

The Avocet

Volume XIII, Number 6

June, 1966

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

Friday, June 10, 1966
7:40 p.m.

- Bellucci's
Moody Road, Los Altos Hills

The programs have been planned this year to give a great deal of variety. Our last dinner meeting was so successful that for our last meeting of the year we plan another in a very different setting - the Redwood Room of Bellucci's in Los Altos Hills. Dinner will start about 7:40 p.m. but Mr. Bellucci has invited us all to come out anytime after 6:00 p.m. for an early evening bird walk in the lovely wooded grounds. We have the choice of two dinners: Breast of Chicken a la Kiev or a Spaghetti dinner with all the trimmings. After the meeting is over those who wish are invited to stay on for dancing. The dinner is our last meeting of the year and hence will include the reports of the officers of the year and the installation of those for next year.

Make your reservations early for this gala occasion! Fill in the enclosed form and send it to either person listed by Monday, June 6th. We must have all the reservations by that night, so do not delay. Those who make up their minds late may call Mrs. Grench at 321-7994 between 9:00 a.m. and noon on Monday, June 6th. Remember - June 10, Friday evening.

Bellucci's is the restaurant at Adobe Creek Lodge, 26220 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills (on the way to the Duveneck Ranch). For the few who haven't ventured into this part of the western foothills, go west on El Monte Ave. in Los Altos until it runs into Moody Road and then follow Moody Road up into the foothills a few miles past Foothill College

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COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- Sun., June 5 9:00 a.m. Pt. Reyes
- Wed., June 8 9:00 a.m. Castle Rock Ridge
- Fri., June 10 7:40 p.m. Los Altos Hills (Reg. Meeting)
- Sat., June 18 9:30 a.m. Stanford
- Sat., June 25 9:00 a.m. Point Lobos



Reservations for dinner meeting, June 10, 1966 at 7:40 p.m
at Bellucci's Restaurant, Los Altos Hills Tear off this
slip and send it plus a check to:

Mrs. H. Grench, 2828 South Court, Palo Alto or
Mr. Howard Shellhammer, 3722 Rosemar, San Jose,

so it is received by Monday, June 6, 1966

NAME _____ Please reserve

_____ Spaghetti Dinners at \$3.00 each or/and

_____ Breast of Chicken a la Kiev Dinners at \$4.50 each

Enclosed is my check for _____. (Tax and tip are included).

JUNE CALENDAR

General Meeting

Friday, June 10, 7:40 p.m Dinner meeting
See first page.

Field Trips

Sunday, June 5, 9:00 a m to Pt Reyes and the
Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory Meet in front of the
post office at Inverness at 9:00 a m. Bring lunch
Leader: Dr. Mewaldt, CL 8-7491 For information
call Ralph Trullinger 854-4201

Wednesday, June 8, Castle Rock Ridge off Skyline
Blvd. above Saratoga. Meet at 9:00 a.m at the
Saratoga Gap (Intersection of Big Basin Way and
Skyline Blvd.) Leader: Margaret Henderson,
867-4304.

Saturday, June 18. Something new - a bird walk for
beginners. The public is invited; children are
especially welcome. No field glasses necessary.
Meet at the parking lot at Saks Fifth Avenue,
Stanford Shopping Center at 9:30 a.m. There will
be no driving, just a short walk. Emphasis will be
on our common but interesting birds For information
call: 322-1209

Saturday, June 25, to Pt. Lobos State Park. Meet at 9:00 a m sharp at the entrance of the park (on Highway 1, a few miles south of Carmel), the Lloyd Cases will again lead this interesting and delightful trip. Bring lunch. 867-4748.

MY HINDSIGHT HAS 20-20 VISION

In November and December of 1965 I proposed a program of recreational and conservation activities which, I felt, could make our Society more interesting to us and increasingly vital in the community. Let's see what my (or our) batting average is on these projects.

First along recreational lines, I suggested increased sponsorship of public field trips. We had only one such trip and it was not particularly successful because the local newspapers "goofed" and printed an incomplete announcement. Another such trip is announced in this bulletin. My second idea, suggested first in November and again in a recent Avocet, was a family picnic. No one stepped forward to undertake the necessary arrangements. My third thought was for a bus trip to Pt. Reyes. This trip has materialized but the board thought it best for us to arrange individual transportation. And fourth was a suggestion for a dinner meeting or two. Indeed, we will have had two; everyone likes to eat.

Let's see where we stand on my thoughts concerning conservation projects. I suggested two main projects. The first was to reach into the communities further south along the Bay than Palo Alto and try to point out to them the values of their baylands for wildlife and recreational purposes. We haven't done much; no interest among Audubon members in these towns has become apparent to me. I also suggested that we work on a program of education with our county supervisors with the aim of eliminating the mountain lion bounty. As far as I know we haven't done anything further on this.

My batting average is poor. The principal reason probably is that I didn't spend enough time contacting people individually about these projects.

It's not all gloomy, though. The brightest spot, to my mind, has been the work of Diane Conradson and her

helpers on the Education Committee. Their contribution to the community at large in furthering the Audubon cause in conservation through talks and field trips has been outstanding.

Have an enjoyable summer!

HERB GRENCH, President

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Chesbro Dam - April 13. Leader - Manie Taylor

Tri-colored blackbirds were seen by the leader on the way to the meeting place. A pleasant stop at Calero Dam by the group afforded views of Caspian and Forster's terns. At Chesbro Dam a pair of Wood ducks melted out of view. Also seen were Bullock's Oriole, Yellow Warblers, Cedar Waxwings, Bewick's Wren and Sparrow Hawk.

Pilarcitos - April 27 Leader - Kay McCann

On Wednesday, April 27, fourteen delighted members and guests of the SCVAS met at Pulgas Water Temple on Canada Road and went into Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam for a picnic lunch. We were happy to have as our guests Mrs. E. S. Gillette, Jr., National Audubon Society Board Member from San Francisco and Mrs. Samuel Eastman whose late husband was President of the San Francisco Water Company. They were invited by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mills who went with us on the same trip last year in the pouring rain.

The day was sunny and warm but not hot so the birds sang into the afternoon. Many wildflowers were in full bloom. Among them were Bleeding Hearts, banks of Romanzoffia, Alum Root, Blue Forget-me-nots, Woodland Star, Zygadene, Indian Warrior, lavender Iris and Blue-eyed Grass which is also an Iris. We took the Cahill Ridge Road in and stopped several times for views and to identify flowers and birds. Some of us took delightful walks including one along the flume at Stone Dam. Some of us had the pleasure of seeing and hearing the song of a female Golden-crowned Kinglet. All of us enjoyed hearing

the Winter Wren sing and some of us got a good view of it. Thirty-eight species were seen and heard including an immature Golden Eagle flying overhead, identified by Mrs. Gillette Mrs. Eastman is joining our Society Her experience will be valuable.

FIELD NOTES

Diane Conradson reports several Myrtle warblers in spring plumage at her home in Palo Alto during mid-April.

The blue and black bird seen on Adobe Creek by Nancy and Peter Holmes was finally identified after they saw one ;at the San Francisco Zoo It was a Fairy Bluebird, an Indian native commonly kept here as a pet.

A white Robin has been reported by different people in Campbell, . 985 Whitehall Ave., 960 Arnold Way and 528 Downing Ave.

A pair of Sparrows are apparently incubating a Robin's egg in a nest at 5015 Joseph Lane, Cambrian Park

Please note: There is an opening for a Wednesday field trip planner for the Southern County or help and information, call M. Henderson, 867-4304

Mrs. Emelie Curtis,
Field Note Compiler
P. O. Box 307
Morgan Hill, California 95037

REMINDER

ZIP CODES MUST BE USED ON
ALL BULK RATE MAIL. IF
YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO, PLEASE
SEND YOURS TODAY TO:

Mrs. Fanny Zwaal
478 Clifton
San Jose, California 95128

WALK IN THE MARSHES

You may now walk in the Palo Alto Baylands. The City Council has opened two well-marked dyke walkways to the public. One starts at the dump gatehouse, the other just east of the end of the lagoon.

Thanks are due to the Council, President Grench, and many others who have worked for this.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEEDS SLIDES

The Education Committee has greatly increased its activities, and finds that it is suffering from a dearth of material. In other words - not enough bird pictures. Members who request good slides of warblers, phoebes, various flycatchers, gulls, any birds of prey, starlings, wrens, terns, willets and other shorebirds, rails, ducks, etc. are appalled to find that we have none. Good photographs of most western birds are rarely obtainable from biological supply houses. Our Committee depends largely on photographs taken by members; if you have any, please send me duplicates and I shall reimburse you promptly from our Education Committee funds. When our programs begin again in September, I would like to be able to offer a much better selection of slides.

Diane Conradson
Education Chairman
4337 Miranda
Palo Alto, California 94306
941-2102

WILDLIFE FILMS - GIFT TICKETS

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is presenting a season ticket to the "Audubon Wildlife Films", to an outstanding student in the Life Sciences of all elementary, junior and senior high schools in Palo Alto.

This series of five Nature Films will be presented this fall by the Biology Club of the Palo Alto Senior High School, under the direction of Mr. Le Van Shugart

FOR READING ENJOYMENT

THE HOME BOOK OF ANIMAL CARE by Esther L. Guthrie

Practical information for teachers, animal lovers and parents of children who bring home stray animals. How to simulate natural habitats. Many animals are included: keety dids, dragonflies, turtles, mice and others.

HOMES FOR BIRDS, a pamphlet prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U. S. Dept. of the Interior. All about nesting boxes for various birds. Send 15 cents to Supt. of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

Russell Griswold (Student)
535 Hilbar Lane, Palo Alto, California

Mrs. Clark H. Godel
483 Hawthorne Ave., Palo Alto, California 94301

Donald Thomas
13282 Pierce Road, Saratoga, California 95070

Mr. Vernon W. Heimsoth
2226 Forbes Ave., Santa Clara, California 95050

Mr. Carl Burchfiel
The La Mar Apartments
14400 Oka Road, Los Gatos, California

Mr. Donald Hall
1699 Nickel Ave., San Jose, California

Lionel and V. Stephan
124 James Ave., Atherton, California 94025

Caroline Davis
Membership Chairman

THE CASE OF DEATH IN THE ECOSYSTEM

An ornithologist at Amherst, Massachusetts, placed a dead Black-Crowned Night Heron in a container with a colony of flesh-eating beetles. This is a common procedure in preparing a skeleton for scientific use. He discovered some days later that instead of a clean skeleton, the container held dead beetles. The DDT that killed the heron had contaminated its organs. When the beetles ate the contaminated meat, they died.

The heron undoubtedly acquired the DDT by eating fish containing DDT residues. The fish probably acquired the poison by eating stream insects weakened by DDT, or by absorbing it directly from the water through gills and skin. The DDT probably got into the water via wind-drift or runoff from some spray program.

The important factor is: The original target of the DDT was not night herons, nor fish, nor the beneficial stream insects. The DDT had been aimed at something else. But, after its original mission it kept on killing. "Entering the Ecosystem" means that all living creatures that are exposed to a substance such as DDT incorporate it in some manner within their bodies. From there it begins a seemingly endless journey as it is concentrated, reconcentrated, and passed on to progeny and predators.

From: The Los Angeles Audubon
Society - January, 1966

THE SAFE USE OF INSECTICIDES

By Roland C. Clement, Staff Biologist,
National Audubon Society.

In general, we must remember that nearly all insecticides are poisons and that almost all of them have undesirable effects even when used by professionally trained people. One must not only read the instructions provided by the manufacturer carefully, but must first decide whether an insecticide is absolutely necessary, since these chemicals should always be a last resort.

Despite the tremendous emphasis placed on "Reading the directions" and the assurances of safety when directions

are followed, this is not enough! A standard dispenser of DDT recommends applying 1 pound of DDT to 800 square feet of lawn, yet this is at the rate of 54 pounds per acre, when we know full well that even only 5 pounds per acre is acutely toxic to birds.

In the safe category we can list the botanically-derived poisons, pyrethrum, ryania and rotenone. Dr. Westcott called rotenone "probably the gardener's best chemical friend". It is, however, very toxic to fish and other cold-blooded animals. Its effects last about a week, whereas pyrethrum, though it gives a quick insect kill, especially in warm weather, quickly loses its toxicity.

Nicotine, in the form of nicotine-sulphate spray, sold as Black Leaf 40 and under other trade names, and sulphur in various combinations, are two old friends of the gardener. Once again, however, nicotine is a dangerous poison that must be used with care.

Our experience with the new, more potent chemical insecticides which followed the introduction of DDT has served to demonstrate that our knowledge of the effects of most of these poisons has been altogether fragmentary, and that although we have had plenty of discussions of how to use these materials against the insects, relatively little discussions of undesirable side effects has been available largely because such information was never sought for.

Of the chlorinated hydrocarbons (DDT, aldrin, dieldrin, chlordane, toxaphene, BHC, heptachlor) only methoxychlor appears safe enough to use if one is to avoid the undesirable complications of residual action, that is, food chain poisoning such as may cause remote and long delayed effects. The case of robins being poisoned by eating earth worms which have concentrated DDT ingested with the leaves of elm trees sprayed the year before is the most familiar example.

Even such relatively "safe" synthetic chemicals as methoxychlor, malathion, and the carbamate Sevin leave us uneasy until we know much more about the case of cancer in animals and plants. One school of qualified opinion favors the view that cancer may be caused by the "insult" which foreign molecular substances can cause to replicating cells.

In addition to chemical insecticides, we now have an ally in Bacillus thuringiensis, a bacterial formulation useful against the Lepidoptera (insects with leaf-chewing caterpillars). This is available under the trade names Thuricide, Nutralite and Parasporin.

Remember, however, that the Lepidoptera are the butterflies and moths, and we must certainly use even these new biological agents with due conservatism, and not blanket the countryside with them lest they so depress this insect group that birds will lose an important food supply, and we will lose the butterflies we admire so.

Everyone should be familiar with Milky Spore Disease, another bacterium which has helped control (reduce) the Japanese Beetle in the East. However, so much soil has been turned in developments in recent years, that the bacterium needs to be introduced from time to time.

A new group of silica gels (dessicating agents) appear promising for household insect control in dry places.

One final word: Insecticides should be for emergency use, applied specifically and locally, a shrub here, a tree there, not the whole yard. Remember that leaf-chewing by insects is "natural", a part of the normal and constructive cycles that keep the landscape alive. Protect specimen plants you want to show off; let Nature do most of the work otherwise.

And don't let anyone browbeat you into considering that Rachel Carson's Silent Spring was unscientific. You can buy this basic work in paperback form now. Obtain, also, The Use of Pesticides by the President's Science Advisory Committee (15¢ from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402) if you wish to keep abreast of the pesticides controversy.

From Massachusetts Audubon
Newsletter - October, 1965.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

BRANCH OF

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers 1965 - 1966

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Vice President	Dr. Thomas Harvey	716 Garner Ct. Santa Clara	CH3-6956
Secretary	Mrs. F. E. Myers	2250 Amherst Palo Alto	322-0207
Treasurer	Mrs. John Todd	945 Matadero Palo Alto	326-6904

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Editor	Mrs. Philip La Riviere	453 Tennessee Lane Palo Alto	327-2854
Circulation Manager	Miss Elsie Hoeck	1311 Christina San Jose	293-5668
Mimeographing	Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor	Sycamore Ave. Rt. 1, Box 116A Morgan Hill	779-9097

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUKBUSH SOCIETY

BRANCH OF

NATIONAL AUKBUSH SOCIETY

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327-2874	457 Tennessee Lane Palo Alto	Mrs. Shilp La Riviere	Editor
393-6666	1211 Christiana San Jose	Miss Elaine Gock	Circulation Manager
779-9977	4500 Moore Ave. P.O. Box 1154 Moraga Hill	Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Taylor	Ministry