SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc. See and the second and the second the second

The Avocet

Volume XV, Number 10

December, 1968

Calendar

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Bird Discussion Group - - - - - - - - Tues., Dec. 3, 10:00 am. Birds for study will be Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Hutton's Vireo, their similarities and differences. Meet at Eve Case's, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga 95070, Tel. 867-4748.

Rodeo Lagoon - - - - - - - - - Sun., Dec. 8, 9:00 am. Proceed to north side of Golden Gate and take Sausalito Turnoff, then first left, marked Ft. Baker etc. Go through tunnel and meet on west side of it. Will try to find male Hooded Mergansers at San Rafael in the afternoon. Leeders: Dr. Joseph and Russ Greenberg . 11 .

Board Meeting - - - - - - - - - Tues., Dec. 10, 7:45 pm. Meet at Nancy Holmes', 843 Moana Ct., Palo Alto. No General Meeting for December.

The state of the state the tap is Annual Christmas Bird Count - - - - - - Sun., Dec. 22, 7:30 am. Meeting Place: Security Savings & Loan Association, 2830 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose. Time: 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Reconvene at 4:30 pm.

sharp. Refreshments will be served during the tally.

Count Areas: Same as in past years, i.e. a circular area 15 miles in diameter, with center at junction of Mabury Road and Capitol Avenue, northeast of the city limits.

Sectors: The count area will be divided into 5 sectors, namely: A. Alviso Sector: bounded on the east by State Highway 17 (the old "Cakland Highway"), and on the south by Bayshore Freeway.

Leader: Dr. Thomas Harvey, 716 Garner Court, Santa Clara,

Telephone: 243-6956.

B. Southwest Sector: bounded on the north and east by Bayshore Freeway, south of Alum Rock Avenue. Bayshore Freeway is inside this sector.

Leaders: Mrs. Charles (Fannie) Zwaal, 478 Clifton Avenue, San

Jose, Tel.: 292-2060.

Mr. John Brokenshire, 102 South 23rd Street, San Jose, Telephone: 273-6289.

C. Evergreen Sector: bounded by Bayshore Freeway, Alum Rock Avenue and Mt. Hamilton Road. Mt. Hamilton Road is inside this sector. Leader: Mr. Roy Cameron, 20560 Komina Avenue, Saratoga

Telephone: 867-9309.

D. Alum Rock Sector: bounded on the south by Mt. Hamilton Road, Alum Rock Avenue and Bayshore Freeway; on the north by Capitol Avenue and Sierra Road; on the west by State Highway 17 (the old "Oakland Highway"). Alum Rock Avenue, Bayshore Freeway, Oakland Hiway and Capitol Avenue are all in-

side this sector.

Leaders: Mr. Don Schmoldt, 165 Blossom Hill Rd., San Jose wide and Tel.: 227-6570. Mr. Richard Sandkuhle, ---1221 Glenwood Avenue, San Jose, Tel.: 292-1534.

E. <u>Calaveras Sector</u>: bounded by Sierra Road, Capital Avenue and State Highway 17 (the old "oakland Highway"). Sierra Road and State Highway 17 (the old "Oakland Highway") are <u>inside</u> this sector.

Leader: Mr. Albert J. Wool, Box 68, La Honda, Tel.: 747-0317.

Sector Leaders are responsible for planning the itinerary of the teams working within the Sector (if you know of good birding within a Sector, please advise the Leader in advance of December 22). Sector Leaders are responsible for securing permission to trespass on posted or closed areas within their Sectors.

The Annual Christmas Bird Count Registration is your invitation to participate in this exciting event on Sunday, December 22. Please return your Registration Form not later than Saturday, December 14, mail delivery, so that Howard Wolcott can forward the entries to the Sector Leaders for assignment to teams. The 1966 and 1967 policy of equalizing the number of people on the Sector assignments will be followed in 1968. Your first Sector preference that you check on the Registration will be honored as far as possible. Information concerning the number of registrants and cars available will enable the Sector Leaders to plan more effective coverage of their respective areas.

<u>Records</u>: One person on each team will serve as recorder, and will record the counts of each species of wild birds that are positively identified. In making estimates of large numbers, indicate the probable error, e.g. 2,000 \pm 300. If unable to estimate the degree of accuracy, record the estimate as "2,000 est.". In adding estimates to the actual count in the final tally indicate the accuracy as follows: Coot -2,173 (2,000 \pm 173). This shows that of the total number of 2,173 coots reported, 173 were actually counted, and the rest were estimated.

The recorder for each team should also keep a record of the following: (1) hours spent (a) on foot and (b) by car; (2) mileage covered (a) on foot and (b) by car. This information is an important factor in the overall picture that is develop ed from the data submitted by each group.

Because weather conditions affect the activity of birds and influence the results of the count, please try to keep a record of (1) minimum and maximum temperature; (2) wind direction and approximate velocity; (3) percent of sky that is covered by clouds; (4) additional pertinent notes, such as fog, rain, sun, etc.

Habitats are important in evaluating species counts! Please record the habitats visited, and the approximate time spent in each, such as salt marsh, canyon stream, oak woodland, grassland, golf course, etc. Give the percentage of total field time spent in each habitat.

Count Chairman: Mr. C.L. Sleeper, 861 Harvard Avenue, Menlo Park, Telephone: 323-9370.

Count Compiler for AUDUBON FIELD NOTES: Mrs. Emelie Curtis, 17180 Copper Hill Drive, Morgan Hill, Tel.: 779-2637.

Opportunities to serve as sector leaders for next year are available. Anyone interested should contact the Count Chairman.

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY is doing important conservation work on the shorebirds and seabirds of the Farallon Islands. Your valuable support is needed for the continuance of this exciting and unique project. See the accompanying brochure for details.

OPEN SPACES and the ART OF LIVING

One day Grammy was giving me a lesson in painting and she observed the large green object in the center of the page. After a pause she said--"that tree. It's so solid. Where will the birds fly in and out without any opening? When you paint, you have to leave plenty of open spaces."

The importance of leaving plenty of open spaces is not confined to painting. It is a necessary ingredient in the art of living. How could one see without plenty of open space in front of one's eyes? This summer my wife asked me to cut down some scrubby trees behind the barbecue pit so she could get a better look at the redwoods. When the job was done, I was surprised to discover how much more feeling of openness there was in our back yard. Visitors would remark "I didn't realize your patio was so large," or "My, what a lovely view of the trees."

Sometimes a feeling of openness occurs when trees or shrubs hide less desirable views. While waiting for trains at the railway station, I have often scanned the Palo Alto skyline. There is a tall eucalyptog that partly hides the old municipal water tower. It breaks the view of the stark structure and adds to the comfort of the eyes. One wonders if our city's skyline might be more beautiful if all building were blended with appropriate sized trees. The crowded business structures would have their massiveness broken by the trees, and a feeling of openness would exist.

Grammy used to say "A good painter never tries to fill up all the paper." Could it also be true that a good planner never tries to fill up all the land? Could it be that vacant space is the pause that to freshes? Perhaps we need to learn to harmonize trees and open could. Can the artist's feeling of the need for openness be developed for better community planning?

Another aspect in the art of living is leaving open spaces in our time schedule. One day we were hunting for a house in which to live. We discovered an old brown shingle house on a hill overlooking ine Santa Clara Valley. On its front porch was a rocking chair which livet in and rocked back and forth until a quietness possessed me. We took the house and many a time I took to the rocker. --Though the house no looger stands, I still have the rocker -- a symbol that by just sitting and perhaps rocking a little, I will stop the whir of activity and open Time's most treasured dimensions. Perhaps both the body and the mind could benefit from periods of "lying fallow".

Open spaces in sound or rhythmic intervals of non-sound is said to be the difference between music and noise. Have you ever tried to pay attention to the brief periods of silence between beats in a concert? It adds to the rhythm and gives time to prepare oneself for the next note. I find restoration in discovering some time each day when there is an open quietness or an absence of sound.

Sit quietly without looking or listening with no awareness of time. Leave oneself open for whatever may come his way. Beautiful thoughts will fly through one's mind as easily as tropic birds fly through the trees. This is one's reward for the quiet open mind. Howard Wolcott, President.

<u>CONDOR SURVEY</u> - The 4th annual survey was held on Oct. 16 with 33 condors being observed from 19 stations, and on Oct. 17 with 52 condors seen from 22 stations. The 52 individual birds does not indicate an increase or decrease of population, but is consistent with findings of 3 previous surveys: 1965 - 38; 1966 - 51; 1967 - 46.

CALIFORNIA BIRDS

This month was an odd mixture of the coming winter weather and those interspersed hot Indian summer days. Could this be the cause of those great flocks of waxwings all over the Peninsula and the whole state? I hope they aren't as confused as I am of the weather.

Those Blackpolls and Palm Warblers and that Magnolia must have been confused when they appeared at Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove.(The Palms were around all fall with as many as 8 in the whole area.) And how about the male Canada Warbler at a nearby feeder. This was the same yard that Ovenbird hopped around in last October. There was also a Clay-colored Sparrow. Clay-coloreds breed in British Columbia and winter in Southern Baja, but somehow they miss California. Do the Western birds move east, and the Eastern birds fly to Baja? The way to identify those from Clay-coloreds is to see the buffy wash on the breast and sides of a buffy-looking Chippy. There was also a Northern Water-thrush at the Carmel River.

If anyone's keeping count, this fall was a Monterey fall, but San Diego came up with a close second, finishing off the fall with an Ovenbird, a Hooded Warbler, a Scarlet Tanager and a few Black-throated Blues Ted Chandik got into the swing of local birding when he found 3 Yellow-headed Blackbirds in the flock of blackbirds at the Palo Alto Sewage Plant. By the end of October the flock was dominated by Tricolored Blackbirds. Mike Perrone found a Baird's Sandpiper at the Yacht Harbor and the Greenbergs found 3 Blue-winged Teal with their dogs. There was a Dipper on Coyote Creek near Anderson Reservoir on November 9.

It is sad to note that the sewage pond in Santa Cruz where David Gaines found so many good birds is being filled in.

Local birding is very good in the winter. Harris Sparrows and Bohemian Waxwings (especially with all these waxwings) can be looked for by rare bird hunters along with other birds that have been found in the area in recent winters : Trumpeter Swan, Emperor Geese, Broad-winged Hawk and Tree Sparrow.

And for those interested in bird population, Myrtle Warblers need great study. Those who can identify them by the white extending up the neck can take valuable censuses. I for one have found Myrtle Warblers exclusively on the coast, and Mike Ferrone found about a 10 to 1 ratio of Myrtle's to Audubon's at Stanford.

There are other study areas available. Somebody could take advantage of high tides on the bay to take a census of the Light-footed (Clapper) Rail. And that newly split species, Thayer's Gull, needs a lot of work. I have found as many as 15 at the dump thus far this fall. They can be identified in adult plumage as Herring Gulls with no black under the wing tip. Immatures look like Herring Gulls, but are plumaged like immature Glaucous-winged Gulls.

As you can see there is a lot of work locally, but if you want to travel, check the Central Valley refuges for waterfowl, Lewis' Woodpeckers and Sandhill Cranes, or Monterey for pelagics or possibly more distant places like Death Valley, Honey Lake or Crescent City for their exotic species. - Russ Greenberg, Field Notes Compiler Note: Dave Desante has been down on the southern tip of Baja trying to find out where our eastern vagrants go. He reports that he has a back yard list of 95 with Xantus' Hummingbirds, Gray Thrashers and St. Lucas Yellowthroat all over. He's banded 22 species including Water-thrush and Black & White Warbler. He also notes that Frigatebirds and Boobies are abundant. We hope to hear more. - R.G.

A LOOK AT CONSERVATION

<u>Our disappearing coastline</u>: The Pacific Ocean laps onto the sands and rocks for the entire length of California. How much of it is ours - the public? How free are we to enter upon the sands and rocks? What about the strip of land between high and low tides - is it public? if so, can you reach it?

Without introducing statistics of miles of public beach vs. private home sites: about the number of acres lost to development in the past 5 years and the more dismal prognosis for the next 5 years, let us deal with a very serious defeat which occurred in Sonoma County's last election. The development of the most gorgeous coastline along our shores has been occurring for the past several years. Under original zoning the public was to have access to the ocean shores at selected sites. Recently this was restricted to one somewhat undesirable site. Seeing the dark future ahead, a small group of conservationists of that county took the matter to the electorate. They lost, as you read above. But what is unusual is that the vote was extremely close, much closer than you would realize by the amount of money poured into newspaper ads by the developers of the coastline. Full pages vs. ads of 1/5 the size by the conservationists. Unusual? - yes, because with proper financial backing and an aroused citizenty, the coastal access could have been secured in any future development along the Pacific shoreline of that county. . . 4

What about the future? Continued loss of our right to stroll the sands and dip our toes in the briny. Or - the loss to study the shorebirds in case they should happen to stray over the imaginary line of private property. Sonoma County is a long way north, but what about Santa Cruz or San Mateo Counties? They have been undergoing changes also, in fact, the boom is just beginning. The public must demand the right to proper coastal access - we should help lead the way in this democratic process!

The newly elected President's conservation views - Since we are talking about elections, it is interesting to note the views of two successful candidates in the past election. From OUTDCOR AMERICA, October 1968-a statement by Richard Nixon. He speaks of our natural resources as part of our natural heritage; their existence and how we use them has a great impact on the quality of life in America. He believes there are 2 questions to be asked: (1) How adequate is their quantity and (2) how good is their quality? In terms of quantity the U.S. is blessed with an overflowing abundance - our level of natural resources continues to be more than adequate. He estimates our forests are expanding 60% faster than we are cutting them. The built-up areas still only cover 3% of our land.

The quality of our natural resources and the effect they have on our lives is important. The pollution of our already polluted air and water has become greater. Our parklands become less than adequate to serve the needs of our population. The quality of our living environment - particularly in our cities - is becoming increasingly unpleasant and dangerous. Some of the problems spill over traditional political boundaries and we must rightly consider the desirability of regional and federal approaches. We need to develop objective standards of environmental quality and effective fair means of enforcing them. "California's Natural Scene" - an exhibit of art works, photographs and books on this theme. Included are works of Ray Strong, Ansel Adams, Philip Hyde, Howard King and Donald Aitken. Christmas gifts may be purchased, with proceeds going to Sempervirens Fund for Big Basin and Castle Rock Parks. Location: Veterans' Memorial Bldg., 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City. Sat., Dec. 7 from 1 to 6 pm; Sun., Dec. 8 from 9 am. to 4 pm. - - Tony Look, Conservation Chairman

<u>Me Went to Isle Royale</u> (Continued) by Lloyd and Eve Case We spent our first few days at the southwestern end at Windigo Inn. There were trails leading to places that intrigued us when we read about them. They intrigued us even more when we hiked along them.

From one of them, at the mouth of Mashington Creek, we saw our first Moose, a cow feeding in the shallow water of the marshy area at the outlet. It was fun to watch her submerge her head for a moment, then lift it mouthing a mass of dripping, dangling vegetation which she proceeded to chew and work into her mouth. Intent on feeding, and probably aware of the fact that people a hundred feet away were not going to molest her, she seemed to ignore us as we stood on the solid ground at the edge of the stream. Even in the woods the Moose showed no alarm nor great fear of us; they usually stood and looked at us for several moments before slowly and deliberately lumbering off into the trees and brush. The trails alternated between crossing ridges and low wet places, including small creeks and marshy areas. On the ridges they were hard and rocky, through virgin timber with thick duff on the forest floor. In the lower areas the earth had been churned into gooey, sticky mud by the hooves of the moose using the trails. Here the going was harder, footing more precarious, even discouraging enough to turn back the less hardy individuals who soon got "enough of this muck". Across the really wet places, the Park Service has constructed foot-bridges of log supports and plank walk-way; these are actually "cat-walks" rather than bridges, being just above the surface of the mud and water, inconspicuous and fitting right into the natural surroundings with a minimum of disturbance. Walking on these, beside the deep muddy ruts used by the moose, we were glad that the big animals did prefer the soft mud to the hard smooth planks.

As I have indicated previously, we had chosen to be on the Isle in the early part of the season in order to see the blossoming plants. Our timing had been right. Our faces smeared with mosquito-repellent, (even wearing a mosquito net over our heads for extra protection) we found many lovely flowering plants along the trails and spent much time taking close-ups of the flowers, to add to our collection of colored slides.

At noon of the fourth day we left Windigo Harbor on the "VOYAGEUR" headed for Rock Harbor Lodge at the northeastern end of the island. The trip along the norhern shore was an audio-visual lesson in the geology and topography of the island. The "audio" portion was furnished by Roy, the genial skipper of the VOYAGEUR. I had "just-sort-of-accidentallylike" dropped a couple of nautical expressions couched in Navy slang and thus "revealed" a Navy background. So, I spent most of the time up in the tiny wheel house, talking to Capt. Roy and his Mate, Dave.

This boat makes the local "freight-run", like a commuter train between San Francisco and San Jose, turning into passages between smaller islands, entering long narrow fjord-like inlets and delivering food and other supplies to small "camps" that can be reached only by boat. The scenery was marvelous: rocky shores and vertical cliffs, backed by dense forests with the darker spires of black spruce standing out against the lighter foliage of the other trees. Regret of finishing the run along the coast was balanced out by the expectancy of the trip down the southern shore when we would leave the island, almost a week later.

Our accommodations at Rock Harbor Lodge were delightfully attractive and comfortable, comparable to the units of our "Best Western" chain of motels. On the second floor, with southern exposure, two floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors opened onto a private balcony separated and screened from the similar balconies on each side. From here we looked across Rock Harbor (about a mile wide at this point) to two lovely forest-covered islands and between them across the fifty or sixty miles of Lake Superior toward Michigan. This end of the island is quite the better of the two ends, for a short stay. The coast is more rugged, the network of trails is much more extensive, the terrain is, in general, higher than at the other end, there are more open spots and "balds" along the trails, the views are more exciting and everything is, well, just "better"!

Because of the geology of the Isle, the trails here, too, lead alternately over ridges and across creeks and marshy places. But everywhere there was a profusion of wild flowers. Brilliant wood-lilies were everywhere, with magnificent white paper-birch trees, dense groves of maples with thimble-berries growing in solid masses under them, and the black spruces standing in dense dark forests.

On one of these trails, at a sharp bend, I got a fleeting glimpse of a wolf as he almost came around the bend. But he saw me first and reversed course so suddenly that about all that I saw resembled a quick short flash on a movie screen; but I did see his size and color and his bushy tail, in particular. What a thrill! Here we now had our perfect "Balance of Nature" between the moose and the wolves: - we had seen one moose and one wolf. What a balance! After this, however, Nature seemed to become completely unbalanced: we kept on seeing more and more moose, but no more wolves!

Actually, we were usually much more intent on finding the Whitethroated Sparrows that were singing all around us, but almost impos-sible to see in the dense canopy of foliage overhead. We saw only one for each five or six that we heard, and they were singing nearly all of the time, along all of the trails. In spite of obstacles such as foliage and the showers during some part of every day, we did see many species of birds, including several new ones for our Life-Lists. These included (in part): the beautiful Eastern Blue Bird, Red-eyed Vireos, Ovenbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeack, American Redstart, Bay-breasted, Nashville, Canada and Black-throated Green Warblers, Woodthrush and, of course, the loons that were seen and heard as frequently as any of the others. This is far from a complete list of the birds that we saw, nor is it at all an adequate description of the many interesting things that we found on our hikes along the trails. Each and every day was full to the brim with beauty. In retrospect I think that Theodora Stanley-Fletcher described it perfectly in her book "Driftwood Valley" when she wrote: "Our days are so full that we sink into bed right after supper, too exhausted even to read But it's a nice kind of fullness. There is no strain about it. We do what we can and want to do each day and know that nothing really has to be done by such and such a date or hour. I'm beginning to believe that complete independence from other people's ideas and actions is almost the nicest thing in the world".

I whole-heartedly agree with her! We did enjoy such days at Rock Harbor. BUT, if we are going to conserve such places for the spiritual re-creation of harassed mankind, we cannot have this "complete independence from other people's ideas and actions".... We must remain con-stantly aware of the ideas and actions that would eliminate, forever, so many of these beautiful areas where things can grow and live in their natural balance, for the enjoyment of coming generations.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Foothill Park - October 23, Leader, Kay McCann

A sunny, balmy morning. After a brief explanation of the ecology of the chaparral habitat in California and the other four chaparral areas in the world and the plant adaptions to the long, dry season, we all took Chamise Trail which is through just such an ·** ·**

are . Several typical birds were seen and heard such as Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows, the California Thrasher, Bushtits, Scrub Jay, Rufous-sided and Brown Towhees, Lesser Goldfinches, Chickadees, Titmice, Bewick's Wren, Downey Woodpecker, and some confusing fall warblers. Some of us examined the shrubs and trees in the area noting their adaptations.

Palo Alto Yacht Harbor - October 26, Leaders, 'The Turners" Of especial interest were fine views of the Clapper Rail, as well

as the tallying of: Eared Grebe, Dunlin, Bl-bellied & Semi-palmated Plover, Lincoln Sp., Night Heron and Dowitchers. Total 30.

Palo Alto Yacht Harbor - October 15 - , Kay McCann

Betsy Peterson and I saw two large rafts of the white pelicans massed together and touching, paddling around, dipping their beaks constantly, their heads bobbing up and down almost in unison. Pieces of green algae were seen in their beaks at times. It was difficult to tell whether they were eating it or not as they were so close together. They remained going back and forth in these masses for at least an hour just before sunset from about 4:30 on. They came quite close to us and we had binoculars and a 20x telescope. We would still like to know if they were eating the algae. There has been a great deal in the lagoon this fall and it seemed to have begun to disappear recently. Several of the pelicans were marked with tags, red, orange and green, in the same raft.

<u>Welcome to New Members</u>: Caroline Davis, Membership Chairman Charles R. Henry, 844 Driftwood Dr., Falo ALto 94303 Mrs. Jeanne Pinneo, 918 Mareno Ave., Falo ALto 94303 Mr.& Mrs. A. Charles Morse, 150 Stonegate Rd., Portola Valley 94025 Mr.&Mrs. Dan T. Smith, 175 Alta Vista, Atherton 94025 Marquis & Marjorie Smith, 3150 Ramona Palo ALto 94306 Robt, R. & Elyndell Stout, 1028 Quicksilver Dr., San Jose 95123 Dr.& Mrs. Daniel Tuern, 133 Churchill Ave., Palo Alto 94301 Elaine McDougle, 248 Higdon Ave., Mountain View 94040 James M. Kyle, 3856 Duncan Pl., Palo A to 94306 Mrs. Robert O. Cook, 17151 Phillips Ave., Los Gatos 95030 Mrs. Henry A. Dietz, 150 Sheridan Way, Woodside 94061 Jean McNamara, 101 Bredway, Los Gatos 95030 Mrs. L. & Miss T. McWhirter, 2348 Osborne Ave., Santa Clara 95050

A ROSTER OF MEMBERS IS AVAILABLE. FOR A COPY WRITE HOWARD WOLCOTT 1030 PARKINSON, PALO ALTO 94301.

AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST, in the Wind River Range of western Wyoming, will again offer 4 two-week sessions in 1969. Two units of University graduate or upper div. credits are available. Camp fee of \$150 includes board, lodging, instruction, and all field trip transportation. For information write: Audubon Camp of the West, P.O. Box 4446,Sacramento, California 95825.

AVOCET

Our publication appears monthly except July and August. It is 32.00 a year for non-members. Copy is requested by the 15th, except December, when the deadline is the 10th.

Editor: Mrs. Emile Curtis, 17180 Copper Hill Dr., Morgan Hill 95037 Staff: Miss Elsie Hoeck, Mr. & Mrs. E. Taylor, C. Rulofson.

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(For information concerning the territories included in each Sector, and the names of the various Sector Leaders, please refer to December Calendar in this issue.)
Mail Registration to arrive not later than December 14,1968, to Howard Wolcott, 1030 Parkinson, Palo Alto, California 94301.
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