

# The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 7

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## Plans and Ideas for the Coming Year

Welcome to another year of Audubon adventure! We plan to continue the frequent field trips, the monthly nature programs and the Audubon Screen Tours. Field trips will be held on week-ends and on Wednesdays with Dr. Joseph Greenberg as Field Trip Chairman. Mrs. Kay McCann will arrange trips for north county, and Mrs. Katherine Lintott for south county. We are seeking a centrally-located place for our monthly meetings which will probably be held on the third Wednesday of each month. Our first general meeting will be in October. Miss Harriet Mundy, the Program Chairman, will be assisted by Dr. Richard Robertson.

Under our Society's sponsorship the Audubon Screen Tours will be held at San Jose State College. There will be a separate series by the Palo Alto High School Biology Club. Announcements of these events will be published in the "Avocet".

In order to help members get better acquainted with each other we plan to hold fellowship meetings in each community. Hopefully we will meet in members' homes in an informal manner in the afternoon or evening. (If you are willing to volunteer your home, please contact me.) These meetings should give us a chance to know one another better, to share nature experiences, to discuss conservation concerns, and to have a joyous occasion. Members in each community will be notified as to time and place of the gathering.

Our Education Committee, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Nancy Holmes and assisted by Mrs. Mark Hopkins, will continue conducting programs for youth groups and others desiring to learn more about the wonders of nature. Our Conservation Committee will continue to keep us alert on the many threats to quality living. Tony Look and Lloyd Case will keep us informed.

We are hopeful that an increasing number of members will be involved in the affairs of the S.C.V.A.S. this year. If you have a special interest or concern and would like to be more active, please contact me or the chairman of the committee on which you would like to serve.

Looking forward to a great year with Santa Clara Valley Audubon!

Howard Wolcott, President

### Field Trips

Dumbarton Bridge - Sat., 9/28, 9a.m.  
Meet at parking area  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile before  
bridge. Rails & Shorebirds. Leader:  
Les Sleeper  
Palo Alto Bayland - Wed., 9/25, 9 a.m.  
Meet at duck pond at end of Embarca-  
dero Rd. Leader: Nancy Holmes 948-1854



California Field Notes

by

Russ Greenberg

The summer usually brings a settling down of things to California birding. Birds get down to serious work of raising young; birders plan long distance trips to see nesting birds of other areas. But this summer had added excitement for those birders interested in the unusual.

This summer was not especially unusual for the peninsula. There was a great abundance of orioles this year in our cities. A Greater Scaup, possibly the first summering record for the state, remained at the Palo Alto duck pond throughout July. And coastwise, Elegant Terns moved up the coast early this year, with some individuals present in May.

As usual, the Farallon Islands produced many rarities. But the early summer catch made by the banding project from PRBO had a somewhat less impressive amount of rarities than in previous years. Rarities included a male Bay-breasted Warbler. The most interesting finds there were the 8 Dusky and 10 Hammonds' Flycatchers banded in early June. The migration habits of both birds is almost unknown. The Dusky is practically absent from the Bay area. Regular banding out there should improve our knowledge.

The best birds in Northern California were found in San Rafael. In late July many observers saw the first Northern California record of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron. A few observers saw an adult Little Blue Heron at a nearby location July 28. The number of valid sightings of either bird can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The number of early summer vagrants east of the Sierras was very impressive. Many of those birders who took the annual trek to Deep Springs and Oasis included Death Valley in their trip. Singing male Bobolinks were found for the second year in a row skulking in a "lawn at Furnace Creek and one was found singing at nearby Panamint Spring. Many Lucy's Warblers were found - probably nesting. A female Redstart and Summer Tanager were found; but, the bird that made the long dusty haul worth it for some was a Mississippi Kite!! This bird, the second for the state, was very tame and stayed for a week.

The list of rarities from the Deep Springs-Oasis area included a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings, two female Redstarts, two singing male Parula Warblers, a Brown Thrasher, a Summer Tanager, and a female Baltimore Oriole.

But those were far from the greatest rarities of the summer. The greatest surprise came from the San Jacinto Mountains. In a narrow canyon near Idlewild, at least three male Whip-poor-wills were found calling. Although they have never been seen, they have been heard by local people for 10 years!



Another surprise: four Chimney Swifts were residing ( as of time of writing) at Solano Beach. Two had been previously discovered at La Jolla, (possibly same two at Solano). While one was collected for confirmation, Chimney Swifts may be identified under close study by their darker underparts, larger size, and slower wing-beats. A pair of Vaux Swifts took up housekeeping at the Crane Flats station in Yosemite for the first breeding record in the Sierras.

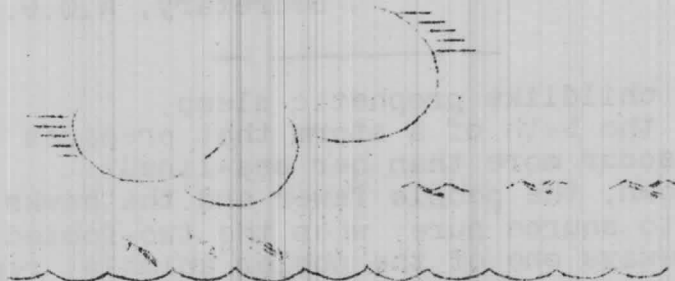
Many birds wandered up from the warm waters of Mexico this summer. A large number of immature Frigatebirds, reminiscent of the booby invasion of two years ago, turned up in Southern California. Three were seen flying up the Colorado River July 19. On the same day a bird was found at the south end of Salton Sea, and a bird was also seen there on August 3. Birds not often found inland were seen there as usual, Heerman's Gulls, Western Gulls, Kittiwake, a Sabine's Gull, and a Surf Scoter. Laughing Gulls and Gull-billed Terns were very common early in the summer indicating possible breeding on the sea for the first time in a number of years. But the best birds on the sea were six Black Skimmers present for at least three days - June 23-26. This is one of the first sightings, and the one specimen taken establishes it on the state list.

On a special boat trip to San Clemente Island, many birders were lucky enough to see nine apparently adult Red-billed Tropicbirds and five Least Petrels. The July 27 date might have had something to do with their success as they usually go on Labor Day, but I feel it was because no Northern California birders went on it.

Grackles are very well established at Imperial Dam.

The first vagrant of the fall was found in Glendale. An adult Woodthrush was found frequenting a backyard in early August before being collected by a cat for the second state record.

As we enter the fall the slow trickle of migrants should increase in momentum. Frequent trips to the coast could yield an interesting list of shorebirds at such places as Moss Landing and Tomales Bay. Later on in September land birds may be looked for in the "islands" of trees at Point Reyes or Point Pinos. But for the less adventurous many possibilities for observation of our common shorebirds and even discovery of less common species exist around the bay. Landbirds and vagrants will turn up anywhere along the peninsula, but generally the coastal areas are your best bet.





A Few Words on the A.O.U. Meeting in Alaska

Dear Mrs. Curtis:

Your letter asking for a few words on the meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union at the University of Alaska has reached me

Our meetings and field trips were unusually successful for the 236 registered attendees, including several Bay Area Audubon Society members. They included our good friend Elsie Hoeck of SCWAS as well as Enid K. Austin of Oakland, Dr. John Davis of Carmel Valley, Ann Folis of San Francisco, Elizabeth Lennon of Sausalito, Dr. and Mrs. Allan Wilson of Orinda, who are also members of PRBO, and others.

A high-light was meeting Elsie Hoeck in a meadow above timberline in Mt. McKinley National Park. There my wife, Fran, younger son John, and I shared with Elsie a pair of Long-tailed Jaegers with their chick, several nesting Lapland Longspurs, a pair of Wheatears, and a cup of hot soup courtesy of Elsie's group from Camp Denali.

We spent two days near Nome where Arctic Warblers, Yellow Wagtails, rare White Wagtails, Bar-tailed Godwits, Snow Buntings, Hoary Redpolls, nestling Gyrfalcons and their parents, Snowy Owls, etc. were part of our fare. We were well supplied with field guides on this three-day flyingtrip to Nome and exciting St. Lawrence Island (Siberia was clearly visible) because Roger Peterson and Chandler Robbins were both enthusiastic members of our party.

Back to the Bay Area, I have spent some time already and will this fall spend a couple more months on South Farallon Island. It is the most intense and uniquely important avian 100 acres in or near California. PRBO has a most important role to serve in the future of the Farallones if we can attract the support essential to our mission. Last week we completed our new Heligoland Trap for the capture and banding-study of land birds precipitated there in migration and post-breeding dispersal.

We are on the brink of an important era for the study of bird-ecology. It is exciting to participate in and satisfying to support this ecological work. It is important in the very continuance of Homo sapiens as a creature with dignity,

Sincerely yours,  
L. Richard Mewaldt  
Secretary, A.O.U.

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"The earth, in her childlike prophetic sleep,  
Keeps dreaming of the bath of a storm that prepares up the long coast  
Of the future to scour more than her sea-lines:  
The cities gone down, the people fewer and the hawks more numerous,  
The rivers mouth to source pure; when the two-footed  
Mammal, being someways one of the nobler animals, regains  
The dignity of room, the value of rareness."

from NOVEMBER SURF by Robinson Jeffers

A LOOK Towards Conservation

What slow progress has been made in the protection of the most beautiful of all living things in the storehouse of natural wonders! Forty years ago the first visionary person suggested the redwoods should be protected by Federal legislation. But just as this progress has been slow, the pace of the lumberman has been accelerated, thereby diminishing the size and beauty of our park. This has been a costly and wasteful wait. A realistic viewpoint of a Redwoods National Park must, of necessity, include money for the purchase of the private timber lands. Hence the vital importance of the following piece of legislation which will be heard in the Senate shortly.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION AUGMENTATION BILL S. 1401

The bill passed by the House called for a boost in the fund to \$200 million annually for 5 years by adding a portion of the Outer Continental Shelf Revenue to the funds.

This bill failed in the Senate and so the two bodies will attempt to arbitrate the differences. The importance of such a measure can be seen when you consider that such funds will be used to put into being the Redwoods National Park and other areas designated for Federal protection. There is also the possibility that the Golden Eagle Pass will be dropped next year in favor of the National Services returning to their previous systems of collecting fees.

The extreme value of constant contacts and a flow of letters to your congressional representatives is shown by the close association and relative bearing these two measures have one upon the other. Our elected representatives want to hear from us; they want to know our thoughts and they appreciate the time we take to let them know this. Please keep expressing your thoughts to these important people.

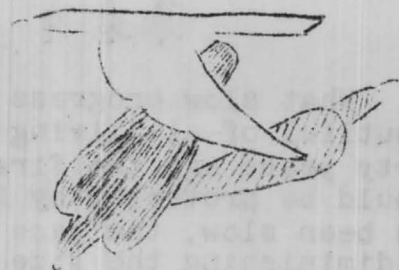
OTHER ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE

1. Dos Rios Dam - The appropriations bill for the Dos Rios Dam on the Middle Fork of the Eel River will not come before congress at this session, but please do not be lulled into a state of forgetfulness in this regard. It will be back in 1969 and for many years thereafter unless it is proved to be impractical.
2. Lake Tahoe - A new approach to the Lake Tahoe dispute between the States of Nevada and California appears to be headed toward the breaking of a deadlock over the creation of a bi-state compact agency in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Assemblyman Edwin Z'Berg of Sacramento County is working on the complicated matter at this time and Governor Reagan has given his guarded approval.
3. Statewide Trails - A statewide Recreational Trails program has been proposed by Assemblyman Edwin Z'Berg. This would authorize the state to enter into agreements with the counties to develop and operate hiking, riding, and bicycling trails previously acquired by the counties or if the state had previously acquired the trails, they would be authorized to transfer them to local jurisdictions for operations.

Tony Look, Conservation Chairman

MORE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION NEEDED FOR EAGLES

Since midwinter I have been anxiously searching the skies above Western Nevada for the sight of Eagles. Since early winter there has been a profound decrease in the number of Golden Eagles. Where I was encountering as many as 4 or 5 eagles a day, now many days pass without the sight of one.



I am sure this decrease, in part at least, is due to a crash in the jackrabbit population. Both hares and rabbits are at the lowest density I have seen in 15 years afield in Nevada, and, perhaps, our eagles have had to shift their hunting ranges. I have spent many days in the Carson Range during the past two months without the sight of a single eagle. It's weird!

But since the eagle is given virtually no effective protection in Nevada, and since man hereabouts is responsible for the demise and crippling of many, one can not help feeling a bit apprehensive."

from "The Pelican", Lehontan Audubon Society  
---- by Fred Ryser, Ph.D.

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What Do You Know About The "State's Rights Wildlife Bill (S2951)????"

"All of us should ponder the so-called "state's rights wildlife bill" (S2951) introduced by Senator Alan Bible of Nevada. This bill, and similar ones, are being pushed by the Directors of state fish and game departments in certain Western states.

These bills are being opposed by the National Audubon Society, the National Parks Association, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, Izaak Walton League of America, Wilderness Society, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

These bills are being endorsed, with reservations, by the American Forestry Association, the National Wildlife Federation and the Sport Fishing Institute.

The National Audubon Society is on record as supporting "the concept and practice of state authority over resident - - non-migratory - - species of wildlife - - that if any public hunting or fishing is permitted on any federal lands, it should be done in accordance with state conservation laws." (Audubon. Vol 70, No.3, 1968)

On July 18th Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall issued a policy statement which declared that any public hunting and fishing on areas administered by the Dept. of Interior agencies shall be in accordance with state laws and regulations. But this policy statement bans hunting in the National Parks, Monuments and Historic Areas. ( And the International Assoc. of Game, Fish and Conserv. Commissioners particularly wants legal control of wildlife in the National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks.)

Senator Bible's S2951 goes far beyond the state vs. federal



control over wildlife on federal lands. It would turn all wildlife, including migratory species, over to the states. It would open the National Parks and Refuges to hunting. It would cripple the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife. It would repeal the federal laws protecting the eagles - - Bald and Golden. It would nullify essential parts of the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966."

from "The Pelican" , Lehigh Audubon Society

### ILLEGAL BIRD TRAFFIC

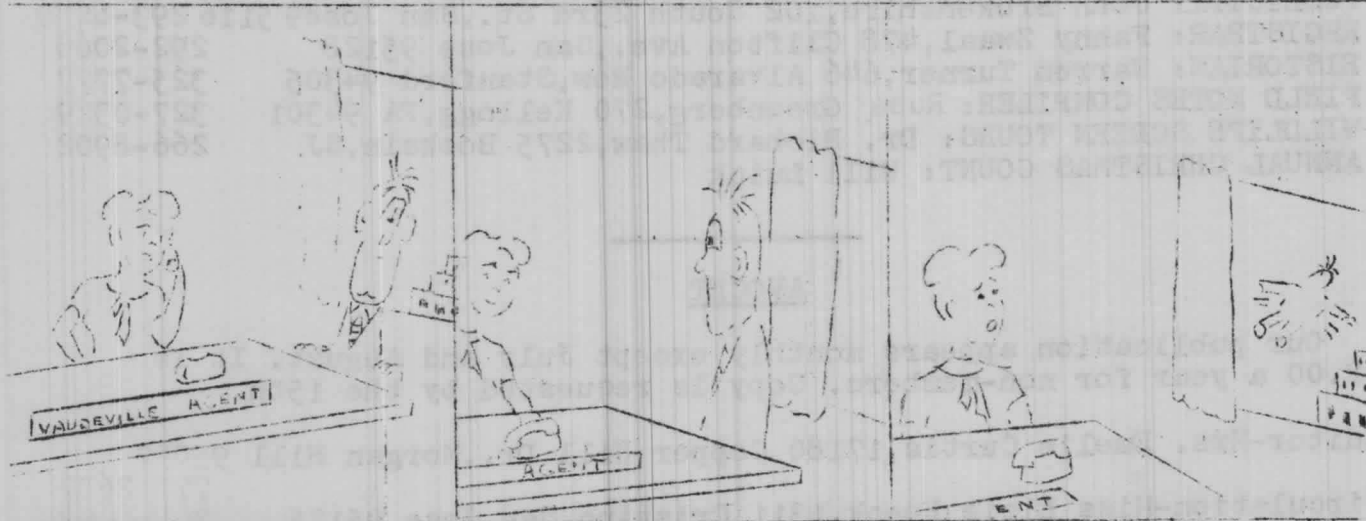
"A two-year investigation has resulted in smashing of a ring specializing in obtaining protected game and song birds for mounting and sale as home ornaments and center pieces, the Maryland State Department of Game and Inland Fish reported.

At least three Bald Eagles, the national emblem, were killed, mounted and sold illegally, and hundreds of other protected birds including Humming Birds, Indigo Buntings, Cardinals and a variety of ducks and other waterfowl.

Prices for the mounted birds ranged from \$80 each for humming birds to \$12 a pair for cardinals and up to \$50 each for the most colorful and rarer species and some of the waterfowl.

The law enforcement chief said that although the investigation, which involved undercover work by federal agents for some 18 months, has probably smashed the Maryland traffic in some birds, he believes many other states are involved."

(AP) Annapolis, Md.



He says he does bird imitations.

No - I'm sorry. We have no openings for bird imitators.

O K. Goodbye !

WELCOME to New Members :

Mr.&Mrs. W.E. Dawson Roberts, 2914 Emerson St., Palo Alto	94306
Miss Nancy Damron (student), 1634 New Castle Dr., Los Altos	94022
Mr.&Mrs. Martin Cavanaugh, 3319 Machado Ave., Santa Clara	95051
Mrs. P.M. Evans, 1184 Palo Alto Ave., Palo Alto	94301
Mr.&Mrs. L.L. Ferguson, 578 Cresta Vista Lane, Portola Val.	94025
Mr.&Mrs. R. Philip Hart, 2060 Amherst, Palo Alto	94306
Mrs. Ruth Holl, 24 San Juan Ave., Menlo Park	94025
Mr.&Mrs. Norman R. Sly, 171 Santa Rita, Palo Alto	94301
Richard D. Davis, 16788 Littlefield Lane, Los Gatos	95030
Mr.&Mrs. Robert W. Donselman, P.O. Box 773, Sunnyvale	94088
Inez Preston, 165 Blossom Hill Road, San Jose	95123
Mr. David R. Rodal, 3405 Kenneth Drive, Palo Alto	94303
Mr.&Mrs. Suen E. Wahlstrom, 570 Jackson Dr., Palo Alto	94303

Caroline Davis  
Membership Chairman

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