

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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## The Avocet

TIME VALUE

Volume 20 Number 10

December 1973

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- December 4 Bird Discussion Group Tuesday, 9:30 AM at the home of Eve Case 20537 Verde Vist Lane, Saratoga, CA Topic: "Migratory Land Birds to be seen in Santa Clara Valley Gardens in winter"
- December 8 Alviso Baylands Field Trip Saturday 9:00 AM. Mt. View-Alviso Rd. east off Bayshore. North to Alviso just east of SP tracks. Meet on Gold St. east of Marina Sea Food Grotto. We'll walk several miles to historic settlement of Drawbridge. Bring lunch and water. Leader: Allen Jamieson 327-8310
- December 10 Board of Director's Meeting Monday, 7:30 PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above logo at top of this page) Members are welcome
- December 12 Field Trip South Loma Prieta Rd., Wednesday, 9:00 AM -- Highway 17 south from Los Gatos about 6 miles to Summit Rd. On Summit go 1 mile past school. Left on Loma Prieta 1 and 1/3 miles to mail box 24795 (Duncan is name on box). Leader: Margaret Henderson 353-3041
- December 15 Audubon Christmas Count Saturday - Please see article in this AVOCET for particulars for this event. Also note information in Bob Yutzy's Where It's At column for other Counts in other areas.
- January 9 Field Trip South Mt. Hermon, Wednesday, 9:00 AM. Highway 17 to Mt. Hermon Rd. turn off. 4½ miles on Mt. Hermon Rd. to Safeway Store. Left at Safeway one block and then left again on Conference Dr. One mile to parking lot on right. Bring lunch. We will meet at Mary Lou Grunigen's Cabin. Birding Leader: Frank Farran 252-3874

January 19-20 Local Owl Trip 3:30 AM Saturday and Sunday. Sign up at January 16 General Meeting (see next AVOCET for details), or if you can't attend send me (Bob Yutzy) a self-addressed stamped envelope, including the number of people attending and day preferred. Leaders: Bob Yutzy, 1625 Hazelaar Way, Los Altos, CA 94022 also Ted Chandik, Bob Dyer, and Mike Brady.

January 24 Audubon Wildlife Film Thursday, 7:30 PM, Spangenberg Auditorium of Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA. The film: "What Have You Done With My Country" -- see next month's AVOCET for particulars.

#### FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Klamath Basin -- as expected we saw enormous flocks of Ducks (12 species) and Geese (4 species), and some interesting Passerine birds such as a Townsend's Solitaire. However, the high point of the trip was the raptors. A beautiful pair of Rough-legged Hawks went over while we were eating lunch, followed by a Golden Eagle. Later in the day while birding along the base of a craggy rimrock, we also saw Bald and Golden Eagles, a Prairie Falcon, several Red-tails and a Shrike -- all at one car stop. The problem was which bird to watch.

Frank Farran

Palo Alto Foothills Park -- (October 31) attended by 12 birders; weather was beautiful. Some 21 species were sighted, notable among them being 2 Red-breasted Sapsuckers in the picnic area, and on Boronda Lake (in addition to the usual Coots) a Green-winged Teal and a female Canvasback.

Barbara Allen

Mike Brady reports that the November 18 "beginners" trip to Alum Rock Park (in the wind and rain) was a good one. They saw 18 species, the most notable being the Golden Eagle and a Dipper (singing yet -- you don't always hear that) along the Penetencia Creek.

The Editor (Dave Nauer) would like to add that on the same morning as Mike's trip (and in the same cold wind and rain) I saw 5 Golden Eagles circling over Silver Creek Road; that area is south of Alum Rock Park. Five Eagles at the same time is a thrilling sight!

#### NEEDED -- OLD MAGAZINES

Old magazines, pictures of animals, flowers, etc. are desperately needed for some Elementary Education projects in the Alum Rock School District (San Jose). If anyone has such items for a worthy cause, please leave items at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above the AVOCET logo on the front of this newsletter) or call Mary Hallesy (327-4822) to make arrangements.

## WHERE IT'S AT

December brings Christmas Counts, ducks, geese, wintering hawks, land visitors, and the beginning of the southerly Gray Whale migration.

Christmas Counts offer excellent opportunities to learn more about birds, have some fun, and help gather bird population data.

### Christmas Count Dates:

Dec. 15 - San Jose	Dec. 16 - Santa Cruz	Dec. 22 - Pt. Reyes	Dec. 28 - Los Banos
Dec. 16 - Oakland	Dec. 17 - Palo Alto	Dec. 27 - Monterey	Dec. 29 - W. Sonoma

To join these counts see American Birds (April 1973), Christmas Count Issue, and contact the individual count compiler at the end of each Count. By the way, the Ohlones Audubon Society is having a January 26 (Saturday) Pelagic Trip from Moss Landing; \$9 adults and \$6 for under 16's. This will probably be a rough weather affair but a very productive one. For tickets contact: Tom Southworth, 1238 Mountain Blvd., Oakland, CA 94611

The best bird of the season and probably the most "seeable" is undoubtedly the Bar-tailed Godwit in Stinson Beach. This bird was first seen on Oct. 27 and was still present by Nov. 18, and will probably winter there. This is a bird of Subarctic Eurasia and Alaska which winters normally to Africa, Australia and New Zealand; it is only accidental on the Atlantic coast. The bird has a typical Godwit bill, body slightly smaller than Marbled. Best field marks are the whitish undertail and belly (Marbled is buffy) and the light back and rump patch in flight. The bird has been found just off Route 1 north of Stinson Beach, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile past Stinson Beach State Park on the west side of road turn left at the blue sign for Sea Drift Homes, continue to Sea Drift locked gate and park. Take the right road just inside the gate approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. The bird is usually on the mudflat shore of the right side of the road, often feeding with other Godwits, that is at the waters' edge near you, across from lot marker 179. Also up to 3 Golden Plovers have been here also. One Thick-billed Murre is still in Monterey between Cannery and the Coast Guard Pier. This bird is best identified by its shorted bill with a down slope to it's upper mandible and the pointedness of the white of the breast meeting the black of the throat. Also a Yellow-billed Loon was seen off the pier; look for a common loon type with a light to yellow large bill with lower mandible curving upwards and a postauricular spot. The pier has also produced Red-necked Grebes which are often seen at Bedega Harbor mouth. It appears as though there will be no winter invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Evening Grosbeaks as there was last year but we have had a large influx of Red Phalaropes at the Dumbarton Bridge, Pt. Reyes, and even one in a swimming pool in Atherton!

Waterfowl should be looked for in ponds, lakes, and especially in the refuges where they tend to concentrate during hunting season. Look up north (Honey Lake, Tule Klamath) for Whistling Swans. The refuges should produce White-fronted and Snow Geese and even Ross's and Blue (Blue phase of Snow). Along the coast and at Tule Klamath there is always a chance of an Emperor Goose. The European Wigeon and Blue-winged Teal are at the baylands in Palo Alto, often behind the duck pond. King and possibly Common Eiders are showing up in Bolinas Lagoon and Tomales Bay. Black-bellied Tree Ducks have been seen in the Salton Sea

Lake Merritt in Oakland has a good nature center, small animal and bird zoo and the lake almost always produces Common and Barrows Goldeneyes, with possibly Redheads and Hooded Mergansers. This is a fine short trip and the naturalists are most helpful. Alongside Sandy Mush Road in the fields, driving to Merced National Wildlife

(concluded on next page)

Refuge one can often find Mountain Plovers. Rock Sandpipers can often be found on the west side of Bodega Head, though this is a tough bird to identify and a rough place to bird. Monterey is the best place to look for Fulmars. Wintering Hawks should be look for near refuges and in the Valley. They seem to be especially rich from Sacramento and Grey Lodge north. Look for Rough-legged, Harlans race and possibly a Ferruginous. Bald Eagles are often plentiful at Tule Klamath. Pigeon Hawks (Merlins) and Peregrine Falcons are to be seen and being seen in many areas. No details -- it appears such notes increase falconers predating (capturing). Northern Shrikes should be looked for to the North at Bodega Head, Honey Lake, etc. Groups of Cedar Waxwings might produce Bohemian. Mew Gulls seem to be thick at Pt. Reyes, Monterey, and elsewhere. Look for immature Glaucous Gulls at the dumps, where you might also find Tri-colored Blackbirds. Many will be seeking the Sharp-tailed Sparrow and the Black Rail at the Audubon Sanctuary marsh, just east of the Dumbarton Bridge. Rufous-crowned Sparrows seem to found year round on steep hilly areas of Weller Rd. and some places in Alum Rock Park, in San Jose. In backyard feeders and anywhere look for White-throated Sparrows with the White-crowns. Also look for Slate-colored with Oregon Juncos, all called Dark-eyed now. A Sage Thrasher has been in a San Jose back yard for at least four weeks; what might you have in your yard? A Clay-colored Sparrow was seen at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin. Honey Lake is the place for Longspurs, Snow Buntings, Tree and Harris Sparrows. Death Valley is also quite good for many of these. It has recently produced Dickcissel, Ground Dove, Ovenbird, Black-throated Green and Palm Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, Redheads, Prairie Falcons, (two playful ones), Tree Sparrows, and, as it often does in winter, Rusty Blackbirds.

Good Counting.

Bob Yutzy

#### OPERATION NATURE GUIDE

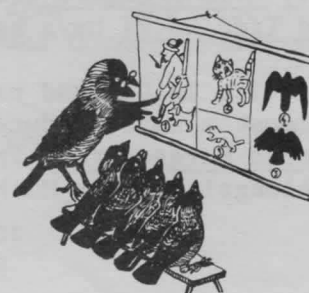
Many of us have found that one of the most enjoyable aspects of birding is to introduce a birder from another area to the birds of one's own area. Doubtless with this in mind, the people with the Tahoma Audubon Society have formed "Operation Nature Guide."

The "Operation Nature Guide Directory" currently lists names of people from 30 Western Audubon Chapters, willing and eager to guide traveling Auduboners to local natural habitats to see birds -- or wildflowers, trees, or other interests.

We would like the names of 5 to 10 volunteers from our Chapter. You need not be an expert birder. You should be familiar with several of the local natural areas of interest, and willing on fairly short notice a few times a year to help a fellow Auduboner. If interested please call Frank Farran at 252-3874.

Any Audubon member may obtain a copy of the "Operation Nature Guide Directory" by sending 25¢ to:

OPERATION NATURE GUIDE  
34915 4th Ave. South  
Federal Way  
Washington 98002



WORLDLY GOODS

S.C.V.A.S. Budget 1973-1974

<u>Expended 1972-73</u>		<u>Proposed 1973-74</u>
Production	1400.00	2000.00
Mailing	330.00	345.00
<u>Avocet</u> Computer label costs	134.00	200.00
Editor	20.00	20.00
Postage for other mailings	-0-	100.00
President	25.00	25.00
Secretary	10.00	10.00
Treasurer	25.00	25.00
Registrar	33.00	-0-
Conservation Chmn.	50.00	50.00
Membership Chmn.	25.00	5.00
Education Chmn.	10.00	-0-
Field Trips Chmn.	29.97	25.00
Program Chmn.	-0-	10.00 North 25.00 South
Publicity	28.66	30.00
Social expenses	-0-	100.00
Tax report filing fee	5.00	5.00
Audit	50.00	50.00
Gift memberships	36.00	36.00
Christmas Bird Count	64.14	65.00
Audubon telephone	97.57	45.00
California Tomorrow	12.00	12.00
Save SF Bay Assoc Westbay	500.00	
Memb.	10.00	10.00
Pt. Reyes Bird Obs.	150.00	200.00
Sierra Club Coast Fund	500.00	-0-
Condor Fund	300.00	300.00
Sempervirens Fund	300.00	350.00
Save the Redwoods League	100.00	150.00
Audubon Camp 1/2 schols	225.00	235.00
United New Conservationists	100.00	100.00
Nature Conservancy Prop. 14	500.00	
SF Bay Project	500.00	1000.00
Insurance	53.00	53.00
Subscriptions <u>Audubon Leader</u>	60.00	60.00
Peninsula Conservation Center	300.00	900.00
Casey Slough Fund	-0-	500.00
Totals	<u>5983.34</u>	<u>7041.00</u>

Authentic.

Total receipts fiscal year ending May 31, 1973: \$7581.00 (Memorial Funds excluded)

Savings Account present balance: \$7801.01

Included are: W. A. Proctor Memorial 431.00 (for SSF Bay NWR)  
Emily Smith 655.00 (for Bird Obs.  
Building 94.00 Castle Rock)  
Library 344.70  
Memorial 57.00

Joyce T. Todd  
Treasurer  
October 31, 1973

## NOTES ON THOSE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETINGS

There are no General Meetings in December. You are hereby instructed to:

- (1) HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
- (2) HAVE A VERY PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

## CHRISTMAS COUNT 1973

As a large portion of the local world must know by now, Saturday, December 15 is day of the Audubon Christmas Count. Sponsored locally by some 200 Audubon Chapters in all 50 States and the provinces of Canada, the Count information is used by professional ornithologists to further studies in such areas as migration, population, and distribution. Aside from its scientific or even aesthetic values, the Count brings together veteran, amateur, and neophyte birders for a day afield.

For those who are already "expert" birders, most of what follows may be twice-told tales. But for those with lesser experience -- Remember! -- you don't have to be an accomplished birder to participate. Any newcomer to birding can gain valuable field experience by accompanying those with more "birding seniority" -- it's the Count that's important, not the hash marks. We'd like to have as many people in the field as is possible to help with the 1973 survey. Generally things will begin early in the morning and then we meet to tally up that evening.

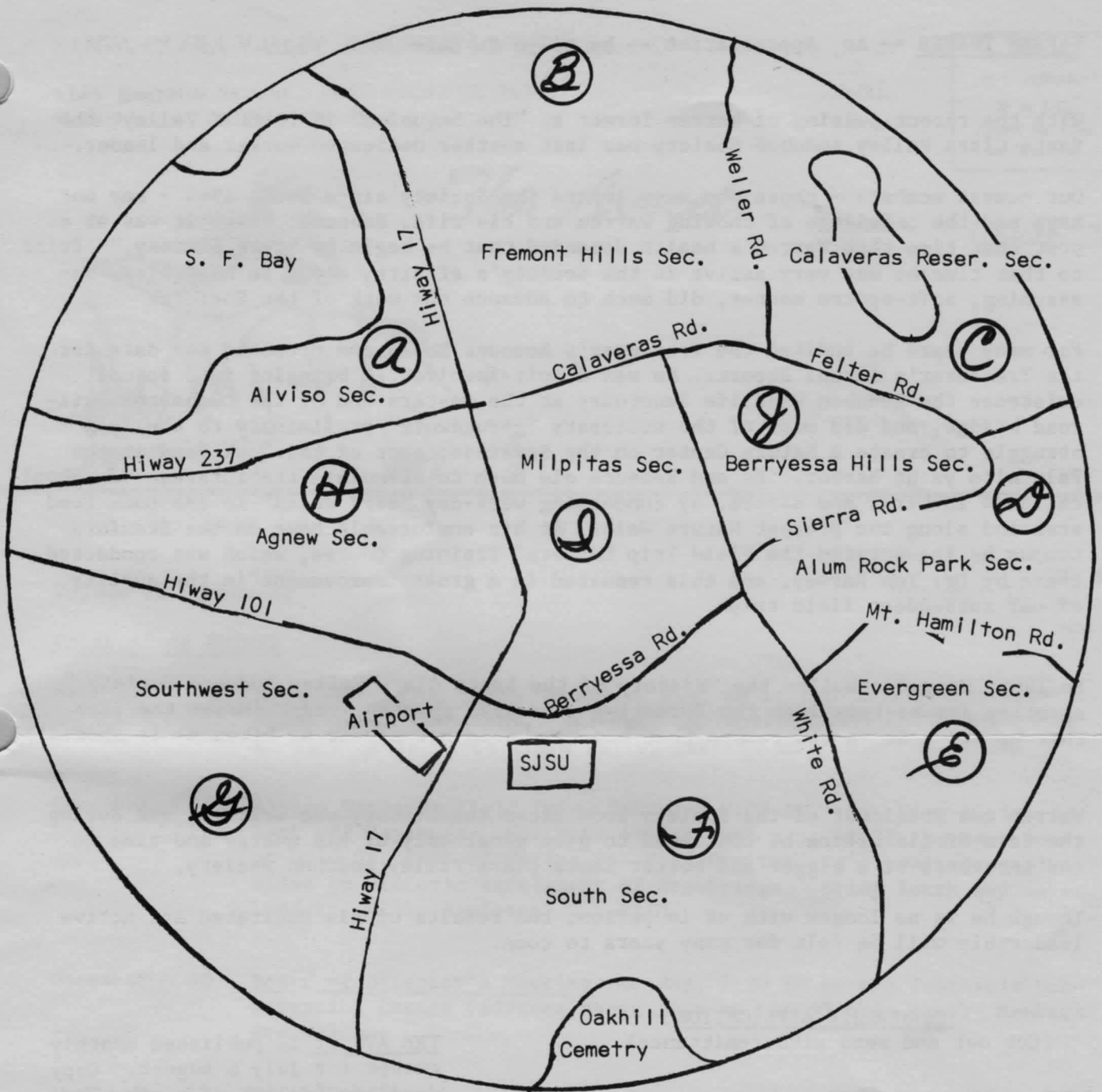
The Count Coordinator is Mike Brady; 1973 is Mike's second year at this task, and it's a big job. The easiest way for someone to join the Count is like this: look at the map on the next page, pick a section that appeals to you, and call the appropriate Section Leader.

Here are the pertinent facts about the Count:

- (1) All Counts must be done in the designated area.
- (2) Tally-up will be held at: San Jose State University, Duncan Hall, Room 213 (Corner of San Salvador and South 4th Streets; be careful of the University Parking Lots -- they tend to ticket, even on weekends!)
- (3) Tally-up time is between 5-6 PM, and the phone number in Room 213 is 277-2359
- (4) For those with more than average nocturnal inquisitiveness: we're planning a few Owl Trips in some of the sections starting at midnight or so (Yawn!.) on the night of Dec. 14-15. Those interested call Mike Brady at the number below.
- (5) People with Bird Feeders or someone interested in doing a small neighborhood Count -- please call between 5-6 PM at the Tally-up phone number on the day of the Count. Particularly let us know about rare birds, vagrants, or anything out of the ordinary.
- (6) As mentioned earlier, please make arrangements with your appropriate Section Leader. For General Information about the Audubon Christmas Count, please call Mike Brady.

Please help to make the Christmas Count another success this year.

Mike Brady  
Count Coordinator  
Phone # 998-3159



Section Leaders - SCVAS Christmas Count - 1973

Section		Section			
A	Joe Greenberg	326-8120	F	Mike Rigney	738-2028
B	Jay Andree	257-2038	G	Chris Russo	736-5917
C	Al Wool	747-0317	H	Tom Myers	998-3159
D	Diane Matthiesen	867-5363	I	Nancy Holmes	948-1854
E	Phyllis Swanson	274-2349	J	Frank Farran	252-3874

WARREN TURNER -- An Appreciation -- by Lloyd N. Case

With the recent passing of Warren Turner at "The Sequoias" in Portola Valley, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has lost another dedicated worker and leader.

Our newest members - those who have joined the Society since about 1964 - may not have had the privilege of knowing Warren and his wife, Rebecca, since it was at about that time that Warren's health demanded that he begin to "take it easy." Prior to that time he was very active in the Society's affairs, and, in his quiet, unassuming, soft-spoken manner, did much to advance the work of the Society.

For many years he audited the Treasurer's Account Books and prepared the data for the Treasurer's Annual Report. He was deeply involved in bringing into actual existence the Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary at the eastern end of the Dumbarton Railroad bridge, and did much of the necessary "groundwork" preliminary to the long struggle to create a Nature Center on the Baylands, east of the Duck Pond at the Palo Alto yacht harbor. He and Rebecca did much to stimulate the interest of school children in birds and nature, by conducting week-day "Bird Walks" in the Duck Pond area and along the present Nature Walk. At his comfortable home on the Stanford Campus he inaugurated the Field Trip Leaders' Training Course, which was conducted there by Dr. Tom Harvey, and this resulted in a great improvement in the quality of our subsequent field trips.

In 1964, Warren compiled the "History of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society," covering its history from the formative year 1925 through 1962. (Maybe the fact that he wrote it is the reason that his name does not appear as often as it should!)

Warren was President of the Society soon after the History was written, and during the term of his office he continued to give generously of his energy and time to the interests of a bigger and better Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

Though he is no longer with us in person, the results of his dedicated and active leadership will be felt for many years to come.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Cut out and send with remittance)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: (Please check)

\_\_\_ \$12 individual

\_\_\_ \$15 family

Remit proper amount with application to:

National Audubon Society

950 Third Avenue

New York, New York 10022

(Please affiliate this application with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society)

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