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TIME VALUE



Volume 20, Number 6

June, 1973

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 2 Yosemite Field Trip, Saturday, 7 am. Meet where the entrance road to Bridalveil Campground meets the Glacier Point Road. If you plan to attend, please contact the leader. If you plan to stay in a Curry Company cabin or lodge, get reservations now at 415-434-0660. Leader: Joe Greenberg, 326-8120.
- June 5 Bird Discussion Group, South County, Tuesday. Meet at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, or the entrance to Haxone Gardens, Saratoga at 9:30 am. Leader: Eve Case, 867-4748. Bring a lunch.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Frank Farran reports that a dozen members came on the southern California trip. About 75 species of birds were seen including Lawrence's Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Solitary and Warbling Vireos, Western and Cassin's Kingbirds on the same fence, Snipe, Avocet, Phainopepla, Gambel's Quail, Black-throated Grey Warbler, Great Horned Owl on nest, Verdin, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Anna's Hummingbird on nest, Vermilion Flycatcher, Sora Rail, Black-throated Sparrow, Costa's Hummingbird, Townsend's Solitaire, and Cactus Wren.

Virginia Bothwell reports a Chukar in the foothills above Arastradero Road, Palo Alto, last March 20. It stayed a day then left.

Mary Cole, San Jose, spotted a Greater Yellow Legs April 14 near Silver Creek Road at the edge of a cattle pond. She and her family also enjoy watching Bullocks Orioles almost stand on their heads stealing nectar from the Hummingbird feeders they've placed all around the yard.

Ted Graf has spotted Roadrunners on several occasions within the last year. His latest sighting was March 12 behind Anderson Dam on the North shore about 1/4 mile East of the spillway. He and his wife also observed a Roadrunner last July on Calaveras Road about 3 miles East of Levin Park, Milpitas.

SEE, SOMETHING CAN BE DONE!

Late last March Bob Schneider and I became concerned about nesting Red-winged Blackbirds and Meadowlarks in the fields between Mayfield Mall and San Antonio Shopping Center, knowing the fields were to be disced for weeds.

We proposed to the City of Mountain View that either they delay the discing or let us stake all the nests we could find with a commitment to clear the weeds ourselves later on. We were told that only the owner could ask for a delay. While Bob began the effort to reach the owner, the upper field was disced, and bulldozers took out several trees in the lower part, one of which contained a nest full of little Shrikes. Our efforts took about two weeks, involving numerous phone calls and trips for information or interviews. By April 11th Bob had an OK from owner's office and Captain Pierson, in charge of weed abatement, agreed to call the discing contractor. We thought we were home free but were in for a surprise.

Early in the undertaking I asked Lyn Dremalas, teacher at Escondido School in Palo Alto, if her Bird Study Group would like to assist with the staking and weeding in case the City accepted that offer. The group, consisting of 17 4th, 5th, and 6th grade boys were eager to help. Strangely enough one of the boys, Jedd Parker, discovered the identity of the owner just about the same time as Bob did. Jedd's father knew that the land was owned by L. B. Nelson and destined to become a large shopping center known as the "Old Mill." Jedd wrote a letter to Mr. Nelson describing the plight of the birds and offering to stake the nests. He brought it to school, his group signed it, and Lyn took it to the Post Office on her lunch hour. All of us felt we were in a day to day race to beat the discing. That was on April 11th, the same day that Bob thought he had succeeded in delaying the discing. On the 13th Lyn received a call at school asking her to arrange a meeting at the field for Monday, the 16th, to show a representative from the construction firm, Nelco, where the nests were.

Puzzled by the turn of events, Bob, Lyn, and I met with Ray Brownfield and his secretary beside the Continental Market. We found that the whole area was scheduled for immediate grading, not discing. Mr. Nelson had given directions that we were to be allowed to stake off the nesting area, and all his personnel and subcontractors were instructed to stay out of the area until April 21st which is the amount of time Bob had estimated would give most of the birds a chance. Mr. Nelson took this action as a result of Jedd's letter, and Jedd received two personal letters from him which were quoted in an article in the San Jose Mercury. Ray Brownfield told us that Mr. Nelson had read Jedd's letter to a meeting of about 35 developers and contractors from all over the country with the comment, "We can learn from children."

We spent the rest of the afternoon scrounging stakes and flagging material and Lyn and Bob did the staking. The huge machines arrived and began work in the lower part of the area while the birds continued feeding their young inside their sanctuary. I approached the drivers as they were finishing lunch and got some joshing about being a bird lover. Then they began to tell me stories of the nests they had staked themselves and of other attempts to protect the wildlife which their machines inevitably disturb.

Everyone we met or talked to throughout this enterprise was interested and friendly and in many instances talked of their own experiences with birds. People at Mountain View City Hall were very helpful. As of today, May 6th, the staked area is still intact, and Bob sighted a pin-feathered Red-wing, just out of the nest.

Betty W. Emlen

WHERE IT'S AT -- THIS SUMMER

This general note on summer birding is to encourage you to get out and see all the wonders of summer. It is simply about some good places to bird and what to look for there.

Mountain birding is really where it's at in the summer, especially in areas such as Lassen, Sequoia & Kings Canyon and most importantly Yosemite. Here are a few of the birds to keep an eye for: Great Gray Owl, Black-backed, 3-toed, Pileated, and White-headed Woodpeckers, Williamson's Sapsucker, Hermit Warbler, Pine Grosbeaks are often easier to see than Evening Grosbeaks, Purple and Cassin's Finch, Red Crossbills, and above tree line even Rosy Finches. Be sure to bird the Bridalveil area if you're in Yosemite, and don't miss the Henness Ridge Fire Lookout. Hummer feeders attract at least five species--Rufous, Anna's, Allens, Black-chinned, and Calliope. Also there are Mountain Quail, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky Flycatcher, and Lazuli Buntings. The White Mountains offer two breeders seldom found anywhere else in California, Broad-tailed Hummingbird (listen for it's buzzing wing tips) and Virginia's Warbler.

Desert birding in the summer is only for very cool and rugged people--but has a lot to offer. The Salton Sea's Red Hill, Rock Hill, #1, #2, Mouth of the Whitewater, New River, and Finney and Ramer Lakes are excellent areas to see such specialties as: Blue-footed and Brown Bobies, Frigatebird, Gull-billed Tern, Laughing & Yellow-legged (Western) Gulls, both Tree Ducks, Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Ibis, Least Bittern and my favorite Black Skimmer. Regular desert birds here are often Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Blue Grosbeak, Abert's Towhee, Crissal Thrasher, Gila Woodpecker, and Lesser Nighthawks. Yuma and the Colorado River just across from Arizona are good places, especially West Pond. Check for Vermillion Flycatcher, Boat-Tailed Grackle, Osprey, Least Bittern, Black and Sora Rails, and even an Olivaceous Cormorant has been there.

Our local coast areas are also good this time of year. Look for Purple Martins, Bank Swallows, and specifically on San Gregoria Road between signposts 3.45 and 3.31 (the numbers on small, tall, thin white county road markers) look for Grasshopper Sparrows (don't forget to listen for their buzzing.) Check Pigeon Point for the brown Marbled Murrelets. At super Ano Nuevo look for Harlequin Ducks, Black Brandts, Black Swifts, Bank Swallows, and the cliff and rock nesting Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemots. Just south check Wadell Creek for Vaux's Swifts, Teal and Swallows. At Moss Landing, starting in July and August, the Elegant Terns can be seen often with Forster's, Caspian, and sometimes even Common Terns. Speaking of terns keep half an eye peeled for Least Terns on the coast.

Late migrant looking can sometimes be successful in June at Furnace Creek and Scotty's Castle in Death Valley--look especially for rare eastern warblers and birds like Indigo Bunting. Also for late migrants see Morongo Valley, Whitewater Ranch, and Yucca Valley Golf course (dirt road-north side to ponds and sometimes Solitary Sandpipers.) Wied's Crested Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Costa's Hummingbird, Bell's Vireo, Vermillion Flycatcher are all at Morongo. Regular desert species are there too.

Have a good summer birding!

Bob Yutzy

SPRING TURKEY HUNT

Eugenia McClay, 3316 Norwood Avenue, San Jose, sent the following article to The Avocet. It appeared in the San Jose News, April 26, 1973, page 81 in Joe Dearing's column Outdoors:

Amorous Turkeys Elude Gun-Totin' 'Suitors'

California turkey hunters who opened a 16 day season last Saturday on gobblers have not been thinning out the big birds to any extent. The biggest and probably the smartest of our game birds, the male wild turkey is exceptionally cagey this time of year, which is the mating and nesting season. It is extremely difficult to get a glimpse of the old boys. They don't respond readily to man-made calls, however deceiving they may sound to the human ear. This inborn survival trait diminishes some when the nesting season ends, but not enough to make a wild turkey an easy target to come by.

The bag of turkeys is reportedly down in San Luis Obispo County, which has an estimated wild turkey population of no less than 5,000 greatest of any county in the state. Too, getting permission to hunt on private land there, which most of the county is comprised of has been practically impossible. A few ranchers sell hunting privileges, but their prices are high. In fact, there are a lot of farmers in the 14 counties and part of another open to turkey hunting who are adamantly against such a season. And there are other than ranchers who believe any kind of spring hunting should be outlawed. Following are remarks on the subject from Eugenia McClay of San Jose:

"I was shocked to read in your column that the California Fish and Game Commission had opened a hunting season of any kind in the spring. They, of all people, would know that this is the most crucial time in the life cycle of our wild birds and animals. This is the nesting season of all birds, including wild turkey, quail, chukar, grouse, doves, bandtailed pigeons and pheasants. It seems to me that whoever authorized a spring hunting season was not thinking far into the future. How can we get the California Fish and Game Commission to reconsider, and have only a fall harvest--or hunting season--for all-game.

LES SLEEPER

The sudden and untimely passing of Les Sleeper has deprived this Society of a dedicated conservationist and a most capable leader. He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

Les loved young people. His sympathetic understanding of them made him eminently successful as a teacher, and many youngsters will, undoubtedly, grow into more substantial and knowledgeable citizens because of their contact with him.

Deeply interested in all aspects of Mother Nature--particularly birds--Les was always willing to share his extensive knowledge of trees, plants and wildlife. As a long time member of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Les was always quietly active in behalf of the best interests of the Society. As a frequent leader of Field Trips he was completely unselfish of his time and energy, making sure that every one present saw all that was to be seen in the area. His 'conversational comments' about the life-history and the behaviorisms of the birds to be seen were always informative, not only to beginners, but also to the experienced birders on any field trip.

It is with deep sadness that we note his passing; but it is with great gratitude that we remember him for his far reaching love of nature, and particularly for his unstinted sharing of his knowledge, and his quiet, efficient leadership.

Surely his name is written in the Great Book of "those who loved and served their fellowmen!"

NEW BIRD BOOK

Audubon Vice President/Biology Roland C. Clement is author of a new bird guide, American Birds, illustrated with color photographs rather than drawings. Pocket-sized and paper-covered, it affords a stimulating introduction as well as describing 120 species; good for the beginner and an interesting addition to any birding library. For sale from National Audubon Society Service Department, \$1.45.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Keith Adams	6280 Desert Flame Drive	San Jose, California 95120
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ENERGY MESSAGE 'DISAPPOINTING' SAY ECONOMIST

"In its emphasis on increasing supply rather than curbing demand, President Nixon's April 18 energy message is a disappointment," according to Audubon staff economist Robert K. Davis. The President's message calls for reliance on domestic fossil fuel (oil, natural gas, increased use of coal) for the short term, with a priority of nuclear- and solar-generated power as long term goals. "Mr. Nixon gives industry about everything it wants," said Davis, pointing to his support of the Alaska pipeline, oil shale, and new off-shore oil exploration. Specifics for a strong program of energy conservation are not outlined.

AN EDITOR IS NEEDED FOR THE AVOCET

Because of pressures of other commitments and not being able to devote as much time as I wish to The Avocet, this will be my last issue as Editor. Anyone interested in contributing to the cause, and looking for a way in which to do it please contact me at 1193 Somerset Drive, San Jose, 95132, or 259-7827. I'll explain what has to be done, and give you a hand in getting out the first couple of issues next fall if you wish.

My thanks to the Staff, all who have contributed material to the paper, and those who've offered constructive criticism. It was a great experience. Have an enjoyable summer!

Dick Knoetzsch

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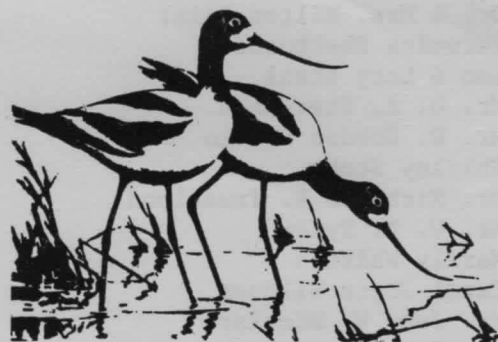
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