

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

1176 Emerson Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301  
Telephone: (415) 328-5313

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT No. 1290  
San Jose, Calif.



# The Avocet

TIME VALUE

Volume 20, Number 8

October 1973

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- October 2 Board of Director's Meeting Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 1176 Emerson St. Palo Alto 328-5313
- October 2 Audubon Wildlife Film "The Living Jungle" Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Spangenberg Auditorium Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Rd. Palo Alto--see September AVOCET for particulars.
- October 3 Audubon Wildlife Film "The Living Jungle" Wednesday, 8:00 PM at Morris Dailey Auditorium, CSUSJ, San Jose--see September AVOCET
- October 9 Bird Discussion Group Tuesday, 9:30 AM at the home of Eve Case 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga 867-4748 The topic will be: "Summer Bird Experiences"
- October 10 Field Trip South Wednesday, 9:00 AM Coyote River Park--take the Monterey Rd. (US 101) to Morgan Hill, then go east on Main Ave. to the first stop-light. Just one block to meeting place. Leaders: Emmanuel and Mary Taylor (408) 779-9097
- October 14 Field Trip Greater Monterey area Sunday 7:00 AM to 10:00 AM at Pt. Pinos, Pacific Grove. Go approximately two miles past Lovers Pt. on Ocean View Blvd, to pond on Golf Course; will also bird on Coast Guard Pier, Carmel River mouth, Moss Landing, and perhaps Salinas River mouth for rare warblers. Be prepared for wet feet!! Leader: Bob Yutzy 968-8804
- October 17 General Meeting (North) Wednesday, 7:30 PM at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center--end of Embarcadero Rd., parking to the right, Center to the left--please see article in this AVOCET about program
- October 21 Sesame Street's Malvina Reynolds Sunday, 2:00 PM Flint Center on the De Anza Campus--more information in this AVOCET

- October 23 General Meeting South Tuesday, 7:30 PM Rose Garden Branch of the San Jose Library, Dana & Naglee Streets, San Jose--please refer to article in this AVOCET about program.
- October 25 Bird Discussion Group Thursday, 9:00 Am at the home of Flora Hauck 1275 Martin Ave. Palo Alto 327-4868 A trip to Flora's beach house is planned (weather permitting). Topic: "Turnstones and Surfbirds" Bring lunch and binoculars
- October 26 Four Day Field Trip Friday through Monday Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuges. Contact leader early: Frank Farran 252-3874--please see note in this AVOCET
- October 31 Audubon Wildlife Film "West Side Story--Mexico to Alaska" Wednesday 8:00 PM at Morris Dailey Auditorium, CSUSJ - see note in this AVOCET
- November 1 Audubon Wildlife Film "West Side Story--Mexico to Alaska" Thursday 7:30 PM at Spangenberg Auditorium, Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Rd. Palo Alto--see note in this AVOCET
- November 6 Board of Director's Meeting Tuesday, 7:30 PM--same address as previously noted Board Meetings
- November 14 Field Trip South Wednesday, 8:30 AM Sunol Regional Park--Nimitz Freeway to Mission Blvd., east on Mission Blvd. 2 blocks. North on US 680 nine miles to Calaveras Rd., then south on Calaveras about 4 miles. Left at sign to Park headquarters; we'll meet at headquarters area until 9:00 AM Leader: Ted Graf 296-6499



#### KLAMATH BASIN FIELD TRIP

A short note on this trip might be in order; the Klamath Basin is truly an outstanding place for waterfowl. There are 5 refuges within the area, and a large proportion of migrating waterfowl funnel into the Basin and remain until the weather drives them further south. We can expect to see Snow, Canada, and White-fronted Geese, 10 or more species of Ducks, and perhaps 3 different Grebes. We should see a variety of hawks: Ferruginous, Swainson's, Marsh, Cooper's, Red-tails, and Sparrow Hawk (now called American Kestrel). If we're lucky we might see a Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, or Peregrine Falcon. We should see White Pelicans and a variety of passerines including Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Lincoln Sparrow. At the very least the flocks of waterfowl should be enormous.

Frank Farran

## SPECIAL EVENT--A BIRTHDAY PARTY

Help celebrate Mrs. Eva McRae's 80th birthday with some of her long-time Audubon friends. "Mrs. Mac" is a charter member of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and the coiner of that glorious title AVOCET (April 1954). Mrs. McRae spent some 30 years on the staff at the "old" San Jose State, some 24 years as head of that mysterious place, the Biology Storeroom. Sponsored by the faculty and staff at CSUSJ, the party is being held on Saturday, October 6, at 6:30 PM, at Marco's Restaurant (formerly Franciscan Restaurant), corner of Meridian and Hamilton in San Jose, CA. Dinner reservations are \$4.00/person and must be reserved in advance at the Biology Office of CSUSJ. Make checks payable to CSUSJ, San Jose, 95192--attention Mrs. Louise Zones. Since this affair is early in the month, and the AVOCET is a victim of the vagaries of the Post Office, the printer, the editor, and God, please call Mrs. Zones first about reservations. The phone number of the Biology Office is 277-2355.

## FIELD TRIP NOTES

Ted Chandik reports that the September 15 jaunt to Pescadero Marsh and Ano Nuevo Point was a birder's delight -- a total of 73 species for the day. Here are some of the more noteworthy sightings: Sooty Shearwaters (hundreds of these), a Black Brant, 5 Harlequin Ducks, Snowy Plovers, 3 Knots, 2 Pectoral Sandpipers -- these were all sighted at Ano Nuevo. Pescadero Creek and the Marsh yielded an elusive Virginia Rail and 3 Baird's Sandpipers. For mammalers (I made that up; it's somebody who watches mammals) there were Harbor Seals, Northern Elephant Seals, and Seal Lions.

## GETTING BIGGER

I'm not certain that the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is the type of organization to blow its horn about size, but we are getting to be pretty fair size now. The most recent issue of Audubon shows that we are in the Top Ten category. Our membership at the end of July (1973) was reported as 1,634, and that's a lot of AVOCETS!!



## WHERE IT'S AT

October and November are the times to look for vagrant warblers and also our regular seabirds, shorebirds, and the returning waterfowl. The best places are areas like Monterey and Pt. Reyes, or any of the coastal "traps" and refuges. A good spot might yield some of the following: Blackpoll, Palm, Black and White, or Tennessee Warblers, as well as American Redstart or Northern Waterthrush. In early September Nashville, Hermit, Townsend's and MacGillivray's -- all northern California mountain breeders -- were moving through. If you feel like a long trip, try Death Valley: Oasis, Furnace Creek Deep Springs. This is usually good for vagrant warblers and other eastern specialties -- Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink and Dickcissel; 10 Northern Waterthrushes were seen one September weekend. By the way, both Pt. Pinos and Pt. Reyes have reported Bobolink. As I have mentioned before, keep an eye out for Rose-breasted Grosbeak wherever you are.

Ducks and Geese are coming back now, so look for European Widgeon, Blue and Green-wing Teal (including a European race of Green-wing), at the Palo Alto flood basin and Baylands. If you get a chance visit one of the Central Valley refuges: Merced, Sacramento, Grey Lodge, or Los Baños. Look for geese, ducks, cranes, the various water-birds, and check for broad-winged hawks -- Swainson's, Ferruginous, Rough-legged, and the Harlan's race of Redtails. A good place for many of the above are the Tule-Klamath Refuges (see note on Klamath Basin Field Trip); look for Mountain Plovers in the Valley, especially near Merced.

Anywhere along the coast can be productive -- Princeton Harbor, Ano Nueve, Pescadero (last year's Curlew Peep was seen again) and of course the much-mentioned Monterey and Pt. Reyes. If you're traveling south try Morro Bay (Peregrine Falcon on Morro Rock), San Diego; north try Eureka. Look for Marbled Murrelet's, and other Alcids or Shearwaters Terns, Jaegers, and perhaps Black-footed Albatross. Get on a boat trip if you can; more sightings and better looks at what you are able to see!!

Some of the usual and good species include Common and Arctic Terns, many Black-footed Albatross, Black and Ashy Petrels, rarely Wilson's and Fork-tailed, perhaps Tufted Puffins, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Sooty, Pink-footed and New Zealand Shearwaters, Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklets, Red Phalaropes, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Sabine's Gull, Ancient and Xantus Murrelets, and possibly Skua. Boat trips out of Eureka might see Laysan Albatross, and a good chance of Fork-tailed Petrels and Skua. San Diego (which I feel is the best non-bay pelagic trip) just might see some of the following: Least and Leach's Petrel, possibly a Wilson's, and maybe Craveri's and Xantus Murrelet, Frigatebird (Magnificent!!), Red-billed Tropic-bird, Royal Tern, Manx Shearwater, and Long-tailed Jaeger. If you see all of the above this fall, you're going to be very busy!!

Good Luck, and let me know what you see.

Bob Yutzy



## NEW A.O.U. CHECKLIST REVISIONS

In April of this year, THE AUK (90:411-419) listed a series of lumps or splits in bird species. The entire list is somewhat long and involved, so Bob Yutzy, AVOCET field note editor, has listed those revisions which would be most important to California birders. Since most field guides are arranged in phylogenetic sequence, we'll do the same.

The Slender-billed Shearwater is considered a Short-tailed Shearwater, and the Blue Goose is lumped with Snow Goose. Green-wing and Common Teal are merged as Green-wing Teal. Harlan's Hawk is now considered a race of the Red-tail, the Pigeon Hawk is to be called Merlin and the Sparrow Hawk becomes the American Kestrel. Thayer's Gull (formerly in the Herring Gull group) has been elevated to full species. All of the Flickers are considered conspecific and may be referred to as Common Flickers, and Traill's Flycatcher has been split into two species, the Willow Flycatcher (Western type) and the Alder Flycatcher (the Eastern type). Audubon's and Myrtle Warblers are lumped as Yellow-rumped Warbler, and the Bullock's and Baltimore Oriole have been merged as the Northern Oriole. The Junco group has been split in two groups, the Dark-eyed and the Yellow-eyed Juncos.

Incidentally two birding organizations, the "600" Club and the American Birding Association, have decided not to make these full changes at least until the new A.O.U. checklist is printed.

## FOOD COLORING FOR HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS

The AVOCET received a note of caution from the Oakland Audubon Society regarding use of "Red 2" dye (amaranth) as a food coloring in hummingbird feeders. Red 2 is often used in the commercially prepared sweeteners sold to attract hummers, as well as the little bottles of red coloring we use in our own foods. Some work done in Russia a couple of years ago indicates that Red 2 can cause cancer, birth defects, and fetal deaths in laboratory animals. In February 1973 Consumer Reports reported that certain dosages of the dye caused a variety of deformities in chick embryos. With winter on the way, and the cold snap experience of last year fresh in our mind, we know that weather can be rough enough on hummers. Perhaps we can't change the weather, but we could use other means to attract hummers to our feeders; a bit of bright red string or some such device might work just as well.

## AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAPPENING AND CONCERT

We thought a short note on this affair might be in order, since it appears in our Calendar of Events. This is a concert sponsored by the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) and the proceeds will go into a legal defense fund for current and future environmental battles. Composer-folk singer Malvina Reynolds will perform her "Little Boxes" with Larry Hanks. Billed as SESAME STREET'S MALVINA REYNOLDS, the concert starts at 2 PM on Sunday, October 21 at Flint Center on the De Anza College Campus (21250 Steven's Creek Blvd.--Cupertino, CA). Tickets are \$2.00 a person, and there will be a 1:30 happening with BIG BIRD. By the way, if you can't go, but would like to make a donation to PCC's legal defense fund, the address is 1176 Emerson St.--Palo Alto, CA 94301. For more information on this environmental extravaganza, give PCC a ring at (415) 328-5313.

## NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD PROGRAM

Last spring the AVOCET carried a few notes on the nesting program, an ongoing and monumental effort originating from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. This note will serve as a THANKS and a reminder to those Audubon members who participated in the program; with the breeding season over with (for birds anyway) it's time to turn in nest cards for the year. Please mail them to me c/o the Avian Biology Laboratory, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192. By the way, if anyone has any questions about the cards or, better yet, would like to participate next year, just give me a call at (408) 867-5363. A summary of this years program and a list of those kind people who contributed will appear in a later issue of AVOCET

Sincerely,  
Ms. Diana Henry-Matthiesen  
Coordinator, SJSU Regional Center  
North American Nest Record Program



## A DAY IN COURT -- CONCLUSION

In the September issue of THE AVOCET we ran an article on the lawsuit over "Casey Slough," a 90-acre parcel of marshlands at Mountain View. Peninsula conservation organizations were unanimous in their opposition to filling this unique area with garbage from San Francisco. Needless to say, environmental battles cost money, and we did ask for donations from our members. We wish to thank those people who were kind enough to help out.

On Tuesday (September 18) the U. S. District Court rejected the suit, dissolved a temporary restraining order against the city of Mountain View, and refused to issue an injunction against further work; the only recourse would have been appeal to the Circuit Court. One of the attorneys representing Peninsula environmental organizations summed it up this way: "the city (Mt. View) and the scavengers and San Francisco can go on paying for litigation, but we can't." Enough said, though the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will still accept donations earmarked "Casey Slough;" the Judge's ruling dissolved everything but the bills!!

## AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

A comment on the second in the series of films from the Audubon Screen Tour should be in order; the following refers to the October 31 showing (San Jose) and the November 1 screening in Palo Alto.

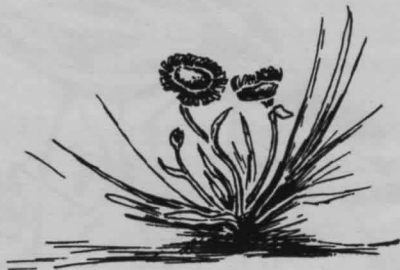
The film is titled "West Side Story -- Mexico to Alaska" and is narrated by Mr. Walter H. Berlet. Mr. Berlet will take us up the western coast of North America, showing seasonal changes and the attendant changes in wildlife populations and activities. We'll see birds returning from their wintering grounds in Mexico, otter and sea lion off summer California coasts, and Kodiak bears fishing in salmon-crowded Alaskan streams. Why not make it an evening at the movies; you don't even need a TV!!

## GENERAL MEETINGS

As Nancy Holmes mentioned in her "Presidential Address" in the last AVOCET, we are going to hold two General Meetings each month (one in Palo Alto, the other in San Jose) and see how it works out. As the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society grows in membership, it becomes increasingly difficult to find places that are in fact "central" to our people; thus the two meetings. We invite any of our members to bring their friends to these affairs; refreshments are served, there is no charge, and it's an ideal way to meet other people who share your interests, concerns, and planet. Octobers' meetings are as follows:

As noted in the Calendar of Events the October 17 General Meeting is being held at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center at 7:30 PM. The program will feature a talk/slide presentation by Ted Chandik on the "Birds of East Africa;" Ted just recently returned from an extended field trip to Africa, where he acted as the staff Naturalist. By the way, refreshments will be served first, and the program will get underway about 8:15. This meeting is being co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto's Nature and Science Department and we thank them for their help.

The following Tuesday, October 23, the "southern" General Meeting is being held at the Rose Garden Branch of the San Jose Public Library -- 7:30 PM. This month we feature a film "On Coyote Trails," photographed by Gerald L. Coward. Shot in the Turnbull Canyon area of the Puente Hills in California, we'll see the animal wild and free -- a tribute to the patience and perserverance of the photographer. As with this meeting and the one in Palo Alto; please come, bring your friends, and meet some new friends.



Kay McCann  
Florence LaRiviere

## CONSERVATION EDITOR

The AVOCET is in need of a conservation editor /chairperson, to help keep members posted on environmental issues, legislation in the mill, lawsuits pending in places around the country, etc. Jerry Grow, who has handled the job so admirably in the past, finds that his own job requires more and more of his time. THE AVOCET thanks Jerry for all his time and effort in the past; we hate to loose him. Since wild-life is in no position to speak out on these matters (let alone defend itself), it is up to the "people".

Actually we would be interested in a committee of persons; perhaps each party could follow their own area of interest, such as local, state, or national issues. Anyone who might be interested in taking on this worthwhile cause is asked is asked to contact Nancy Holmes--843 Moana Ct. Palo Alto, CA 94306 (948-1854). By the way, there's a Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) scheduled at the Oakland Museum on October 6; someone might like to attend as our Conservation Chairperson.

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

THE AVOCET was put together in a big rush this month so I apologize for some of the human and topographical errors that no doubt slipped through. Perhaps no better example of this sort of thing is the one directly above in the article about a new Conservation Chairman; notice in the 3rd line, 2nd paragraph that delightful "is asked is asked" -- a perfect example!! On the other hand, THE AVOCET does need a Conservation Chairperson (the Chairman above was a slip) so you have all been asked--TWICE.



THE AVOCET is published monthly, except July & August. Copy deadline is 15th of month. Editor: Dave Nauer PO 4501 San Jose, CA 95126. Phone: 295-9917

