



The Avocet

Volume XVIII, Number 10

December, 1971

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

No General Meeting this month. Please help with the Christmas count.

No Bird Discussion Group, North County, this month.

No Field Trip North this month.

- Dec. 7 -- Board of Directors Meeting, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Ron Stecker, 5357 Rimwood Dr., San Jose, 266-0723. Meeting open to all members--please phone in advance if you plan to attend.
- Dec. 7 -- 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: "Snowy Owls".
- Dec. 8 -- Field Trip South - Oak Hill Memorial Park, Wednesday, 9 a.m. Take Monterey Road (S. 1st St.) South from downtown San Jose to Curtner Ave. Turn right (west) on Curtner and go about a block. Turn left into the park and meet at the parking lot just inside. Leader: Fanny Zwaal, 292-2060.
- Dec. 11 -- Alviso Baylands Field Trip, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Alviso Marina. Go north from the Milpitas - Mt. View Rd. to Alviso at the Alviso turn off. Leader: Bob Gill, 297-1895.
- Dec. 11 -- Save S. F. Bay Association Conference, Saturday, University of California, Berkeley (Bolt School of Law). Cost: \$3.75 for registration and lunch. For further information contact 'Save S. F. Bay Association', P. O. Box 925, Berkeley 94701, or phone (415) 849-3053 or (415) 843-9927.
- Dec. 26 -- Christmas Count, Sunday, 7 a.m. Refer to following article.

CHRISTMAS COUNT 1971

The 1971 count will be held Sunday, December 26. All participating members will meet at Security Savings, 2830 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, at 7 a.m. We will reconvene there at 4:30 p.m. sharp. Please bring a lunch if you wish. Refreshments will be served during the tally.

The count areas will be the same as in past years, i.e. a circular area 15 miles in diameter with center at the junction of Mabury Road and Capitol Avenue, northeast of San Jose City Limits. For specific section boundaries see old AVOCETS (Dec. 1968, '69, '70). Persons wishing to count in a particular sector may call the sector leader and make arrangements. The sector leaders are: Southwest, Jerry Balisteri, 294-6414, Ext. 2253; Evergreen, Mike Brady, 321-7746; Alum Rock, Emilie Curtis, 799-2637; Calaveras, Al Wool, 747-0317; Alviso, Joe Greenberg, 326-8120, Ext. 51.

It would be beneficial to both the count and to those individuals participating for the first time if they would familiarize themselves with their sector, i.e.-habitat types and bird species usually found within them.

There will be a meeting for all sector leaders (all participants are also encouraged to attend) on December 8, 1971, 7:30 p.m. Rm 236, Second floor, Old Science Building, San Jose State College, on Fourth Street between San Fernando St. and San Carlos St. to finalize plans for the upcoming count.

If you have trouble contacting your sector leader or have questions about the count please contact me.

--- Bob Gill, Compiler
Avian Biology Laboratory
San Jose State College
294-6414 Ext. 2657
Home: 297-1895

BOARD NOTES

Dave Nauer has been selected by the Board to be the new Publicity Chairman. Our thanks to Gerry Grow for his past efforts on behalf of SCVAS.

SCVAS will loan its unused mimeograph machine to United New Conservationists for their work.

An updated, revised edition of Birds of the Santa Clara Valley Region will be printed in the not too distant future.

TURKEY VULTURES OR?

Kay Partelow spotted what appeared to be two turkey vultures walking some offshore rocks along the Mendocino Coast last October. She says they looked too small for vultures, but thinks they may have been, since she cannot find a description of any other bird with a red head and vulture shape.

She wants to know if offshore rocks are common haunts of vultures, or were these another bird species?

Anyone who can be of help can contact her at: 816 Ames Ave., Palo Alto 94303

June 24, 1971

Dear Santa Clara County
Audubon Society —

I am about ready to depart for the 12th session of Audubon Camp of the West — made possible through the scholarship you've awarded me, without your aid — there would be no trip for me.

I have stored so much in my head this past year about our Natural World — So many wonderful people have been helping me open my eyes that I'd like to do the same for others — and hope I can bring back many tools to help me accomplish this at the Audubon Camp.

I organized an undergraduate course last year for pre-service elementary school teachers at the Univ. of Calif, Berkeley for training in Urban Ecology. Next year we are a permanent course which I will continue coordinating (sponsored by 4 departments). I hope I can put everything I learn this summer to use.

Thank you for making it possible.

Carole Spurlin

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Frank Farran reports a good turn-out, including several birders inadvertently "captured" from another Audubon group at the Oct. 23 Sunol Regional Park Field Trip. The weather for birding couldn't have been better. There had been a storm of sorts the night before, but by 8:30 it was bright and clear.

Streamside birding in Sunol Park in the fall is excellent because the birds are concentrated near the only water in a large dry area. However, the high point of the day was not along the stream, but hundreds of feet above us - three Golden Eagles. Two of the birds were juveniles and one, an adult. One of the eagles was being harassed by a group of blackbirds. The huge bird went into short evasive dives to shake his persecuters, but to no avail. It was better than any scene from "The Blue Max" or "The Dawn Patrol".

Aerial combat proved to be the order of the day. Other contests witnessed were a Sharp-shinned Hawk versus a Sparrow Hawk and another sharp-shinned Hawk versus a flock of Magpies. In both duels the Accipiter fled the field. The first Sharp-shinned Hawk was outmaneuvered by the falcon and the second was simply outnumbered by the magpies.

Other notable sightings were a pair of Dippers; a number of Belted Kingfishers; California Purple Finches; a Ruby-crowned Kinglet displaying his crown; six species of sparrows, including a Savannah Sparrow and many Lark Sparrows; several Phainopeplas; and quite a few Nuttall Woodpeckers. In all, we identified 39 species.

Kay McCann reports the Oct. 27 Foothill Park Field Trip was enjoyed by 20 'Birders'. 29 species of birds and some deer were observed.

What appeared to be a Melanistic Phase of the Red-tailed Hawk was seen. A Baldpate was seen on Boranda Lake, a rarity in the area.

Thanks to Virginia Bothwell and Frank Farran for their botanical help; and to May Florman for her help in getting everyone properly parked.

Les and Nell Sleeper report a turnout of 38 observers on the Oct. 9 field trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park.

Many duck species, Avocets, Dowitchers, and Tule Wrens were seen in and along the ponds. Three to four hundred white Pelicans put on a great flying exhibition on the bay side of the park.

On returning to the picnic tables a Great Horned Owl put the finishing touches to an exciting trip. 53 species, in all, were observed.



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HELP THE BIRDS!

Immediately after the Jan. 18 oil spill in San Francisco Bay, a large group of volunteers opened a rescue center in Richmond, California which processed approximately 1,350 afflicted water birds.

Their success, which was almost 7 times as successful as any previous bird rescue effort by other organizations, allowed 20% of the birds to survive cleaning, treatment, and captivity.

These volunteers are now trying to form a permanent organization, in order that the experience they gained last winter can be made available should similar disasters occur again. The organization, called International Bird Rescue Research Center, Inc., has trained personnel able to provide assistance in communications, manpower, supply, and wildlife rehabilitation. They also have experience gained from working the Seattle and San Clemente spills. They are included in the Environmental Protection Agency's Contingency Plan for the Western Region.

Anyone interested in supporting or helping the organization can secure more information by contacting:

International Bird Rescue Research Center, Inc.
2701 Eighth Street
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(415) 841-9086

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