

# The Avocet

Volume XIII, Number 9

November, 1966

## An Illustrated Talk

### " A FISHY STORY "

By

Mr. Robert L. Hassur

Wednesday, November 30  
8:00 P.M.  
Rose Garden Branch Library

Naglee and Dana  
San Jose

Have you ever wondered what fish live in San Francisco Bay and along our coast line? Did it ever occur to you that some fish demonstrate a remarkable ability to adjust their systems to both salty and fresh waters? Did you know that the bay is a vital link in the life cycles of several fish?

If you are the wondering kind, you will be delighted with Mr. Hassur's illustrated talk. He is a most interesting and authoritative speaker. An Assistant Professor of Biology and Natural Science at San Jose State College, he is also a Ph.D. candidate in ichthyology at Stanford University. Come and hear his true fish story.

Kay McCann  
Program Chairman

## ABAG REGIONAL PLAN

At the Claremont Hotel, Berkeley, on November 4, at 9:30 A.M. the Association of Bay Area Governments will present its comprehensive regional plan. Principal planner Robert S. Cornish will emphasize open space and discuss land use, shore line, and solid waste disposal need. You are urged to attend!

## COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Wed., Nov. 2	8:30 A.M.	Alviso
Sat., Nov. 5	9:00 A.M.	Santa Cruz
Mon., Nov. 7	7:30 P.M.	Santa Clara (Board)
Fri., Nov. 18	4:00 P.M.	Palo Alto (Screen Tour)
Sun., Nov. 20	9:00 A.M.	Redwood City
Mon., Nov. 21	8:00 P.M.	San Jose (Screen Tour)
Wed., Nov. 30	9:00 A.M.	Palo Alto
Wed., Nov. 30	8:00 P.M.	San Jose (General Meeting)



November Calendar

Board Meeting

Monday, Nov. 7, -7:30 P.M. at the Harvey's, 716 Garner Court,  
Santa Clara - Phone CH 3-6956

General Meeting

Wednesday, Nov. 30 - 8:00 P.M. - San Jose (see first page)

Field Trips

Wednesday Morning - Nov. 2 - 8:30 A.M.

To the levees of Leslie Salt Company at Alviso where the migration of shore birds should be well along.

Meet in front of GEORGE MAYNE SCHOOL on the San Jose-Alviso Road, which is an extension of San Jose's North First Street.

Please meet promptly at 8:30 A.M., since we meet Mr. David Hoxie of Leslie Salt Company at the gate to the levees at 9:00 A.M. For late comers the gate is at the right of and back of the old cannery buildings. It will be open.

Leaders: Lloyd and Eve Case  
Phone - 867-4748

Saturday, Nov. 5, to Santa Cruz beaches and lakes.

Meet at 9:00 A.M. at the Ranger Station, Natural Bridges State Park. Bring lunch.

Leaders: Lloyd and Eve Case  
Phone - 867-4748

Sunday, Nov. 20, to Greco Island.

Meet at Redwood City Sea Scout ship at 9:00 A.M. Turn east off Bayshore at Harbor Blvd., turn left onto the road into the Redwood City Yacht Harbor. Just over the tracks turn left on the dirt road and follow it around to the Sea Scout building. Transportation to the island is being provided by the Redwood City Sea Scouts in their boat "Fury".

Leader: Ralph Trullinger  
Phone - 854-4201

Wednesday, Nov. 30 - 9:00 A.M. to the Palo Alto Baylands.

Meet at the Duck Pond.

Leaders: Rebecca and  
Warren Turner  
Phone - 325-7777

Screen Tours

Friday, Nov. 18 4:00 P.M. Palo Alto Senior High School Aud.

Monday, Nov. 21 8:00 P.M. Morris Daily Aud. - San Jose  
State College

For more on screen tours see page 82.

Screen Tours (continued from page 81)

The famous photographer-naturalist Allan D. Cruickshank narrates his beautiful film "The Bear River", which covers a 650 mile trip across Utah, Wyoming and Idaho; from melting mountain snows and spring flowers, through canyons and woodlands, to valleys and plains. We meet moose, bear, antelope, and elk; forty species of birds - a gallery of natural wonders.

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This year the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society presented a season ticket to the Audubon Wildlife Films to an outstanding student in the Life Sciences of each of the elementary, junior and senior high schools of Palo Alto. The Biology Club of Palo Alto Senior High School, under the direction of Mr. Le Van Shugart of the Science Department, sponsors this program. The students do their own ushering, announcing and projecting. All proceeds of this series can be used to send biology students on special bussed field trips to study the ecology of special California habitats.

The balcony seats and several of the front rows of seats of the auditorium have been sold at a special rate to elementary age Boy and Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls.

Every one come!!! Help others to learn to appreciate our natural heritage and enjoy the beauty of this wonderful series of wildlife programs yourself.

Jill Cisne, Coordinator  
Phone - 321-3195

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An Invitation from the Sierra Club

The Stevens Creek Freeway presents us with the almost impossible challenge to create a nature area with trails and natural plantings beside a busy thoroughfare. Perhaps we can salvage something from our shattered dream of a Stevens Creek Parkway from the bay to the creek's headwaters below skyline.

The planning department of the City of Mountain View has developed a plan for the area within the city limits. Santa Clara County has applied for title to the strip along the Freeway which lies within the county. The combination of these two areas would yield about five miles of trail and natural plantings. The existing trees along with more plantings would yield cover for many birds and other wildlife. This would be the beginning of a nature area within easy access of many city dwellers.

The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club invites interested conservationists to join in viewing the area along the Stevens Creek Freeway from El Camino Real to Fremont Avenue. Meet at the City Hall of Mountain View on Castro Street at 9:30 A.M., Sunday, November 13. A member of the planning department will present his group's plans. We will then travel by car to a point where the cars can be parked

(See page 83 for more)

An Invitation from the Sierra Club (continued from page 82)

and start our walk along the proposed nature area, continuing past the Mountain View city limits and exploring the area under option to the County of Santa Clara.

Please join us in previewing a potential nature area which could be created with the combined efforts of the County of Santa Clara, the City of Mountain View, conservation groups, and interested youth groups.

Claude A. Look, Chairman  
Loma Prieta Chapter  
Sierra Club

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NOTES FROM AFIELD

Moss Landing- Sept. 17 - Leader, Viola Anderson

Shorebirds, gulls and terns were identified on the low tide island near the yacht harbor and later at the Salinas River mouth. Migrating Elegant Terns were observed at both areas and a Parasitic Jaeger harrying a tern was seen offshore from the river mouth. Notable among a species total of 44 were Green-winged Teal, Baird's Sandpiper, Common Murre, Belted Kingfisher, Horned Lark, and Savannah Sparrow.

Palo Alto Yacht Harbor - Sept. 21 - Leader, Harriet Mundy

Some highlights of this trip were a Great Blue Heron standing in the tallest tree at the duck pond, a group of Black-bellied Plovers all in winter dress except one still in breeding plumage and a Belted Kingfisher perched on a wire. Other interesting species, Black-crowned Night Heron, a bittern (seen the day before) and Black-necked Stilts.

Palo Alto Yacht Harbor - Sept. 25 - Leaders, L. & J. Cisne

On a mild, slightly overcast day twenty members met for some fall migration birding. Forty-eight species were seen. On the day before 51 species were tallied. There were large flocks of mixed blackbirds; Brewers, Redwings, Tricolors, and Cowbirds. Tight energetic flocks of sandpipers whipped by and a Clapper Rail was heard. Violet-green and Barn Swallows were still seen.

Early Migration Arrivals

Sept. 17 - Fox Sparrow - Margaret Henderson  
Sept. 20 - Golden-crowned Sparrow - Joyce Todd  
Sept. 20 - Immature White-crowned Sparrow - Evelyn Hester  
Sept. 21 - White-crowned Sparrow - Alan Walther  
Sept. 30 - Cedar-waxwing flock - E. Hester  
Oct. 9 - Hermit Thrush - Emelie Curtis

Mrs. Evelyn K. Hester, Field Notes Compiler  
Phone - 356-3728 (evenings)

New Members

A sincere welcome to:

Mr. & Mrs. James H. Allen  
43 Amador Avenue, Atherton, 94025

Marian L. Lemon (transfer)  
70513 Daffodil Court,  
Sunnyvale 94086

Mrs. Ruth Hughs/Hallett  
1180 No. Lemon Ave.,  
Menlo Park, 94025

Maureen McTaggart  
226 Grand Street  
Redwood City, 94061

Mrs. Richard H. Milligan  
4260 Pomona Avenue  
Palo Alto, 94306

Mrs. Eleanor B. Hopkins  
159 Churchill  
Palo Alto, 94301

Eda M. Coburn  
P.O. Box 283  
Los Altos, 94022

Mrs. Ruby Smock  
Timothy Smock (student)  
121 Byron Street  
Palo Alto, 94301

Caroline Davis  
Membership Chairman

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CONSERVATION NOTES

On our mid-September trip across the northwestern Nevada and southeastern Oregon desertland, en route to the Wild Life Refuge at Malheur Lake, Even and I found ourselves being repeatedly thrilled by the wave after wave of White-crowned Sparrows that flowed across the desert road and all around us as they migrated southward from their northern wintering areas. In addition, we thoroughly enjoyed the numerous flocks of ravens and the even greater numbers of Blackbilled Magpies. Equally enjoyable, however, was the silence and the vast emptiness of the broad and long desert valleys where we could see our road often stretching for ten or fifteen miles in a straight line ahead of us, usually without another car in sight. In a distance of over seventy miles we saw only seven other cars! As we drove along, with many, many stops to observe birds or roadside plants, we compared the traffic situation with that of most of our California roads, and I was reminded of one chapter in Edwin Way Teale's recent book, "Wandering Through Winter".

I recalled how he told that a dozen miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona, they had pulled off of the highway pavement to enjoy the view of the vast sweep of desert. While countless cars zipped past them and numerous trucks thundered by, they too talked of travelling on leisurely back roads. Becoming discontented with the rush of traffic, they determined to take the next good side road that they came to; it happened to lead them to the utterly charming valley of Sonoita Creek and the small town of Patagonia.

Since we first read about Patagonia in Pettingill's "A Guide to Bird Finding (West)", and later in Teale's book, we have talked

(See page 85 for more on Patagonia)

about going there on a birding trip, "when we have time". Now our interest was rejuvenated.

Much to our very pleasant surprise, when we returned home, our mail informed us that the Tucson Audubon Society, with the cooperation of The Nature Conservancy, is undertaking the acquirement of 320 acres along Sonoita Creek for the establishment of The Patagonia - Sonoita Creek Bird Sanctuary. This involves the raising of \$150,000; a bold undertaking.

Pettingill states in his guide that in Patagonia the most interesting birding area is the Creek bottom with its small live stream, willows, cottonwoods, sycamores, mesquite, live oaks, etc.; with the birdlife being an unusual mixture of species from the southern major watercourses and the lower southeastern (Arizona) mountains association. The area is remarkable for the birds that winter there and are usually found elsewhere in Arizona only during the warmer months, among them, the Epidonax Flycatchers and Hepatic Tanagers. Among the rarer birds that have been seen there he lists the Violet-crowned Hummingbird and the Green Kingfisher. The complete list of "possibles" is one to excite any birder. As an additional "goodie", 15 miles to the east is the San Rafael Valley; where the wintering birds include large flocks of Horned Larks, McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and occasionally, the rare Baird's Sparrow.

Refreshing our memory by once more reading Mr. Teale's description we found it easy to understand why the Indians called this area "The Enchanted Land". The environment provides birds with everything they need, - food, water, protection, shelter, and cover, with trees, side canyons, running water, - open ground for Robins, berries for thrushes, grass seed for the seed-eaters, etc. It is impossible to give, here, the details of the pictures that Mr. Teale paints in his ten pages, but some of the highlights include Mexican Jays and Robins, Hermit Thrushes and Lark Sparrows, Eastern Phoebes and S y's Phoebes, Phainopeplas and Curve-billed Thrashers, Vesper Sparrows and Field Sparrows, Evening Grosbeaks and Cardinals, Great Blue Herons and Red-shafted Flickers.

This small valley, with its year-round stream is actually a "funnel" on the migration routes of these landbirds, where they find the necessary resting and feeding places. It is a southern and "landbird" counterpart of the Wildfowl refuges that we had just visited on the Pacific Flyway, at Malheur, Tule, Lower Klamath, and Upper Klamath Lakes.

We had been disturbed by the fact that plans have been advanced for flooding this "Enchanted Land" in order to provide a resort lake. It was good news indeed to learn that an Audubon Society is endeavoring to convert the area into a Bird Sanctuary. This seems to be the type of conservation activity that every Audubon Chapter and individual member should support. California, the Bay Area, and each of our local communities are involved in controversial conservation activities, but, while Patagonia is not exactly in our own backyard, many of our birders do travel at least this far on "birding vacations", and we should not withhold a helping hand when projects of other groups are as deserving of our aid as this one: the preservation of necessary habitat for over 170 species of birds. Contributions are needed. For information please contact: L.N. Cass, 20534 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga.