

The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 4

April, 1968

Shore Birds of San Francisco Bay Region

Monday, April 15, 8:00 p.m.
Rose Garden Library Dana & Naglee, San Jose

The speaker will be Dr. Howard L. Cogswell, nationally known authority on birds of the Bay Region, and formerly of Mills College, now at the State College at Hayward. His topic will be "Shore Birds of the San Francisco Bay Region", illustrated with slides. Dr. and Mrs. Cogswell will be our guests beforehand at 6 PM at the Garden City Hofbrau, Post and So. Market Sts., San Jose. We welcome any of you and guests to this no host dinner in his honor.

Field Trips

Foothill Park, for Beginners - - - Thursday, April 4, 9:00 a.m.
Meet at the entrance of Foothill Park on Page Mill Road - approximately 4 miles above Foothill Expressway.

Leaders, Nancy Holmes 948-1854, Kay McCann 327-4138

National Audubon Western Conference - Asilomar April 6 thru 9

Bird Discussion Group - - - Tuesday, April 16, 10:00 a.m.
At the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. The birds for discussion this month will be Orioles and Blackbirds.

Calero, Chesbro Resv. & Llagas Cr. Area - Wednesday, Apr. 17, 8:30 a.m.
Meet at King's Court Shopping Center, Bascom & Blossom Hill Rd. at 8:30 a.m.
Leaders, Mr. & Mrs. E. Taylor

Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam - - - Wednesday, April 24, 9:00 a.m.
It will be an all-day trip good for wild flowers and birds and will end around 3 p.m. Take your lunch. We will be behind locked gates situated miles from our destination. Meet at the San Francisco Water Co. headquarters at 1000 El Camino Real. Leave Bayshore at Millbrae Exit and drive west to El Camino; turn right, go about 4 blocks to the well marked gate on your right. Enter and park at the first convenient location.
Leader, Kay McCann 327-4138

Pilarcitos Lake and Stone Dam - - - Sunday, April 27, 9:00 a.m.
See directions for Wed. trip.
Leaders, Ray and Kay McCann

Farallon Islands Boat Trip - Sunday, April 28
For HARDY SEAFARERS - leaves Sausalito 7 a.m.
Daylight Saving Time, returns about 4 p.m.
Leaders: Ted Chandik & Rich Stallcup
SEE PAGE 27 FOR FURTHER DETAILS!



YOUR PRESIDENT REPORTS:

OUR TAX EXEMPTION has been unquestioned during the years since the Society was incorporated in 1955 and a letter from the Franchise Tax Board informed us of our tax-exempt status. During the past year, however, California has passed a new law, modifying the tax procedures to be followed by County Tax Assessors. Under the new procedure it has been necessary for us to fill out and to file a four-page questionnaire regarding the nature and location of our "business" and the nature and value of all property and equipment owned and operated by the Society.

Well, we do not own any real estate, buildings, machinery, etc., but we do own a mimeograph machine purchased in 1962 for \$467.52, a movie projector and screen purchased in 1962 for \$426.40, an Address-ette purchased in 1966 for \$197.81, and a telescope and tripod purchased in 1966 for \$124.70; the total value of these items amounts to \$1,216.43, new cost price. This information was recorded in the four proper spaces, and the rest of the four sheets were filled in with answers of "No", or "Not Applicable". The prepared form has been filed with the Santa Clara County Tax Assessor's Office.

At the same time, we filed a claim for tax exemption from County Taxes. This form consisted of only three pages which had to be filled out with detailed information regarding the Society's activities, etc., and to which were to be attached copies of our Articles of Incorporation, and of the letter informing of our income tax exemption. Copies of our financial statement for the last fiscal year, showing profit and/or loss of all "transactions" were also required. Our claim for exemption will be examined and we will be informed of our tax-status, under the new law.

That is my "State-of-the-Society" Message.

THE NEW "SAN LUIS WILD LIFE REFUGE", located eight miles north of Los Banos, will be dedicated on Wednesday, April 3rd, at 10:00 a.m., by ceremonies on the refuge. We have received a letter from the Fish and Game Commission stating that, because so many of our members were helpful in supporting the acquisition of this area for a wild life refuge, they are pleased to invite our members to the dedication. This may not reach you until too late for you to plan to attend, to get acquainted with the Refuge Staff and to tour the area, but it will be another interesting place to include on your own birding trips, when wildfowl are wintering there.

1968 AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST will again be located at the Trail Lake Ranch, Dubois, Wyoming. There will be four sessions of two weeks each: June 23 - July 5, July 7 - 19, July 21 - August 2, and August 4 -16. We visited the Camp a few years ago on our way home from the Audubon Camp of Wisconsin and found it to be in a very interesting and exciting location, - an entirely different setting from the previous location in "The Sugar Bowl" at Norden, California. We have been informed that several of the members of previous staffs, who were at the California Camps, - including our Dr. Tom Harvey, will be on the 1968 Staff. Folders of Camp Information will be available at the April and May meetings, but if you are at all interested in attending one of the Camp Sessions, I suggest that you write early, and avoid the rush. Address your inquiries to: AUDUBON CAMP, P.O.Box 3666, El Monte, Calif. 91733. An Audubon Camp is truly a wonderful experience, combining an enjoyable two-week vacation with a bit of very informal Nature Education.

-- Lloyd N. Case.

Be An Informed and Active Citizen

Do you know that the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's authority over the filling and dredging of San Francisco Bay tidelands and marshes will end in January of next year? There will be a time lapse when uncontrolled filling can occur before the 1969 Legislature can act on the Commission's recommendations. Senate Bill 231 will extend the BCDC's control until this time.

Do you know that the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission may soon propose that Uvas Canyon Park, and a lesser known parcel, the Sanborn Road property, be sold? The shame is that the money received will not be used for other park property (nor will there be a land swap), but will go into the General Fund.

Do you know that revisions of the Palo Alto City Charter are being considered by a citizens' committee and that City Manager Morgan has suggested that the Park Dedication Law be eliminated? Without this law, Palo Alto's Foothills Park and the Palo Alto Baylands can be filled, subdivided, bulldozed - you name it -, and the matter may never go to the people for a vote. (It is indeed a fascinating world!) The Charter Committee Chairman, Dean R. Cresap, c/o City Hall, Palo Alto, is in a position of influence in this regard.

DON'T JOIN THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE! If you have hesitated before, there is no need to change your plans now. On the other hand, Spring Fever is surely going to strike you one of these days and the urge to go walking, birding or to take a deep breath of semi-fresh air is going to be overwhelming. And this is when you DO something; you take someone along. You call the nearest school, tell the secretary that you are available to take a nature walk with a group of children. It's that easy. When the time comes that you have a few youngsters in tow you simply proceed to the nearest vacant lot, tree-filled backyard, or orchard if you can find one, and share your knowledge of the out of doors, your curiosity and willingness to observe. You might want to show our garden bird slides, feel free to use them! Whatever you can do to teach children of any age the fun of nature and the excitement of conservation is bound to be rewarding to you now and to our cause in the future. Isn't it worth one try?

-- Nancy Holmes, Education Chrm.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip - (Continued from front page)

For hardy seafarers, a boat trip to circle the Farallon Islands to see nesting and migrating sea birds. Fare: \$10 per person. Make check payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society and please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and mail to Mrs. Valeria DaCosta, 2090 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94109. More details will be sent with acknowledgment. Reservations will close April 15 or earlier if boats are filled.

FIELD REPORTS

Palo Alto Foothills - Feb. 28 - Leader, Virginia Bothwell

It was cold enough for everyone to wear coats, but that didn't stop birds or birders. A good count of 40 species, including: Cedar Waxwing, Varied Thrush, Bittern, Wh-tailed Kite, Kingfisher, Allen & Anna's Hummingbirds, Bewick Wren, Wh-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Golden Eagles flying with 4 Redtails, Audubon & Orange-cr Warblers, Hutton's Vireo and Ruddy Duck.

Honey Lake - Mar. 2 & 3 - Leader, Joe Greenberg

About 20 members and guests of the SCVAS saw seven male Sage Grouse

booming. It was a spectacular sight viewed from the comfort of cars at a distance of a few hundred yards. Also seen on the trip were 3 Northern Shrikes, Golden and Bald Eagles, many Rough-legged Hawks, Black-billed Magpies, a flight of about 1000 cranes, Canada and Snow Geese and Whistling Swans. The weather was great!

Palo Alto Baylands for Beginners - Mar. 7 - Leader, Kay McCann
assisted by Janet Fisher

Ten members and friends enjoyed a walk along the nature trail near the airport and around the duck pond and yacht harbor. Of the 26 species seen were 2 Burrowing Owls, nearly displaced by airport improvements, a Bufflehead, Gr-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, White Pelican, Bittern, a Whimbrel and several Black-bellied Plovers. On the scouting trip on Mar. 5 sixty-five Whimbrel were seen by Betsy Peterson and Kay.

WELCOME to New Members:

Sigrid H. Bullard, 317 Palomar Dr., Redwood City, Cal. 94062
Mrs. Charlotte L. Case, 1520 Walnut Dr., Palo Alto, Cal. 94303
Mr. & Mrs. James V. Conklin, 2842 Fordham St., Palo Alto, Cal. 94303
Jarn B. Jorgensen, 311 Curtner, Palo Alto, Cal. 94306
Mrs. Marjorie Lewis, 2561 Fourth St., Livermore, Cal. 94550
Mr. & Mrs. Edward A. Reynolds, 1099 Fife Ave., Palo Alto, Cal. 94301
Robert Roadcap, Tr. 2, Box 869B, San Jose, Cal. 95131
Edward & Patricia Roth, Delas Pulgas, 3853 Alameda, Menlo Park 94025
Mrs. Derril W. Schneider, 2005 Park Blvd., Palo Alto, Cal. 94306
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Stout, Jr., 1049 N. Fifth St., San Jose, Cal. 95112

California Field Notes

With the late-winter stabilization of bird populations in California came a prolonged period of rather eventless birding for those interested in the out-of-the-ordinary category of birdlife. The latter half of the winter generally provided few surprises, only the usual dosages of common winter birds embellished with a very small number of vagrants. But seeing that not all birders seek rarities in their week-end expeditions, the impressive flights of cranes and waterfowl and the hordes of visiting land birds from the north must have warmed the hearts of many Audubonites during the past few months.

Two Trumpeter Swans at Limantour Spit continued to prove that last year's Pescadero Trumpeter was no fluke; Trumpeters, as they increase in numbers, may someday prove to be regular in coastal California.

A few Barrow's Goldeneyes remained at Oakland's Lake Merritt until the approach of spring.

Bald Eagles abounded at Calaveras Reservoir during the late winter, with up to six being noted at once at the south end of the reservoir during early February.

For the hardy few that made the long trip to Honey Lake in early March in search of displaying Sage Grouse, the trip proved well worthwhile. Up to ten male grouse were present at once at one of the birds' traditional strutting grounds. The females, often difficult or impossible to find among the clumps of sage-brush, appeared unimpressed by the efforts of the males. Somehow, though, the species manages to

propagate itself.

As usual, a few Golden Plovers spent the winter at Alviso among the Black-bellied.

The University of California Research Station at Bodega Head proved to be a busy place during February, as two authentic rarities and one counterfeit were found there by Bay Area birders. First, a pair of Rock Sandpipers wintered among the Surfbirds and Black Turnstones along the rocky shoreline in back of the station. The phoney vagrant was a strange-looking Common Knot which was for a time believed to be a Great Knot, unheard of in the continental United States.

A Saw-whet Owl, always an elusive little bird worthy of note, was seen during February near Olema.

Those who went along on the Honey Lake trip also managed to find three Northern Shrikes. These Northerners, however, proved much more shy than the Loggerheads that were also present in the Honey Lake area.

Perhaps the rarest bird of the winter, a Great-tailed (Boat-tailed) Grackle showed up at Cabrillo Beach in Southern California. This marked the fourth time this Mexican Blackbird has been seen in California.

The rash of Tree Sparrow sightings continued, as one visited a Marin County feeder regularly throughout the winter.

It goes without saying that the coming of spring brought the arrival of many of our breeding birds --- first, the terns, hummingbirds and swallows, then the Warbling Vireos and Orange-crowned Warblers. As the weeks pass, all the rest of our warm-weather species will appear in their familiar places. After months of their not being here, it will be good to have them back again.

-- Doug and Russ Greenberg

Alaska, Anyone?

A special week's program of birding, nature study, and outdoor activities, is planned by Camp Denali, a wilderness camp situated at the Kantishna gateway to Mt. McKinley National Park. Scheduled to run from June 28th through July 5th this summer, the week has been reserved in the name of the Seattle Audubon Society, but participation is open to any Audubon Society member.

Many Audubon members may be planning to visit Alaska this summer to attend the annual meeting of the American Ornithological Union, which will convene on the University of Alaska campus between June 20 and 23. Thus it will be possible to combine the Union meetings, a jaunt to the Arctic, and the week program at Camp Denali in one Alaska vacation.

Cost for the week's Audubon Nature Program will be \$215 per person, including all expenses from McKinley Park station to the camp

and return. Reservations may be made directly with Camp Denali, Box D, College, Alaska, or by writing to Mrs. Hazel Wolf, Secretary, Seattle Audubon Society, 806 Joshua Green Bldg., Seattle, Washington. A deposit of 20% is required to hold space. Camp Denali folder sent on request.



A PAUSE FOR CHUCKLES - (from Seattle Audubon Society Notes) :

"A new member ... armed with binoculars, a new Peterson's Guide, and boundless enthusiasm brought back the following list: Pixilated woodpecker, yellow-bellied seersucker, rough-necked hawk, long-winged lappspur, hepatic tanager, wobbling vireo, loggerhead strike, red-breasted deckhatch, black-billed mudpie, and a bar swallow. Along the shore were double-breasted cormorant, parasitic jaguar, marbled nitwit, rhinoceros anklet, wandering teetotaler, old squawk, pinhead duck, black-hearted turnstone, long-necked dowager, and a greater lesserlegs."

A LOOK Towards Conservation

"Era of big dam construction in the United States reaches its twilight stage!" This headline appeared recently in the Grand Forks Herald, Grand Forks, No. Dakota.

Perhaps the time lag between North Dakota and California accounts for such a headline. While the twilight may be in the mid-west on dam construction, the dawn is just breaking in Northern California. There are current proposals to build dam projects on every major river in Northern California in order to deliver 1,000,000 acre-feet of water per year to areas outside of Northern California. The proposed dams would still much of the white water of these major rivers. Dams as high as the Oroville, the Hoover, and the Glen Canyon with reservoirs the size of a combined Shasta and Oroville in acre-feet of storage and surface area!!!

Construction of these proposed dams could begin in the early 1970s and extend to the year 2,000. All for the exportation of water, recreation, and flood control. By the year 1990 the technology for desalination of salt and brackish water will have progressed to a point where it could be much cheaper than water imported from Northern California.

What of the wildlife that will be displaced from the reservoir sites? The deer herds will lose their winter ranges and will be forced to invade another habitat in a higher and unfamiliar range. The nesting lowland birds must find a new flyway. The proposed dam on the Klamath River, which is the finest steelhead and salmon stream in the United States, would be just 12.5 miles from the mouth of the River. This would block the migration of these bodies of fish not only to the Klamath but also to the Trinity and the Salmon plus the smaller tributaries.



When the dawn is upon us for the construction of dams on these rivers in Northern California, it will be up to us to be certain that the twilight which follows will cast shadows on the natural stream beds and not chains of concrete dams and man-made chains of lakes.

Conservation Chairman - Claude A. Look

More Notes on Nesting Golden Eagles
by Smellie Curtis

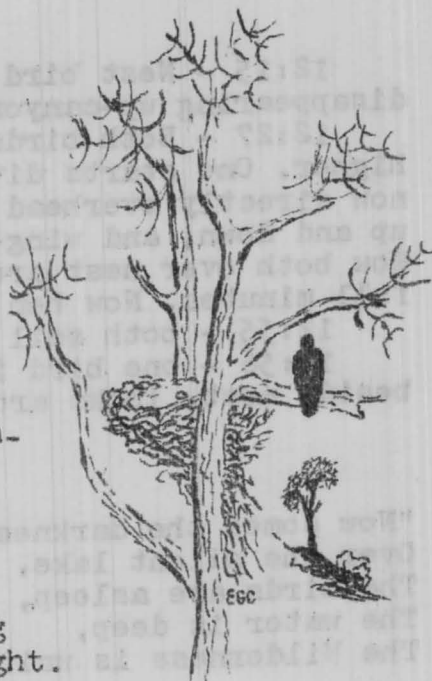
Feb. 12, 1968 - Arrived at nesting area 10:35. Nothing flying. At 10:40 eagle left perch somewhere near nest, circled, coursed along ridge face until 10:50 and disappeared over ridge. I assume hen is sitting on nest, but cannot see her. Must wait for exchange - perhaps at 11:30.

11:12 - Hen leaves nest and begins to circle. By golly, she has a bulge in the abdomen - just as she did last year before laying her egg! There'll probably be an egg in the nest by tomorrow. She circles and courses low until 11:20 and goes over ridge as did cock.

11:50 - Pair circling high in tight curves. Then one begins dives - rather shallow and moving fast up-canyon. He did 2 before going out of sight. Mate (hen) followed closely in sail.

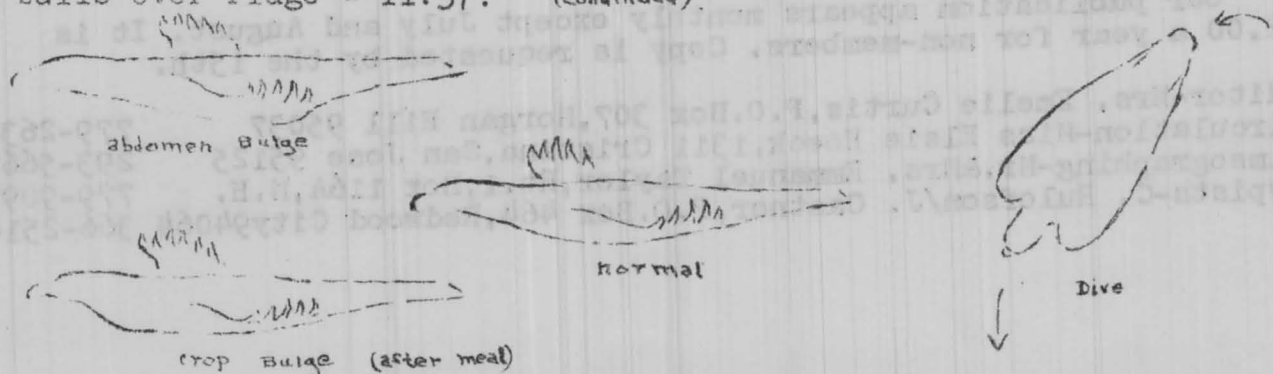
12:05 - Both sailed back fast. One lowers legs, folds wings slightly, spreads tail, and moves right into nest fast. Mate (cock) circles above. (Must have copulated up-canyon.) Hen's head visible in nest. Cock disappeared 12:10.

Will check nest tomorrow for egg!



Feb. 13, 1968 - Slight fog in early morn. Hiked to nest arriving at 10:05. Used green cloth as blind. Approached slowly last 50 ft. Hen is on nest, but does not notice me. Sit beneath cloth with elbows on knees and glasses focused on nest for full hour. Distance to nest, about 70 ft. She moves grasses about occasionally with beak. Mostly, just lay quietly. Once she got up, stretched out wings - one at time - looked down between legs (I couldn't see), pecked at breast feathers. Then she lay down again, remained so until 11:15 when she got up and flew off. I inched further to left and managed to see a lone egg - white and brilliant with a few dark spots. Several tiny white feathers lay beside egg. Evidently those she had plucked from her breast. Hazy sun. 55° - left at 11:20.

Feb. 14, 1968 - Arrived 11:00 - hen on nest. Cock left perch 11:15, circled, and sailed up-canyon. He returns at 11:27. Hen leaves nest and both course along cliff for a minute. Then one descends to nest. Cannot tell which. Mate circles, lands on ground, picks up a length of grass in beak, and carries it to nest. Drops it on nest for mate to arrange and leaves immediately. There was very likely an exchange at 11:30 - with cock now on nest. Eagle now soaring calls - I believe the hen. No bulge apparent in either bird. She circles high and sails over ridge - 11:37. (continued)



12:15 - Nest bird leaves, circles high, does 6 fair dives before disappearing up-canyon. Must have been cock as I had guessed.

12:27 - Both birds circle just above far ridge. Higher and higher. One starts dives - coming my way - all very high. Dive now directly overhead - just a round dot as he descends! Whew! and up and down, and wing-over, and up and down. Hen circling high. Now both over nest area - cock has been diving exuberantly for ten full minutes. Now hen dives too - both dive simultaneously!

12:55 - both sail south.

12:56 - one bird in stoop right for nest. Alights on branch beside nest, looks around, then hops on nest. I left area 1:00.

Cry of the Loon

"Now comes the darkness rolling on
Over the silent lake.	And while the world is listening
The birds are asleep,	There grows a longing cry.
The water is deep,	It's near, it's far, it's on the
The Wilderness is waiting . . .	lake,
	It fills all earth and sky . . .

.....
A sudden laughter breaks the spell,	Now moon and stars have disappear-
A strange and throbbing sound.	ed,
Far off the echo gives it back,	Clouds covering the sky.
It's heard now all around . . .	There's darkness now and shivering
	And then that lonely cry. . . ."

by Jean Brugg in Bulletin of Ontario Naturalist 1961

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