State College. Tickets are available at the door. Emerson Scott will present "Our Changing Heritage". Mr. Scott of Caro, Michigan, takes us on a tour of our magnificent west as we follow a herd of domestic

sheep through their various grazing grounds during the four seasons. What vital changes are being wrought by man? How much and what part of our land should we leave untouched? This film deals with the compelling question of preserving our wilderness areas.

Africa, Anyone?

Stan Picher of Marin Audubon Society has organized a birding trip to Africa for the coming summer. The trip, a forty day tour of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, was planned and will be led by John G. Williams, the foremost ornithologist of the region. Eight game parks and the widest possible variety of bird habitats will be visited, assuring that members of the tour will see around 600 species of birds and a wide variety of animals, such as elephant, lion, rhinoceros, hippo, buffalo, etc. For a brochure and further information, write to Stan Picher, P.O. Box 917, Belvedere, California.

Report of Directors' Meeting Feb. 3, 1964

The meeting was held at the home of Eva McCrae. The minutes were read by Secretary McCrae and approved. Treasurer's report was read by Fanny Zwaal.

President Brakenshire appointed Dr. Tom Harvey, Lucy Evans, Warren Turner, Dr. Eve Case, Harriet Mundy to a committee to formulate Audubon suggestions concerning the possible Palo Alto Baylands Park. In a proposed bond issue for recreational facilities in Palo Alto, money may be allocated for improvements at the bay edge. A narrow footbridge for bird and sailboat viewing over a marshland wildlife refuge was thought desirable by most board members. Other improvements suggested by Baylands Park proponents include replanting the bird sanctuary behind the Duck Pond (with shrubs and trees known to attract birds) and planting trees as a windbreak around picnic tables behind the present Harbormaster's office. The committee will present plans, complete with maps, to Palo Alto City Councilman Robert Byxbee.

Support was urged for San Francisco Bay Association's plea for a moratorium on bay filling. San Mateo County plans to fill its entire bay shoreline.

The Avocet will be mailed under bulk mailing permit, saving some \$110 or more a year. An outside mailing cover will be printed, and much time will be saved handling envelopes, stamps, etc.

Dr. Arnold Applegarth proposed tuition scholarships for San Jose State College students, based on need and interest, to Field Studies in Natural History. Students most likely to benefit will be selected. Scholarships come from Audubon film tours, heavily subscribed by San Jose State students. The board voted ten \$20 tuition scholarships for the Easter week field trip.

Audubon phone listing will be given to Palo Alto Library, Palo Alto Community Center, Alum Rock Park. We can also be reached through San Jose Humane Society.

Mr. Brokenshire read San Jose Mercury editorial to county parks director concerning purchase of state land in Santa Clara County for a park (once intended for reservoir purposes). Board favored resolution urging Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to act at once.

Diane Conradson recommended that members visit the new 5000-acre Plumas-Eureka State Park near Portola and Quincy on Highway Alt. 40. Head Ranger is Jack Mason, who is interested in all history and natural history of the area. Camping is permitted; hiking and gold mine exploring possible.

-- J. Todd

New Members

We are glad to welcome the following new members:

Mr. Frank Schnoor	1141 Empey Way	San Jose
Mrs. Robert Hill	413 Ferne Avenue	Palo Alto
Mrs. Orrin Lynde	179 Dacia Street	Los Gatos
Msss Kathy L. Coleman	1238 Cordelia Avenue	San Jose
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hawes	2180 Sunny Vista Avenue	San Jose
Miss Mary Louise Balch	146 South Tenth Street	San ose
Master Danny Flippen	855 Sharon Park Drive	Menlo Park

-- Angelina Snow, Membership
Chairman

Conservation Notes

In the January Avocet, I expressed the opinion that if Mr. Kennedy had lived, his administration might truly have become a "Third Wave" in the history of conservation. It is now becoming evident that President Johnson is going to do what he can to see to it that the "Third Wave" rolls on.

The achievements since Mr. Kennedy first took office include:

The establishemt of three new national seashores and several new wildlife refuges.

The authorization of a loan amounting to \$105 million for a "crash" program of wetlands preservation;

The strengthening of programs to control water and air pollution.

The acceleration of a program for wilderness preservation (even though Congress, so far, has failed to pass the Wilderness Bill supported by the administration).

A program to lessen the threat of chemical pesticides to man and wildlife by furthering research, law enforcement and educational programs.

The creation of the new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) within the Department of the Interior.

The adoption of a regulation requiring "coordination with state conservation agencies in the planning of highways that are to be built with federal funds".

This record is encouraging. The cause of conservation is making some progress, in some areas, but much can be lost if we "rest on our oars" and do not continue to do individual "missionary work" for conservation at every opportunity.

It is very reassuring to consider President Johnson's background and to realize that he has long had a personal interest in conservation. An avid outdoorsman all his life, he learned the necessity for conservation and the wise use of resources on his father's ranch in the hill country of central Texas. His attitude toward conservation is indicated by these quotations (only a few from the available material):

"As our land becomes more populated, there will be an increasing necessity for us to set aside retreats -- places where people can go, to find peace, and to become rejuvenated...." (Brownsville, Tex., 1961)

"We must constantly be vigilant and on the alert to keep our air clean, to keep our water pure, to keep our forests green, to keep our birdlife abundant and our wildlife plentiful, or else we will lose a vital essential of what we call America." (Detroit, Mar., 1963)

"No nation can long endure that fails to take prudent steps to conserve its natural resources and its human resources....It is only in this century that we in the United States realized that the earth is not a perpetual gravy train.....Now we are learning that our great natural resources can be lost forever unless we act to protect them from the consequences of our own folly." (Brownsville, Tex., urging the creation of Padre Island National Seashore, ...June, 1961)

Our President is not an "absolute monarch"; his wish does not become law just because it is his wish. His proposed conservation measures need the support of every conservation-minded citizen. Our senators and representatives welcome letters expressing our (individual) opinions on proposed legislation, and we should not hesitate to speak out on conservation matters.

We, in California, give great consideration and effort to the problem of saving the Tule Lake-Klamath Lake Basin. This would be a very shallow victory if, in our concern for our local wildfowl population, we allow the despoliation of the 10,500 square miles of their breeding ground that would be flooded by the proposed Rampart Dam in northern Alaska. This area has been pictured in AUDUBON MAGAZINE, July-Aug., 1963 (pg. 238). It is an area of vital importance to many species of wildfowl and animal life. I have looked at the maps of the breeding grounds of each species of our North American Swans, Geese and Ducks and have found that this particular area is a breeding ground used by the Lesser Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Mallard, Baldpate, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Shoveller, Canvasback (this area is an isolated breeding "island area" for the Canvasbacks), Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, American Goldeneye, Bufflehead, White-winged Scoters, Surf Scoter and the Red-breasted Merganser.

The construction of Rampart Dam will not mean the extinction of any of these species, but it will mean "the end of the road" for hundreds of thousands of individuals of many of these species..

As a conscientious member of the National Audubon Society, please look over the back issues of The Audubon Magazine (particularly July-Aug., 1963), carefully read Charles Callison's report on RAMPART DAM -- and let your conscience be your guide!

--Lloyd N. Case

Notes from Afield

Pike Estate Trip - January 15

We had a beautiful clear day, and the view from the hill was spectacular. There were approximately 15 people. Twenty-three species of birds were observed:

California Quail	Wrentit	Cedar Waxwing
Anna's Hummingbird	Bewick's Wren	Audubon's Warbler
Red-shafted Flicker	Mockingbird	House Finch
Acorn Woodpecker	California Thrasher	Lesser Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	Robin	Rufous-sided Towhee
Black Phoebe	Western Bluebird	Brown Towhee
Scrub Jay	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Oregon Junco
Plain Titmouse		

Stockton Delta Area - January 25

The area of this trip was approximately 25 miles north of Stockton along the Mokelumne River. Fifteen of us were the guests of the Stockton Audubon Society. Sandhill Cranes were seen feeding and dancing. Thousands of Whistling Swans on flooded fields along Route 4 were seen by the Camerons on their way home. The weather was overcast with some fog. A total of 42 species was observed.

Common Egret (1)	Acorn Woodpecker (2)
Whistling Swans (several flocks)	Black Phoebe (1)
Canada Goose (several flocks)	Tree Swallow (1)
White-fronted Goose (several flocks)	Scrub Jay (30)
Snow Goose (several flocks)	Common Crow (1)
Pintail (100 plus)	Mockingbird (1)
Ring-necked Pheasant (est. 40)	Robin (3)
Sandhill Crane (1500)	Water Pipit (25)
Common Gallinule (1)	Loggerhead Shrike (2)
American Coot (20)	Starling (15)
Killdeer (40)	House Sparrow (10)
Common Snipe (1)	Western Meadowlark (25)
Long-billed Curlew (300)	Redwinged Blackbird (est. 50)
Greater Yellowlegs (2)	Brewer's Blackbird (several flocks)
Dunlin (20)	House Finch (20)
Sandpipers (unidentified)	White-crowned Sparrow (40)
Western Gull (100)	Golden-crowned Sparrow (3)
Belted Kingfisher (3)	Song Sparrow (1)
Red-shafted Flicker (2)	

Richardson's Bay Trip - February 2

We met just north of the Richardson's Bay Bridge on Highway 101. We birded here around the mud flats and sloughs on both sides of the highway, then drove to Strawberry Point. After the walk out Strawberry Point and back, we drove on to the Audubon Center for lunch. Here John Larson was kind enough to give us a short talk on the history of the house and to answer questions. Twenty-two people attended this trip. The weather was clear and comfortable, and the tides were low. A total of 51 species was observed:

Horned Grebe	Mallard	Bufflehead
Eared Grebe	Pintail	White-winged Scoter
Western Grebe	Green-winged Teal	Surf Scoter
Pied-billed Grebe	Shoveler	Ruddy Duck
Double-crested Cormorant	American Widgeon	Red-breasted Merganser
Great Blue Heron	Canvasback	American Coot
Common Egret	Greater Scaup	Killdeer
Snowy Egret	Lesser Scaup	Black-bellied Plover

Willet	Red-shafted Flicker	Audubon's Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Black Phoebe	Western Meadowlark
Least Sandpiper	Horned Lark	House Finch
Sanderling	Common Crow	Rufous-sided Towhee
American Avocet	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Oregon Junco
Herring Gull	Bewick's Wren	Golden-crowned Sparrow
California Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Fox Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Water Pipit	
Anna's Hummingbird	Myrtle Warbler	

Searsbille Lake Trip - February ;6

This trip was open to the public and was attended by 60 people. Many of these were newcomers. Owing to the large turnout, we formed into four separate groups and walked in various directions. The weather was ideal with bright sunshine. Most of the birds seemed especially colorful, probably owing to the breeding plumage. The wild-flowers were just starting to bloom -- a very pleasant added attraction/ A total of 41 species was observed:

Great Blue Heron	Anna's Hummingbird	Robin
Gadwall	Red-shafted Flicker	Hermit Thrush
Cinnamon Teal	Acorn Woodpecker	Western Bluebird
Ring-necked Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Canvasback	Black Phoebe	Audubon's Warbler
Greater Scaup	Scrub Jay	Western Meadowlark
Lesser Scaup	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Rufous-sided Towhee
Bufflehead	Plain Titmouse	Brown Towhee
Ruddy Duck	Common Nighthawk	Oregon Junco
California Quail	White-breasted Nuthatch	Golden-crowned Sparrow
American Coot	Wrentit	Song Sparrow
Killdeer	Bewick's Wren	
Band-tailed Pigeon	California Thrasher	
Additional birds seen on scouting trip:		Brewer's Blackbird
Eared Grebe	Green Heron	White-crowned Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Redwinged Blackbird	

-- Leaders: Warren and Rebecca Turner

Individual Observations

From Maurice V. Barnhill, III:

I now have a series of five counts taken in January (a earlier count in early December yielded no ducks at all) and a summary follows. I hope they will prove interesting to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society members. I believe that the study is worth continuing, so I will attempt to keep making the counts periodically.

Date	1/6/64	1/9/64	1/15/64	1/23/64	1/31/64
Depth Gauge Reading	24.5	24.5	24.5	28.5	32
Time of Count	15:00	9:45	15:20	10:25	11:05
	15:15	10:00	15:50	10:40	11:45
Readhead, male					1
female					1, sp.
Ring-n. Duck, male		1	2	8(1)	
female		1	1, sp?	5(1), sp?	
Canvasback			2(1)	5(1)	1(1)
Scaup, <u>sp.</u> , male	1	1	2	5(2)	10(2)
female					1
Common Goldeneye				1(0)	
Bufflehead, male	13(2)	15(6)	15(4)	3(1)	1
female	17(2)	19(8)	24(4)	2(1)	
Ruddy Duck	6(2)	19	27(3)	38(5)	42(5)
American Coot	4(0)	3	2(1)	8(2)	5(2)
Gull, <u>spp.</u>	99(9)	150(10)	436(50)	65	389(30)

The numbers in parentheses are estimated uncertainties, which are believed to be fairly accurate. The observation period is given in twenty-four hour time. Also, the reference to male and female means male and female plumage; undoubtedly many of the birds recorded as female plumage were really immatures of both sexes.

The habitat is an artificial lake (Lake Lagunita) on the Stanford Campus. The lake is gradually filled each winter by water from Searsville Lake and is relatively undisturbed in winter: no hunting or boating; but it is used for swimming and boating in the spring. The lake was not yet full on January 31.

These observations are intended as background for a spring study to determine the departure dates of migration ducks. It may also prove interesting as a record of the winter build-up of population. The results so far seem to suggest that ducks that come to the lake tend to remain for fairly extended periods of time, but the sudden decrease in Bufflehead between the fifteenth and the twenty-third should be noted. The number of Gulls (which are mostly California, but also Mew and Ring-billed on occasion) tends to vary widely, as would be expected.

From Eve Case, Santa Clara:

I have a Golden-crowned Sparrow singing a four-note song.
2/1 - a Western Tanager has been visiting our yard for the past five days. He eats suet, bathes and preens.

From Virginia Bothwell:

In January, Red-breasted, White-breasted, and Pygmy Nuthatches were feeding on the same feeder in Portola Valley in the vicinity of "The Sequoias". Harley Bothwell has seen two Grey Foxes in the hills near Los Trancos Woods.

From Joe Wissel:

2/2 - White-faced Ibis, 25 to 30, Los Banos.
2/2 - Black-crowned Night Heron, 200 to 300, Los Banos.

From Herbert C. Wittgenstein:

Observations along Highway 33 between Coalinga and Blackwell's Corner on 2/8: Several flocks of Horned Larks, a total of perhaps one thousand; and 10 to 12 Mountain Plover 4 miles north of Blackwell's Corner. 2/9 at Morro Bay Wildlife Refuge: Hundreds of Brant Geese, about 100 White Pelicans, many Loons.

-- Ralph R. Trullinger
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Menlo Park
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SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
Branch of
National Audubon Society
1963-1964

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