

The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 1

January, 1968

AMATEUR NIGHT

Monday, January 8, 8:00 p.m.

Garland Elementary School
Multi-Purpose Room

870 N. California Ave.
Palo Alto

This is the very popular amateur night when everyone is invited to bring his best wildlife slides. No more than 5 slides, or perhaps 3, will be shown from any one person. Either send a card or phone Kay McCann, 783 Garland Dr., Palo Alto 94303, 327-4138, and let her know you wish to show slides. If we receive too many requests, we'll act on a first-come basis. A projector which takes 35 mm. or 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 slides will be furnished. Also, check your December Avocet about prints for display. Come enjoy the confusion!

FIELD TRIPS

Villa Montalvo - - - - - Wednesday, Jan. 10, 9:00 a.m.
Located east of Saratoga on Saratoga-Los Gatos Road. Meet at parking lot #1 by the mansion. Leader, Margaret Henderson

Monterey & Pacific Grove - - - - - Saturday, Jan. 13, 9:00 a.m.
Meet at base of Coast Guard pier, foot of Cannery Row, Monterey. Bring lunch and scopes. Leaders, Bill Reese & Alan Baldrige

Calaveras - - - - - Sunday, Jan. 21, 9:00 a.m.
Meet at post office in Milpitas. "Bring a sandwich and we'll sit on a sunny bank and watch for Bald Eagles and Peregrines." Leader, Al Wool

Palo Alto Baylands - - - - - Wednesday, Jan. 24, 9:30 a.m.
Meet at duck pond at end of Embarcadero Road. Leaders, Mrs. Peter Holmes 948-1854 & Mrs. Philip La Riviere 327-2854

Palo Alto Duck Pond - - - - - Thursday, Feb. 1, 9:30 a.m.
Meet at end of Embarcadero Rd. For beginners and new members especially, to acquaint them with the areas, etc. Leaders, Nancy Holmes 948-1854, Kay McCann 327-4138

Audubon Wildlife Film, "High Horizons" - - Tuesday, January 9
by William Ferguson
at Palo Alto High School Auditorium - 4:00 p.m.

Morris Daily Auditorium,
San Jose State College - 8:00 p.m.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE
TO BE SELECTED

The January meeting will be an important meeting. At that meeting, in accordance with our By-Laws, one member of the Society is to be selected to serve on the Nominating Committee that will nominate the four Officers for 1968-69, and three Directors who will serve on the Board for the regular term of three years.

The Nominating Committee consists of three members. One of these is a Director, selected at the January meeting of the Board of Directors. The second member of the committee is a regular member of the Society, selected by the membership present at the regular January meeting. The third member of the committee is a regular member of the Society, selected by the two committee members who have been selected as described above. The Director-member of the committee is the Chairman. It is customary that one of the other two members be from the northern area, and the other one be from the southern area. In this manner, it is much easier to contact the Society members who are being considered as possible nominees.

Please give this matter some thought between now and the January meeting, and be prepared to suggest the name of someone who will be willing to serve on the Nominating Committee. Once the seven nominees have been selected, the work of the Committee is done, and the Committee is dissolved.

PUBLIC HEARING - YOUR
CHANCE TO HELP

The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission is considering plans for the development of the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, including the area east of the present berthing area. There are two plans to be considered: (1) The Report of the Santa Clara County Citizens' Subcommittee on Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, and (2) an alternate plan presented by Attorney Anthony J. Trepel.

The first plan, called "The County Plan", or Plan B, is built around the interests of yachting and boating, to the exclusion of other forms of recreation. It would eliminate: some of the features of natural beauty of the area; some of the area which is essential to the wildlife that is beginning to return to the area as the environment again becomes suitable; and some areas that are desirable for educational uses by students (adults and youngsters) in the field of Natural Science and its related subjects.

We are of the opinion that the area under consideration for County action is an area of interest to all citizens of the county, not exclusively those who live in the immediate vicinity. Accordingly, we believe that the plans should include the interests of a broad section of the public, rather than being definitely oriented toward the interest of, and benefit to, a special group. We hold that there are recreational activities that are worthy of more consideration than is given to them in Plan B.

The alternate plan, presented by Mr. Trepel, does take into consideration the broad interests of the general public; it makes better provision for multiple use; it is more economical; and it makes better use of the presently existing conditions than does Plan B.

On Thursday, Nov. 30, several members of our Society from Palo Alto, and four from San Jose, attended a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at which both plans were presented. This meeting was not a public hearing, so it was not possible for individuals to express opinions. However, it was obvious that there was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction with Plan B.

Consequently, the Commission decided to hold a Public Hearing on this matter on Thursday, Jan. 25th, at 7:30 p.m., in the Chambers of the County Board of Supervisors at 70 West Hedding St. in San Jose. Parking space is available at the western end of the building.

This will be your chance to help! We are not asking for people to speak, but we do ask you to attend the meeting, if you possibly can. We need as many individuals as possible, to show an interest in this matter, and to show a preference for the Alternate Plan, if such an expression of opinion is asked for by the Commission.

Lloyd N. Case, President

BIRD DISCUSSION GROUP - Tuesday, January 16, 10:00 a.m.
At the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga
Tel. 867-4748

A small but enthusiastic group approved the Bird Discussion idea at the first meeting; this will be the second meeting. We hope that it will become a permanent activity.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Dr. J. Ian McNeill & Family, 1345 Cowper St., Palo Alto, Calif. 94301
Mrs. George W. Allen)
Mrs. Ruth Ronsey) 1678 Montemar Way, San Jose, Calif. 95125
Martha L. Dunbar, 430 E. Maude Ave. 7, Sunnyvale, Calif. 94086
Mrs. P.C. Keyes, 7 Oakhill Drive, Woodside, Calif. 94062
Mrs. Donald A. Wilhelmson, 860 Moana Court, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306
Mr. & Mrs. Virgil Frizzell Jr., 766 N. 11th St., San Jose, Cal. 95112
Mr. & Mrs. D.T. Hill, 234 Pinehurst, Los Gatos, Cal. 95030
Carol Bergaman, 601 S. 5th St 3, San Jose, Cal. 95112
June Bilisoly, 415 Encinal Ave., Menlo Park, Cal. 94025
Mrs. Lyle F. Campbell, 263 Hillview Ave., Los Altos, Cal. 94022
Mrs. Robert W. Grunigen, 2145 Prospect Ct., Menlo Park, Cal. 94025
Frederick & Virginia Lewis, 12540 Gail Ave., Sunnyvale, Cal. 94086
William S. Pier, 16000 West Rd., Los Gatos, Cal. 95030
Mr. Tim Smock, 310 Ventura St. Apt. 1, Palo Alto, Cal. 94306

Membership Chairman - Mrs. Caroline Davis

A LOOK TO CONSERVATION

DELIGHTS OF COAST
HIGHWAY IN SONOMA
AND MENDOCINO

Waves were thundering upon the rocky shore as they tried to fragment the immense boulders standing in their way. The road dipped and climbed around the coves and then returned for another

view of the dashing surf.

Such was our trip north along the delightful Coast Highway #1 in to Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. We made the trip on Sunday and were blessed with the beauty and cleanness of a bounding ocean and the fresh odors that follow a rugged coastal storm.

Everything was in motion. The trees, Bishop Pines (locally called Bull Pines), the golden yellow Maples, the Douglas Firs and all of the rest, were alive with movement. The water was never still; the foam of repeated lashings of the waves onto the shoreline remained to form immense drifts of white suds. The birds were as restless as the ocean. The terns, gulls, grebes, cormorants, and the shorebirds were enjoying the newborn rays of the sun by their acrobatic displays. The large rocks offshore were a haven for those who had performed and were taking a rest.

Even the place names are a delight - Salt Point, recently purchased by the state for a Conservation Preserve; Horseshoe Point; Horseshoe Cove; Black Point; Fish Rocks; Havens Neck (a private holding that rivals Point Lobos in its botanical features); Iverson Pt.; Saunders Reef; and Sea Lion Rocks follow one after another in the few miles of this ocean country.

There are other names also and they will remain to be joined by more in the modern trend of wilderness urbanization. Timber Cove, The Sea Ranch and several others have discovered this immense wilderness and staked their claims.

The others that follow may not be as picturesque as Timber Cove where neighbors have a difficult time seeing the house next door or The Sea Ranch where about half of the area will remain in open space. Those which follow may not be as conservation minded.

NORTH STATE
SCENIC HWY. #1
ENVISIONED

Why talk of this? - because we all have a chance of preserving much of this dramatic land. The residents of this coastline are interested in the formulation of plans for the proper zoning ordinances that will allow the land along Highway #1 to be preserved. This shoreline is even more impressive than the world renowned seacoast south of Monterey. This southern seacoast highway is a dedicated State Scenic Highway. Mendocino and Sonoma Counties have a jewel in this land which can be finished into a sparkling crown: A NORTH STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY #1.

Your encouragement of these coastal residents can be by means of a letter to the Boards of Supervisors commenting on the infinite beauty of their coastal shores which bring people from many parts of the world for scientific observations, biological studies and the arts. Boards of Supervisors, like people, enjoy being told they have beauty that is appreciated.

SAD REALITY OF
DISAPPEARING
"OPEN LANDS"

Open land is one of our most valuable inheritances from the pioneers who settled in our counties many years ago. We all know it is disappearing, but do you know how rapidly? State Agriculture Director Earl Coke said, "California has a relatively limited supply of prime agricultural land, and it is in the best interest of the future of this state that these prime lands be preserved for the growing of foods and fibers." He added, "Californians should be aware of the great harm to the state that may result from continued urbanization of our fertile agricultural valleys. Rural areas are already being covered with concrete, macadam and cement at the rate of 150,000 acres a year, and about half of this is prime agricultural land." Along with our disappearing agricultural lands will be the friends that make up the ecological community of these open lands.

\$2.00 WILL BUY
100 SEEDLINGS

Tree plantings are carried out to replace the mighty trees that were cut down over the years to produce lumber. The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club annually carries out such a program and has announced the dates for 1968. The first will be on January 27 in Big Basin where 2 pockets of redwoods were cut this past summer; Feb. 10-11 in Humboldt State Park to reforest the upper drainage of Bull Creek; and Feb. 17 in Butano State Park where a forest was ripped out by pioneers to make way for crop lands. You might like to join in the fun of placing your shovel into the ground to make a slit for a new tree's roots. The information about meeting places and time can be obtained by writing the undersigned. You may prefer to help defray the cost of a few trees rather than plant. The trees cost \$2.00 for 100 young seedlings and are purchased from the nursery of the State Division of Forestry. This year the Chapter will plant 15,000 young redwoods and firs. If you want to buy a few trees, please send your check to Don Diehl, 10555 Cordova Rd., Cupertino 94022, who is the Treasurer of the Loma Prieta Chapter's Tree Planting Committee.



Conservation Chairman, Tony Look

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Los Gatos Creek - Nov. 8, Leaders C. Lintott & M. Rugh.

Lovely day with no wind. Highlights of trip were a Spotted Sandpiper and a Sparrow Hawk which dashed through a flock of black-birds pursuing one individual, whereupon the flock descended on him, harassing him, until he finally gave up and perched on a limb. 22 species tallied.

Merced Refuge - Nov. 18, Leaders, Joe & Doug Greenberg.

This trip was well attended in spite of the intermittent sprinkles. First to greet us were goodly numbers of Sandhill Cranes with their measured, graceful flights and haunting, froglike guttural - a real treat! Great flashing white flocks of Snow and Ross' Geese rode with the darker-patterned Canada and White-fronted Geese. A Barn Owl obligingly sortied over the parking area at the ranger's office. Those who stayed after lunch were rewarded with an immature Bald Eagle. 58 species were totaled by the leaders.

Northern California Field Notes



Late November and early December brought an unexpected rash of unusual birds into Northern California. During most years, the last migratory vagrants make their appearance around the first week of November; this year, however, a steady stream of rare birds was reported up through the first week in December. This unusual extension of the migratory season more than made up for what was a disappointingly dull fall until this last-minute rush of rarities.

The appearance on December 1 of a Yellow-billed Loon at Gerard Brady's Inverness Motel on Tomales Bay marked the first substantiated record for this northern species in the state of California. At least a dozen people were privileged to see this remarkable bird, and possibly many more will see it; for it was, at the time this went to press, still present on Tomales Bay.



A group of hardy seafarers ventured out from Monterey on December 2 for an unseasonal pelagic trip. Unfortunately, King Neptune had little to offer the boatload of birders, as the best find of the day was a flock of four Ancient Murrelets, certainly nothing to get excited about.

An Eastern Phoebe showed up at the Carmel River on November 28. Another good find in the Monterey area was a Brown Thrasher, which was first seen on November 10 in the Carmel Highlands area. It stayed at least a few weeks.

An extremely late Swainson's Thrush was banded near Point Reyes Bird Observatory on November 2. (We should be especially careful in identifying thrushes on our Christmas Counts and during our winter field trips, for there is no substantiated record for a Swainson's Thrush during the winter in California.)



Point Reyes Bird Observatory reports having banded twelve Saw-whet Owls in the area around PRBO Headquarters during the last few months.



Poor-wills were seen regularly near PRBO until around November 17.

One of the most startling birds seen of late was a Prothonotary Warbler on December 3 at the mouth of Willow Creek, about sixty miles south of Monterey. Another off-course warbler, a Lucy's, was caught and banded at the Carmel Riviera on November 24.

A Swamp Sparrow was found by Val DeCosta at Rodeo Lagoon during late November.

I normally would not include any Southern California reports, but the fantastic array of birds seen in the southland during recent weeks is too astounding to resist. At Death Valley over the Thanksgiving Holiday the following were seen: Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Vermillion Flycatcher, and Rusty Blackbird (3). In the San Diego area, Guy McCaskie and several other enthusiastic birders found a Wood Thrush (first state record), a Cerulean Warbler, and a Little Blue Heron. An immature

male Hooded Warbler is reported wintering at Borrego Springs, in the Anza-Borrego Desert. It almost tempts one to move wouthward, where the good birds are. But there's more to life than birds. There's smog, freeways, suburban sprawl.....I think I'll stay in Northern California for a while.

Doug and Russ Greenberg

REUNION AT ASILOMAR - PACIFIC GROVE, CALIF.

Saturday, April 6

- Afternoon - INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT OF NATURE SLIDES
- Evening - MAN SPINS THE CYLINDERS by George Treichel

Sunday, April 7

- Morning - MAN AND HIS WILDLIFE RESOURCES by Dr. Richard E. Warner
THIS CROWDED PLANET by Mrs. Elizabeth Rudel Gatov, former
Treasurer of the United States
- Afternoon - CALIFORNIA GAMBLES WITH NATURE by Mr. Samuel E. Wood
REDUCE THE ODDS by Mr. Norman B. Livermore, Jr.
- Evening - Conference Dinner
THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK by Mr. Charles H. Callison
A special film.

Monday, April 8

- Morning - Trips afield and to sea.
- Afternoon - Panel presentation on Outdoor Education & Nature Centers
Chairman - Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.
Moderator- Dr. Joseph J. Shomon
- Evening - EDUCATION - THE SAFE CYLINDER by Mr. Roland C. Clement

Tuesday, April 9

- Morning - Film Festival

The Conference is open to Audubon Members and non-members alike.
Registration forms and further information available from:
Narional Audubon Western Conference, P.O. Box 3666, El Monte, Cal.
91733

Don't delay! Request your registration form today. See your old friends and make new ones!

BRITISH COLUMBIA, THE LAST REFUGE OF THE SWIFT PEREGRINE FALCON

The wilderness of the Queen Charlotte Islands off the British Columbia coast is the home of the world's fastest flying bird - the Peregrine Falcon.

Once enjoying the widest distribution of any bird, the number of Peregrine Falcons has been greatly reduced in recent years.

The causes are many. The bird is bold on the attack and protests vigorously whenever its nest is approached, making it an easy mark for hunters. Soil, air, and water pollution have also taken their toll.

Falcons have disappeared from most of Europe, and a recent survey of U.S. wildlife experts reveals that they are virtually extinct east of the Rocky Mountains.

Here on the British Columbia coast the story is more hopeful. Huge flocks of Peregrines, Eagles, other birds of prey and seabirds patrol the skies over Queen Charlotte, living on marine life washed up from the sea.

It is not uncommon to see fifteen or twenty eagles soaring over Sandspit Airport, or as many as fifty eagles soaring over Langara Island.

And nowhere else in the world can a man stand on one spot and be within sight of six peregrine eyries at the same time.

The Queen Charlotte falcons nest in the greatest density known anywhere. The British Columbia Wildlife Service was greatly concerned about the birds' future and has been carefully controlling the annual peregrine harvest since 1960.

The prergrines inhabit the bleakest isles of the Queen Charlottes, locating their nests on the sides of sheer cliffs, often three hundred feet above the pounding surf.

Both peregrine adults incubate the eggs, then brood the progeny for six weeks.

From (A.P.) Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C.

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