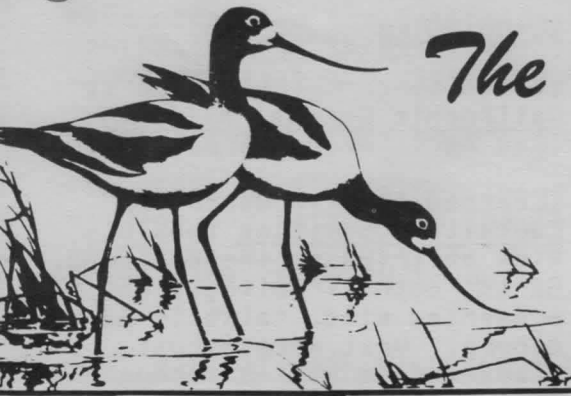


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The Avocet

TIME VALUE

VOLUME XVIII, Number 5

May 1971

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 2 BEGINNERS' BIRD WALK, Sun. 9 AM
Duveneck Ranch, Moody Rd, Los Altos Hills. Take El Monte from Hwy 280 past Foothill College to Moody, then on past Adobe Creek Lodge to Hidden Villa Ranch; sign on L. Park inside gate. Leaders: Lily Estrada & Dick Carlson, 326-2929. (See page 5)
- May 4 BIRD DISCUSSION GROUP, Tues. 9:30 sharp, at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista, Saratoga. Finish Hummingbirds; bird at Hakone Gardens.
- May 5 SUNOL REGIONAL PARK, Wed. 9 AM
Take Hwy 680 north past Mission San Jose up hill to Calaveras Rd turn-off. Head south about 4 miles to park road. Bring Lunch. Leader: Frank Farran, 252-3874.
- May 8 COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK, Sat. 7:30 AM. East across Dumbarton Bridge and turn L at Jarvis to 1st traffic light. L. one mile to park; sign on L. Park at lot at pine grove, 1 mile from hwy. Leader: Dick Carlson, 326-2929.
- May 13 BOARD MEETING, Thurs. 7:30 PM at home of Kay McCann, 783 Garland, Palo Alto, 327-4138. Members Welcome.
- May 15 LIVERMORE & DEL VALLE RECREATION AREA, Sat. 8:30 AM. Joint meeting with Sequoia Audubon. Meet just beyond flagpole on Livermore Ave, Livermore. Bring lunch & entrance fee for Recreation area. Expect Yellow-billed Magpies, Western Kingbirds, Lewis' Woodpeckers & Phainopeplas. Leaders: Henry & Louise Hoffman and Pete & Betsy Peterson, 326-9090.
- May 19 GENERAL MEETING, Wed. 8 PM
Homestead High, Homestead Rd. at Mary, Cupertino. A FISH'S-EYE VIEW OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY, Bob Hassur, (see page 2).
- May 21 N. COUNTY BIRD DISCUSSION GROUP
Fri. 9:30 AM at home of Barbara Allen, 1181 Greenwood, Palo Alto, 326-0521. Subject: Summer Residents.
- May 23 AL WOOL RANCH, LA HONDA, Sun. 9 AM
Meet at shopping area in La Honda. Leader: Al Wool, 747-0317.
- May 26 PALO ALTO FOOTHILL PARK, Wed. 9 AM
Meet at park entrance on Page Mill Rd, Palo Alto. Leader: Virginia Bothwell, 854-6458.
- June 3 ANNUAL MEETING, Thurs. 5 PM to dusk, Steven's Creek Park. Bird before picnic dinner. Election of board members (see page 3 & June Avocet for details).
- June 5 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Sat. 7 AM.
Meet at entrance to Bridalveil Campground on road to Glacier Pt. If you plan to stay in cabins or at lodge, make reservations early. Leader: Joe Greenberg, 326-8120 between 8 & 5.

GENERAL MEETING: MAY 19
A FISH'S-EYE VIEW OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY

We have heard, seen and read about our Bay from almost every point of view except that of the water's inhabitants--the fishes! Fish have evolved a great variety of forms through adaptation in diverse habitats. Thus, the presence or absence of certain fishes may offer clues to the diversity and the quality of their aquatic environment.

Bob Hassur, a Professor at San Jose State and a member of our Board of Directors, will take us on a Color-slide tour of the Bay, show us many of the fishes and reveal what they indicate about the waters of the Bay. Bob is an entertaining as well as informative speaker and with his help we will all have a new "fish's-eye view of the Bay".

HERBICIDES IN VIETNAM

An American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) team has charged * that the American military use of herbicides has been considerably more destructive than anyone had previously imagined. They assert: (1) One-fifth to one-half of South Vietnam's mangrove forests have been "utterly destroyed"; years after spraying there is almost no sign of new life coming back. (2) Half the trees in the mature hardwood forests are dead, and a massive invasion of apparently worthless bamboo threatens to take over the area for decades to come. (3) The crop destruction program designed to deny food to enemy soldiers has actually destroyed food that would have been used by civilian populations particularly the Montagnard mountain tribes. (4) Further study is needed to determine the reason for the high rate of still births in one heavily sprayed province and for an increase in two kinds of birth defects in Saigon which were coincident with large-scale spraying. (Naturally not all who heard the report agree with these conclusions, especially those who feel that the damage was justified as a tool to save American lives.)

The herbicide program has been operating almost a decade. About 1/7 of the land area of South Vietnam--equivalent in size to the state of Massachusetts--has been treated with herbicides. The chief herbicide used against forests has been Agent Orange, a mixture of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. Use of this mixture was stopped a year ago when tests indicated that 2,4,5-T was teratogenic (caused birth defects). The next most commonly used agent against forests has been Agent White, a mixture of 2,4-D and picloram, and the herbicide used against crops has been Agent Blue, an arsenic compound.

Specialists on Vietnam in the USDA estimated that the destroyed food would have been sufficient for 600,000 persons for a year. The anti-crop spraying program has been largely confined to the food-scarce Central Highlands, which has a population of only about

(Continued pg. 4)

*"Herbicides in Vietnam: AAAS Study Finds Widespread Devastation", Science, Jan. 8, 1971.

BOARD NOTES

.Voted to contribute \$150 to California Coastal Alliance. (See April Avocet & page 3.)

.Learned that in March the Education Committee took 614 kids on trips to the baylands, 52 to Foothill College, and presented slide talks to 52 others. Most were school classes from cities throughout Santa Clara County.

.Designated Nancy Holmes as our official delegate to the National Audubon Society Convention (at her own expense).

.Learned that the Palo Alto Audubon Wildlife Films have earned \$272 for Palo Alto High School's Biology Club. The money will purchase a Portable Lab for field trips.

AUDITOR NEEDED

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society needs an auditor shortly after our fiscal year closes May 3, 1971. We would much appreciate the services of a qualified member. In past years a member did this for us as his contribution to the Society, but we can pay for it. Please call Treasurer, Joyce Todd, 326-7482.

REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ken Kidd, Betsy Peterson, and Eve Case have presented the following persons in nomination for three Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society board vacancies, 1971-74.

Joyce Todd Tony Look Ron Stecker

Members will vote for these (or other members nominated from the floor) at the annual picnic, Thursday, June 3, Stevens Creek Park, 5:00 PM to dusk.

S.F. BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE H.R.111

As this is written no date for hearings in the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries has been set. It is just possible that a note to the California members of this committee; Robert Leggett, Wm Mailliard, Paul Mc Closkey or Glen Anderson and to Subcommittee Chairman John Dengell and Chairman Edward Garmatz would help. Room 1334, Longworth Office Bldg, Washington D.C. 20515.

FIELD TRIP REPORTSMarch 24, Duveneck Ranch

Fifteen members and guests had the pleasure of a conducted tour through the garden by Mr. Frank Duveneck. As always the highlight was the Santa Lucia Fir, one of the few specimens outside the Santa Lucia Mountains. Mr. Duveneck knows most of the scientific names of his native and exotic plants, and is most gracious in sharing his knowledge.

During our walk around the valley, 23 species of birds were seen and heard and many wildflowers enjoyed. We all appreciated the repeated song of the Purple Finches and a few heard the rarer song of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. It was a very pleasant morning.

--Kay McCann

March 28, Byrne Park

Approximately 30 people in two groups saw or heard 26 species of woodland birds on a balmy spring day. Highlights included a telescopic view for all of a preening Violet-green Swallow, the building of a fantastic lichen bag-nest by a Common Bushtit, and an early Western Flycatcher hawking for insects.

--Ruth Troetschler

CALIFORNIA COASTAL ZONE CONSERVATION ACT

AB 1471 was introduced April 1 in the California Assembly by Alan Sieroty and John Dunlap with Alquist, Behr, Beilenson, Dymally, Gregorios, Marks, Moscone, Nejdely, Petris, and Rodda as co-signers.

This important bill would provide the same protection for our Coastline that we now possess for San Francisco Bay. Hearings before the Assembly Planning and Land Use Committee (Paul Priolo, Chairman) began April 14 and thus letters of support are appropriate now. (State Capitol, Sacramento 95814)

The bill provides for creation of a plan for the orderly long-range conservation and management of the natural resources of the coastal zone (the area of land and water between the outer limit of state jurisdiction to the highest elevation of the nearest coastal mountain range). The plan would be administered by a two layered system. Over all: a 12 member Commission with 6 members chosen by and representative of 6 regional commissions and 6 public members appointed; two by the Governor, two by the Senate Rules Committee and two by the Speaker of the Assembly. Over each of 6 regions a 12 member Commission, with 6 members representing the city and county governments, and 6 members appointed; two by the Governor, two by the Senate Rules Committee and two by the Speaker of the Assembly.

The law restricts the powers of the Commissioners in order to prevent conflict of interest, and otherwise defines the powers of the Commissions. After the plan is put into effect, developers must adhere to the plan and receive a permit (after public hearings) before development can take place. The law provides for appeal to the State Commission by an applicant whose permit has been denied or by a person aggrieved by approval of a permit application, and for further judicial review of same. The law also provides for individual or class actions to enjoin violations of the act and for penalties for violators of up to \$10,000 or \$500 per day for development carried on in violation of the Act.

The plan must be submitted to the Legislature in 1975.

THESE MERIT SUPPORT

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY: Carries on research on bird populations in co-operation with Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game; San Jose State; U.S. Coast Guard & Fish and Wildlife Service; and Nat'l Park Service. Membership \$7.50/year includes annual report and annual newsletter. Mesa Road, Bolinas, Cal. 94924.

CALIFORNIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS: Is for those devoted to field observation of birds. The quarterly journal includes papers devoted to bird distribution and the identification of selected western species. Membership \$5/year, P.O. Box 369, Del Mar, Cal. 94014.

WESTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOC: Primarily for bird-banders but not required for membership. The quarterly journal deals with results of banding studies; aging and sexing techniques. Membership \$4/year, P.O. Box 217, Cave Creek, Ari. 95331.

HERBICIDES (Continued)

1 million, mostly Montagnards, a tribal people disliked by the lowland Vietnamese who are active in helping to plan the spraying missions. It was learned that several classified studies under military auspices have concluded, as did the AAAS team, that the food spraying program has only hurt the civilian population, not the military.

The lack of new plant-life in the Mangroves was deemed one of the most significant findings. These areas are "outwardly unimportant" but they serve as home for tens of thousands of people, supply firewood and charcoal, provide cover and food for birds, fish and crustaceans, and continually build up and stabilize the shoreline.

Timber equivalent to S. Vietnam's entire domestic timber needs for the next 31 years has been destroyed. Recovery may take decades partly because the invading bamboo and grasses is difficult to eradicate, and partly because nutrient minerals previously tied up in forest vegetation may be leached out of sprayed forests by heavy tropical rains.

Outside of Saigon, a nationwide increase in stillbirths, placental tumors and malformations coincided with the peak of herbicide spraying. Though coincidence does not prove

FIELD TRIP REPORT

April 3, Isenberg Ranch

Twenty-five people saw the following birds: Red-shafted Flicker; Acorn Woodpecker; Golden-crowned, White-crowned, Fox, House & Song Sparrows; Oregon Junco; Brown Creeper; Hutton's & Warbling Vireos; Brown & Rufus-sided Towhees; Brewer's and Red-wing Blackbirds; Bewick's Wren; Anna, Allen, & Rufus Hummingbirds; Red-tailed & Cooper's Hawks; Steller's & Scrub Jays; Wren-tit; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Great-horned Owl; Wilson's & Orange-crowned Warblers; Robin; Varied & Hermit Thrushes; Violet-green & Barn Swallows; House Finch; Coot; Band-tailed Pigeon; Western Flycatcher; Black Phoebe; California Quail; Common Bushtit; Plain Titmouse; Turkey Vulture & Mourning Dove.

We also saw a variety of wildflowers including two types of Trillium.

--Howard Wolcott

connection, further study of the trend is indicated according to the AAAS team. Tay Ninh, a heavily defoliated province, had a stillbirth rate of 64 per thousand, as compared with 31.2 per thousand nationwide.

The team collected samples of shrimp, fish, human milk, hair and fat, and other materials in an effort to determine if dioxin, an extremely toxic impurity in Agent Orange, was being concentrated in the food chain. Their results indicate that dioxin may be photo-degraded quickly, but further tests are indicated to determine whether it accumulates in fatty tissues.

Interviews with farmers and village officials revealed that the spraying has had "a negative psychological impact" on farmers, many of whom feel that the U.S. is deliberately trying to destroy the rural economy and make farmers dependent on the west.

The U.S. has taken no steps to renounce defoliation. It is officially maintained that herbicides, like tear gas, cannot be classified as genuine weapons.

FEEDING BABY BIRDS & MAMMALS

BABY BIRDS: 1 cup kibbled dog food, 1 hard-boiled egg yolk, 1 drop liquid multi-vitamins (for babies) and water to make a consistency suitable for rolling dough balls. Force-feed (shove down gullets like the natural mother) 5 or 6 times a day or more. A full baby bird will reject further food by regurgitation.

BABY MAMMALS: Use Similac mixed 1:1 with water. Feed about 5-6 times a day. If old enough add baby rice to the similac. The key to success; get the creature on solid food as soon as possible. (The Kite Call)

BIRDWALK FOR BEGINNERS

The Adult Liberation Front on the move! For too long has SCVAS conducted beginners' bird walks for little people--and paid little attention to us bigger people who are virtually ignorant of birds and their ways.

With their arms only slightly twisted, Lily Estrada and Dick Carlson have agreed to lead a birdwalk for adult (high school age and older) beginners, on Sunday, May 2, 9 AM at Duveneck Ranch, Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. The ranch is a beautiful area populated with many birds. We especially invite newcomers to SCVAS to join us in what should be a pleasant and instructive field trip. The walk will last about two hours. Ideally, each participant should wear boots and bring binoculars and a bird book; however, if you don't have some or all of this gear, just bring yourself. You'll still have fun!

--Gerald Grow

THE SOUTH BAY--WHAT'S LEFT

All you need to really see South San Francisco Bay is a calm day, a canoe, and a strong back. The four of us, two strong backs and two wives, left the Palo Alto boat launching ramp, noon, November 15. The peak tide of 6.2 feet would come at 1:00 p.m. Paddling south we canoed over the entire island across from the ramp, but the several resident Clappers were hiding. South of the island is "Rail Heaven". At high tide, it seemed impossible that anything larger than a sparrow could hide in the tiny clumps of Cord Grass remaining out of water. Then my paddle touched one of those clumps, and out popped a Clapper Rail. We soon saw a dozen Clapper Rails within 20 feet of that spot, and they allowed us to approach within less than five feet.

Suddenly a small rail ran out of the grass! My wife, Pat, nearly flipped the canoe, "A Virginia Rail, Whoopee!" We had seen assorted flitting shadows that were identified as Virginia Rails by their calls, but that isn't the same as a bird standing in the open 10 feet away in broad daylight while you check all his field marks. To top off the rail hunting, we also found two Sora Rails. At such a range, rails are simply lovely birds.

After a grand hour of rail watching, we moved South. Beyond Charleston Slough, the water gets cleaner, but the marsh disappears. The Clapper Rails appear to need only a patch of Cord Grass the size of an average living room, but recent diking has left few such patches. Between the dikes and the Cord Grass there was no room for Pickle Weed and the Black Rails we had hoped to find. We stopped to peer over the dikes at thousands of shore birds and ducks within the salt ponds. Over 100 egrets were feeding in one small area. The hunters were inactive, but their blinds were everywhere.

About four miles out (half way) we entered Guadalupe Slough. A seal floated out of the entrance on the falling tide to meet us. Here was the largest and cleanest marsh we saw. Another fresh dike enclosed a pond that was jammed with shorebirds. In another mile we came to Alviso Slough, and were greeted by hundreds of cormorants occupying the skyscraping transmission towers and filling the air. Several hundred White Pelicans flew north on the other side of the slough.

Fired by thoughts of a panicky babysitter, we paddled hard against the outgoing tide. Uncountable numbers of Willets, Avocets, Dowitchers, curlews, godwits, Dunlins, and small sandpipers came to feed as the receding tide exposed the mud flats. The marsh side of the slough was crowded with godwits and herons waiting for more space at the dining table. A river of gulls moved north across the sunset, but our destination seemed to recede.

A passing cruiser offered a tow, so we shared the noise and fumes that accompanied their power. We finally reached Alviso after a short but welcome ride, as dusk fell and the Night Herons came out to the mud-flats. The sounds of the marsh at night made me wish that we had paddled that last mile.

Distance: 8 miles. Time: 5 hours

--Richard Carlson

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Economics must be considered
as a subsystem to ecology.

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