

The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 5

May, 1968

ANTARCTICA - The Original Settlers

Monday, May 13, 8:00 p.m.

Garland Elementary School
Multi-Purpose Room

870 No. California Ave.
Palo Alto

Miss Harriet Mundy will talk on "Antarctica". She has just returned from a trip there with many interesting slides of the six species of penguins. Also, she stopped en route at the Falkland Islands and has pictures from there. Come and join her on an enviable expedition to the Antarctic!!

FIELD TRIPS

Lazy-K Ranch, 27440 Natoma Rd., Los Altos Hills..Thurs. May 2, 9 a.m.

Beginner Bird Hike - new territory! Turn left off Arastradero onto Purissima Rd. just before going under Junipero Serra Freeway. Turn right on Elena Rd. (now go under freeway) then right on Natoma. Meet just inside the gate. Hostess Mrs. Muriel Knudsen.

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

Board of Directors Meeting

Tues. May 7, 8 p.m.

At home of Diane Conradson, 4337 Miranda Ave. Palo Alto 941-2102

Bird Discussion Group

Tues. May 7, 10 1.m.

At Catherine Lintott's, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos, phone 356-4264. New Subject will be Meadowlark.

Stevens Creek Park

Wed. May 8, 9 a.m.

Meet at parking area at dam. Leader: Edna Winger

Stevens Creek Park

Sat. May 11, 9 a.m.

Meet at parking area at dam. Leader: Lloyd Case

Mines Road

Sun. May 19, 8:30 a.m.

Meet at junction of Tesla Rd. and Mines Rd. (southeast of Livermore and found on most Bay Area maps). Leader: Ted Chandik

Foothills Park

Wed. May 22, 9 a.m.

Meet at entrance on Page Mill Rd. Leader: Kay McCann

Yosemite Trip - changed from June 1 & 2 to June 8 & 9. Details on page 36.

'Albatross Expedition' - Mon. June 17

Stagnaro Landing - Santa Cruz
Details on page 36.



THE PRESIDENT REPORTS:

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, at their regular meeting on April 2nd, discussed the latest development in the Society's status regarding Santa Clara County Property Taxes. Under the new State Law passed in 1967, we are not exempt from county property taxes because we do not have an "irrevocable dedication" clause in our Articles of Incorporation. This information was received only a couple of days prior to the date on which the County Assessor's office was to send all exemption claims to Sacramento. Since the Society does not have an attorney upon whom we may call for legal advice, and since the fee for having an attorney prepare the necessary amendment to our Articles of Incorporation would have been, undoubtedly, greater than the property tax, - probably in the neighborhood of ten dollars, - the decision was made to pay the taxes this year, but to prepare the necessary amendment and claims for exemption for next year, if it seems desirable to do so.

THE REVISION OF THE BY-LAWS has been completed and tentatively approved through the sections on "Responsibilities and Duties of Officers". The sections pertaining to the "Duties and Responsibilities of Chairmen of Standing Committees" have been rewritten, but have not yet been presented for consideration and discussion. If, as, and when the revision is completed, the new By-Laws must be filed with the Secretary of State for inclusion in our Articles of Incorporation. Procedure for such filing requires the presence, in person, of both the President and the Secretary. The project has been temporarily tabled.

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON WESTERN CONFERENCE held at Asilomar April 6-9 was attended by over six hundred members from some thirty-one branches of National Audubon. This was a greater number than at previous regional conferences and, also indicative of a growing interest in Audubon activities and our concern with conservation problems was the fact that most of the conferees stayed through all of the sessions until adjournment, Tuesday noon.

The conference program was as stimulating and informative as had been anticipated, with some extremely excellent films shown, and short but delightful musical programs presented each evening.

S.C.V.A.S. members seen at the various sessions included Eleanor and Kenneth Kidd, Margaret and Howard Woolcott, Lyle and Bernice Campbell, Eve and Lloyd Case, Fanny Zwaal, Elsie Hoeck, Emelie Curtis, Catherine Lintott, Mary Rugh, Mrs. Pentler, Dr. Amy Stannard, Dr. Dorothy Sproul and Mr. and Mrs. John Brokenshire. (I hope that I did not miss anybody!)

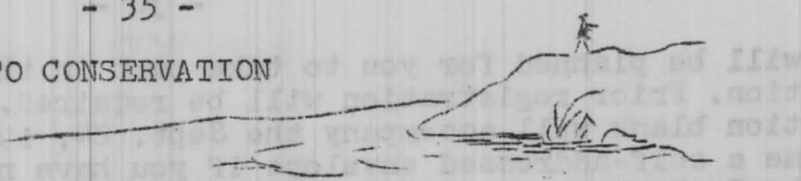
--Lloyd N. Case
President

The following were omitted from the 1967 Christmas Count tabulation published in the March 1968 'Avocet:

| <u>Species</u> | <u>Alviso</u> | <u>Southwest</u> | <u>Evergrn.</u> | <u>Alum Rk.</u> | <u>Cal.</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Belted Kingfisher | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 15 |
| Mew Gull | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |



A LOOK TO CONSERVATION



State Beaches -

Access to California beachlands is dwindling because of the development of beachside homes and tracts. These have and will close many pathways to the sands and waves of the ocean. The opportunity to investigate tide pools and observe the shore birds along our coast lines could be seriously endangered.

A bill has been introduced into the California State Legislature by Mr. John Dunlap of Assembly District #5 of Vallejo to insure reasonable public access to ocean beaches by requiring local governmental agencies to stipulate the public will have such access as a condition for approval of subdivision maps. Progress of this bill will be reported from time to time.

Land and Water Fund -

President Johnson's conservation message to Congress asked for augmentation of the land and water fund from outer Continental shelf revenues to \$200 million level for the next 5 years. The increase will be used to round out the National Park system. Point Reyes will certainly benefit from such an arrangement.

The Electric Power Reliability bills (so-called anti-power blackout bills) are pending before House and Senate Commerce Committees. These bills have major conservation consequences. For instance, tying together of existing generating facilities can increase the national power supply without construction of more dams and powerplants. A comprehensively-planned transmission grid can provide more economical land use, thus reducing the taking of land for this purpose. Recent Senate Commerce Committee hearings were postponed because of a lack of public interest. Letters indicating a more complete text and expressing interest in such bills can be addressed to: Senator Warren G. Magnuson, Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee, 5202 New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Representative Torbert H. MacDonald, Chairman, Communications and Power Subcommittee, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Please send a copy to your own Senator and Congressman.

Conservation Conferences in the Fall -

There will be two conservation conferences presented by the University of California at Santa Cruz during the fall of this year. The first will be titled "Santa Cruz Mountains - their future". The date will be September 24, 1968 and the University will announce the time and place by bulletin. The Santa Cruz Mountains concern all of the Counties on both the east and west slopes. Their future must be discussed and proper planning adopted to protect this valuable asset. Panels and discussion groups will be held to include conservationists, foresters, naturalists, wildlife experts, developers, and city and county planners. Prior registration will be necessary and the announcement and registration form will be distributed several weeks before the conference.

The second date will be of the Conservation Workshop. This will be an entire day at the Santa Cruz Campus of the University of California. All conservationists are invited to attend this day of discussions, displays, how-to-do-it talks, and a great get-together. The program

will be planned for you to take part in the great future of conservation. Prior registration will be required. Announcement and registration blank will accompany the Sept. 24, 1968 announcement. Please send me a self-addressed envelope if you have not received an announcement by September 1st. - Tony Look, 411 Los Ninos Way, Los Altos, Ca. 94022

Education Committee

Thanks to the talents of Diane Conradson, the Education Committee now has printed handouts illustrating the saltmarsh animals and plants at low tide and at high. These will be given to the children at either their Baylands slide lecture or field trip. A message on the back, written by Florence La Riviere explains how valuable these marshes are to all of us, and hopefully will be read by the parents also. More thanks to Diane Conradson for allowing us to copy her great slides of the Coast Redwood community, including birds, flowers, trees and salamanders! We can now show these to youth and adult groups who will camp or picnic in the nearby mountains and perhaps open a few eyes in appreciation of their surroundings. Feel free to volunteer your time to show these slides!

-- Nancy Holmes

Details of trips listed on front page -

Yosemite Trip, June 8 & 9 - Meet at dawn on Saturday at Peragoy Meadows where camp road meets road to Glacier Point. We will stay there until 9:00 a.m. and then bird surrounding area until noon. For p.m. there would be choices: Evans Flats for Evening Grosbeaks and Pileated Woodpeckers, or Hennis Ridge for Green-tailed Towhees and Mountain Quail. We'll do much the same on Sunday with a possible drop to the Valley for Black Swifts and Dippers. Birds we hope to see are: Great Gray Owl, Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Pine Grosbeak, Blue Grouse, Caliope Hummingbird, and resident warblers such as Nashville, Black-throated Gray, and MacGillivray's. Everyone must make his own housing arrangements - which most likely will be camping. Prepare for cold nights.

Leaders: Joe, Doug & Russ Greenberg
327-0329

'Albatross Expedition', June 17 - Leavitt McQuesten will conduct this annual boat trip. A sport fishing boat will leave Stagnaro Landing on the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf at 7:30 a.m. and return about noon. Destination, 12 miles out in the Pacific. Tickets \$1.50. Make reservations with L. McQuesten, 120 Otis St., Santa Cruz, Cal. 95060.

CALIFORNIA BIRDS

by Doug Greenberg & Russ Griswold

During late March and early April the slow, unexciting California spring migration brought thousands of returning nesting birds to California. Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds, Wilson's Warblers, Warbling Vireos and several species of swallows were the first to arrive, followed by those birds that definitely prefer warm weather, namely, the orioles, tanagers and flycatchers. With the exception of a few wintering Bullock's and Hooded in the Monterey area, the main army of orioles invaded California during mid-April. Locally, Fanny Zwaal reported an early pair of Hoodeds, first noticed on April 3, and Evelyn Hester saw a Bullock's on March 21.

The most exciting part of spring migration for "list-hungry" birders is during late May and early June when they are drawn to such exotic places as Death Valley, Deep Springs, Morongo Valley and locally, Point Reyes. This is the time when spring stragglers show up in these places, lost birds headed for an unknown nesting ground. This spring's trickle of off-course birds is even more mysterious than its autumn counter part. Where do these birds come from? Are they the same vagrants that passed through during the fall? If so, then why are nearly all California records of Parula Warbler for May and June? And why is the Blackpoll, so commonly seen during the autumn, almost unrecorded in the spring? And the last question is, why are these birds so late in migrating North? By June most other birds are far into the nesting season. Perhaps someday we will know the answer to these questions.

The remainder of this column I shall devote to the birds of Texas, as I see them, or have seen them. During the trip taken by Jos. Greenberg, Russell Greenberg, Russell Griswold and me, we have seen many exciting birds (I say "have seen", because I am writing this from High Island, Texas). Birding in West Texas, except for Big Bend, is dull. Flocks of Lark Buntings and a few Cassin's Sparrows can be seen easily from the car, and White-necked Ravens are very common. Central Texas is full of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Cardinals, but little else of interest. The first exciting place we visited, Rockport, produced Sandwich Terns, Black Skimmers, American Oystercatcher and Caracara (6). Also seen were Mottled Ducks, Black Vultures and many others. In nearby Aransas Refuge there were hundreds of Cattle Egrets, a few White Ibis, herons of all kinds, and, of course, Whooping Cranes (20 were left at the time). Roseate Spoonbills and Wilson's Plovers were also present in the Rockport-Aransas vicinity. Inland a few miles, at Corpus Christi State Park, we found many Golden-fronted Woodpeckers and Long-billed Thrashers, as well as a single Olive Sparrow.

The Houston area proved equally fruitful bird wise. At Arahuac Wildlife Refuge, during a jeep ride across a wet meadow, we saw LeConte's and Seaside sparrows, Short-billed Marsh Wren and, most exciting of all, the rare residents, the Yellow Rail. This rare bird is regular on Arahuac Refuge, up to 5 have been seen on a single day. High Island has proved to be a fabulous place for migrating land birds. In addition to hundreds of Wood Thrushes, Indigo Buntings, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, we have seen 18 species of warblers, with the possibility of seeing several more tomorrow morning.

But enough about Texas. The nesting season has begun in California and offers an opportunity to study the domestic life of our familiar birds.

Flash! Both in early April: a Tufted Duck in Eureka and a docile Thick-billed Murre viewed by five boat-loads of Western Conferees out of Monterey.

FIELD REPORTS

Duveneck Ranch - March 27

On this beautiful, sunny, warm day twenty-five members and friends saw 31 species of birds. Mr. Duveneck met us and took us through his beautiful garden where we saw the Santa Lucia Fir and

many flowering plants. At the entrance where the olive grove is, a flock of Band-tailed Pigeons were feeding, many Robins, Golden-crowned Sparrows and a few Varied Thrushes. Wilson's Warblers and the Warbling Vireo made an early appearance and two Red-tailed Hawks soared overhead. The spring wildflowers were out, including Seaside Trillium, Hound's Tongue, Zygadine, Milkmaids, Buttercups and Mission Bells; it was hard to leave such a beautiful spot.

Leader: Kay McCann

Chesbro and Calero Dams and Llagas Creek - April 17

This was an unusually cold April day with a strong, steady wind which drove both birds and birders to sheltered areas. Small birds such as warblers were completely missing. Four species of swallows, including the rarer Tree Swallow, and one lone Vaux Swift braved the winds as well as one mature Golden Eagle. One immature Scaup with two white wing feathers was an interesting puzzle for a while.

Leaders: Mr. & Mrs. E. Taylor

"During a week-end in late February a large number of hawks and eagles were shot by a supposed JACK RABBIT hunter while driving down the roads in the Boardman area of northeastern Oregon. At least seven GOLDEN EAGLES were found beneath the telephone poles and it is believed that many more were killed or wounded and were not found. The finding of one in a Portland park would indicate that a Portlander was responsible for this massacre and not a local resident of that area. Although large numbers of hawks were killed, the majority of ROUGH-LEGS had already moved farther north and were not involved. Fortunately, the eagles were all GOLDENS which are somewhat more common than BALDS. Large numbers have wintered in this area and were reported in good numbers on the Heppner Christmas Bird Count. Although this is a very serious setback in the protection of these rapidly declining birds, it could have been worse. Most of the Eagles shot were migrants from farther north and probably came from widely separated areas. If they were all from one area, such as eastern Oregon or Washington, the entire breeding population could have been eliminated by this one act of destruction.

If the birds of prey continue to use Oregon as a wintering area it is inevitable that a greater number will be killed if we do not begin a personal campaign to educate the people of Oregon on their responsibility to save these valuable and enjoyable birds. The laws are on the books protecting these birds, now it is up to the individual to make sure they are carried out. The law cannot do this alone."

From Oregon Audubon Society
March "Audubon Warbler"

THIS IS YOUR BULLETIN ! Please feel free to submit articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. We are well over 500 members now and we wish to represent you all. There must be varied, untapped talents that would enrich us all. Volunteer!-- as special reporter, illustrator, editor! ! !

Editor: Mrs. Emelie Curtis

Still More Notes on Nesting Golden Eagles
by Emelie Curtis

Mar. 24, 1968 - Carried tripod, scope, and camera to nest area. Downy white eaglet was lying with head resting on egg. Must have hatched yesterday afternoon or this morning. Incubation time, 40 days. Now and again he would raise his head on his scrawny neck and, mouth agape, would peer skyward for mama. His eye area was very dark, like a black mask. His little white wings, no more than scoops, would embrace the sibling egg and his wobbly head would clunk down upon it after his scanning exertion. And thus he'd remain for 5 minutes, then struggle to lift his head all over again. Prey of a gray color, probably tree squirrel. Took two pictures.



Mar. 30, 1968 - Cock flying from nest just as I arrived at 9:25. Hen on nest feeding eaglets. Second eaglet hatched this morning or late yesterday. Older eaglet, Alpha, called softly, kyip kyip, as hen left nest. First time I've heard sound from young. Younger eaglet, Beta, struggled to lift head - neck very weak. Prey is brown, seems to be ground squirrel.

Apr. 5, 1968 - Adults not on nest or nearby. Only one eaglet in nest; the size indicates it's Alpha. Nest covered profusely with greenery for first time - mostly long sprays of bay leaves (tree nearby) and one spray of green Digger. White downy mass at edge of nest. Must be dead sibling, Beta. Alpha rather lively, walked or hobbled on large flat leg joint to pile of down and fleshy prey. Nudged prey half-heartedly once. Then he lay down, chin flat on nest. Left nest 11:40. From car below, saw both adults alight in oak near nest. One left perch and performed two fine, deep dives. After the last dive he rose in a sharp ascending arc until he was actually upside down. It was the most spectacular dive performance I have seen to date. He then re-alit on perch beside mate and remained so for some time. I left at 12:20.

April 24, 1968 - Found nest of second pair of eagles of this same area. This new nest is located less than two miles by line of flight from my first nest. The kyipping of the young being fed by the hen directed me to the very well hidden nest in a Live Oak. There were two young eaglets, their size indicating that they were about 5 days younger than Alpha. Prey on nest was fresh ground squirrel. It would be interesting to know the relationship of the two pairs of adults.

Color-marked Shorebirds - Point Reyes Bird Observatory is marking shorebirds caught at Limantour Estero regularly each month. Observers in other areas are requested to look for birds with painted tail feathers and report to the Observatory the location on the tail and the color of the paint. The colored tail feathers are best seen when the birds are in flight. Report observations to PRBO, Mesa Road, Bolinas, Calif. 94924.

WELCOME to new members!

Mrs. Kirkwood Bourret, 1380 N. Lemon Ave., Menlo Park 94025
Mrs. Robert V. Brown, 680 Westridge Dr., Portola Valley 94025
Mrs. Margaret A. Collinet, 125 Oak Ct., Menlo Park 94025
Mr. & Mrs. Edward H. Grubb, 1514 Madrona Ave., Palo Alto 94307
Dr. & Mrs. D. Hass, Med. Plaza Suite A6, 1101 Welch Rd., Palo Alto 94304
Miss Joylean Joy, 492 N. 2nd St., San Jose 95112
Dr. & Mrs. Miles C. Leverett, 15233 Via Pinto, Monte Sereno 95030
Leslie I. Nichols, 369 Atherton Ave., Atherton 94025
Miss Jan Paull, 919 Willow Glen Way, San Jose 95125
David Price, 766 Stendhal Lane, San Jose 95129
Cora Scheel, 635 Tennyson, Palo Alto 94301
Anna Wegerbauer, 1000 Siskiyou Dr., Menlo Park 94025
Mrs. Mabel B. Wright, 2608 Bryant St., Palo Alto 94306

--Caroline Davis
Membership Chairman

S.C.V.A.S. OFFICERS & CHAIRMEN 1967-68

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|--|-------|----------|
| President-Lloyd N. Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga | 95070 | 867-4748 |
| Vice-Pres.-Diane Conradson, 4337 Miranda Ave., Palo Alto | 94306 | 941-2102 |
| Secretary-Edna Winger, 7400 Tiptoe Lane, San Jose | 95129 | 252-3796 |
| Treasurer-Joyce Todd, 945 Matadero Ave., Palo Alto | 94306 | 326-6904 |
| Conservation-Claude A. Look, 411 Ninos Way, Los Altos | 94022 | 968-8878 |
| Education-Nancy Holmes, 843 Moana Court, Palo Alto | 94306 | 948-1854 |
| Field Trips-Dr. J. Greenberg, 270 Kellogg Ave., Palo Alto | 94301 | 327-0329 |
| Wed. Trips North: Kay McCann, 783 Garland Dr., Palo Alto | 94303 | 327-4138 |
| Wed. Trips South: Mrs. C. Lintott, 17150 Buena Vista, L.G. | 95030 | 356-4264 |
| Field Notes Compiler-Doug Greenberg, 270 Kellogg, P.A. | 94301 | 327-0329 |
| Membership-Mrs. Caroline Davis, 104 Winslow Ct., Campbell | 95008 | 378-0329 |
| Program-Kay McCann, 783 Garland Dr., Palo Alto | 94303 | 327-4138 |
| Registrar-Fannie Zwaal, 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose | 95128 | 292-2060 |
| Publicity-John Brokenshire, 102 S. 23rd. St., San Jose | 95116 | 293-6289 |

AVOCET

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