

The Avocet

Volume XVII, Number 4

April, 1970

Desert Island - Marsh, Meadow, and Mountain

Homestead High School
Room 5, Bldg. C

Wednesday, April 15
8:00 pm

Homestead Road
Cupertino

This program is to be a real treat, for Mr. Jim Hammond has been making this film with the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the past three and one-half years at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge which is in the middle of the desert in southeastern Oregon. He will show the last third of his film which will have synch-sound throughout. We are, in a sense, having a preview, for the film is still being edited, added to, fine-tuned, discussed and criticized by interested conservationists and cinematographers.

Mr. Hammond is a member of SCVAS and a man of many parts: V.P. of the National Association of Manufacturers, film maker, author and former newspaperman having been six years with the N. Y. Times Bureau in Shanghai.

Come and join in the polishing of this film, for I am sure Mr. Hammond would receive friendly criticism and suggestions on the part of the audience.

-- Harriet Mundy, Program Chairman

Calendar of Events

Audubon Canyon Ranch - - - - - Sat., Apr. 4, 9:00am

Meet at Ranch headquarters. Take Hwy 101 to Mill Valley where you turn onto Hwy 1, go past Stinson Beach to Aud. Canyon R. which is just before you reach Bolinas. Bring lunch and plan to spend the day. To see nesting Com. Egret, Great Blue Herons & some Snowy Egrets. Leader, Howard Wolcott

Bird Discussion Group - - - - - Tues., Apr. 7, 9:30am

Bird Walk at Mrs. Mary Dewing, 1311 Hillcrest Dr., San Jose. Bring lunch. Go south off Blossom Hill onto Almaden Rd., right on Crown (this is just beyond Almaden Center), right on Hampton, left on Hillcrest Dr.

Los Gatos Creek - - - - - Wed., Apr. 8, 9:00am

Meet at parking lot of Assembly of God Church on Lark Ave., east of Winchester Blvd., west of Lark Ave. off-ramp. Leader, Catherine Lintott

Foothill Park - - - - - Thurs., Apr. 9, 8:00am

Meet at entrance of park on Page Mill Rd. to take a walk to learn bird songs. Lunch optional. Leader, Kay McCann 327-4138

General Meeting (see above) - - - - - Wed., Apr. 15, 8:00pm

Coyote Hills Regional Park - - - - - Sat., Apr. 18, 9:00am

Meet at first parking area in park. East side of Dumbarton Bridge turn left on Jarvis Rd., to 1st traffic signal, turn left, go about a mile & watch for sign on left side of road (on right is SRI Lab sign). Marshlands, woods, rocky hills, and bayshore. Leaders, Mr. & Mrs. Les Sleeper

Pulgas Water Temple - - - - - Wed., Apr. 22, 9:00am

Meet at P. Water Temple on Canada Rd., Woodside, to go into San Fran. watershed to new area. Bring lunch. Plan to stay until 3:00 pm behind locked gates. Ldr, Kay McCann 327-4138

Isenberg Ranch - - - - - Sat., Apr. 25, 9:00am

The ranch is about 4 miles south of Skylanda on Skyline Blvd. (Woodside area) Look for name on right (west) side of road. Two miles to ranch. Leader, Mr. Isenberg

Farallon Boat Trip - - - - - Sun, Apr. 26

See March issue of "Avocet" for details.



The Problem of Environmental Destruction Concerns Us All

While there are many who are predicting inevitable doom, a group of homemakers, with a stake in the future, have come up with a series of recommendations. The consumer who cares can take a home-front, grass roots approach to the problem. If we all do the following specific things, we can begin to solve the problem of environmental destruction.

I. Decrease-refuse & maximize conservation gains.



A. Think re-use and re-cycle

1. Buy only return bottles of soda and beer. If you are unable to do this, get drinks in aluminum cans which can be smashed, collected, and reclaimed.
2. Return aluminum cans for re-cycling. Coop at Midtown and San Antonio Rd. will re-cycle. (Aluminum cans are light and can be crushed between your fingers.)
3. Save newspapers for return to paper & pulp industries. Community Assoc. for the Retarded on Middlefield Rd. will take newspapers.
4. Some wineries and liquor stores take back their own bottles.
5. Subscribe to a dairy service which supplies round-trip glass milk bottles.
6. Be a BBB - Brown Bag Backer. Take your brown bags back to the market for re-use in packing your own groceries. This saves trees (and money for the market). Or use a mesh shopping bag.
7. Bring your own coffee mug to lunch or meetings. Let the group supply the coffee, but not the styrofoam or plastic cup.
8. Use china or ceramic plates & cloth napkins. Disposable plates, cups, napkins, tablecloths, and utensils just add to the problem.
9. Give empty cans, egg and milk cartons, magazines and Xmas cards to schools for hobbies and crafts.
10. Re-use jars and lids for canning or packaged items.

B. Limit or avoid other canned, bottled or packaged items.

C. The ideal container is like an ice cream cone- you can consume it or return it for more.

II. Use biodegradable cleaning compounds with a limited phosphate content

Detergents are known to play a contributory role in eutrophication (aging process and plant overgrowth) of water by phosphate pollution. Ivory Soap is still 99 & 44/100 % pure. The following percentage of phosphates listed in a New York Times news item (12-15-69) are: Axion 44%, Biz 40%, Bio-Ad & Salvo 35%, Oxydol & Tide 31%, Bold 30%, Ajax Laundry 28%, Punch 26%, Drive & Dreft 25%, Gain 24%, Duz 23%, Breeze Cheer & Fab 22%, Cold Power 20%, Cold Water All 10%, Wisk 8%, Diaper Pure 5%, Trend 1%.

III. Decrease smog and traffic congestion. Drive your car less and bicycle more; share car rides or walk; use and encourage more public transportation.

IV. Keep noise levels controlled. The psychological toll of noise pollution may be more devastating than the physical effects.

V. Be an involved citizen. Work in community projects. Campaign for local, state and federal regulations regarding environment and conservation. Encourage our government to examine our priority of goals. In addition, know how your congressmen stand on environmental issues.

LOOK AT PERSONAL GOALS AND VALUES IN TERMS OF NATIONAL AND GLOBAL NEEDS,
BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND - GIVE UP SMOKING!!

Model Plan For Disposing Of DDT

We can look to Massachusetts for a model to follow. That state's Dept. of Natural Resources has set up 18 collection stations and Mass. Audubon Society has 13, at its different sanctuaries. In addition, the Society will collect supplies of pesticides left at fire stations in one county.

All will be stored in unused ammunition bunkers until an experimental incinerator is completed at Whitman, Mass. Then it will be burned at temperatures high enough to destroy it without letting any dangerous residues escape.

Delegates Chosen for NAS Convention

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Nominating Committee Report

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Nature Books Needed

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And be sure to read the park literature on the Indian Shellmounds, the geology, ecology and history - all of which add to a richer appreciation of this fine area.



Art For Nature's Sake

In an effort to raise money to publicize one of the finest possibilities for San Francisco Bay, the South Bay Wildlife Refuge Complex, the committee for the Refuge plans to sell art works during the week of April 27 to May 3 at the Whole World Wonder Fair, an art show whose theme is nature and conservation.

Where: Oakland Coliseum

When: Weekdays 2 pm to 10 pm

Sat. 10 to 10Q Sun. 10 to 9

What is needed: 1- Volunteers to man our booth. Please call if you have a few hours free during that week and would enjoy helping. 2 - Any art that you would care to contribute to this cause - paintings, ceramics, stitchery, photographs, or other objects.

Contact any of these: Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Ln, Saratoga 867-4748; Nancy Holmes, 843 Moano Ct, Palo Alto 948-1854; Florence Laktiviere, 453 Tennessee Ln, Palo Alto 327-2854.



Flamingo In The Bay

If you see an immense pink bird wandering around the local tidal marshes, you are not seeing things; it really is a Flamingo. My wife and I were walking along the Bay at the north end of Coyote Hills Regional Park on Feb. 14, when I noticed what appeared to be a heron out in the Bay. I looked at it through my binoculars and it was light pink with a long neck and drooping bill. It was obviously, but impossibly, a Flamingo. Neither my wife nor I could believe our eyes, but the creature just stood there calmly feeding and preening. Undoubtedly the bird is an escapee, but it still is an impressive sight in the wild.

— Richard C. Carlson

Test Your Involvement - Are You An Active, Passive, Tired Conservationist?

Did you write a letter to BCDC regarding the Brod Marina? -the Southern Crossing? Have you talked a non-conservationist into being concerned about his or her environment to any degree? Did you attend a City Council meeting in the past three months? Will you attend one in the next six months? Did you write a letter regarding the powerlines in Briones Park? Did you know 700 acres of Virgin Redwoods will be inundated if the Corps of Engineers builds the dam on Pescadero Creek? Is that fact accurate? Will you support the proposed Nat. Wildlife Refuge in So. San Francisco Bay with your letters and money? (P.O. Box 4386, San Jose 95126) Have you suggested that your teacher friends take their classes on field trips to the nearest wilderness (ie a vacant lot - if one is found, please contact the "Avocet" at once) or Villa Montalvo, Palo Alto Yacht Harbor, or Sunnyvale Mountain Park?

Winter Interlude, II (continued from February Avocet)



From Las Cruces, N.M., it is only a relatively short distance to the Bosque del Apache Nat. Wildlife Refuge on the upper Rio Grande River; but it promised to be an interesting drive, -- and it was. About halfway to the point where we would leave the north-south Freeway is a town called by the most unexpected name of Truth-Or-Consequences. It is just far enough away from Las Cruces to be a good place for a breakfast -stop, and we were looking forward to reaching it when we left Las Cruces in the pre-dawn dark and cold. As a result of the first couple of hours of driving that morning, I think that I can never again whole-heartedly resent the "progress" that has built divided freeways through some of our mountains and across some of our deserts, because just a short distance out of Las Cruces we ran into, - practically collided with -, a dense fog. On that winding road, with visibility restricted to the nearest hundred feet or so directly in front of me, I was never before so glad to be on a divided highway and to know that I could drive astraddle the dimly-seen white center-line, and not have to worry about crashing into an oncoming car. While I took occasional glances to the sides to see if by chance that gray fuzzy world of which we seemed to be the un-moving center had any holes or thin spots allowing a view of the real world outside of our gray cocoon, my mind began to form such unspoken thoughts as: "Boy, that refuge had better have something special, after driving through this, to get there!"

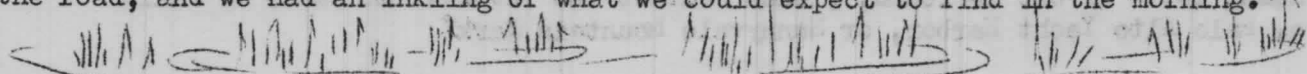
Then suddenly we were out of it and into Truth-Or-Consequences. To me, at the time, it seemed that I had never sat on a more comfortable stool at any small town Coffee Shop, nor tasted a more delicious cup of coffee, than that right there in that small, one-street desert town with that unbelievable name. (Perhaps the fog had something to do with my feeling.)

Maybe, after all, the Bosque del Apache Refuge would be worthwhile. It was. As we drove from the little community of San Antonio south to the refuge, almost immediately we saw a large flock of Canada Geese flying overhead in their long V-formation, and then numerous small flocks of Greater Sandhill Cranes, flying out of the refuge to their feeding grounds. At the refuge headquarters we introduced ourselves and were cordially welcomed.

Following instructions and a well-marked "self-guided" tour route, we drove along the gravel road with its many overlooks providing excellent opportunities to carefully observe the numbers of birds still on the ponds. With our new clamps for mounting our telescopes on the glass of the car doors, it was not necessary for us to get out of the car, and consequently we had excellent birding without disturbing the birds. Approximately in the order in which we saw them, our list for the loop included Canada Geese, Spoonbills, Pintails, Mallards, large numbers of Snow Geese with a few Blue Geese on the water (and later in the air), a few White-fronted Geese, American Widgeons, Redheads, Buffleheads, Marsh/Hawks, Sparrow Hawks, Ring-necked Pheasants, Coots (of course!), Ring-billed Gulls, Red-shafted Flickers, Black Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrikes, Meadowlarks, White-crowned Sparrows (we gave these "messages" from their cousins whom we had left at our place in Saratoga), Song Sparrows, - and then we were at the resting ground of the Greater Sandhill Cranes, large flocks of them, some in the open, and some stalking and feeding in one of the cornfields that are maintained for them. The Loop Tour was very productive, and certainly did live up to all expectations. Now we understood why Margaret and John Henderson are so enthusiastic about this refuge.

Returning to headquarters, we had another delightful chat with the Staff and Richard W. Rigby, the Manager, a young man with a pleasing personality, knowledgeable and dedicated to his job of Wildlife Management.

Driving eastward, to cross the mountains and descend into Roswell, we found more winter: somewhat heavier snow piled along the roadside, larger and deeper patches among the trees and particularly on the north slopes. In Roswell we found our motel with snow on the ground and a good-sized snowman standing in the large central open area which was surrounded by the motel units. Snow was deep and un-trampled on the big parade ground of the New Mexico Military Institute just across the road, and we had an inkling of what we could expect to find in the morning.



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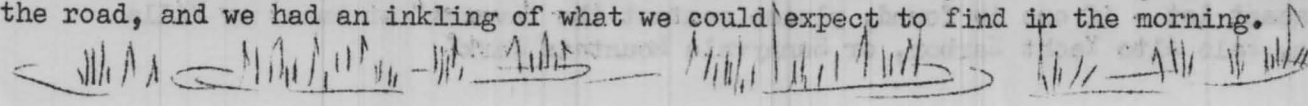
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One thing we did not expect was being awakened very early by the "Reveille" bugle call, starting a new day for the Cadets at the Institute, - and for us, too, if we wanted to spend a good, long day on the Bitter Lake Refuge a few miles north-east of the city. Another thing that we did not expect was a dirt road in the sad condition of the one leading about eight miles from the highway to headquarters. After the snow and the rain the soft dirt road, which had just been scraped and graded in preparation for paving, was in places deeply rutted, and otherwise very slippery and "slidey", with its deep covering of gumbo-mud. "A good road - for keeping the driver on his toes!" At the refuge headquarters the Staff was sympathetic, yet a little amused, as they told us that we had come in by the wrong road! A really good, hard, gravel road enters the refuge from the south, east of the city; we had come in from the east after driving north from the city. Should one of our readers make the safari to Bitter Lake, be sure to drive out of Roswell eastward on the main street and then follow the large, obvious, and well-placed signs to the refuge.

By the time we had received instructions regarding the Tour Route and were out in the field, most of the large numbers of Lesser Sandhill Cranes had already made their daily departure for the feeding grounds outside the refuge. Even so, we did find quite a large number still there. As at Bosque del Apache, the large numbers of birds, and the goodly number of species seen, raised our enthusiasm to such a level that we drove slowly around the entire refuge, then south again to the far end, and started a pattern criss-crossing the area on the numerous cross-over roads that were open to us. Our list for the day included, in addition to the main attraction of the lesser Sandhills, many individuals of the following species: Pied-bill Grebes, Meadowlarks, Redwings, Black-crowned Night Herons, Canada Geese, large flocks of Snow G., Blue Geese with a few dark immatures, many Mallards, Pintails, Green-winged Teals, Amer. Widgeons, numbers of Shovellers, Lesser Scaup, several Common Goldeneyes, Bufflehead, Ruddy, female Marsh Hawks, Sparrow Hawks, a highlight of the day: one white-winged Pheasant (another Life-Bird), the usual large numbers of Goots, Greater Yellowlegs, Belted Kingfishers, Red-shafted Flickers, Say's Phoebes, Water Pipits, and a few white-crowned Sparrows.

When we returned to headquarters again, we met the Manager. He, also, was very cordial, cooperative, and desirous of having us see as much as possible. Since we had missed seeing the thousands of cranes leave in the morning, we were given detailed instructions as just exactly where to park in order to be in the best place to see them returning, at dusk.

Needlessto say, we returned to that spot quite a bit before dusk. In fact, we were there so early that we began to tire, and to think that perhaps we were not going to see them, after all. Just about at that time the Refuge Manager drove up beside us and encouragingly announced that "it is almost time for them to start coming in - now."

Our wait was well rewarded, - far beyond expectations! When they did start to come in, they "flowed in, like a river"! Hundreds at a time, in loose V's and in strings, some low and a bit difficult to find against the dark backdrop of the eastern mountains, others high and easily spotted against the still-light-but-darkening sky. Before we could see a newly arriving group we could hear that distinct warbling call, - the sound that makes them seem like "flying frogs". Spellbound, we watched until night at last lowered the final curtain on this exciting spectacle. Here let us lower the final curtain on our Winter Interlude. Although we continued south to the Big Bend National Park, and then north again into "Indian Country", that portion was for scenery, and not "for the birds".

Lloyd N. Case



"...Among The Purple Heather...With An Eagle Nest In View"

"...That sun which now advances, that ocean which blazes with light, and that sky suffused with all glorious tints, from the intense brightness of its eastern region to the crimson of the light clouds that hover over the frith, and the purple blue of the western hills. Joy spreads over Nature. The lark carols in the sky, the mavis pours forth his mellow song from the hill, the plover whistles shrill on the moor, the plaint of the lapwing comes from the bog beneath, and hear! - was it thunder? - no - hear! - from far overhead comes the drumming sound of the snipe, which you may see wheeling and diving in the upper regions of the air. The "lang yellow broom" on "the ferny brae", the white flowered parnassia on the mossy swamp, the golden hieracium on that greywacke crag, and the long clusters of the purple fox-glove scattered along the sides of the rift, all seemed to burst in beauty. It is a lovely world after all. Let them talk of their "myrtle groves" of the "sweet sough", or the pine forests of "the stormy north", their tangled jungles of "the gorgeous east", their primaeval woods of the "far west", their palmy isles, their green savannahs, their steaming swamps or their burning deserts; - place me among the purple heather, on one of the Lammermoor hills, with an eagle's nest in view, and I leave them to enjoy their pleasures. If they please they may ride crocodiles and thrapple rattlesnakes for aught I care."

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-- Mac Gillivray, 1837, Rapacious Birds of Great Britain

A Warm Welcome To New Members!

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Kofu, Dr. John H. Kuldau, La Loma Student Council, John A. MacDonald, Mrs. R.M. Milligan, George R. Millar, Mr. & Mrs. William P. O'Brien, Mr. & Mrs. Richard J. Paul, Dr. Kenneth A. Phelps, William W. Pugh, Dr. Wayne Savage, Mrs. Howard S. Swinehart, Mrs. Mary Wilburn, The Jeremy Wire Family, Robert Van Vleck Anderson, T.D. White, Rob W. Bidivell, Stephen H. Rowland, Frank P. Adleson, Mr. & Mrs. Vernon Appleby, Pauline C. Baggs, Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Ball, Richard M. Bishop, Karen Garten, Marjorie E. Braymer, John W. Hines, Mr. & Mrs. H. Johnson, Ralph W. Kane, Donald Kennedy, R.L. Kortun, Albart Ligtenberg, Mrs. John B. Lomax, Mr. & Mrs. David R. Martin, Lana Moore, Robert O. Oswald, E. Ruth Owen, Michael Starmack, Laurie E. Steel, Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Von Damm.

-- Caroline Davis, Membership Chairman

S.C.V.A.S Officers and Chairmen

- | | | |
|--------------|---|----------|
| President: | Dr. Joseph Greenberg, 270 Kellogg Ave, P.A. 94301 | 327-0329 |
| Vice-Pres: | Mrs. Grace Lind, 1615 Dry Creek Rd, S.J. 95125 | 266-9598 |
| Secretary: | Mrs. Diane Conradson, 4337 Miranda, P.A. 94306 | 941-2102 |
| Treasurer: | Mrs. Joyce Todd, 945 Matadero, P.A. 94306 | 326-7482 |
| Education: | Mrs. Nancy Holmes, 843 Moana Ct, P.A. 94306 | 948-1854 |
| Registrar: | Mrs. Fanny Zwaal, 478 Clifton, S.J. 95128 | 292-2060 |
| Field Notes: | Russ Greenberg, 270 Kellogg, P.A. 94301 | 327-0329 |
| Program: | Miss Harriet Landy, 759 Tennyson, P.A. 94306 | 325-1192 |
| | Mrs. Phyllis Klein, 4263 Newberry Ct, P.A. | 327-4378 |
| Field Trips: | Dr. Joseph Greenberg | |
| " Wed-North: | Mrs. Kay McCann, 783 Garland, P.A. 94303 | 327-4138 |
| " Wed-South: | Mrs. Katherine Lintott, 17150 Buena Vista, L.G. 95030 | 356-4264 |

AVOCET

Our publication appears monthly except July and August. It is \$2.00 a year for non-members. Copy is requested by the 15th.

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