

# The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 9

November, 1968

## Olympic Rain Forest to Canadian Rockies

Thursday, November 21, 8:00 p.m.

Homestead High School  
Room 5, Bldg. C

Homestead Road  
Cupertino

Ken and Eleanor Kidd will present this hour-long slide program on a trip they took this summer to the northwest. They will take us from moss-draped trees of the rain forest to snow laden peaks of Canada's Glacier, Banff and Jasper Parks, with close-ups of flowers and animals. En route will be a stop-over at Butchard Gardens near Victoria.

We are happy to welcome Ken and Eleanor again as many of us recall their last program on Havasu Canyon. Both of them have been members of our own Board of Directors. Let's give them a warm welcome with a large turnout at our new central meeting place, which attracted many welcome new faces at our October meeting. We hope the enthusiastic reception of Mr. Good's artistic slides, the entertaining bird call recording, (You've really missed something if you haven't heard a puffin extemporize mournfully!) and Homestead High's lovely grounds will encourage greater attendance of our many members and their friends.

### Calendar of Events

Bird Discussion Group - - - - - Tues., Nov. 5, 10 a.m.

We will continue with interesting birds of the summer. Meet at Mrs. Eve Case's, 20537 Verde Vista Ln., Saratoga 95070, Tel. 867-4748.

Audubon Wildlife Film - - - - - Thurs., Nov. 7, 8 p.m.

"The Vanishing Sea" by Robert W. Davison at Morris Daily Auditorium, San Jose State College. Great Salt Lake is featured with studies of brine shrimp, pelican, desert kit fox, kangaroo rat, water ouzel and Western grebe. Dependence of life upon water is explored.

Natural Bridges State Park - - - - - Sat., Nov. 9, 9 a.m.

Meet at parking lot near ranger's office. Bring Lunch.

Leader, Lloyd Case.

Robert Taylor Ranch in Santa Cruz Mtns. - - - - - Wed., Nov. 13, 9 a.m.

Meet at intersection of old Santa Cruz Rd. and Summit Rd. Bring overshoes; it could be damp.

Leader, Catherine Lintott

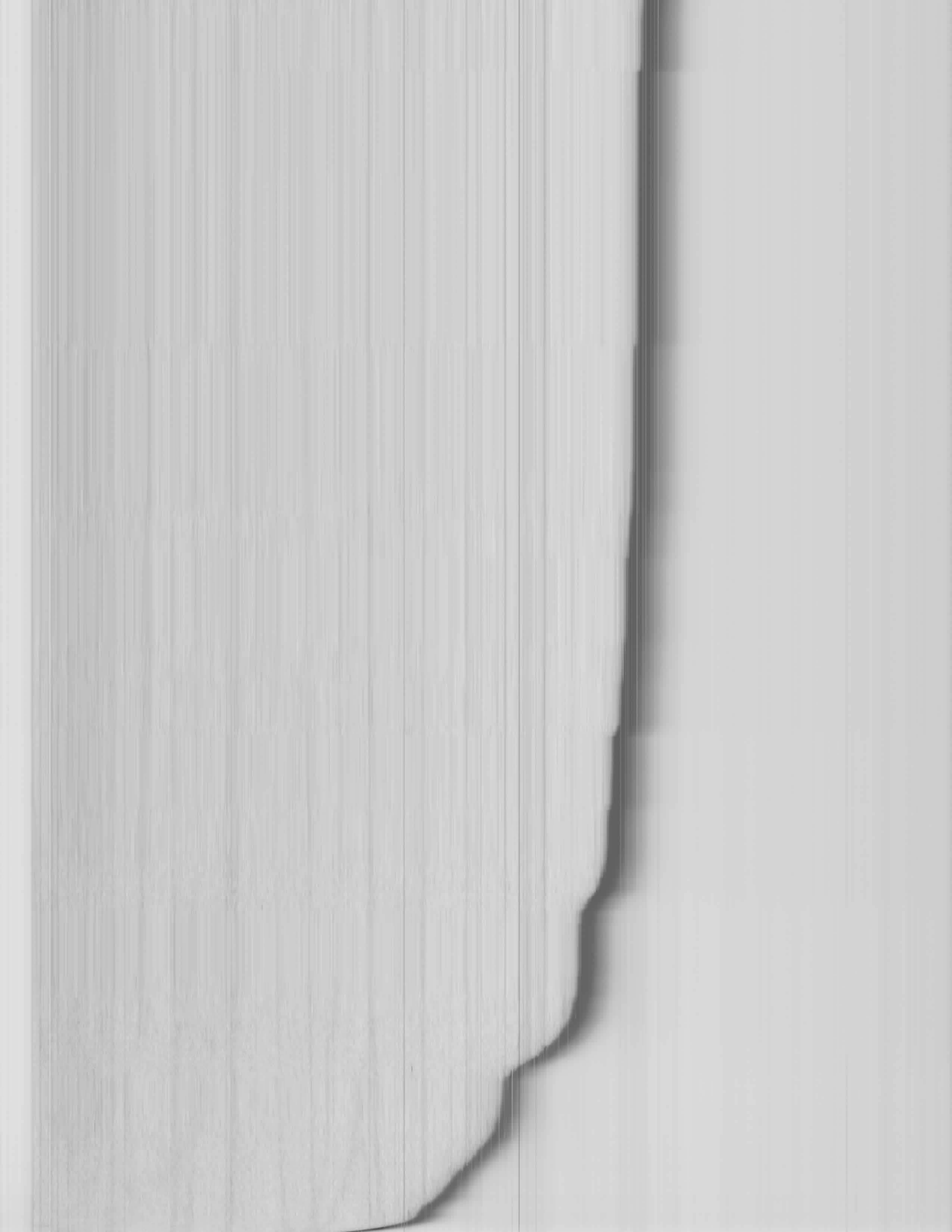
Gray Lodge Refuge - - - - - Sun., Nov. 17, 9 a.m.

Meet at gates of refuge. To reach area go to Yuba City; take 99 E to Live Oak; left on Pennington Rd. about 10 miles to Rutherford Rd.; left to Gray Lodge Wildlife Management Area. Expect to see White-fronted, Snow, & Ross' Geese, Sandhill Cranes, possibly Whistling Swans, ducks, and many hawks. Traveling time is about 4 hours or so. For those going up on Saturday we suggest birding the Sacramento Refuge north of Willows. Leaders, Dr. Joseph Greenberg & Russ G. 7-0329

Searsville Lake - - - - - Wed., Nov. 20, 9 a.m.

Meet at entrance to Searsville Lake, on the left of Sandhill Rd., Menlo Park after passing Whiskey Hill Rd. on the right. Admission 25¢. Leaders, Warren and Rebecca Truner (325-7777)





Dumbarton Bridge, Leader - Les Sleeper - September 28

This somewhat smoggy morning was brightened by the thrilling whiteness of the White Pelicans, numbering up to 500, and by the toy-like spinning of scores of Northern Phalaropes. Other birds that kept the scopes busy were: 3 Ruddy Turnstones, 1 Lesser & 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 3 Black-bellied Plovers, Snowy Plovers, Dowitchers, Godwits, Black-necked Stilts, Bonaparte Gull, Forster's Tern, Lesser & Western Sandpiper, Pintail, Shoveler, Cinnamon Teal. (E.G.C.)

NATURAL BRIDGES STATE PARK, Leaders: Lloyd and Eve Case - October 9.

Although the sky was overcast and cloudy, there was no bitter wind, and the temperature was cool, but not cold; it was a good morning for birding, even though the light was not brilliant.

There was a large number of Monarch Butterflies on the eucalyptus trees at the end of The Butterfly Trail, although the morning temperature was still a bit too low for much activity on the part of the Monarchs. As had happened on previous trips, we again watched a Chickadee fly into a clump of hanging Monarchs and carry one back to his perch. In a few seconds the butterfly fell to the ground. This sequence of actions was repeated several times. As before, examination of the butterflies on the ground under the Chickadee's perch showed that the heads were missing. It seems to be a well established fact that the Monarchs have a bitter juice in their bodies which is distasteful to birds. However, that does not seem to keep them from losing their heads, even though the body is not devoured.

Birding areas visited included The Lagoon, the beach, the surf along Cliff Drive, the beaches and coves along the cliff, and then back to the Picnic Area at the Natural Bridges. One interesting sighting was a Kingfisher which was seen to dive, successfully, and to come up with a small fish. He immediately began to fly directly toward us (on the parking area above the Bridges) and we watched him fly into the archway under the "Bridge", - but he did not fly through! Hmmm!! A cave-dweller!!!

The usual species of shore birds were pretty well represented by Black Turnstones, Sanderlings, Black-bellied Plover, Heermann's Gulls, Godwits, Willets, Black Oystercatchers, Pigeon Guillemots, Cormorants (unidentified), Western Grebes, Eared Grebes, Common Loons, Brown Pelicans, and, back at the Picnic Tables and around the Parking Area were the usual Golden-Crowned Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Bewick's Wren, House Finches, Lesser Goldfinches, and the Mallards on the pond just off the Butterfly Trail. While this list may not seem to be exciting to many of us, it did include new Life-Birds for some of those present, - added fun for new members and for members recently coming from our Eastern States.

(L.N.C.)

Moss Landing Trip, Leader: Mrs. Viola Anderson - October 13

Birds were checked from Jetty Rd., Moss Landing, at McClusky Slough in Zmudowski State Park and at Salinas River mouth (courtesy Kenneth Martin). The morning was overcast and drizzle started at 11 am. Heavy rain by 2 pm. Eighteen participants; 56 species listed. Elegant Terns near the yacht harbor, 2 White-tailed Kites at McClusky Slough, a Burrowing Owl, Common Terns and 3 Black Brants at Salinas River mouth were highlights. The bird list was: Common & Red-throated Loon, Eared, Western & Pied-bill Grebes, Brown Pelican, Gr-Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Black Brant, Mallard, Gadwall, Pintail, Gr-winged Teal, Cinnamon, Am. Widgeon, Wh-winged & Surf Scoter, Ruddy, Wh-tailed Kite, Sparrow Hawk, Coot, Killdeer, Bl-bellied Plover, Lg-billed Curlew, Willet, Gr Yellowlegs, Less. & West Sandpiper, Dunlin, Dowitcher, Marb. Godwit, Sanderling, Avocet, Bl-necked Stilt, No. Phalarope, W., Cal., Rg-bld, Heermann Gulls, Com., Eleg., Casp. Terns, Mourning Dove, Burrowing Owl, Water Pipit, Log. Shrike, West. Meadowlark, Rd-wing & Brewer Blk-bird, House & American Goldfinch, Br. Towhee, Savannah, Gold-cr, White-cr, Song Sparrows.

California Birds

Migration has been fairly slow this fall in Northern California. Pelagic birds were not reported in numbers and no major "flights" of landbirds were noted, except on the Farallons.

Few birds were seen on the Monterey trip October 5 in contrast to the one in September when everything was seen. This is opposite to the typical year. The only bird of interest was a Fork-tailed Petrel seen by a few people. Formerly common, this bird has been virtually extinct for several years. Skuas and New Zealand Shearwaters, normally October specialties, were seen only on the September trip.



The Yellow-crowned Night Herons were last seen in mid-September. Elegant Terns remained scarce north of Moss Landing. There the large flocks of Elegants were constantly attacked by Parasitic Jaegers. An American Flamingo, one of two residing at Moss Landing for two years, was seen during the month.

Ted Chandik reported 20 Marbled Murrelets at Pigeon Point, once again showing that Pigeon Point is an excellent place to see murrelets in the summer. They have been reported flying through the trees in Big Basin and probably breed there.

There were few reports of Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers this fall. However, Golden Plovers were reported at least twice from Point Reyes. Eight were seen in late September at Abbotts Lagoon, and an individual was found on Limantour Spit at the end of the period.

Point Reyes had another disappointing fall. A Townsend's Solitaire was seen September 21. The author saw an immature male Ruby-throated Hummingbird there Oct. 6. This is probably the first state record. The same day a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen. Two Lapland Longspurs were seen and/or heard Oct. 13.



The Farallons had an impressive list of birds. Guy McCaskie joined the PRBO team with John Ralph in late September. They banded 27 species of warbler including a Hooded and a Virginia's. Bobolinks, Dickcissels and a Lapland Longspur were also banded.

But for onshore birders, Monterey was the place. Blackpoll and Palm Warblers were seen at Pt. Pinos all fall. A Chestnut-sided was seen first week of October. Alan Baldrige, Bill Reese and Vern Yadon found an adult male Capemay Warbler there Oct. 4 and it was again seen by a few on the 5th, for the third state record. The author found a Virginia's there the same day. It was later seen by others. A Catbird and an Ovenbird both made brief appearances in yards in Pacific Grove.

With late October come the late fall birds. Geese flock to the central valley refuges, Zonotrichia move in large numbers, and Cedar Waxwings and Varied Thrushes begin to visit local berry bushes. In these, rare birds can be weeded out with patient work. But a major factor is being able to know a rare bird when it is seen.

Longspurs will be in now. They are generally found in with Horned Larks. They can best be picked out by the soft musical trill they utter in flight. Laplands can further be identified by their conical bill, brown tail with four white outer-tail feathers. Males will show a dusky breast band, a buffy head, and much rust on the nape and wing-bend. Two other species, Chestnut-collared and McGowan's, are rarer and can be picked out by the large patch of white in the tail, McGowan's forming a distinct black "T" on the tail. The McGowan's has a dryer rattle, and the Chestnut-collared gives a distinctive TEE-YOU.

Russ Greenberg  
Field Notes Compiler

A Look towards Conservation



One of the greatest weeks for the protection of America's natural and scenic areas occurred with the week ending on October 4, 1968, when President Johnson signed into law seven long-sought conservation measures.

On Monday, President Johnson gave his approval to the Central Arizona Project legislation which bars dam-building in the Grand Canyon. On the same day he signed the Great Swamp Wilderness Act which protects a unique marsh and woodland area only 30 miles from Times Square. On Tuesday he signed the Redwood National Park, North Cascades National Park, National Trails, Scenic and Wild Rivers and Mt. Jefferson Wilderness Area bills.

President Johnson described passage of the Redwood bill as "A great victory for every American in every State". He said "We have rescued a magnificent and meaningful treasure from the chain saw. For once we have spared what is enduring and ennobling from the hungry and hasty act of destruction. The Redwoods will stand. So long as they do, they will give delight".

Temporary Park Headquarters will be at Crescent City, Calif. The new Park Superintendent is Nelson Murdock, formerly Assistant Director of the Omaha Regional Office.

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The California Parks and Recreation Commission held their October meeting in San Jose on October 11, 1968. It was reassuring to hear them oppose the Federal Highway Aid Program which deals the death penalty to all trees within 30 feet of each side of a road when such a road is the recipient of federal highway funds. Can you imagine the Redwood Highway remaining the most enchanting roadway in California with 60 feet of the magnificent giants cleared from its shoulders?

The Commission also suggested to the County of San Mateo that if Portola State Park is to become part of the County's Pescadero Creek Recreational Complex then all of the redwood trees must remain uncut and the level of the water in the dam must be decreased so the high water mark would not flood the redwood forest of Portola Park. The proposed dam would be built by the Army Corps of Engineers.

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The recent Sempervirens Fund Dinner in San Jose was certainly an inspiring affair for all of the more than 500 people in attendance. The message delivered by Dr. Vishniac in his appealing manner was most emphatic about the role of nature in our daily lives. His color motion picture on the ocean beaches following his talk was the inspiration needed to make his words come to life.

Dr. Roman Vishniac is a truly gifted, dedicated naturalist. His words and actions are exciting and inspiring. He has faced the brink of death several times in his early life and is therefore able to measure existence with a different set of values than most of us. The one tangible thing to him is nature and this, he explains, is the greatest mystery of our universe. His attempts to solve the mystery are remarkable.

Tony Look, Conservation Chairman

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MORE MATERIAL FOR THE LIBRARY:

Previous gifts to the S.C.V.A.S. from Emily and Betty Smith have been augmented by the very recent gift of early Audubon Magazines, numerous books, pamphlets and pictures. Many of the latter are designed for use in the teaching of nature subjects to younger children. They should be very helpful to those members who are helping in the work of the the Education Committee by working with the younger groups.

Betsy Peterson, with her background of Library experience, is the guiding force in the sorting and arranging of the newly acquired material.

E. H. Case

We Went to Isle Royale  
by  
Lloyd and Eve Case



When thinking "conservationally", and considering the relationship between the tensions, pressures and stresses due to our highly urbanized, industrialized, mechanized and "otherwise-ized" daily life on the one hand and the resulting need of mankind for large areas of natural beauty, of wilderness areas where he can find physical recreation and spiritual re-creation, I recall a paragraph from David Conover's delightful book, "ONCE UPON AN ISLAND", in which he writes: "... (At Hollywood and Vine) watching the surging mass of humanity around us, pushing and rushing, homeward bound, a strange depression fell over me... Every time we stopped, I found myself staring at the crowds congregating at the traffic lights, - tired, worried people caught in a relentless chase, prodded on blindly, driven by fear. It was written in their pinched, somber faces. Fear of the clock, of mistakes, of a fall in the market, of the weather, of what others think, of losing their jobs, of what tomorrow would bring, - every step and desire shackled by fear. In the multitude of faces sweeping by, I saw the sadness of buried dreams, - so few heads held high. ..."

Within the last few years the American public and its leaders seem to have become increasingly conscious of the growing need for definite conservation measures, and much has been done to establish wilderness areas, parks, and other areas of natural beauty that will be preserved (we hope) for the generations to come. The 90th Congress, just adjourned, has been a good Congress.... In the words of Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield: "not a great Congress, not a poor Congress, but a good Congress". Conservationists have not won all of their goals, but we have made definite gains, in many cases.

Planning a vacation that would take us into a restful wilderness area, including perhaps some Wild Life Refuges, we (Eve and I, that is) decided on Isle Royale in Lake Superior, as our objective. We had, for a couple of years, been intrigued by what we had read about the Isle, - how the National Park Service administered it so as to keep it in its natural state; of the interesting geology of the island; of the forests and blooming wildflowers, and of course of the birdlife during the early summer months.

Attractive "bait" for such a trip was found in the additional "goodies" that we could include into our trip eastward, by car. Such places as The Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho; - The Red Rock Lakes Wildlife Refuge along the Idaho-Montana border just west of Yellowstone Park, where we could expect to (and did) see nesting Trumpeter Swans; some of the larger "Big Game" Wildlife Refuges; then eastward across Montana and North Dakota, including the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park; and on to Ely in north-eastern Minnesota into the general areas of the Canadian Boundary Area Canoe Waters, the Quetico-Superior Parks areas, and the land of the historical French-Canadian "Voyageurs" who opened up the great northwestern fur-trapping areas of the Hudson's Bay Co. and the Northwest Co.; - then by boat to — Isle Royale. If we needed anything else to give us the final nudge into our decision, we found it in thinking of returning through southern Canada, and the Trans-Canada Highway; of being on the "Canadian Shield"; of going through Banff and Jasper Parks in the Canadian Rockies; and of taking "just a peek" at the Rain Forest of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. We went!

We love the vast, wide-open feeling of the western dessert country, and so we thoroughly enjoyed the broad expanses to distant horizons, the amazing desert peaks of volcanic origin telling their story of hundreds of thousands of years of unhurried geological history, and the almost unoccupied desert highways. We watched for, and quite frequently saw, bands of Pronghorned Antelope grazing, often not very far from the highways. When we stopped, they would stop grazing to stare at us, as curious about us as we were about them. They were inquisitive animals, often a white handkerchief waved out of a car window will entice them to come closer for a better look. With a proper lens good photos are quite possible, but they must be taken from within the car. Any sudden movement, or attempt to get out of the car, will immediately spook them; the nearer ones will start bounding across the landscape, and the "white flags" of the large patches on the rump are very conspicuous danger signals. Immediately the entire herd, and many individuals that had not been noticed, are in rapid motion, putting more space between them and the frustrated photographer.



Our daily schedule was to get up about five o'clock, have coffee in our motel room, and be on the road by daylight, or not later than six o'clock. After driving for about an hour and a half we would find that the rest of the world was now beginning to wake up, so we would begin to look for a coffee shop and a hot breakfast. Our noonday lunches we carried with us. About eleven-thirty we would start to look for an interesting turn-off, with a good view of interesting surroundings. There we would eat our lunch and Eve would catch up with her notes on the birds, etc., that we had seen during the morning. We had lovely sunny weather every day, until!!

In our motel in Fargo, on the eastern edge of North Dakota, we were on the second floor, and in the evening we had looked across vast expanses of relatively flat and seemingly empty prairie land at a gorgeous sunset. Shortly after midnight we awakened to find ourselves in the midst of a gorgeous, crashing thunder-and-lightning storm, complete with driving torrents of rain. Daylight brought an altogether different looking world! From then on, we had some rain almost every day for over two weeks.

Rain in the "Northwoods" and the lakes around Ely, in northeastern Minnesota, is a delightful experience, in spite of the mosquitoes and the even pestier blackflies that come swarming as a "Welcoming Committee" to greet the unwary traveller who steps out of his car. The Autumn months may be a more glorious riot of brilliant colored foliage, but in June in these northern latitudes, it is still Spring and everything is green and fresh, washed by the rain. Loons cry as they wing across the lakes, and we find ourselves thinking of the history of the region and the wildlife that was once so prolific. Through here passed the fur trappers, brigades of "Voyageurs" in their birch-bark canoes, seeking the beaver and fur-bearing animals to satisfy the demands of European markets. These men spent long hours in their fragile canoes, toted incredible loads packed in hundred-and-fifty pound units over long difficult portages around rapids and falls in their river highways. With indomitable courage and fortitude, ignoring physical hardships, they penetrated into the remote regions that are now Canada's Northwest Territories. So successful were they that they almost exterminated not only the beaver, but many of the other fur-bearing animals which they sought. Now, although these Northwoods show signs of having been heavily lumbered in places, and there is quite extensive copper mining,



there are also signs of an increasing interest in conserving the expendable natural resources and many of the areas of natural beauty. We talked to Park Rangers in places where we met them, and were encouraged by what we learned. We can be encouraged, but must remain far from satisfied! Wherever Conservation makes a gain, vested interests continue to maintain, even to increase, pressures to neutralize and even to reverse the gain.

Our reason for going to Ely, Minnesota, was to see the area in which our favorite author lives, and some of the areas which he has described in his writings. In his books, "Listening Point", "The Singing Wilderness", "Runes of the North", "The Lonely Land", Sigurd F. Olson has very graphically portrayed the natural beauties of this land of lakes and forests. His perceptiveness and ability to express what he has seen and felt enable the reader to feel participation in the scene. As we walked through the woods or stood on the rocky shore of a lake we recalled paragraphs from his books, and we found ourselves with a better understanding of our surroundings, a better sense of the meaning, the interdependence, and the unity of everything around us, and of the great importance of the saving of such areas for future generations. The visit we had with the Olsons, in their home in Ely, was THE highlight of our entire trip.

In our parting conversation, Mr. Olson said, "Judging from what I have gathered during our talking, you two people are going to find Isle Royale an exciting and stimulating place. I am sure you will love it." And again his perceptiveness and judgment were so right. We did!

The island lies some fifteen miles off of the Canadian shore, just to the northeast of the extreme eastern tip of our state of Minnesota. It is much closer to Canada than to Michigan. Nevertheless, Benjamin Franklin managed to get the U.S. Canadian International Boundary placed between the island and the Canadian mainland, thus placing Isle Royale within the state of Michigan. The island itself is some fifty miles in length, its width varying up to some twelve or fifteen miles with the long axis of the island extending from southwest to northeast. It is accessible only by boat or float-plane. There are no roads on the island and at only two places, on opposite ends of the island, are there accommodations for tourists. All travel must be on foot trails or by boat. Therein lies the great charm of the island for a couple of "nature lovers" bent on getting into its wilderness area for short periods and with a minimum of physical discomfort for a look at its flora and fauna with a minimum of disturbance by luxury-minded "tourists".

(To be continued next month)

S.C.V.A.S. Officers:

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