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San Jose, Calif.



# The Avocet

TIME VALUE

Volume XVIII, Number 9

November, 1971

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Nov. 6 -- Tubbs Island Field Trip, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Take 101 north beyond San Francisco. Turn right on Route 37 (to Vallejo). Cross Petaluma River Bridge and continue about four miles. Note turn-off to Sonoma (Route 121 on left). Immediately beyond this turn-off is Tolas Creek Bridge. Turn right to headquarters of Tubbs Island Refuge. If there are heavy rains for two days before or on day of trip, trip will be cancelled. Leader: Harriet Mundy, 325-1192.
- Nov. 9 -- Bird Discussion Group, South County, Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, 867-4748. Any member welcome. Topic: "Birds of the Arctic Tundra".
- Nov. 9 -- San Jose Audubon Wildlife Film, Tuesday, 8 p.m., Morris Dailey Auditorium, San Jose State College Campus. "Filming in No-Man's Land". See Sept. issue for additional information.
- Nov. 9 -- Board of Directors Meeting, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Al Jamieson, 592 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, 327-8310. Meeting open to all members--please phone in advance if you plan to attend.
- Nov. 10 -- Field Trip South-Coyote River Park, Wednesday, 9 a.m. Take U. S. 101 South to Morgan Hill. Turn left (east) on Main Ave. at the first stop light. Proceed 1 block on Main Ave. to the parking lot at the intersection of Main and the SP tracks. Leaders: Emmanuel and Mary Taylor, 779-9097.
- Nov. 11 -- Palo Alto Audubon Wildlife Film, Thursday, 4 p.m. Palo Alto High School Auditorium, 50 Embarcadero Rd. "Filming in No-Man's Land". See Sept. issue for additional information.
- Nov. 17 -- Field Trip North-Searville Lake, Wednesday, 9 a.m. Meet at the entrance to Searville Lake on Sandhill Road, Palo Alto. Entrance fee is 25¢. Sandhill Rd. can be reached from Route 280. Turn west on Sandhill Rd. to Searville Lake. Leaders: Les and Nell Sleeper, 323-9370.

- Nov. 19 -- Bird Discussion Group, North County, Friday, 9:15 a.m. Meet at Barbara Allen's home, 1181 Greenwood Ave., Palo Alto, 326-0521, for a trip to Portola Valley. Hopefully to be seen are Chickadee, Bush-tit, Goldfinch, Hawks, Phoebe. Refreshments will not be served.
- Nov. 21 -- Grey Lodge Waterfowl Management Area Field Trip, Sunday, 9 a.m. Take Route 80 to Woodland turn-off (Route 113) to Yuba City. Take 99 (north) to Live Oak. Take Pennington Road (left) to hunters' check station. Take Rutherford Road (left) to headquarters. Driving time from Santa Clara County about four hours. There are places to stay in Marysville, Yuba City and Woodland. Leader: Joe Greenberg. 328-7647.
- Nov. 24 -- General Meeting, Wednesday, 8 p.m., Homestead High School, Rm. 5 Building C. See notes on page 3 on "A Close Look at Our Off-Shore Birds".

BIRD WATCHERS WATCH A LOT!

- Aug. 17 - Say's Phoebe seen at Anderson Lake by Emelie Curtis.
- Sept. 5 - Calliope Hummingbirds (male and female) seen at Saratoga by Dr. Eve Case.
- Sept. 18- White-crowned Sparrow heard at Saratoga by Dr. Eve Case.
- Sept. 19- White-crowned Sparrow seen at Saratoga by Dr. Eve Case.
- Oct. 1 - Golden-crowned Sparrow seen at Saratoga by Dr. Eve Case.

We would like to hear from anyone else who has seen or heard birds when they first arrive in the area on their migrations.

See also the story by Harley C. Watson, Los Gatos, Calif.

ATTENTION!

All Audubon members who have changed their address should notify Mrs. Fanny Zwaal, 478 Clifton Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95128 of the change. Because THE AVOCET is 3rd class mail it will not be forwarded to the new address.

Your cooperation will make Mrs. Zwaal's job easier and help to speed up delivery of THE AVOCET.

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE. . . . . DON'T WAIT TO BE ASKED!

Men and women are needed to show slides and movies as well as lead field trips; and they don't need to be experts! Enthusiasm and a willingness to learn are probably the most important assets needed. The members of this committee devote as much time as they wish and work with the age group they prefer and on the subject they like best: the bay, backyard birds, foothill etc.

Every possible help including the How-To's of leading field trips and showing slides will be given to anyone interested in joining this committee.

Please call Nancy Holmes at 948-1854 or 948-3262 if you can help.

A CLOSE LOOK AT OUR OFF-SHORE BIRDS

Nov. 24, Wednesday, 8 p.m.  
Public invited--no charge

Homestead High School  
Room 5, Building C

Living between the bay and the ocean as we do, we have a wide variety of aquatic birds to observe. However, most of our attention is given to the shore birds because they are more accessible than the off-shore birds.

Ken Briggs and his superb color slides will bring the inaccessible to us and give us a close look at the off-shore birds of this area.

Mr. Briggs is an entertaining and informative speaker. He is a graduate student in Marine Mammals at San Jose State College, and was at Moss Landing Marine Station for a year. He also has been banding birds with Dr. Mewaldt at Point Reyes Bird Observatory for the past eight months.

BOARD NOTES

R. Jay Andree has been elected by the Board to fill the vacancy created by the recent resignation of Dick Carlson who resigned because he has moved out of the state. We are sorry to lose Dick because he is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable birder.

The SCVAS Memorial Fund received gifts from Miss C. F. Borman and the Ladera Garden Club in appreciation for a talk by Florence LaRiviere.

The anticipated expenses of SCVAS for the year, 1971-72, have been budgeted in the amount of \$742.24.

Tony Look proposes that SCVAS limit its conservation efforts to local issues which concentrate on preservation of habitat within the Santa Clara Valley, and lend only verbal support to regional and national efforts. The Board would like to hear the members' thoughts on this proposed policy.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Dorothy Taylor reports the Sept. 29 Palo Alto Baylands Field Trip mustered 44 persons, seventeen of which were fourth and fifth grade children from Menlo Park's Peninsular School.

The children and their leader separated from the main group and proceeded at a faster pace. Fortunately it enabled the children to spot a Clapper Rail, something the remainder of the group could not do.

It was a good trip for all as forty species were sighted by the two groups.

GOLDEN EAGLE

by

Harley C. Watson

Returning from a little rough riding on the East side of the Lexington Reservoir in the Santa Cruz mountains, just above the town of Los Gatos, I was treated to a little extra enjoyment to add to the morning's outing.

Rounding a curve in my Land Cruiser, I chanced on a large bird feeding on a fresh kill at the base of a steep embankment, fifty yards North of the intersection of Hillsdale Rock Co. road and Alma Bridge Road at an elevation of 715 feet above sea level.

As I drew to within a distance of sixty feet or so, I remarked to my partner, Warren Butman, that the bird appeared to be a young eagle. The remark did not bring the expected reaction, so I stopped the vehicle and told the others to sit tight while I made better identification of the bird.

Approaching slowly and talking to the animal, I got to within six or eight feet of the very obviously most hungry bird. It evidenced no fear of man as it continued to rip off large chunks of its freshly killed gopher snake that must have approached four and a half feet in length, before the reduction began. At this distance I began a study of some of the bird's features, that I might confirm my first identification on my return home.

The bird was a young Golden Eagle; it still had a few white downy feathers poking through the large golden feathers on its back. The broad tail feathers were of a lighter golden brown. The legs were very stocky, yellow and well covered with chap like feathers to within a short distance of the proportionately large talons. The beak was very curved with notches back of the hook. The nostril area had a yellowish plastic appearing band bridging the upper beak.

Having made note of some of the bird's features, I decided to see how close I could approach; of course this brought on a series of shrill shrieks of protest as the bird raised his head from the feeding. At a distance of three feet, he spread his wings forming a canopy over the treasured food. In this position one could hardly see the Animal's head as it continued eating. With its head toward the embankment and I right at its rear, the creature was more or less doomed to staying put. At this point (talking in the most reassuring tone at my command I proceeded to touch the Eagle's back on two occasions; needless to say this was not appreciated too much by the other half.

Having completed by observation, I told Warren to take the Toyota home and come back with his camera as he would not have the opportunity to get a picture like this again in a lifetime. I stayed with the Eagle knowing it to be protected by Federal Law, and also being aware that young boys are prone to stoning such perfect set-ups.

Several cars stopped and spilled out their interested occupants but I asked them to please stay away from the bird. All were curious yet cooperative, barring one individual who roared up in his Jeep and spooked the young Eagle. It wheeled around and came right toward me; I showed courtesy and side stepped to allow the bird to make its way to the far side of the road where there was a small berm and a drop of approximately fifty degrees down through the brush and trees to the lake's edge. All this time the young bird was handicapped by having to drag the remaining generous portion of the snake behind him. When he topped the berm at the roadside there was a large bush that stalled the takeoff. He would have to move twenty feet or so to the right to gain a path through the trees. At this point Warren drew up with camera in hand, but as the Eagle was in deep

shadow under the bush, a good picture was all but impossible. Something had to be done. Knowing by this time that the creature was not about to relinquish his hold on the snake; I did it :- Grabbed the snake by the tail and brought the whole smear out into the sunlight. This move brought a little resentment from my feathered friend, so I backed off while the picture taking went on. Friend Eagle had made his way back up on the berm to a good point of departure.

Meanwhile my not so friendly friend in the Jeep, having several times remarked that he would like to have the bird, returned with a large sheet of what appeared to be heavy toweling and said he was going to take that bird. I informed him that he was not and that if I had to I would pull rank. This statement made him back off.

Mr. Golden had evidently received orders from the tower, for in one swoop lunch in hand, he was off the berm threading his way through the brush and trees like a champion, disturbing not a twig.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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THE AVOCET is published monthly, except July and August. Copy deadline: 2 days after the published date set for the Board of Directors Meeting. Editor: Dick Knoetzsch, 1193 Somerset Dr., Dan Jose, Calif. 95132. Staff: Elsie Hoeck, addressing: Charles and Fanny Zwaal, mailing.