

The Avocet

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No. September Meeting

Please take note NOW that our monthly meetings will again be held at the Homestead High School in Cupertino, BUT the meeting night will be the 3rd WEDNESDAY instead of the 3rd Thursday. This is necessary because the School has changed the nights for their adult education program. The first meeting will be Oct. 15th and the second Nov. 19th. I hope all our old friends can come and perhaps others who could not on Thursday nights.

Harriet Mundy, Program Chairman

Calendar

Bird Discussion Group Tues. Sept. 9, 10:00
Topic will be "Most Interesting Bird of the Summer!" At the home of Eve Case.
20537 Verde Vista Ln., Saratoga, tel. 867-4748.

Board Meeting Thurs. Sept. 11, 7:45 pm
At Diane Conradson's, 4337 Miranda, Palo Alto. 941-2102

Coyote Hills Park Sat. Sept. 20, 9:00 am
Meet at Shopping Center, N.W. corner Jarvis Ave. and Newark Blvd., Newark (east of Dumbarton Bridge).
Leader, Phillip Hathaway 793-3063


Home of Mrs. Ransom K. Davis Wed. Sept. 24, 9:30 am
At 1140 San Mateo Dr., Menlo Park (322-8586), which is between Santa Cruz Ave. and Valparaiso Ave. about 7/8 mile west of El Camino. There are many birds to see in her inviting garden. You may bring a sack lunch; she will provide beverage. No reservations necessary.

Ecological Conference, Oakland Museum Fri. & Sat., Sept. 26 & 27
Registration fee for the conference is \$2.00, plus an additional \$1.50 for those who wish to reserve box lunches, which will be available during the conference's noon recess on Sat., Sept. 27. Detailed program and registration form can be obtained from Hubert A. Dafeo, Acting Curator, Natural Sciences Div., Oakland Museum, Tenth and Fallon Streets, Oakland, Ca. 94607. See page 46 for program.

The Natural History of Man in California Oct. 1 - thru Dec. 17
A new course being offered by Dr. Thomas Harvey at San Jose State College, Science Bldg., Rm 5142. Two units, cost \$38.00, Wed. eves 7 to 9:30 pm. Preregistration can be made. It covers man's impact on his environment, starting with the Indians and concentrating on the present problems.



THE BAY



Yes, the Governor has signed the bill, but what a long hot summer it was for those who worked so hard to get it. Don't relax, though. As was said to me at the last meeting of the Commission: "The citizens have a bigger job than before to keep track of every member." Come November when the new law takes effect there will be drastic changes in the composition of the Commission. This change took place on the Senate floor the last day when there was no opportunity to even discuss it. The Commission will have no proxies and all representatives of Boards of Supervisors and ABAG must be elected officials. Because of this the Commission is going to lose four or five of its most devoted and best commissioners. Among them Mr. Hans Feibusch, Dr. Upton, probably Dr. Joseph and Mr. Kane of Santa Clara County who was proxy for Mr. Quinn. Also, the continuity of the Commission will be seriously affected and the problem of getting a quorum may be present. So please don't sit back and consider the question settled. I will report on this as things become clarified.

Now for really good news! The Nature Conservancy has created a San Francisco Bay Project. Mr. Huey Johnson notes that "the ecological crisis of the Bay and its shoreline has created intense interest and concern but pressures for filling the Bay and developing its shoreline have also seen new heights. The resulting tensions will be with us indefinitely. One great omission concerning the Bay has been apparent. At present there is no agency carrying on a concerted area-wide effort to preserve key natural lands by acquiring those lands permanently." Mr. Gregory Archbald of San Francisco has been appointed director of this project. The first acquisition is Lower Tubbs Island, lying east of the mouth of the Petaluma River in San Pablo Bay. It is 330 acres and the price is about 300,000. Fund raising is underway. I have access to this property and hope we can have a field trip there this coming year. Now is the time to do something practical for the Bay. Consider the Nature Conservancy gave me a real chance to "put some money where my mouth has been." Donations may be marked "Tubbs Island" (or S.F. Bay Project) mailed to Nature Conservancy, 215 Market St., San Francisco, Ca. 94105.

Harriet Mundy

Ecological Conference Program - Oakland Museum - Sept. 27

- 8:00 am : Registration and Museum Tours
- 9:30 am : OUR TOTAL ENVIRONMENT by Stewart L. Udall
- 10:30 am : Panel Discussion, "Pesticides"
 Moderator: Dr. Ray F. Smith, Chairman, Dept. of Entomology & Parasitology
 University of Calif., Berkeley
 Panelists: Dr. Roy Hansberry, Assistant to Mgr., Shell Development Co.
 Dr. John H. Phillips Jr., Dtr., Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford
 Dr. John E. Swift, Ext. Entomologist, U. of C., Berkeley
 Dr. Robert L. Rudd, Prof. Zoology, U. of C., Davis
- 12:30 pm : Box Lunches in Museum Plaza, Continuous Museum Tours
- 2:00 pm : Panel Discussion, "Population, Pollution, and Land Usage"
 Moderator: Alfred E. Heller, Pres., California Tomorrow
 Panelists: Joseph E. Bodovitz, Exec. Dtr. BCDC
 Dr. H. Thomas Harvey, Assoc. Dean, School of Natural Science
 and Mathematics, San Jose State College
 John T. Knox, Assemblyman, 11th Dist., State of Calif.
 Stephanie Mills, Valedictorian, Mills College Class of 1969
 William M. Roth, San Francisco

Conference addresses and panel discussions will be held in the Oakland Auditorium Theater (seating 2,000), directly opposite the new museum's Fallon St. entrance. See further data on front page.

California Birds
by
Russ Greenberg



After the rapid succession of first state records and new discoveries about California birds in the past few years it seems incredible that, like the last days of Cannery Row, this might be the beginning of the end. This prediction being true, the symbol of the quickly diminishing birdlife would be the Brown Pelican. With the extirpation of any other species the ways have been too subtle or days of abundance too long past to have anything to do with most people's reality. It may be sad to know the Clapper Rails are suffering from habitat destruction and eco-alteration; but it isn't really a very blunt reality. Condors had always been "the rare bird" to most people. And nobody ever saw that many eagles and Peregrine Falcons.

But the loss of the large soaring pelican is enough to shake anyone. For a long while the pelicans will remain deceptively common and birds in immature plumage will still be seen slowly flapping along with adults. But, the long-to-mature, long-lived pelican is already doomed. And there is no evidence that the way that sealed the fate of the pelican will ever melt. DDT is here to stay - in the fat of us all. Apparently no pelicans nested successfully in California this year. Pt. Lobos has been inactive for years and the historical spots on the channel, Santa Catalina, Anacapa, and Los Coronados Island showed no success. Nothing to show but some broken eggs.

Paul Erlich, population ecologist at Stanford and author of "The Population Bomb", predicts the sea will be dead by 1979. Some say it is already infected with a terminal disease - pesticides pollution. It's all very easy to believe.

But people will still go through the same silly rituals - including birders. Birders from all over the country joined the annual late summer trip of San Diego. This year it produced Pink-footed, Sooty, and Pale-footed Shearwaters, Pomarine Jaegers, lots of Leach's and Black Petrel. The great surprise of the trip was the number of Least Petrels. Peterson says it is rare off San Diego. But with estimates as high as 35 birds that statement holds little weight. This species has been found every year since 1966. The big disappointment was the absence of Tropicbirds. San Clemente Island failed to re-produce the concentration of last year when as many as 9 were seen (July). Craveri's Murrelets were also absent.

Post-breeding tropical wanderers were down from last year. Only one Frigatebird was found on Point Loma and Mission Bay in July. The Salton Sea only produced 2 skimmers (Guy McCaskie et al) and a Roseate Spoonbill along with the usual Western Gulls. No Boobies, - no Frigatebirds.

Another conspicuous absence was that of the Whip-poor-will in the San Jacinto. Heard all last summer until August, not one could be found this year. The Chimney Swifts resident at Solana and La Jolla last year were not present this year. But McCaskie saw 2 in San Diego in June.

The herons returned to Aubry Burns' backyard. A sub-adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron and a Little Blue Heron. Both are again roosting or possibly nesting on the West Marin Island Rookery.

The Farallons produced three state records: Field Sparrow, Yellow-throated Warbler, White-eyed Vireo. The latter two were found in July with Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos. Another state record was White-rumped Sandpiper found by McCaskie on the Salton Sea. First west of the Rockies!

Dave Desante banded 3 waterthrushes and saw 1 Canada Warbler at Deep Springs in May on a warbler migration study. On Memorial Day an army of vagrant hunters