

# The Avocet

Volume XVII, Number 5

May, 1970

## No Monthly Meeting In May

The ANNUAL MEETING will be held at the Holbrook Palmer Park on June 9th. Details in June Avocet, but do put down the date NOW. It will be a picnic meeting. Your program chairman and hospitality committee would like four or five volunteers to help set up tables and chairs. Please call or write Betsy Peterson, 1180 Harker Ave, Palo Alto, tel- 326-9090.

The Holbrook Palmer Park collects newspapers. Please start saving now, and everyone who comes may bring them tied in bunches and thus we will help them, save paper, save the Bay, etc. Harriet Mundy & Phyllis Klein, Program Dept.

## Calendar of Events

- Coast Road (Cabrillo Hwy) - - - - - Sun., May 3, 9:00 am  
 From Princeton to Pigeon Point. Meet at parking lot at fishing pier at Princeton (north of Half-Moon Bay) on Rt 1. Will bird along coast looking for Purple Martins, Black Swifts, Grasshopper Sp, Marbled Murrelets. Ldr., Ted Chandik
- Bird Discussion Group - - - - - Tues., May 5, 10:00 am  
 At the home of Catherine Lintott, 17150 Buena Vista, Los Gatos, near Villa Felice
- Board Meeting - - - - - Wed., May 6, 7:45 pm  
 Meet at Dr. Joseph Greenberg's, 270 Kellogg Ave., Palo Alto.
- Audubon Family Breakfast - - - - - Sat., May 9, 8 to 11 am  
 At Duveneck- Hidden Villa Ranch, Los Altos Hills. See details and reservation form on back page.
- Stevens Creek Park - - - - - Sun., May 10, 9:00 am  
 Meet at parking lot at dam. Bird riparian woods for summer residents: Solitary Vireo, Dipper, Green Heron, etc. Leader, Mark Hopkins
- Stevens Creek Park - - - - - Wed., May 13, 9:00 am  
 Meet at parking lot at dam. Leader, Catherine Lintott
- Bird Study Group - - - - - Thurs., May 14, 8:00 am  
 Learn bird songs. Meet at Page Mill Rd. entrance to Foothill Park. Lunch optional. No meeting in June. Leader, Kay McCann 327-4138
- Mines Road - - - - - Sat., May 16, 9:00 am  
 Meet 1 block beyond tall flagpole on Livermore Ave. in Livermore. Bird riparian growth to sagebrush: Phainopepla, Lewis' Woodpecker, Sage Sp., Lawrence's Goldfinch. Leader, Betsy Peterson
- Foothill Park - - - - - Wed., May 27, 9:00 am  
 Meet at Page Mill Rd. entrance, 4 miles above Foothill Expressway. Leader, Kay McCann 327-4138
- Yosemite - - - - - Sat., June 6, 6:30 am  
 Meet at junction of Glacier Pt. Road and road to Bridleveil Campground. Mountain Bluebirds, Arctic black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Blue Grouse, Great Gray Owl (?). Leaders, Russ & Joe Greenberg
- Santa Cruz Boat Trip - - Mon, June 8, 7:30 am  
 Annual offshore trip to observe Black-footed Albatross and other pelagics. Leaves Stagnaro Landing on Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf at 7:30 am, returning about noon. Price \$2.00. Make reservations with Leavitt McQuesten, 120 Otis St, Santa Cruz 95060. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope.



Field Trip Reports

Coyote Hills Regional Park, April 18, Leaders - Les & Nell Sleeper

61 species tallied by 35 observers. Highlights of trip were: Fulvous Tree Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Tricolored Blackbirds, Downy Woodpecker on nest, Coots with chicks, and the Flamingo feeding on the salt ponds.

Palo Alto Foothills, Mar. 25, Leader - Virginia Bothwell

Among the 39 species tallied were: Red-shoulder Hawk, MacGillivray's Warbler, Purple Finch, and Kingfisher.

Audubon Canyon Ranch, April 4, Leader - Howard Wolcott

Of the 34 species seen were: Downy Woodpecker, Osprey, Warbling and Hutton's Vireos, and, of course, the three species of nesting herons.

Assemblyman George Milias' Bill (AB-1050) On Conservation Education

Here are some of the pertinent highlights of the bill:

1. Purpose. Through a comprehensive Conservation-Education program, to attack the ignorance concerning the future of California's livability, by instructing teachers, who in turn will pass on their knowledge to their students. In this way, we will be moving in the direction of turning California back into a livable, pleasant place to live.

Students will learn about ecological relationships and social aspects of environmental control by classroom study, by training, by field trips and by summer jobs in environmental internship, for which they may receive certain units of credit toward graduation. Such jobs would include federal, state and local agency work in such areas as game management, mosquito abatement, water resource development and control, highway planning, etc.

Planning and implementation grants will be made available to school districts county offices of education, regional conservation centers, public institutions of higher learning.

Environmental facts will be taught as they relate to each other rather than isolated bits of information.

2. Method of financing the program. Tax those companies utilizing materials or resources that come from our natural environment, which include crude oil, natural gas, timber, cement, sand and gravel. A small tax on these resource extractions could easily raise sufficient funds, which Mr. Milias estimates to be in the neighborhood of fifteen to twenty million dollars.

What you can do. This bill is in its beginning stages and needs and deserves the support of all who care about our environment, particularly here in the State of California. Any suggestions should be submitted to Assemblyman Milias' office. And in the meantime, hopefully there will be strong expressions of support by publicizing this bill within and beyond your own group, as well as letters to your elected representatives in Sacramento.

Conservation Chairman, Tony Look

Snakes Lay Eggs? Most snakes are hatched from eggs. This is the case in pythons and cobras and in common snakes such as green, rat, and bull snakes. But many snakes bear their young alive. Most vipers, including copperheads and rattlesnakes, boas, water & garter snakes, and most sea snakes bear living young. If the snake is an egg laying specie, the female searches for a place to lay her eggs about 2 months after mating. The place must have warmth and moisture needed for development of the egg. The female scoops out a small space under the soil or in a rotting tree stump. There she deposits her eggs. Most snakes lay between 8 & 15 eggs, and leave the eggs as soon as they are laid. Female pythons, king cobras and mud snakes, however, remain coiled about the eggs until they hatch. Among snakes that bear their young alive, the females carry the unborn young within their bodies. Live-born snakes often do not appear until 4 or 5 months after the female has mated. Did you know that no kind of female snake pays any attention to the young after they are born or hatched? The young are on their own from birth. -from Desert News, by A. Leokum

Keeping Up With The Condors

Secretary of Interior Mickel recently declared a moratorium on the issuance of oil drilling permits within the condor sanctuary. 29 permit requests were on file. This is a temporary action & oil interests can be expected to repeat their attempts.

Word has reached the Western Regional Office that the U.S. Gypsum Co. has applied for permits to open a STRIP MINE in the Los Padres National Park along hwy 33 near Pine Mountain in Ventura Co. The phosphate open mining operation would gouge a scar five miles long and milling operations could cause considerable air and noise pollution. The permits must first be recommended by Mr. William Hanson, Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest, Santa Barbara, then Mr. John Dienema, Reg. Forester, 630 Sansome St, San Francisco, and then Mr. J.R. Penny, State Director, Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, 95825.

Your opinion might be important!

From Mr. J. R. Penny to Mr. Paul Howard on March 13, 1970:

"At this time I wish to acknowledge the several thousand expressions of interest which I have received regarding the protection of the condor and the Sespe Wildlife Refuge.

I believe you will appreciate the immensity of the task of my personally responding to each person, many of whom are members of the National Audubon Soc.

It would be greatly appreciated if through your newsletters and publications, you could convey my acknowledgment and thanks for the many letters of interest I have received."

Bird Eaters vs Bird Lovers in Italy

"Julius Caesar liked figpeckers. He ate them whole, each little bird roasted atop a wild red mushroom and flavored only with a pinch of salt and a dash of olive oil. Modern day Italians like figpeckers, too. And larks, robins, bullfinches, blackbirds, snipes, plovers, linnets, thrushes and crows as well as quail and pheasant.

This appetite for small birds on the dinner table is turning into one of Italy's most heated issues. Thousands of hunters, permitted by a controversial new law to use nets to trap birds, are expected to capture millions. Many birds will wind up, contrary to law, on dinner tables and restaurant menus.

The bill, according to sponsors, forbids killing any birds caught in nets. Few persons believe the law will be obeyed and conservationists believe it cannot be enforced. Under the bill, captured birds can be used only for pets, decoys or scientific study such as breeding or migratory habits.

But tell that to the birds."

-from Rome (UPI)

Wilderness Workshop in Alaska

Camp Denali, a wilderness camp situation on the northern boundary of Mt. McKinley National Park, will again offer its Wilderness Workshop from June 19 -29. The Workshop is limited to 15.

The program of the Workshop emphasizes the natural history of the Park and surrounding area, including the geology and glaciology of the region. The group will spend part of each day in the field, with hikes carefully graded to the steadily increasing stamina and endurance of each member.

Cost of the ten-day Workshop is \$300 per person which includes transportation between McKinley Park Station and the camp, all guide service and incidental transportation during the Workshop, room and meals, use of all camp equipment, canoes, etc.

For further information contact Ruth Anderson, 2244 S.E. 252nd St., Issaquah, Wash. 98027.

Nominating Committee Report (correction)

Those nominated to be voted on as directors at the June Annual Meeting are Allen Jamieson, Harriet Landy, Kenneth Kidd. Submitted by nominating committee, Diane Conradson, chairman; Kay McCann; Grace Lind.

The law doth punish man or woman  
That steals the goose from off the commons,  
But lets the greater felon loose  
That steals the commons from the goose.

-author unknown, c. 1764



ADDENDA: "WINTER IN CALIFORNIA"

On several field trips since the April issue of the "Avocet", I have been asked, "What birds did you see in Big Bend Park?" Our Editor has said there would be room for a bit of an article on that area. Remember that it was during the second week of December that we were in the park.

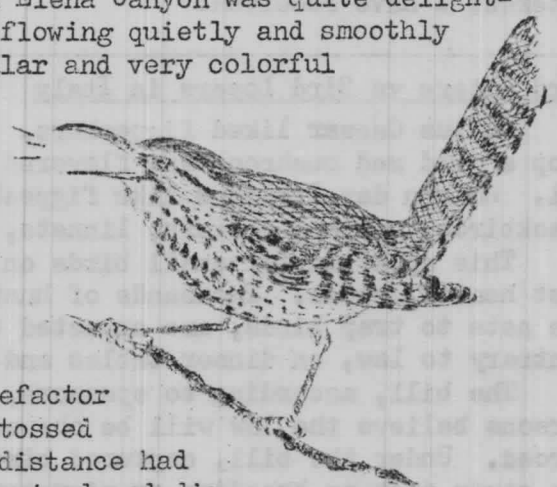
We entered the park from the town of Marathon, driving south through flat desert land, irrigated farm land, and rolling hills. Some thirteen miles south of Marathon, a grove of large Cottonwood trees stand at the foot of a low rocky ridge. This marks Garden Springs which Pettingill described as being reached by a half-mile walk across pasture land. Apparently, since Mr. Pettingill wrote that, the desert has reclaimed its own. The "pasture land" is now thickly grown with cat's claw, creosote bush, cactus and a number of other desert species that call for circuitous walking and considerable care in making one's way.

At the springs we found a number of catch-basins which provided good water for birds and animals of the area. We hoped to find Lark Buntings here. In this, we were disappointed. But there were Black-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Purple Finches, and a Ladderbacked Woodpecker. To our delight, we also saw a family of Javelinas coming through the chaparral. We had looked for these lean wild pigs each time we had been in Mexico; this was our first success.

A few miles inside the park after leaving the Persimmon Gap entrance, we turned out to look at the Fossil Bone Exhibit, a dinosaur's bones, taken from one of the Cretaceous formations of the area. The call of a Rock Wren attracted my attention from the dinosaur, and I followed the wren with interest. With my back to the fossil display I allowed myself a bit of fanciful "supposing". The historical geologists tell us that the Cretaceous Era ended some 70 or more million years ago, with a long indefinite period of time known as "The Time of the Great Dying". During this time eight species of huge reptiles became extinct, including the dinosaurs. Not one dinosaur is known to have lived to see the dawn of the Cretaceous, however, ancestral ducks, pelicans, and grebes are known to have existed, and other modern types of birds appeared before the close of the Era, including eagles, vultures, quail, and various shore birds. My "supposing" led me to wonder: is it just barely possible that the first ancestors of this little rock wren were contemporary with the last of these dinosaurs? During the long indefinite, mysterious period between the Eras, the wrens were evolving, and could have been present while the dinosaurs were "dissolving"! (This is not a theory; it is just an interesting possibility on which to ponder.)

In the Chisos Mts. Basin where we were staying, we almost immediately found a Cactus Wren busily gleaning in the area immediately in front of our door, unafraid, undisturbed, always on the lookout for some little goody that we might drop for him. He was always in the area, often as audible as he was visible. On our afternoon walk we found Say's Phoebes, Brown Towhees with a different note than ours at home, Mourning Doves, and White-winged Doves.

The next day, the 100-mile round trip to Santa Elena Canyon was quite delightful. The deep, narrow canyon, with the Rio Grande flowing quietly and smoothly between the high vertical walls was really spectacular and very colorful with its soft pastels of nature. The birds were just as interesting. Black-tailed Gnatcatchers were in the mesquite along the road; Say's Phoebes hunted in a small vertical-walled canyon cut through volcanic tuff by stream action; Lesser Goldfinches were feeding at the lunch tables near the parking area, with a Roadrunner furnishing the main attraction. He definitely wanted the scraps of bread being tossed to him, but he was a bit reluctant to come too close to his benefactor who stood, quiet and patient, barely moving when he tossed another tidbit to the Roadrunner. The intervening distance had been reduced to about six feet before another car arrived and disturbed him. Ravens were flying in the canyon which is 1000 feet deep and only from fifty to a hundred feet wide here near the mouth. Rock Wrens sang and hopped from



boulder-top to rocky ledge, and Brown Towhees fed nonchalantly along the trail. Water Pipits were feeding in the shallow water of Terlingua Creek and allowed us to approach very close. Cactus Wrens and Scaled Quail were quite numerous along the road back to the Basin.

Next morning when we left for Boquillas Canyon in the south-east corner of the park, the Cactus Wren was busily getting his breakfast on our front porch, with a Chipping Sparrow also getting a good start for the day. This day's trip was to provide us the "highlight" of our park birding: a Least Grebe on a small pond near the Rio Grande Village Camp-ground. Here was a life-bird, and the principal reason for going to the village campground. The grebe has been reported from there for quite some time, and there it was, - quite small compared to the Goot and the Ring-necked Duck with whom he was sharing the quiet little pond. The light was excellent and I was delighted that I was able to get a number of good pictures.



Down in the campground, all over the place, were Cardinals, Scaled Quail, and Roadrunners feeding undisturbed by campers, all of whom were thoroughly enjoying the privilege of seeing these beautiful birds at close range. Audubon's Warblers, Red-shafted Flickers, Black Phoebes and Black-tailed Gnatcatchers flitted through the trees, feeding casually and undisturbed.

Along the river, on the trail to the mouth of Boquillas Canyon were Sandpipers, Audubon Warblers and Sparrow Hawks. A small wild burro stood at the river's edge, on the Mexican side, and watched us with obvious curiosity; but he didn't sing for us, - not even in Mexican.

The following day on our walk to "The Window", the six foot wide opening in the limestone wall of the basin, through which all of the drainage flows, (if, as, and when there is rain), the Mexican Jays were as numerous and noisy as their cousins are in our own hills. House Finches, Brown Towhees, Chipping Sparrows and Canyon Wrens kept the trail from getting monotonous.

Say's Phoebes, Shrikes, Red-tailed Hawks, and Black Phoebes added to the pleasure of the next day's drive, south-west to the village of Presidio.

When we left the park to return to Alpine, we had a good look at a Fuerte's Red-tailed Hawk. We also added Bluebirds, Mockingbirds, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Violet-green Swallows, Meadowlarks, and Robins to the list of the day. Roadrunners and Scaled Quail were also numerous and just as interesting as ever.

The Desert is an uninteresting, lifeless place???

-- Lloyd N. Case

From Sketches Here and There by Aldo Leopold

"Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is capable, under science, of contributing to culture. That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. That land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known, but often forgotten."

From Voices for the Wilderness by William Schwartz (compilation of papers from Sierra Club Wilderness Conferences)

"Myths destroyed at a Wilderness Conference: (1) The myth that the need for park and wilderness areas increases at the same rate as the population. (2) The myth that the U.S. population explosion, which threatens to leave Standing Room Only in parks and wilderness areas, can be controlled by handing out birth control information. (3) The myth that the wilderness is of use only to the rugged few. (4) The myth that engineers can calculate what's best for everybody."

Approximately 180,000 tons of DDT are sprayed into U.S. air and water each year.



Wanted - Eagle Reports

Bald Eagles were widely reported in California this winter and most were immatures. Alexander Sprunt, director of National's Bald Eagle Survey states: "There is some southward movement of Bald Eagles along the Pacific Coast during the winter. Immature birds, particularly, are often seen as far south as So. Calif. The source of these birds is not well known, but the likelihood is that some of them come from either the Puget Sound area or points north. We need more information . . ."

Any observations of these eagles during the summer months, either in the immediate S.C.V.A.S. area or in more remote vacation areas of our members would be greatly appreciated. Note field marks carefully; the position of any white areas is very important in sorting the immature Balds and Golden Eagles. Record the date and location and any details of activity. Also observations of hunting style and prey of the Golden Eagle is of great interest to me. - Emelie Curtis (address below)

A Warm Welcome To New Members !

Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Reeser & Family, Mamie Bucholz, Mrs. Kathryn Dymond, Mr. & Mrs. Edward B. Gregg, Dr. Donald G. Harris, Mr. & Mrs. C. W. Jacklin, John P. Kelly, Richard C. Knoetzsch, Mrs. Paul Lorton, Mr. & Mrs. J. E. Lanevaring, Dr. J. Ian McNeill & Family, Leigh H. Trowbridge, Virginia Whitebread, Donn Lobdell.  
- Caroline Davis, Membership Chairman

S.C.V.A.S. Officers & 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 Latadero, 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 Ave., P.A. 94301	327-0329
Program:	Miss Harriet Mundy, 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 Ave., P.A. 94303	327-4138
" Wed-South:	Mrs. Catherine 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.

Editor: Mrs. Emelie Curtis, 17180 Copper Hill Dr, Morgan Hill 95037 408-779-2637  
New Editor starting with Sept. Avocet will be Ed Agenhals, 10401 Creston Dr., Cupertino, Calif. 95014. Please direct copy and exchange bulletins to new editor after May 15 deadline.

Staff: Miss Elsie Hoeck, Mr. & Mrs. Emmanuel Taylor, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Zwaal

AUDUBON FAMILY BREAKFAST ! ! !

Saturday, May 9, 1970 - serving from 8 to 11 am., at Duveneck HIDDEN VILLA RANCH, Los Altos Hills. A chance to meet other SCVAs members, families and friends - - To talk, to hike, or just enjoy the good company and scenery.

HOTCAKES, HAN, COFFEE, and TRIMMINGS	-ALL YOU CAN EAT-
ADULTS 75¢	CHILDREN under 12 - 35¢

Please bring your own eating utensils & milk for youngsters.

Please clip off attached reservation & mail to Bob Hassur, 14875 Cole Dr, S.J. 95124 by May 4, 1970.

Reservation for Audubon Family Breakfast, May 9, 8 to 11 am. (resv. deadline May 4)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ (pay upon arrival)

Number of Adults ~ 75¢ \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Children ~ 35¢ \_\_\_\_\_