

The Avocet

Volume XIII, Number 10

December, 1966

THE RED-FOOTED BOOBY

This south Pacific, ocean-going bird was named by sailors long ago. It followed sailing ships, alighting on rigging and railing. Apparently it became a nuisance and sailors would yell at the bird, "Go way you crazy boobies."

The latin name is *Sula sula* and Rebecca and I preferred to use this name. The *Sula* has a wing spread of five feet, nearly all feathers are white, except black on the lower wing primaries. The long, tubular bill is blue, the eye dark and crimson, webbed feet. The body is described by one authority as like a "fat cigar."

We visited a colony of these birds in late February, 1966 at the Kilauea Lighthouse located on the extreme north coast of the Island of Kauai, Hawaii. There were about 500 birds in the colony and when we first saw them from a distance they looked like bees flying around the hive. They were in the midst of nest building and mating and there was excitement in the air. Only one egg is laid in a nest. The egg is a little smaller than a hen's egg. We saw the first one in a nest on February 28. We expected it would be blue and were disappointed to see it was white. Later, when we picked up a discarded shell, we found we could rub off the white top layer of calcium and then discovered a lovely, sky-blue color.

The incubation period was 44 days; a little over six weeks. It was interesting that, while some of the females had mates present, who shared nesting responsibilities, others were alone, and were never seen to leave their nests to feed. We saw the first baby on April 12; a tiny naked, toddling, shaking thing just emerging from the egg, aided by the mother's long, gentle bill. Nature provides three days' food for the baby. After that it can feed from the parent's lower mandible. After a few days, the baby has all white feathers and a black bill and face. The baby growth is rapid, changing from day to day, so that after three weeks one baby we watched particularly, could perch beside its mother and was constantly begging for food.

Mr. Gerald Swedberg, representative for the Hawaiian Fish and Game Commission, told us this *sula* colony is growing. This is as it should be and we were pleased.

Rebecca and Warren Turner

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Mon., Dec. 5	7:30 P.M.	Palo Alto (Board)
Sun., Dec. 11	9:45 A.M.	Los Banos
Sat., Dec. 31	7:30 A.M.	Christmas Count



SOME ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY

by H. Thomas Harvey

Part I. Natural Habitats of San Francisco Bay and Their Values

Introduction The interdependence of man with nature is based upon two distinctive aspects. The first is that of his direct relationships. The second and more subtle rests upon his social and esthetic relationships with the environment.

The first of these, then, is the practical level of ecology. It has to do with food production, the quality of water, the cleanliness of the air. Here are man's concerns with his safety, with pollution of both water and air and with the very climate that the bay influences and thus the ease of living.

The second dependence also has some practical aspects but it is primarily a matter of man's feelings; the appreciation of a natural scene, the trill of watching wildlife living free, the crisp breeze with a salt tang. Here too are the relationships of the sport fisherman with a singing line or the sailboater fighting a resistant rudder. And, not least, there is the curious individual who seeks in the marshes and the mud shores the secrets of life itself.

No consideration of the ecology of San Francisco Bay can divorce itself from these two aspects. Economic use and its values enters into the ecological picture just as much as do the needs of the lover of the out-of-doors. The critical problems arise in trying to determine just exactly what the values are and to what extent immediate consideration vies with the distant future. The ecologist does not find easy answers, but seeks them by raising questions. Questions of how is it possible for millions of shorebirds to subsist on the food in the mud flats of San Francisco Bay? It may seem remote, but the answers to questions on shorebird survival may well uncover facts and principles that pertain to human survival. Thus questions contemplated because of their intrinsic interest may well have their practical applications in the realm of human endeavor.

The values of intellectual and esthetic perception place man in the unique role of being a part of nature and capable of knowing that he is a part. The ability to know is our greatest human attribute. Einstein (1934) put it well when he suggested that "the sensitive soul seeks to escape from personal life into the world of objective thought and perception.....". We can not all escape nor can any one of us escape all of the time from the practical problem of survival, but, the opportunities must be maintained for us to do so, for in this lies our humanism and our sanity. To understand and to appreciate the ecological relationships in San Francisco Bay are vital viable human activities, they may also serve to help us live a more enjoyable life free of health hazards and pollution.

(To be continued in the January, 1967, issues of The Avocet.)

December Calendar

Board Meeting

Monday, Dec. 7, - 7:30 P.M. at the Crench residence, 2828
South Court, Palo Alto - Phone 321-7994

Field Trip

Sunday, Dec. 11 -

To Los Banos as guests of the Santa Cruz Bird Club.
Meet at Tiny's restaurant on Highway 152 west of Los
Banos. Be ready to leave for the Refuge at 9:45 A.M.
sharp. Bring lunch.

Leader: Captain Elgin Hurlbert

Information: Ralph Trullinger - 854-4201.

Annual Count

Saturday, Dec. 31, Annual Christmas Bird Count

Meeting Place: Security Savings, 2830 Alum Rock Avenue,
San Jose. Time: 7:30 A.M. Bring lunch; Reconvene
at 4:30 sharp. Refreshments will be served during the
tally.

Count Areas: Same as in past years: - a circular area 15
miles in diameter, with center at junction of Mabury Road,
and Capitol Avenue, north-east of the city limits.

Sectors: The count area will be divided into five sectors:

A. Alviso Sector: bounded on the east by State Highway
17 (the old "Oakland Highway"), and on the south by
Bayshore Highway. Bayshore Highway is inside this
sector.

Leader: Dr. Thomas Harvey, 716 Garner Court,
Santa Clara - Phone CH3-6956

B. Southwest Sector: bounded on the north and east by
Bayshore Highway. South of Alum Rock Avenue, the
Bayshore Highway is inside this sector.

Leader: Mr. Wilbur Luick, 1160 Doralee Way, San Jose
Phone - 264-5892

C. Evergreen Sector: bounded by Bayshore Highway, Alum
Rock Avenue, and Mt. Hamilton Road. Mt. Hamilton
Road is inside this sector.

Leader: Mr. Roy Cameron, 20560 Komina Avenue,
Saratoga - Phone 867-9309

D. Alum Rock Sector: bounded on the south by Mt.
Hamilton Road, Alum Rock Avenue and Bayshore Highway;
on the north by Capitol Avenue and Sierra Road; on
the west by State Highway 17 (Old Oakland Highway).
Alum Rock Avenue, Bayshore Highway, Oakland Highway,
and Capitol Avenue, are all inside this sector.

Leader: Mr. Lawrence Moitozo, 16547 Cypress Way,
Los Gatos - Phone 354-9379.

E. Calaveras Sector: bounded by Sierra Road, Capitol
Avenue, and the old Oakland Highway. Sierra Road and
Oakland Highway are inside this sector.

Leader: Mr. Albert J. Wool, Box 68, La Honda.
Phone - PI7-0317.

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Annual Count (continued from page 89)

Each leader is responsible for planning the itinerary within his sector. (If you know where there is good birding within a sector, please let the leader know about it.) When we meet at 7:30 A.M., we will divide into groups to cover each sector, and individuals may select the leader and the sector which they wish. If you know now which sector you prefer, please write, or telephone, to the leader. It will be a big help in planning the itinerary if each leader knows before hand how many observers (and cars) he can count on for his sector. If you have any questions, call: Ralph Trullinger - 854-4201, or one of the leaders.

Records: One person in each group will act as recorder, and will record the counts of each species of wild birds that are positively identified. In making estimates of large numbers, indicate the probable error, for example: 2000 \pm 300. If unable to estimate the degree of accuracy, record the estimate as: "2,000 est." In adding estimates to the actual counts, in the final tally indicate the accuracy in this way: Coots: 2173; (2000 \pm 300 173) This shows that of the total number of 2173 coots reported, 173 were actually counted, and the rest were estimated.

The recorder for each group, in each sector, should also keep a record of: 1) the hours spent (a) on foot, and (b) by car; 2) the mileage covered (a) on foot, and (b) by car. This data is an important factor in the overall picture that is developed from the data submitted by each group.

Since weather conditions affect the activity of birds, and thus are reflected in the results of the count, please try to keep a record of: 1) minimum and maximum temperatures; 2) wind direction and approximate velocity; 3) percent of sky that is covered by clouds; 4) additional pertinent notes, such as: fog, rain, sun, etc.

Habitats are important in evaluating species counts!

Please record the habitats visited, - and the approximate time in each, - such as salt marsh, canyon stream, oak woodland, grassland, golf course, etc. Give the percentage of total field time spent in each habitat.

South Bay Lands

Please watch the newspapers next month for notice of the hearing on the Leslie Salt Company's dealings with the State of California over title to south bay tideland acreage. The "lame-duck" State Lands Commission has postponed final decision on the matter until then, and it is of vital interest to all of us concerned about the bay.

FIELD TRIP NOTES

Los Gatos - Oct. 12 - Leader, Mary Rugh

Our group first met at the Lintott's residence and then moved on to Oak Meadow Park. The day was unny and bright and the trip well attended. Seen were a Purple Finch, a Brown Creeper, Lesser Goldfinches, Vaux's Swifts, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Nuttall's Woodpecker, a Black Phoebe, and many Bushtits. At our last stop in Vasona Lake Park we stood overlooking the lake from above the dam. One area of the lawn was nearly black with Coots, and there were many Killdeer. We saw two Double-crested Cormorants, five Canvasback Ducks coming in for a landing and most exciting of all a Green Heron.

Alum Rock Park - Oct. 15 - Leader, Elsie Hoeck

A morning of hillside birding was enjoyed by members of this group on a beautiful sunny, clear day. Elsie Hoeck kept the group together and did a good job as substitute leader in Fanny Zwaal's absence. We saw quite a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a number of different woodpeckers among which were a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a Hairy Woodpecker, Red-shafter Flickers, Acorn Woodpeckers, and an extra good view of a Nuttall's in the pines. Seen also were deer, five cows, a squirrel and a cottontail.

Dumbarton Bridge - Oct. 23 - Leaders, Warren and Rebecca Turner

On our scouting trip we saw more than 100 American Egrets clustered in a comparatively small Leslie Salt pond. The wide assortment of psoes, as they stood in the shallow water was most picturesque. Some were fishing, some walking, lookding or just relaxing. They were a joy to see. We also saw a flight of perhaps three dozen cormorants in a rather ragged V-shaped formation flying quite high above us. We had been told to look for a Snowy Plover and our group was delighted to see two alongside a dike. In the same area there was a nice little grouping of three Snowy Egrets and four Black-necked Stilts. Water Pippits were quite numerous as were Least Sandpipers and Marbled Godwits resing in long rows waiting for the tide to ebb.

Foothill Park - Oct. 26 - Leader, Kay McCann

About 20 members and friends walked Panoramic Trail to Bobcat Point. The weather was overcase, coll and windless. We saw 24 species of birds. Highlights of the trip were three Great-horned Owls perched in trees so everyone saw them, and a grey fox running along the edge of a thicket. Virginia Bothwell helped us identify many plants.

Alviso - Nov. 2 - Leaders, Lloyd and Eve Case.

The group that went on this trip were quite fortunate; the day was neither too cold nor too windy, and the visibility was good. Mr. David Hoxie, of the Leslie Salt Company, piloted us along the levees for a distance of about two miles into areas that are usually closed. Our birding was done on the return trip, on which we spent some two and one-half hours.

(Field Notes continued on page 92)

Field Trip Notes (continued from page 91)

Alviso - Nov. 2 -

At one point, one of the steel towers of the P.G. & E. high voltage line was occupied by so many cormorants that one of the group remarked that the cormorants had packed the "grandstand and the bleachers" in order to do a bit of "people-watching".

The numerous and fairly large duck-concentrations were generally at a considerable distance from the levees, but the viewing, particularly with the 'scopes, was quite good. Among the waterfowl identified were Ruddy Ducks, Pintails, Scaup, Canvasbacks, and (of course) the ubiquitous Coots. The shore-bird population included Avocets, Godwits, Long-billed Curlews, Dowitchers, Least Sandpipers, Dunlins. Many Bonaparte's gulls were in the area, as were numerous Snowy Egrets and a number of Great Blue Herons. Song Sparrows darting in and out of the grasses along the sides of the road, and Meadowlarks heard at intervals added to the interest, and to the total observed during a very interesting morning.

Santa Cruz - Nov. 5 - Leaders, Lloyd and Eve Case.

Considering the abrupt change in the weather on the following day, we were quite fortunate in having only an overcast sky! The wind was light and gentle, and the overcast was just enough to provide a good, even, light in any direction, no trouble with blinding reflections of sunlight on the water.

Our caravan consisted of eight cars, and the group included two young lady visitors from Oakland, who had seen the notice of the field trip in Sunset Magazine. The "early-birders", while waiting for the group to assemble, watched two Green Herons, Black Phoebes, a Yellow-throat, White-crowned Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Song Sparrows and Robins in the area of the lagoon to the west of the parking area.

The Monarch Butterflies were fewer in number this year, and they arrived later than previously, but there were enough clinging to the hanging branches of the eucalyptus trees in "Butterfly Hollow" to provide the usual thrill.

At the several stopping places along the West Cliff Drive the total birding was very good (although we couldn't find the Wandering Tattler that was seen on our scouting trip.) The identified species included Western Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, large numbers of Heerman's Gulls (these dark gulls with their brilliant red bills were a thrill to quite a number of the group who had not seen them before this trip). In the open water, off-shore, were many Western Grebes and Double crested Cormorants, with Brown Pelicans mixed in for good measure. In relatively small areas of open water between kep-beds Red-throated Loons and Arctic Loons were identified. Sharp eyes also discovered a Skua for us!

Along the beaches and on the rocks below the Cliff Drive were found good sized groups of Sanderlings, Black Turnstones, Willets, some Ruddy Turnstones, a Black-bellied Plover, and the bonus highlight of the trip: a Kingfisher, perched on the extreme end of one of the rockypoints, where he remained for quite some time, - long enough for all of us to have several good looks at him.

Field Trip Notes (continued from page 92)

Individual Reports

October 8 - Two Chestnut-sided Warblers, one American Redstart, one Blackpoll Warbler, one Blackburnian Warbler, 12 Bobolinks, two Tropical Kingbirds, and a Cattle Egret in the Tijuana River Valley and a Clay-colored Sparrow at Imperial Beach.

October 9 - Two Palm Warblers and a Bobolink at Pt. Pinos in Pacific Grove.

October 16 - Two Tropical Kingbirds and three Palm Warblers at Pt. Pinos.

October 22 - Three Palm Warblers, one American Redstart, one Black and White Warbler, one Magnolia Warbler, one Pine Warbler, (collected by Guy McCaskie as a first state record)*; one Baltimore Oriole, four Red-throated Pipits, one Chestnut-collared Longspur, one Franklin's Gull, 11 Mountain Plovers and three Cattle Egrets, in the Tijuana River Valley. Also, two Louisiana Herons in the Imperial marshes.

October 23 - A Little Blue Heron at Capistrano Beach. This bird had the diagnostic dark wing mottling, had green legs, and lacked any trace of yellow on the face.

The Blackburnian Warbler seen by many people after the October 1, Golden Gate Audubon Society boat trip stayed at Pt. Pinos at least two days, as we saw it October 1 and again October 3.

Joe, Doug, and Russ Greenberg
Russ Griswold and Ted Chandik

October 13 - Ancient Murrelet - Walter and Kay McCann, Winston and Sylvia Brockner. Seen at Moss Landing in good light and with a 20x B & L.

October 15 - Hybrid Red and Yellow-shafted Flicker - E. Hester black cheek patch, red head patch, orange yellow wing and tail linings.

November 2 - Yellow-shafted Flicker (a lady) - E. Hester red head patch, golden yellow wing and tail linings (a real thrill for a westerner)

November 11 - White-throated Sparrow - Margaret Henderson

* I always get a sickening feeling when a bird is collected, especially a rare or uncommon bird in an area. There must be some other way to obtain an official record and if not, then some of the rules need changing. Records do not seem important if the bird ends up dead in a specimen drawer.

E. H.

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A south county member is needed to prepare coffee for the February and April meetings in San Jose. Please call Caroline Davis who has the supplies, 378-1603.

Anyone who might be interested in editing the Avocet next year, please phone Florence LaRiviere, 327-2854.

From the Bay to the Skyline

Consider for your Christmas giving two books of local interest. One is Diane Conradson's Exploring Our Baylands (\$2.00 from the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, 725 University Avenue, Palo Alto). The other, Skyline Landscape edited by Kathryn Stedman, focuses attention on the peninsula hills and problems of planning, hillside building, regional control, and open space. Order (\$2.00) from Foothill Council for Planning Research, Robert Sims, Treasurer, 105 Sunrise Drive, Woodside, California, 94061.

POSTCARDS NEEDED

SUPPORT: The Proposed Buena Vista Lagoon State Park at Oceanside, California to preserve 325 acres of fresh water lagoon at a vital link of the Pacific Flyway, and to acquire the adjacent 125 acre Hosp Eucalyptus Grove to provide riding, hiking, group camping, picnicking and nature study.

Send a postcard today to:

Mr. George Fleharty
Chairman, State Park Commission
Division of Beaches and Parks
Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811

The land we save now is all we will ever have.

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
New Members

Mr. & Mrs. William T. Quinn III
492 Whisman Road, Mt. View 94040

Miss Kathleen Weber
2379 Karen Blvd., Apt. 4
Santa Clara, 95050

Mrs. John A. Wadleski
1543 Daana Ave., Palo Alto 94303

Mrs. W. B. McCreery
99 DeBell, Atherton, 94025

Mrs. Robert W. Gruniger
2145 Prospect Court, Menlo Park,
94025

Stella Ford Walker
P.O. Box 872, Los Altos

Caroline Davis
Membership Chairman

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

A south county member is needed to prepare coffee for the February and April meetings in San Jose. Please call Caroline Davis who has the supplies. 375-1603.
Anyone who might be interested in editing the August next year, please phone Florence Johnson, 327-2824.