

# The Avocet

Volume XVI, Number 10

December, 1969

## Calendar of Events

No General Meeting for December - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Tubbs Island Field Trip - - - - - Sat., Dec. 6, 9:00 am

Starting at 9:00 am for as long as anyone wishes! Destination Tubbs Island in San Pablo Bay. This is the Nature Conservancy's purchase of 330 acres. See 'Avocet' Sept. 1969 and Harold Gilliam's column in Sunday Chronicle Nov. 9th. This will be held rain or shine. The ex-hunting lodge will be open with a fire and hot coffee to go with one's own picnic lunch and a representative of the Conservancy will be on hand.

Directions: To Golden Gate Bridge - I recommend Rte 280. From the Bridge take Rt. 101 north, then take Rte 37 (Vallejo-Napa Rd), cross Petaluma River Bridge and about 4 miles further on just past Rte 121 turnoff watch for Tolay Creek. Cross the creek and IMMEDIATELY turn into a gate on the right and follow that dirt road until you come to the green buildings which are the Nature Conservancy's.

The gate will be open this day so if you cannot be there at 9 am, come at 10 or 11 or any time. I guarantee access right to the edge of the Bay. And yesterday I saw uncounted curlews! There is no access to this property without a key so come one, come all on the 6th. Elapsed-time from Rte 280 interchange at Palo Alto-1 1/2 hrs  
Harriet Mundy

Bird Discussion Group - - - - - Tues., Dec. 9, 10:00 am

Birding at the home of Mrs. Catherine Lintott, 17150 Buena Vista, Los Gatos, next to Villa Felice.

Annual Christmas Count - 1969 - - - - - Sat., Dec. 27, 6:30 am

Please call me, Compiler Russ Greenberg, 210 Kellogg, Palo Alto, 327-0329, if you wish to attend! Your help is important and it needs to be well used in the right area. Last minute contact will make organization hard, but if you can't contact me beforehand meet at Security Savings & Loan Assoc., 2830 Alum Rock Ave., San Jose, at 6:30 am.

In any Christmas Count good coverage means scouting the area. Get your assignment early and scout your area. The following is a guide to scouting for birds that have been missed or not seen in recent years, or those that are simply difficult to get.

Familiarize yourself with what kind of habitats exist in your area. Even a small grove of pines will produce a Townsend's Warbler, or a few rushes will be home for a Virginia Rail (both missed last year).

Freshwater marshes: Rails are very important or possibly a Gallinule, Least Bittern, Green Heron. Last year only one Clapper Rail was found. But Virginia and Sora Rails are residents in the area. Virginia Rail gives a grunting series similar in rhythm but not in resonance or pitch to the Clapper Rail. Remember Rails are more often heard than seen. The high whinny of the Sora is very distinctive. Also check for Tri-colored Blackbirds with Redwings. This year we are asked to locate and count for a special survey any large concentrations of wintering blackbirds and starlings. More details when you get your assignment. (continued)



Freshwater ponds: Ducks! Check particularly for Redheads, Blue-winged Teal, and in ponds with riparian growth, Wood Ducks.

Garbage Dumps and other gull concentrations: Last year Mew Gull (an uncommon winter visitor) was missed! Also look for Glaucous Gull. Any Glaucous seen would undoubtedly be immature. It would probably be whitish with a pink bill with a black tip.

Salt Marshes: If there are extra people in your area and a salt marsh, get them together. Send your people into the marsh and have them look for rails and sparrows (Sharp-tailed) at high tide.

Saltwater Bodies of Water: Ducks again! Particularly Scoters, Redhead, Red-breasted Merganser, Loons.

Reservoirs: Common Mergansers, Canada Goose, Bald Eagle or Golden (Please note, on paper, location of any white areas on eagles. Editor), Peregrine Falcon.

Chapparal: Lawrence's Goldfinch, Rufous-crowned Sparrow; and where the chapparal meets the trees - Pygmy Owl. Among Zonotrichia (crowned sparrows) look for White-throats and Harris', and among Juncos for Slate-colored. The above birds should be looked for where ever there are Juncos and Zonotrichia.

Cities: Check pyracantha for flocks of waxwings with hopes of a Bohemian, and thrushes for Varied Thrush.

Check flocks of small birds (Bushtits, Kinglets, Nuthatches) for Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and warblers such as Townsend's, Orange-crowned and Black-throated Gray (particularly in pines).

Check flowering Eucalyptus for orioles and tanagers.

Open fields and saltmarshes are good for Short-eared Owls.

Riparian Woodlands: Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Sapsucker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Green Heron, Varied Thrush, House Wren, Winter Wren.

Aerial: Hawks - Falcons, Rough-legged, Ferruginous, and Red-shouldered Hawk. Check Sparrow Hawks for Pigeon Hawk (note field marks on paper).

Keep your eyes and ears open, and Good Luck! Meet at Security Savings & Loan Assoc. for the tally at 4:30 pm. Refreshments will be served during the tally.

Russ Greenberg, Compiler

Alviso Sector: bounded on the east by Highway 17 (the old "Oakland Highway"), and on the south by Bayshore Freeway.

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

Evergreen Sector: bounded by Bayshore Freeway, Alum Rock Ave. and Mt. Hamilton Rd. Mt. Hamilton Rd. is inside this sector.

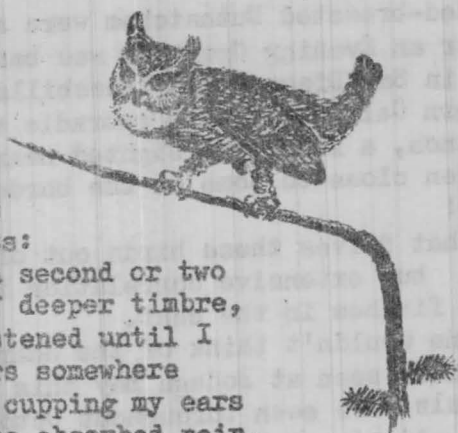
Alum Rock Sector: bounded on the south by Mt. Hamilton Rd., Alum Rock Ave., and Bayshore Freeway; on the north by Capitol Ave. and Sierra Rd.; on the west by Highway 17 (the old "Oakland Highway"). Alum Rock Ave., Bayshore Freeway, Oakland Highway, and Capitol Ave. are all inside this sector.

Calaveras Sector: bounded by Sierra Rd., Capitol Ave., and Highway 17. Sierra Rd. and Highway 17 are inside this sector.



Bubo Virginianus Virginianus

Bubo's lugubrious hooting has often intruded into my dreams during the course of its night's hunting. But this pre-dawn visitation was different, and this difference was enough to prod me to full consciousness. With straining ears I listened to the distant dueting of these tigers of the air. First would come five monotoned hoots: two long, two short, and one very long. Within a second or two there would boom forth three long steady hoots of deeper timbre, but softer. For half an hour I lay still and listened until I realized the hooting was louder and the performers somewhere nearby. So I dressed quickly and sallied forth, cupping my ears radar-fashion and drawing nearer and nearer to the absorbed pair.



Within ten minutes I spotted one owl atop a Douglas fir, and silhouetted against the paling sky of dawn. As I stood frozen in mid-step I saw Bubo, legs spread far apart, lean far forward to an almost horizontal posture and commence the duet. The wings were held low beside the body and the tail was raised to the sky wren-fashion. The white throat was puffed and would vibrate with each hoot. Three low answering hoots came from the mate perched far out on a limb near the top of a neighboring Douglas fir. With the two in view at the same time, it was easy to perceive that the initiator of the duet was the larger and therefore the female. The smaller male assumed the same horizontal posture as the female when he executed his three booming hoots. Even at such close quarters — I had eased slowly to within 100 feet — the male's calls were very soft. The hen was just above me and would peer full-face at me. My lack of movement evidently reassured her for she continued her serenade at least four more times at this close range.

At last, with the rosy dawn pressing their departure, the hen swooped silently and low over my head and disappeared amongst a dense stand of madrone. Stellar's jays mobbed her immediately and harassed her with a ceaseless cacophony of alarm calls. Mr. & Mrs. Bubo soon melted unobtrusively to their daytime roost — somewhere.

Before I too departed I noted that the topmost leader of the perch tree was completely denuded of needles for about 3 feet. Evidently this was one of Bubo's regular hunting posts and well worth checking again.

Emelie Curtis

(I would appreciate comments from anyone else who has witnessed this duet performance and associated posturing.)

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Birds of California

With the fast pace excitement of fall migration slowing down and winter birds moving in, it's interesting to see the movements of the fascinating "invasion" species. This explosion of birds sends species into areas where they are normally rare and makes common those birds that are normally uncommon in an area. Almost all invasions are cyclic and are correlated to food supply — for instance, the Lemming population and Snowy Owl invasions in the east. Last year we witnessed an invasion of Cedar Waxwings bringing their larger Bohemian brothers into the state in good numbers. This year mountain birds are the movers.

It became clear that this is an invasion year for Red-breasted Nuthatches to anyone who visited the coast this fall. The Farallons banded as many as 100 in one day! These birds are also present in numbers in Palo

Golden-Crowned Kinglet



Alto, where they generally don't occur in more than sporadic individuals.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were also very common in Southern California. In early October an Evening Grosbeak was banded on Pt. Loma. And there are now Red Crossbills in San Diego. Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks have also been seen in Northern California with sporadic sightings of Clark's Nutcrackers. One was seen at Pt. Pinos, a flock was sighted near Big Sur, one was seen at Mt. Tamalpais, and one was seen close to home on the border of Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County by a SCVAS member!

What drives these birds out of their mountain homes? This is not yet well known; but extensive correlation is found with food crop shortage and invasion of winter finches in the east.

One wouldn't think of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper as an invasion species; but the number seen at Bodega Bay this October and early November was impressive. Individuals were seen throughout October and Rich Stallcup saw 7 in early November!— and an additional two at Olema Marsh.

Doug Greenberg found a Harris Sparrow at Pt. Reyes on October 23 in a corral and it was present in the same spot 4 days later. And a Harris Sparrow was seen at Furnace Creek on November 8 by the Greenbergs and McCaskie. No Rusty Blackbirds were seen then; but there was one at Pacific Grove found by Stallcup and seen and photographed by many.

The Greenbergs found that Oasis Ranch on the Nevada border near Bishop had four buteos November 8 & 9: 2 Ferruginous, one Kough-legged, one Red-tail, and one Harlan Hawk, as well as Lapland Longspurs.

This month wasn't a total loss for eastern warblers. Bill Reese's water bath was visited by a Worm-eating Warbler for ten minutes. The Yellow-throated Warbler at San Diego had eluded birders for a couple of weeks after it was first banded on October 16, but was refound by Dave DeSante, and there was a Scarlet Tanager there in early November.

Winter is the time to look for winter waterfowl which occur in large numbers in the Central Valley refuges, or maybe a time to search for such elusive birds as Snow Bunting. (There were two reported from Bodega at the time of writing.) Anyway, Good Luck!

Russ Greenberg  
Field Notes Compiler

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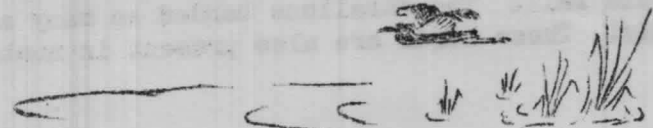
### Watch Your Newspapers For Airport Hearings! ! !

The San Jose Airport planned for the Grey Goose Slough area has the members of the Wildlife Refuge committee very worried. ("That's my good marsh," cries the Clapper Rail.) The possible dumping of the dredgings from the Redwood City Channel onto Bair Island doesn't sound too good either. ("Oh! Get that mud off my coyote bush nest," grumbles the Great Blue Heron.)

Needed desperately besides cold cash for necessities like stamps, stationery, and strategic newspaper campaigns in the future, are people! We need men and women to talk to groups and clubs, adults, and children about the Refuge. Showing slides and explaining the Refuge display is not that difficult. If you have shied away from joining the Education committee because children on field trips didn't appeal to you, perhaps promoting the Wildlife Refuge will. We must contact people from San Jose and Los Gatos to Redwood City and back. The calls are coming in right now for speakers. Please call Florence La Riviere 327-2854 or Nancy Holmes 948-1854 for progress reports, to offer ideas or to volunteer 2 or 3 hours a month. Do drop another line to your Washington Representative; they always like to hear from home and you could mention the Refuge too.

New Post Office Box 4386, San Jose, 95126, for correspondence and cash.

Nancy Holmes  
Education Chairman



Watch For Violations Of Protected Birds!

Most California birds are protected under state or federal law (see list below). Violations involving protected birds should be reported to one of the State Fish and Wildlife Wardens listed below. In the case of a violation or a suspected violation, try to obtain the following information:

1. Identification of individual(s) involved,
2. Description of the individual(s) involved,
3. License number and description of vehicle(s) involved,
4. If a protected bird is killed, and you can safely recover the body, do so,
5. Take pictures of the incident, if this is feasible,
6. Collect any other information that might be helpful.

Do not depend on your memory. Write down the pertinent information, noting the time.

Land Patrol Personnel:

Pescadero, Warden Albert H. Frush, P.O. Box 93, zip 94060, phone: 879-0131  
Belmont, Warden Max Kreuger, 2106 Arthur Ave., zip 94002, phone: 593-3713  
Morgan Hill, Warden John Carton, 1240 N. Monterey St., zip 95037, phone: 779-3458  
Campbell, Warden Charlie W. Harris, 2590 Oak Park Lane, zip 95008, phone: 377-4971  
Palo Alto, Warden James Zobel, 993 Embarcadero Rd., phone: 327-7854  
Ben Lomond, Warden Ron Lang, P.O. Box 626, phone: 336-8611  
Santa Cruz, Warden J. E. Hughes, 416 Alta Ave., zip 95060, phone: 426-3443

If you cannot contact one of the land patrol wardens you should contact one of the marine patrol personnel, who will take appropriate action.

Marine Patrol Personnel:

Sunnyvale, Captain N.J. Millen, 1092 Durham Court, phone: 248-4378  
Freedom, Warden Duncan Snell, P.O. Box 627, phone: 722-3589

Fully Protected Birds and Mammals: Calif. Condor, Bald Eagles, White-tailed Kites, Trumpeter Swans, mountain sheep, sea otters, sea elephants, Guadalupe fur seals, and ringtailed cats may not be taken or possessed at any time.

Raptors: All raptors (hawks and owls) are protected birds.

Protected Non-game Birds: All birds occurring naturally in California which are not resident game birds, migratory game birds, non-protected birds, or fully protected birds, are protected non-game birds.

Non-protected Birds and Mammals: English Sparrows, American or Black-billed Magpie, Crows, Calif. or Scrub Jays, Steller's or crested Jays, and Starlings; moles opossums, coyotes, weasels, skunks, cougars, bobcats, and rodents including ground squirrels, rats, mice, gophers, and porcupines (but not including tree squirrels, flying squirrels, muskrats, and beavers) are not protected by law or regulation and may be taken at any time.

Other Birds and Mammals: All other resident birds and mammals are protected from being taken, except those which may be taken as provided in Hunting Regulations established by the Fish and Game Commission.

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Green Cranes?

Have you seen any GREEN Sandhill Cranes lately? If you have or do, they are part of a study which will determine the exact migration and wintering areas of Greater Sandhill Cranes. Some of the 103 marked birds, which stand three ft. tall, have been dyed while others are tagged with bright plastic bracelets. Please report any sightings to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and wildlife, P.O. Box 3737, Portland, Oregon 97208. It is suspected some of these birds will appear in California Central Valley.

You Can Still Make Your Voice Heard on the Farallon Wilderness Proposal!!!

A public hearing concerning the wilderness status of the Farallon Islands was held Oct. 30; however, letters received before Dec. 14, 1969, will be included in the record. They should be sent to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, P.O. Box 3737, Portland, Ore. 97208.

Conservation organizations urge the inclusion of the Farallon Refuge in the Wilderness System because of the extra protection that would be provided to them. Now, when we have the opportunity, we should safeguard these islands against the forces of population, mechanization, and economic and military activity. The inclusion of these unique islands will add to the variety of habitats which the Wilderness System endeavors to preserve for posterity.

Miss Clara Hinze Dies in Oregon - Professor Emeritus Clara Hinze, 81, a very early (probably charter) member of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society died recently at Rogue Valley Manor, a retirement home in Medford, Ore., where she had lived since 1961. Following a hip fracture, she did not respond well after surgery.

Miss Hinze taught Geography at San Jose State College for 43 years. She was a member of Amer. Society of Professional Geographers, Nat. Council of Geography Teachers, and many other professional groups. She was a much admired teacher, with many friends and students among local Audubon members. She never lost interest in Audubon activities, and kept up with Oregon birding in her garden and through a birding column in the Medford news.

Clara is survived by her sister, Laura, who lives at Rogue Valley Manor.

-- Joyce Todd

John Brokenshire has recently resigned from post as Publicity Chairman. We thank him for his long years of service to the Society in his many capacities.

Welcome To New Members!

- Alice J. Coates, 360 Longview Dr., Morgan Hill 95037
- Kenneth & Mary Cooperrider, 1153 Santa Cruz, Menlo Park 94025
- William R. Dahn, 2721 Midtown Ct., 307, Palo Alto 94303
- Martha L. Dunbar, Apt. 7, 430 E. Maude Ave., Sunnyvale 94086
- Dr. William M. Gould, 110 N. Castanya Way, Menlo Park, 94025
- Mrs. Dorothy Herz, 1349 College Ave., Palo Alto 94306
- Mr. & Mrs. William M. Kays, 852 Pine Hill Rd., Stanford 94305
- W.R. Lockett, 22005 Old Santa Cruz Rd., Los Gatos 95030
- Dr. & Mrs. J. Lee McLaughlin, 347 Massol Ave. 606, Los Gatos 95030
- Mrs. Ethel A. Lich, 580-30 Ahwanee Ave., Sunnyvale 94086

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|----------------------|--|----------|
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| Vice-Pres:           | Mrs. Grace Lind, 1615 Dry Creek Rd, San Jose 95125       | 266-9598 |
| Secretary:           | Mrs. Diane Conradson, 4337 Miranda, Palo Alto 94306      | 941-2102 |
| Treasurer:           | Mrs. Joyce Todd, 945 Matadero, Palo Alto 94306           | 326-7482 |
| Education:           | Mrs. Nancy Holmes, 843 Moana Ct, Palo Alto 94306         | 948-1854 |
| Registrar:           | Mrs. Fanny Zwaal, 478 Clifton, San Jose 95128            | 292-2060 |
| Field Notes-Program: | Russ Greenberg, 270 Kellogg Ave, Palo Alto 94301         | 327-0329 |
|                      | Miss Harriet Hundy, 759 Tennyson, Palo Alto 94306        | 325-1192 |
|                      | Mrs. Phyllis Klein, 4264 Newberry Ct., Palo Alto         | 327-4378 |
| Field Trips-         | Dr. Joseph Greenberg                                     |          |
| " Wed. North-        | Mrs. Kay McCann, 783 Garland, Palo Alto                  | 327-4138 |
| " Wed. South-        | Mrs. Katherine Lintott, 17150 Buena Vista Ave, Los Gatos | 356-4264 |

AVOCET

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