

The Avocet

Volume XII Number 1

January 1965

Lt. Col. ROBERT ALLAN

OUR BAY AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE

Monday, January 11, 8:00 P.M.
Palo Alto Community Center, Room R
1305 Middlefield Road

Col. Allan is District Engineer, U. S. Army Corps, San Francisco. His district is preparing a comprehensive survey of San Francisco Bay and its tributaries.

This program is the fourth in a series around the theme, "Recognizing and Obtaining the Proper Balance between Urbanization and Preservation in the Santa Clara Valley and San Francisco Bay Regions."

THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY WISHES EVERYONE "A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR"

Birds of the Air

"....., the very birds of the air, those that be not hawks, are both so many and so useful to mankind, that I must not let them pass without some observation."

--Izaak Walton

Sunday, December 27th, was the date of our "observations" for the Annual Christmas Bird Census taken every year between Christmas and the New Year. Several of the boys went for owls in Alum Rock State Park at 4:00 A.M. The February Avocet will carry a bird-by-bird account of the day.

Coming Events At A Glance

Mon.	Jan.	4	8:00 P.M.	Board, Los Altos Hills
Mon.	Jan.	11	8:00 P.M.	Palo Alto
Wed.	Jan.	13	9:00 A.M.	San Jose
Sat.	Jan.	16	9:00 A.M.	Stanford
Sun.	Jan.	24	1:00 P.M.	Stockton
Wed.	Jan.	27	8:30 A.M.	Palo Alto
Sat.	Jan.	30	9:00 A.M.	Felton



San Francisco Bay: Part of California Marine Resources

On December the 14th Christmas shopping was put aside and a cold drizzling rain was ignored by almost 200 people who went to hear a dedicated man give his time and talents to help prevent some of the senseless destruction of the values that give "value" to the Bay. They came to hear Mel Scott, a man who understands the dynamics of the Bay, its pollution problems and its potentials, as well as the cultural and industrial arts that crowd in and around it.

Dr. Scott lectures at the University of California in Berkeley on City and Regional Planning, serves on a committee of the Institute of Marine Resources at La Jolla, has done extensive historical and physical research on and written extensively of the Bay Area enigma. A few of the points discussed:

--Aesthetic and commercial values of the Bay, what it means to many people. Boating, fishing, birding, a living - a dump, a sewer, a wasteland - a fresh wind-swept expanse of marsh grass and a high sky.

--The Bay in terms of dollars and no sense. The "tax burden" of disintegrating tract housing and utilities built to raise the "tax base." Dire consequences of building on "queezy" fill without adequate piling in earthquake country.

--Effect on marine and wildlife if the insecticide contaminated San Luis drainage is spewed into the Bay to augment existing silt, sludge, and sluggishness.

--Concern that the Department of Interior was not represented at the national level on the new 29 man commission appointed as a result of the findings of Senator McAteer's conservation study.

After the meeting Mrs. Carol Zabel and her committee served a gala Christmas coffee to those attending the meeting. Conservation groups from the entire area sent their representatives.

Lt. Col. Robert Allan, District Engineer, U. S. Army Corps, will present the next phase of our Symposium on the Bay, "Our Bay as An Environmental Resource."

Mrs. Luther E. Cisne
President

New Members

We welcome with enthusiasm the following new members:

Mrs. Duncan E. Williams	650 La Mesa Drive, Menlo Park, California
Mr. Robert A. Claypole	898 Forest Lane, Alamo, California
Ted and Jane Wassom	200 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, Calif.
Mr. Fred G. Dollar, Jr.	15930 Quail Hill Road, Los Gatos, Calif.
Mrs. James F. Girand	3825 Carlson Circle, Palo Alto, Calif.

Student Members:

Jean S. Silvester	18505 Eucalyptus Drive, Los Gatos
Donald Zuleh	350 Manzanita Avenue, Palo Alto
Karel De Leeuw	817 Santa Fe Avenue, Stanford
Loring Dales	203-10 Stanford Village, Stanford
Kristen Henry	2349 Carlton Avenue, San Jose

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Miss Laura Flitinghoff and Mrs. Grace Brubaker, faithful members and good friends.

--Angelina Snow, Membership Chairman

Audubon Wildlife Films

Mrs. Jack L. Littlepage, head of the Science Department of the Palo Alto Senior High School would like to announce that a Biology Club is being formed to manage the Audubon Wildlife Films for the 1964-65 season.

Under this system all proceeds of the screen tours will be used to take biology students on field trip studies.

Mr. Le Van Shugart, science teacher and ecologist at "Pally" will manage and supervise the program through the Science Department office.

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will cooperate in any way it can to make this program a success.

Notes from Afield

Mrs. Lynde's home in Los Gatos -- November 11

Five people attended on a cold, wet day. Sixteen species were seen, including a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Mrs. Catherine Lintott was leader.

Richardson Bay -- November 14

Forty-two species were seen on a successful trip led by Betty Lennon of the Marin Club.

Stanford University -- November 18

This trip was around the campus museum and mausoleum. Twenty-four people attended on a clear, cool morning. Twenty-five birds were seen, notably Bewick's Wren and Fox Sparrow. A White-throated Sparrow has been seen regularly near the mausoleum with the White and Gold-crowned Sparrows. Rebecca and Warren Turner led.

--Ralph Trullinger, 854-4201
Field Note Compiler

Audubon Camp Scholarships

The Garden Club of Palo Alto is offering partial scholarships to two candidates who wish to attend the Audubon Camp of the West. Anyone interested please apply to Mrs. Sydney T. Harrison, 1160 Stanley Way, Palo Alto, DA 3-1972, or Mrs. Norman J. Silberling, 1120 Palo Alto Avenue, Palo Alto, 323-4891.

BATTLE OF THE BAYLANDS

Dear

On April 20th of this year, and again on November 16th, the Palo Alto members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society asked the City Council to seriously consider a staffed Nature Interpretation Center, walkways ending in observation platforms, to be located on the city-owned baylands, with enough salt marsh and tidal flats for a wildlife refuge and outdoor study laboratory.

We would suggest a long low building for multiple-public use to conform with the "lay of the land" having large windows overlooking a shallow tide-washed resting area for birds, and expanse of salt marsh and Bay.

BUILDING Study-exhibition-meeting hall complex with audio-visual equipment for groups of all ages.

WALKWAYS All-weather foot paths to facilitate field observations by classes of students and interested individuals.

OBSERVATION PLATFORMS To observe the Bay, birds, boats, or just to experience the fresh wind-swept expanse of a salt marsh.

Set up large commercial binoculars to help those not having optical equipment--they soon pay for themselves.

a well-developed walkway from the launching-ramp out to an observation platform on Sand Point would be one of the most popular spots in the area anytime of the day.

STAFF There should be a Naturalist curator to meet, guide, and interpret this biome, and to insure against property abuse.

This unspoiled bit of salt marsh can become a NATIONAL ATTRACTION! The Audubon Society alone can insure this with articles in the Audubon magazine. Other conservation publications would support the Center, e.g., Sierra Club. It would be a "must" to be seen by "birders" from all over the country. There is no educational center of this type on the west coast. Palo Alto would pioneer this field.

The Universities and Colleges of the area insure that many Biologist, Ornithologist, Ecologist, and tourist would be attracted to a Nature Center on our Baylands. Much of the commercial value would be indirect: Motel, restaurant, and shopping-center patronage.

We would appreciate your consideration of these proposed ideas. They have economic potential as well as cultural and esthetic value. The Baylands, wisely used, conserve this natural Heritage.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Luther E. Cisne
President

cc. Mr. Jerome Kiethley City Manager
Mr. Louis J. Fourcroy Planning Officer
Mr. Harry M. Kimball Planning Commission Chairman
Mr. Walter Stronquist Planning Commission Vice "
Mr. Karl Belser County Planning Department
Mr. Alexander Bodi Editor, Palo Alto Times
Mr. Joseph Ehrlich Chamber of Commerce

On January 13th at 7:30 P.M. the Palo Alto Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on a study of the Baylands at City Hall. Dr. Thomas Harvey, Mrs. Diane Conradson, and Dr. Herbert Grench of our Society will speak for us. All members and interested individuals are URGED to attend.

January Calendar

Board Meeting

Monday, January 4, 8:00 P.M. at Mr. and Mrs. Howard Wolcott's, 26511 Altamont Road, Los Altos Hills.

General Meeting

Monday, January 11, 8:00 P.M., Palo Alto, see first page.

Field Trips

Wednesday, January 13. To the Williams Street Park in San Jose at Williams Street and 16th. There is birding along the creek, and Starlings have been seen there. Meet at the park at 9:00 A.M. Leader: Mrs. Fanny Zwaal 292-2060.

Saturday, January 16. Stanford University. Meet at the Boat House on Lake Lagunitas. Leader: Joe Greenberg 322-1629.

Sunday, January 24. The STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY has invited us to join them on their "SANDHILL CRANE FIELD-TRIP." The meeting time is 1:00 P.M., so there will be ample time to get there without an "uncomfortably early" start. Meet at the LINCOLN SHOPPING CENTER, which is reached as follows:

Enter Stockton on El Dorado Street, and continue north to Harding Way; turn left, proceed three blocks and turn right on to Pacific Avenue. Continue north, past the University and past the State Hospital Farm, both on the left.

The Lincoln Shopping Center is on the left, at the 6700 block.

Wednesday, January 27. Meet at 1868 Bret Harte at 8:30 A.M. Leader: Jill Cisne 321-3195.

Saturday, January 30. HENRY COWELL STATE PARK. This trip will be led by Marnette and Herbert Wittgenstein (EL 4-9420). Meet at the parking lot at the Henry Cowell State Park at 9:00 A.M. Bring lunch. The Park is located near the town of Felton, which is most easily reached by leaving Highway 17 (Los Gatos-Santa Cruz Highway) at the Scott's Valley, Mt. Hermon, Felton exit, a short distance south of "Santa Claus Land." Drive through Mt. Hermon to Felton. The Park is on the left as you enter Felton, and the route is marked.

Conservation Notes

Reading books and articles on Conservation is, in a way, like eating mushrooms: when one gets tired of the large caps and buttons, he may still find many interesting bits in the "stems and pieces!"

One of the best reading, and also informative, collections of "stems and pieces" that I have seen for a long, long time is the book "WATERFOWL TOMORROW," published this year by the U. S. Department of Interior (See the Avocet December 1964). It is a well organized collection of related short articles, each by a different author who is a specialist in one field. The individual selections are grouped under the headings, The World of Waterfowl, Duck Factories, The Big Three, Goose and Swan Factories, Down the Flyways, Nature at Work, Man at Work, Places to Hide and to Seek, A Helping Hand, and Waterfowl Tomorrow.

Any one article may be read independently, yet all tie together in a most interesting and informative manner. The book gives a complete picture of our waterfowl, describing their breeding areas, their flyways and wintering habits, and discusses international cooperation for the conservation of the diminishing species.

I recommend it VERY highly for casual, but INTERESTING, reading.

OTHER "STEMS AND PIECES:"

At the recent National Convention, President Buchheister called for a rededication and a redoubling of efforts to meet "the great challenges, the great opportunities, facing the Audubon movement." Here are some of them:

The Bureau of Reclamation wants to build Bridge Canyon Dam across the Colorado River. It would impound water that would back up through the Grand Canyon National Monument and into the Grand Canyon National Park!

The passage of the Wilderness Bill and the Water Conservation Fund Act are legislative landmarks, but as law they are only beachheads, not final victories. We must see to it that these laws are fully implemented.

We have yet to win battles against water and air pollution.

We have no assurance that the pernicious flow of persistent pesticides can be shut off in time to save the Bald Eagle, the Osprey, the Peregrine Falcon, and other species caught in the deadly net of food-chain poisoning.

We have ahead of us the task of preserving the California Condor. Encroachment upon the Condors' habitat must be prevented!

The Whooping Crane is facing a new threat; over-eager technicians want to invade the breeding grounds, remove eggs, and hatch and raise young birds in captivity, as a means of perpetuating the species. This plan is opposed for sound, scientific reasons by outstanding ornithologists and conservation experts.

The Marin Audubon Society reports that the Marin and Golden Gate Societies have raised \$239,000 of the \$337,500 needed to purchase the Audubon Canyon Ranch, the 900 acre sanctuary and educational center which is a nesting area for both Egrets and Great Blue Herons.

The Nature Conservancy has just dedicated 160 acres in a rocky gorge in the Chuckawalla Mts. (Riverside County) as the "Edmund C. Jaeger Nature Sanctuary." It was here, in 1946, that Dr. Jaeger of the Riverside College discovered hibernating Poor-wills and thus established that some birds do hibernate.

The Florida Audubon Society, through cooperative agreements with ranchers and other landowners, has established sanctuaries totaling 2,300,000 acra, for the protection of the Bald Eagle.

The Canyonlands National Park includes only 257,640 acres of the original 750,000 acres that Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall recommended and worked for, against overwhelming opposition. However, this, our thirty-second National Park, does preserve the finest rock formations of the canyon country, along with its major geological and archeological features, --and with no public hunting to be allowed within the park.

AND A PARTICULARLY DELICIOUS TID-BIT, AMONG THE STEMS-AND-PIECES:

A recent decree by the President of Mexico established the island of Isla Raza, in the Gulf of California, as a government wildlife sanctuary for the great nesting colonies of Heerman's Gulls and Elegant Terns. This will stop the uncontrolled eggging which, in past years, has steadily depleted the birds of Isla Raza.

NOTE: The financial structure which will provide warden protection for the sanctuary is complicated, but the ultimate source of the necessary money is The Belvedere Scientific Fund, established by Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth K. Bechtel of San Francisco. Mr. Bechtel is a former director of the National Audubon Society, and it was he who first introduced Joseph Wood Krutch to Baja, California, and to whom Mr. Krutch dedicated his book, "The Forgotten Peninsula."

INCIDENTALLY: If you have not read that book, you should!

--Lloyd N. Case

Q and A Department

Question: Why does the duck go into the water?

Answer: To liquidate his bill.

Question: Why does he come out?

Answer: To make a run on the bank.

Question: Why does he go back in the water again?

Answer: For dive rse reasons.

Question: Why does he come out again?

Answer: For sun dry reasons.

Mr. Turner contributes this nonsense, given him by a member of the Sacramento Audubon Society; it probably originated in Joseph Le Conte's book, "Ramblings."

What Do You Know? About Birds

Try your hand at this quiz--for fun only, or for a prize! Send your answers, dated by January 15 to the Editor, 453 Tennessee Lane, Palo Alto, and compete for a special award.

1. Three local group birds are swimmers--the Grebe, Duck and Cormorant. How do the feet of these three differ?
2. Why doesn't a perching bird fall off its perch when sleeping at night?
3. Name a local bird that trails its feet out behind when flying. Name one that carries the feet forward in flight.
4. A number of California birds capture fish on the wing. Name one that captures fish by diving head first into the water and catching its prey with its bill. Name one that captures fish with its feet.
5. Some birds swim under water. Name a California form that swims under water using its feet. Name one that swims under water using its wings.
6. Are birds color blind?
7. How many feathers does a bird have?
8. Are any female birds more brightly colored than the male?
9. Some mammals turn white to match the snowy winter habitat in which they live. Do any birds do this?
10. Some Screech Owls are red and some are gray. Is this a matter of sex or age?
11. Is the Bald Eagle really bald?
12. What local group of birds possess stiffened tail feathers used for support?
13. What local wild birds possess a toe arrangement of two toes directed forward and two toes directed backward?
14. The toothless horny bill is characteristic of birds. Name another group of animals found in California that possess this same characteristic.
15. How many species of birds exist in the world today?
16. How many species of birds exist in North America?
17. How many species of birds have there been recorded in California? How many breed here?
18. Which birds have the fastest wing beats? Approximately how fast?
19. How fast do birds fly?
20. Are Hummingbirds the only birds that can fly backwards?

Answers in next month's Avocet.

For Reading Enjoyment

Further adventures of Dr. Mewaldt's peripatetic White-crowns:

"California Sparrows Return from Displacement to Maryland" by
L. Richard Mewaldt, Science, 13 November 1964.

One of our members who was ill recently reports that two books helped pass the time pleasantly. Both are written by women who lived in wilderness areas:

Driftwood Valley by Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher.

(Little, Brown & Co., Boston) 1946.

Spring on an Arctic Island by Katherine Scherman.

(Little, Boston) 1956.

Reproductions of the author's paintings handsomely illustrated the autobiography of explorer Robert Scott's son, Peter, who may have shortcomings as a yachtsman but is an excellent naturalist:

The Eye of the Wind by Peter Scott.

(Houghton, Boston) 1961.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
BRANCH OF
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Vice President	Mr. Herbert Wittgenstein	15355 Bellecourt Saratoga	354-9420
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Registrar	Mrs. Charles Zwaal	478 Clifton San Jose	292-2060
Conservation	Mr. Lloyd Case	2586 Homestead Road Santa Clara	243-2467

Field Trips

Week-end	Mr. Howard Wolcott	26511 Altamont Road Los Altos Hills	948-6821
	Dr. Evelyn Case	2586 Homestead Road Santa Clara	243-2467
Mid-week	Mrs. Ray McCann	783 Garland Drive Palo Alto	327-4138
	Mrs. John Henderson	21215 Sullivan Way Saratoga	867-4304
	Mrs. Catherine Lintott	17150 Buena Vista Ave. Los Gatos	356-4264

Directors

Case, Lloyd	Henderson, John	Trullinger, Ralph
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Typist	Mrs. Hong Lee	4123 Dake Avenue Palo Alto	326-8742
Mimeographing	Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor	14311 Quito Road Saratoga	379-3424