

# The Avocet

Volume XIII, Number 7

September, 1966

Wednesday, Sept. 28  
8:00 P.M.

Rose Garden Branch,  
San Jose Public Library  
Dana and Naglee, San Jose

Mr. Clifford Schmidt  
presents  
"Flowers and Plants of Death Valley"

Mr. Schmidt is an Assistant Professor of Science Education at San Jose State College and has served as an instructor in Field Studies in Natural History. He has taken a beautiful collection of colored slides in Death Valley and will use it as a basis for his talk. Of special interest is the amazing way in which plants have adapted to survive in this hostile environment.

## A Letter From the President

Dear Friends:

As J. Hickey points out "birdwatching is anything you care to make it. It is old enough to have stood the test of time yet young enough to lie within the age of exploration." Your Audubon Society is anything you wish to make it. Some find it a challenge worth trying to meet in the development of a viable local society. Others wishing to assist a venerable conservation education organization, support it by memberships. For one reason or another all of us find it worth our consideration in time and/or money. All I ask of you this coming year is your continued support.

You may wish to contribute more in the way of time and talent, and a note to any of the board members would eventually give you that opportunity. We need additional field trip leaders, (for youth and adult groups) we need nature slides for educational programs, we need committee members to help on hospitality, education, publicity and conservation. There are many able people already contributing their time and talent to our organization. I sincerely invite others of you to join in the fun and the challenge.

Sincerely,  
TOM HARVEY

### COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Sat., Sept. 17	9:00 A.M.	Moss Landing
Wed., Sept. 21	9:00 A.M.	P.A. Yacht Harbor
Sun., Sept. 25	9:00 A.M.	P.A. Yacht Harbor
Wed., Sept. 28	8:00 P.M.	San Jose (General Meeting)



September Calendar

General Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 8:00 P.M. (See first page)

Field Trips

Saturday, Sept. 17, 9:00 A.M. To Moss Landing and the Salinas River mouth. Meet on Jetty Road north of Moss Landing. The tide will be just right for shore birds. Bring lunch.  
Leader: Viola Anderson  
(Mr. Trullinger's phone: 854-4201)

Wednesday, Sept. 21 9:00 A.M. Palo Alto Yacht Harbor  
Meet at the Duck Pond  
Leader: Harriet Munday - phone 325-1192

Sunday, Sept. 25 9:00 A.M. Palo Alto Yacht Harbor  
and flood basin. Leader: Mrs. Jill Cisne - 321-3195

Education Committee Report

The committee had a busy summer giving programs and field trips to summer school classes. Mrs. Nancy Holmes will be doing the scheduling for fall programs, requests for which are already filling the calendar. Please direct your applications to Mrs. Holmes at 948-1854.

We are thankful to all the members who give their time to the Education Committee, but I wish we were able to spread our work among more members rather than demand so much of the few who faithfully give their time whenever it is needed. If you feel you can help about once a month please let me know. We can set up another training workshop if enough people are interested.

Our thanks to Mrs. Jay Harrison for her contribution of bird slides. We still need many more of shore and garden birds. Does anyone have slides of Willets, Forster Terns, or Audubon Warblers?

Diane Conradson,  
941-2102

The principles for which the Audubon Society stands have lost an eloquent and dedicated spokesman with the death this summer of C. M. Goethe.

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It is not too late to register for the Audubon Convention November 11-November 16 in Sacramento. The Five (\$5.00) Dollar registration fee should be sent to: National Audubon Convention, 613 Riversville Road, Greenwich, Conn. 06830.

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Help - BCDC Report - Help!

The BCDC has been hard at work all summer and some interesting things have taken place. The Commission has gotten a preliminary injunction against the City of Emeryville to stop fill and the City of Albany brought suit against the BCDC saying that the BCDC has no jurisdiction over their portion of Bay fill. The Attorney General's office has filed a cross-complaint, including a request for a preliminary injunction for Albany to stop fill until the legal issues are settled. This latter hearing was set for August 15th.

In relation to marshlands, several developments have taken place. In July it was reported to the Commission by the Staff that two professors at the University of California, Robert Stebbins in Zoology and Herbert Mason, Professor of Botany, Emeritus, have described in detail the ecology of the Emeryville Crescent, and have asked that it and a similiar area of the Albany-Richmond mudflats be set aside for students at Bay Area universities, high schools and elementary schools because it is one of the last remaining shoreline areas in the East Bay suitable for biological study and research. I do not need to go into their ecological dissertation as it should be very familiar to all readers of the Avocet, and to all those who have attended hearings in recent years at Palo Alto City Hall. For anyone interested in pursuing this further the Memo is #12. I also have a copy available.

The Commission denied a request for a permit to use 97.5 acres of marsh for a dry fill and then "golf course and other recreational uses", in Marin County. It was stated by Commissioner Burton in connection with this application that "the Commission was going to have to clear up the public's misunderstanding of the value of marsh areas and mudflats". An educational program would be desirable. Two forthcoming reports - Fish and Wildlife, and Marshlands, - would cover this subject and in addition, the State Department of Fish and Game has hired oceanography consultants from the East Coast where much more work has been done on this subject. The Commission seems to be very aware of the marshlands and their values.

The City of San Leandro came before the Commission with a comprehensive plan for its four miles of Bay front. The application requested permission to fill approximately 39 acres, and to dredge a 25 acre small boat lagoon and a 1000 foot shoreline channel for public access for recreation. The City has spent \$1,000,000 to acquire about 150 acres of marsh and 650 acres of tideland from the Trojan Powder Company to maintain as a wildlife refuge. The City has committed itself to use this land for open space purposes forever. As the land was acquired through assistance from the Federal Government let us hope that this commitment is firm. The plan was approved on the basis that it seemed that this four mile plan would fit into the Commission's comprehensive plan for the Bay.



Help - BCDC Report - Help! (continued from page 69)

Now, one last word on the cry for Help! The Commission is either going to have to meet longer or oftener as planning reports are beginning to come in and time is so limited. I hope there are some people who will be in a position to help cover these meetings. At the present time they are held the first Thursday and the third Friday of every month, usually in San Francisco and they don't adjourn until 5:00 o'clock or later. It makes it difficult from the Peninsula. Is there anyone in San Francisco or Marin County who could come as an observer? I feel so strongly that the public must be at these meetings and I can assure you that they are extremely interesting and I think they will get more so as time goes on.

Harriet Mundy

We welcome as active participants our New Members

Stephen E. Buggie (student) 839 Mangrove Avenue Sunnyvale, Calif. 94086	Gary K. Kring (student) 17101 Hicks Road Los Gatos, Calif. 95030
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Bill MacKenzie (student) 7550 Oak Knoll Lane Menlo Park, Calif. 94025	Maurren Mc Taggart 226 Grand Street Redwood City, Calif.
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Mrs. Ruth Hughes-Hallett 1180 N. Lemon Avenue Menlo Park, Calif. 94025	Mrs. Samuel P. Eastman 610 Whiskey Hill Road Woodside, Calif. 94062
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Marian T. Allen 1317 Montero Street Burlingame, Calif. 94010	Jim & Lucille Ferguson 1036 Colorado Ave., Apt P Palo Alto, California, 94303
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Mr. Dave Thompson 415 Hermosa Way Menlo Park, Calif. 94025	Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Wright 1615 Deerfield Drive, San Jose, Calif. 95129
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Caroline Davis,  
Membership Chairman

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Watch our next issue for details of another conservation conference at Foothill College. The subject: "Competition for the Bay" - the date: October 29.

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Virginia Bothwell held a delightful field trip for beginners this summer. About twenty people (half of them young children) enjoyed her discussion of bird and plant life in a section of the Stanford campus.

NOTES FROM AFIELD

Stevens Creek Park - May 11 - Leader, Mary Rugh

The morning for 19 members was chilled by the solid overcast as well as by the starkness of the live oaks which were being denuded by a caterpillar invasion. Great masses of the stilled caterpillars littered the ground beneath the trees. The bulging cafeteria provided food for nesting birds: Robin (2 nests), Acorn Woodpecker, Black-headed Grosbeak (with plump young), Starling, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo (2 nests), Bushtits (3 nests), and Nuthatch. Among the 35 species seen were Vaux's Swift, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers, W. Tanager, and Cedar Waxwing. Also a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was whistled up for two lingering members by Mr. Sather.

E.G.C.

Al Wool Ranch, La Honda - May 15 - Leader, Al Wool

A high thin fog was soon dissipated and the sun produced a comfortable temperature. The leader's clear firm voice guided many grateful eyes to fine views of: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, a Wood Pewee pair "contemplating" building a nest (plus a completed nest), Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, a perched Violet-green Swallow, a hurried Rough-wing Swallow, two Black-headed Grosbeaks on nests, and a Chestnut-backed Chickadee nesting in a lumb crevice.

Those members who lingered after lunch were treated to pampered birdwatching while sitting in a warm green meadow with Chipping Sparrows and Lazuli's singing.

E.G.C.

Isenberg Ranch - May 21 - Leader, Roy Cameron

Some 22 persons, including several newcomers, braved cold, wet, drizzly and foggy weather to enjoy the beauty of the Isenberg Ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Among the 30 species observed the most interesting were: Lawrence's Goldfinch; Lazuli Bunting; Black Phoebe; Pine Siskin; Barn, Violet-green, and Cliff Swallows; Western Wood Pewee; Western Bluebird; Warbling Vireo; Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers; Black-headed Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Red-winged Blackbird; Swainson's Thrush; Bewick's Wren; and Band Tailed Pigeon.

Following a full morning of birding, the group was particularly grateful to Mrs. Isenberg for opening her warm, comfortable, ranch house to it.

R. S.C.

Notes from Afield (continued from page 71)

Point Reyes Bird Observatory - June 5 - Leaders, Dick & Fran Mewaldt

Fourteen observers assembled at Inverness to be guided by Enid Austin and Lillian Henningsen of PRBO to Palomarin at the extreme south end of Point Reyes National Seashore. A light breeze and a high thin overcast made conditions nearly ideal. After a tour of the facilities, bird-banding technique was demonstrated on Purple Finches, House Finches, a Swainson's Thrush, Song Sparrows and an Orange-crowned Warbler. Trapping sites around the edge of the mesa overlooking the ocean and active nesting sites were then visited where additional Purple Finches were extracted from a net and banded. A walk in the fern and moss draped gorge of the Arroyo Honda behind the Observatory preceded lunch. In the early afternoon, the woodland and meadow trail took us to the 600 foot table-land just above the observatory where many species were observed in spite of the mid-day hour. The acrobatics of a Red-tailed Hawk were watched as a field discussion on birds and PRBO was held on the hilltop overlooking the ocean and abandoned Palomarin Village. Forty-one species of land birds were observed in the vicinity of the Observatory.

L.R.M.

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Castle Rock Ridge - June 8 - Leader, Margaret Henderson

About fifteen people saw a variety of woodland birds, among them: Western Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Downy Woodpecker, Warbling and Solitary Vireos, Western Wood Pewee, Western Tanager, Swainson's Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Goldfinches.

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Pacific Ocean - June 13 - Leader, Leavitt McQuesten

Sixty persons attended the offshore trip conducted by Leavitt McQuesten. The water was smooth and visibility excellent. Captain Elgin Hurlbert, Winni Hurlbert, Stanley Mythaler, Carlyle Sather, Hilda Sather and Viola Anderson assisted Mr. McQuesten with identification. The following species were listed: Black-footed Albatross, Sooty Shearwater, Pink-footed Shearwater, Black Petrel (1), Double-crested Cormorant, Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Western Gull, California Gull, Heermann's Gull, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Cassin's Auklet, and Rhinoceros Auklet.

Viola Anderson

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Point Lobos - June 25 - Leaders, Lloyd and Eve Case

This year we had "perfect" weather for this trip. It was a beautiful, clear, sunny day with just enough breeze. A fairly large number of our own members, together with visitors and guests from Monterey and Santa Cruz made this one of the largest field-trip groups that we have had for some time.

(Point Lobos field trip continued on page 73)



Notes from Afield - Point Lobos field trip - continued .....

During the first half of the morning we were fortunate to have Jud VanDevere, the Reserve Naturalist, accompany us and point out many interesting details of the formation of the area, the plants seen along the trail, and the changes that are slowly taking place by natural processes.

This first walk took us from Whaler's Cove, up past the old Whaler's Cottage, along the cliff around the Cove, past some of the ancient Indian fishing camps, magnificent specimens of the picturesque Monterey Cypress, and out to the historic areas known as "The Pit" and "The Chute". We saw nesting Cormorants and a large number of swallow's nests, which were not active at this time.

Following this walk we drove down South Shore Drive and then walked out to the point overlooking Bird Island with its nesting Cormorants and Brown Pelicans. Both of these were present in great numbers, but it was noted that the pelicans were not nesting as yet.

Both of the real highlights of the day were seen in this area: first, a Black Oystercatcher on her nest, with her mate appearing from time to time on the rocks in the vicinity; the second, a Kingfisher perched on the cliff below the trail out to Bird Island. As usual, the Sea Otters were located, loafing and playing at the outer edge of the kelp beds.

The species checked off included: Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Flycatchers, Purple Finches, Red-shafted Flicker, White-throated Swift, Violet-green, Cliff, and Barn Swallows, Pelagis and Brandt's Cormorants, Brown Pelicans, Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatchers, Black Phoebe, Brown-headed Cowbird, Starlings, Brown Creeper, and Heerman's Gulls.

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L.N.C.

Ray and Kay McCann led the third census of Foothills Park on May 22. A total of 51 species and 1132 individuals were seen. The following new species were added to the list: Rufous Hummingbird, Western Wood Peewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bullocks Oriole, Western Tanager, Savannah Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow.

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For several days during first week of May a Hooded Oriole "cased" the neighborhood of Dr. Amy Stannard, Palo Alto.

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May 14, one Glaucous Gull (something apparently wrong with one wing) at Palo Alto Yacht Harbor. Joe Greenberg

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June 29 - three Gray-crowned Rosy Finches at 7500' elevation on a snow bank on the North slope of the Sierra Buttes, Sierra County. They were feeding on the surface of the snow and flycatching a few feet above the snow's surfact.

Mark F. Hopkins

(More field notes on page 74)

(Field Notes continued from  
page 73)

July 9 - We saw an immature Little Blue Heron with the sun behind us and on him at 100 feet distance. It flew while we watched with binoculars (7 x 35 and 7 x 50). The bird was Snowy Egret size and white. It had all light-greenish legs and feet (no golden slippers) The beak was whitish with a black tip; it was broad near the face. It was at Palo Alto Baylands on the road opened to a nature walk nearest the Pheasant Farm gate about 4:00 p.m.

Ray and Kay McCann

July 19 - One Rufous Hummingbird in back yard. Monte Sereno  
E. Hester

A goodly number of orioles of different ages and a family of grosbeaks, together with the regular insect eaters, kept the oak worms under control in the Los Gatos garden of C. Lintott.

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo injured itself against a window at Mrs. Jay Harrison's house on Stanley Way in Palo Alto in June. It was not quite mature but the white tail spots and rusty coloring on the wings showed. Mrs. Proctor cared for the bird for ten days, and had hopes for its recovery when it suddenly died.

J.H.

Note

Mrs. Evelyn Hester will be the new Field Note Compiler for the coming year. Please address all future field trip reports and field notes to her at: 15015 Karl Avenue, Monte Sereno, California - telephone - 356-3728 (evenings only)

Emelie G. Curtis,  
Field Notes Compiler  
P.O. Box 307  
Morgan Hill, California 95037  
Phone - 779-2637

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The Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory is offering a training program in bird banding. It started August 1, but will extend until the end of October, so openings might still be available. Address inquiries to: Dr. Howard L. Cogswell, % Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory, Mesa Road, Bolinas, California.



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