

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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The Avocet

TIME VALUE

Volume 21, Number 2

February 1974

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 5 Bird Discussion Group Tuesday, 9:30 AM at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, CA Topic: "Flickers"
- February 6 Field Trip North Wednesday, 10:30 AM at the Palo Alto Baylands... this is a High High Tide Trip. Meet at the parking lot on the right side of the Duck Pond. Bring lunch as we'll be there several hours. (At the High High Tide on Jan. 8 one group saw 36 Clappers, 5 Virginia, and 3 Sora Rails. The marsh is spectacular when it's flooded...hundreds of ducks, shorebirds, and herons are visible.) If it rains you might call the leader before 10:00 AM to see if it's still go. Leader: Harriet Mundy 325-1192
- February 9 Pescadero Beach & Marsh Field Trip Saturday, 9:00 AM...take La Honda Rd. through San Gregorio to Highway 1. Go 5 miles south on Highway 1 to Pescadero Rd. Meet at Highway 1 and Pescadero Rd. Leaders: Patty and Joe Greenberg 326-8120
- February 11 Board of Directors Meeting Monday, 7:30 PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above logo at top of page). Members are welcome and encouraged to come.
- February 13 Field Trip South Canyon Drive, Saratoga, Wednesday, 9:00 AM. Saratoga Los Gatos Rd. to Belle Ct. (about 1 mile from Saratoga or 3 miles from Los Gatos.) Park near 15355 Belle Ct. The leader: Manette Wittgenstein 354-9420.
- February 19 General Meeting North County Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Palo Alto Baylands interpretative Center at the east end of Embarcadero Rd. in Palo Alto. Ted Chandik will give us "A Naturalist's View of the Birds and Mammals of Baja California." Please see note in this AVOCET
- February 23 Community Conference Saturday, 9:30 AM at Little Theater, Cubberly High School, 4000 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA. Topic: "The Public's Stake in the Ocean" (see note in this AVOCET for more details).

- February 27 Field Trip Palo Alto Baylands Wednesday, 4:30 PM This is a trip for the family; come see the marsh as it settles down at night. See the Night Herons set off for their night's hunting and the shorebirds come in. Watch darkness settle over the marsh. Plan a late dinner. Leader: Nancy Holmes 948-1854
- February 27 Audubon Wildlife Film Wednesday, 8:00 PM at Morris Dailey Auditorium at San Jose State University. The film: "Exploring Big Bend" by Charles T. Hotchkiss (see more info in this AVOCET).
- February 28 Bird Discussion Group Thursday, 9:30 AM at the home of Marguerite Nash, 1198 Richardson Ave., Los Altos, CA. Phone: 967-2944 Topic: "Winter Warblers" Please bring binoculars and come and get acquainted. Ione Bradley 327-5973
- February 28 General Meeting South County Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Rose Garden Branch of the San Joes Public Library, Dana & Naglee Sts., San Jose, CA. This will be an African Film night -- please see note in this AVOCET for particulars.
- March 2 Coyote Hills Regional Park Saturday, 9:00 AM. East across Dumbar-ton Bridge. Left at Jarvis Road. Left at Newark Blvd. about one mile. Left at sign to Park. Meet at first parking lot on left. Leader: R. J. Andre 257-2038
- March 5 Bird Discussion Group Tuesday, 9:30 AM at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, CA Topic: "Woodpeckers"
- March 5 Audubon Wildlife Film Tuesday, 7:30 Pm at Spangenberg Auditorium of Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA The film: "Queen of the Cascades" by Charles T. Hotchkiss (see note in this AVOCET for more details).
- March 13 Field Trip South Stevens Creek Park, Wednesday, 9:00 AM. Stevens Creek Blvd. west to Foothill Blvd. Left on Foothill about 2 miles. Meet in parking lot at dam. Leaders: Jean & Bruce Versey 354-8966

THE PUBLIC'S STAKE IN THE OCEANS

This item appears in our Calendar , so we'll enlarge a bit. This is a Community Conference sponsored by the American Association of University Women. The affair takes place on Saturday, February 23, and runs from about 9:30 AM until about 3:00 PM. There's a \$1 registration fee, and you can brown bag lunch or sandwiches and beverages will be available for purchase.

The program will feature two speakers. Dr. John Albers is a former Associate Chief Geologist with the USGS, and was also a delegate to the UN Law of the Seas Conference in Geneva. Dr. Albers will discuss the resource aspects of these conferences. The other speaker is Dr. Lee Tepley, a senior staff scientist at the Physical Science Laboratory of Lockheed, Palo Alto. Dr. Tepley will show two of his own films: "Cloud Over Coral Reef" and "The Poisoned Sea."

Information about advance registration may be obtained from Ann Latta (854-4837) or Kathy Torgerson (321-0722).

WHERE IT'S AT

In February we should find wintering shore and land birds (finches & sparrows), water birds, rare pelagics and owls staking out their territories. This month's site guide is to Ano Nuevo State Reserve -- a particularly rich coastal area at almost any time of year.

Snowy Owls have arrived, 1 at Ano Nuevo Point, 2 at Pt. Reyes, 2 in Novato, and at least 9 in Eureka. Incidentally, two people in the Eureka area were recently given fairly stiff fines for shooting a Snowy Owl; one party was fined for the shooting and the other fined as an accessory to the killing. In three days birding in Washington we saw 37 Snowy Owls (8 in one large field). One Christmas Count there had over 80 in a 15-mile circle. (Speaking of counts, in 1972 over 71,000,000 birds were counted at Christmas Counts; the 1973 Counts are still being totaled.) Washington has had quite a few Gyrfalcons this winter. On a bird census there in approximately one hour an observer saw Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Goshawk, Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine and a Gyrfalcon, plus many Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. Incredible!! Moving south, Oregon had a Hawk Owl, quite an event anywhere in the United States.

Black Rails have been seen fairly easily in some places during the recent Fish & Game Rail Counts. Novato had 17, Benecia 7; these birds are normally very difficult to spy. The channel behind the Palo Alto duck pond still the beautiful European Wigeon, and the P. A. Flood Basin yielded 5 Redheads (rare visitors). There is a Long-eared Owl roost in Coyote Hills Park. Would you believe a Laysan Albatross in with 12 Black-footed? Some of the Northern California Christmas Counts produced Parula Warbler, Tree, Harris, and White-throated Sparrows, Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and Harlan's race Hawk. How about a Ferruginous Hawk in San Jose? Quite a few sightings of Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, as well as some Merlins have been reported. Also many Rough-legged Hawks are still around. A Northern Shrike was seen at Franklin Point, just north of Ano Nuevo. Sunnyvale had a Bohemian in with some Cedar Waxwings at Washington Park. Feeder birds are a Catbird in Monterey (seldom seen this far west), and a Brown Thrasher in Fairfax. A Ring-tailed Cat was seen on Skyline near Route 92.

Look for White-faced Ibis at Los Banos and Mountain Plovers in central valley fields and cow pastures. Coastally and in bays and harbors, check for any Alcids, Black Scoters (seen at Ano Nuevo), Red-necked Grebes and Oldsquaws.

The Monterey list is quite extensive, including: Yellow-billed Loon, King Eider, Oldsquaws (also at Moss Landing), and Fulmars, all near the wharfs. Red-necked Grebes, Rhino Auklets, Marbled Murrelets, Northern (Baltimore) and Hooded Orioles, Western Tanager, Rock Sandpiper, and especially after storms (or during them with a lot of effort!) are often found Black, Ashy and Fork-tailed Petrels, and Short-tailed Shearwaters (we found a Fork-tailed P. and a Short-tailed S. as recent storm kills).

For information on field identification of the newly recognized species of Thayer's Gull, see the Golden Gate Audubon Society's GULL, the October 1973 issue.

Ano Nuevo State Reserve is a promontory on the San Mateo Coast. Follow Coast Route 1 through Pescadero (Pescadero Marsh is good to bird quickly on the way up or back) past Ano Nuevo Ranch and take a right on New Year's Day Road and proceed to the parking lot. Driving time is approximately 1 hour from San Jose, and walking/birding time takes about 45 minutes to reach the Point, about 1 to 1½ mile out. It's a fairly flat but long walk, about 1/3 of it through sand. Dress warmly, take a scope if

(concluded on next page)

you can, and you might even bring a lunch. The bridge area below, and east of the parking lot can be good for warblers, thrushes, sparrows, and other tree-ground birds. Heading west by trail from the parking lot, the fields and pond often have many Swallows including Bank, but the real goodies here are associated with the ocean. Look down over the cliff and check the large rocks for the Harlequin Ducks (in full breeding plumage now), and rocky shorebirds. Black Swifts can also be seen at times. Out in the ocean look for Marbled Murrelets (often out quite a distance), Pigeon Guillemots, Red-necked Grebes, and Black Scoters. Cormorants are often seen on the side of the cliffs (Pelagic) and rocks (Brandts). Along the shores to and around the Point, look for Pectoral, Baird's and Spotted Sandpipers, Red Knots, plus rock shorebirds like Black Oystercatchers, Wandering Tattlers, and Surfbirds. Whimbrels and Brants are also often seen, and even a Least Tern has been here. All of these birds are not here year round of course, some winter, some summer, and some are short-stay migrants, but the birdlife anytime is always rich.

The real speciality of the Reserve (Why are all these people here? They are all birdwatchers?) is a large colony of Elephant Seals on the island and often on the beach nearby. Also many Harbor Seals and Sea Lions (Northern and California). Nuevo is one of the best areas to bird or just visit on our California coast. The birding is much easier and far less spread out here than at our two other great areas -- Pt. Reyes and Monterey.

Good Tripping and Car-pooling,
Bob Yutzy

BIRD SANTUARY

At last, a sanctuary for wounded and abandoned song birds and birds of prey in the Santa Clara County area! The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society has given a \$250 grant to the Youth Science Institute (YSI) of San Jose to expand its native bird release program. Last year YSI cared for and released approximately 40 song birds, as well as 10 birds of prey; that included a Barn Owl found wandering in a daze on a golf course (Owls may be wise, but they don't know what "FORE" means). During the summer 4 nestling Cliff Swallows who's nest had fallen took flight training in the Animal Caretaker's office. Thus part of the grant funds will help to build a flight cage.

The Youth Science Institute also receives a great number of phone calls on the care of young birds. Thus the Institute plans to expand both the number of birds cared for as well as widening its public education program with the grant from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society.

The Board of Directors feels that this is an excellent program and urges members of the Society to match the \$250 grant with individual contributions. The Youth Science Institute is located in Alum Rock Park (San Jose) and is open to the public free of charge Tuesday thru Friday 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, and Saturday from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Information may be obtained by calling the Animal Caretaker at 258-4322. Contributions may be sent to:

Youth Science Institute
16260 Alum Rock Avenue
San Jose, CA 95127

THOSE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETINGS

Palo Alto Baylands Interpretative Center
East end of Embarcadero Road
Palo Alto, CA

Tuesday, 7:30 PM
February 19, 1974

"A Naturalist's View of the Birds and Mammals of Baja California" -- by Ted Chandik. Mr. Chandik is a Naturalist with the City of Palo Alto and is, among other things, an expert birder. The program will include a slide/talk show. A food and social hour start at 7:30, the meeting is at 8:00, and Ted's talk will start about 8:15. By the way, please note that this is a Tuesday evening, and represents a little break with precedent. The meeting is open to the public, there's no charge, so why not join us with friends?

Kay McCann (327-4138)

Rose Garden Branch
San Jose Public Library
Dana & Naglee Streets
San Jose, CA

Tuesday, 7:30 PM
February 26, 1974

One of the Kenyan films by Alan & Joan Root, leading African photographers, will be shown -- either "Mzima Springs" or the "Baobab Tree." The first features beautiful underwater photography and stresses the ecological interrelatedness of the various species, from the dominant hippo to the crocodiles, birds, fish, and snakes. The spring is a lush garden in the parched Tsavo landscape. The second film contains the most interesting bird sequences we have seen; the nest life of the mother Red-billed Hornbill and her young inside their mud-sealed, hollow-tree house. By the way, information will be available at this meeting about a February 1975 safari set up by Root & Leakey of Nairobi.

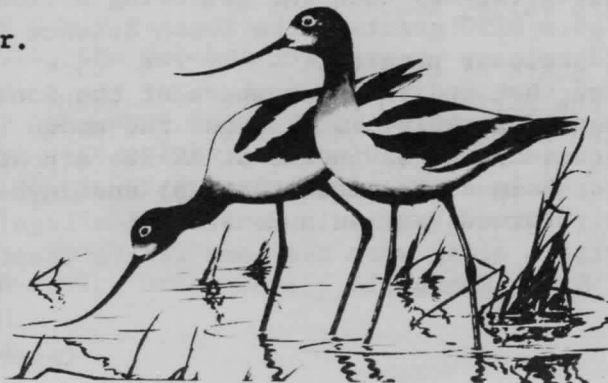
****Please note: as THE AVOCET goes to press, these films are (hopefully) on a plane to San Francisco from Kenya, but they are not actually in hand. You might like to check before you come; there could be a change in plans.

Florence LaRiviere (493-5540)

THE CHRISTMAS COUNT

The totals for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's Christmas Count will be published in the March AVOCET. We apologize for the delay but it is a big, big job, and the reporting procedures were more complicated this year. Please bear with us...

apologize



THE AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

Two Audubon films are mentioned in our Calendar, so here's the particulars. Rather than re-word what has already been said about these films, we'll use the copy as it comes directly from the literature. The Palo Alto series is sponsored jointly by Nature Expeditions International (they're offering a couple of safaris this summer -- see note in this AVOCET) and the National Audubon Society. The San José series is co-sponsored by the Natural Science Department at SJUS. Tickets are available at the door or from: Nature Expeditions International, PO Box 1173, Los Altos, CA 94022, phone 941-2910 for the Palo Alto Films. For San Jose from: Science 18, CSUSJ, San Jose, CA 95192, phone 277-2321 or Dr. Evelyn H Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga, CA 95197, phone 867-4748.

Wednesday

February 27, 1974

Charles T. Hotchkiss

Exploring Big Bend

Tuesday

March 5, 1974

Charles T. Hotchkiss

"Queen of the Cascades"

Established in 1944, Big Bend National Park encompasses territory that was once ruined by ranchers who allowed the land to be overgrazed. Demonstrating its remarkable ability to restore itself, nature is revivifying the animal and plant life of the rugged Chisos Mountains and the arid Chihuahuan Desert. Ty Hotchkiss and his wife, Julie, show you these areas and the cacti, ferns, snakes, hummingbirds, bats, deer, and other species that inhabit Big Bend country.

Mount Rainier, highest peak of the Cascade Range, and dominant feature of Mount Rainier National Park is the focal point of this film program produced by Charles T. Hotchkiss. Black-tailed deer, ptarmigan, hoary marmot and blue grouse are a few of the many wildlife representatives. The concluding sequence features the Hotchkiss' 14,410 foot climb to the summit, through spectacularly scenic Ingraham Glacier.

BOARD NOTES

At the January meeting the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) took the following actions:

Voted a \$250 grant to the Youth Science Institute (YSI) of San Jose for its native bird release program.

Urged that individual members of the Society contribute to the YSI program (please see note in this AVOCET about the above items).

Discussed changes in the SCVAS library at the Peninsula Conservation Center.

Nancy Holmes (President, SCVAS) and Joyce Todd (Treasurer, SCVAS) reported on the newly formed Peninsula Conservation Legal Committee in which the Society will participate along with the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club and The Committee for Green Foothills.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF DEATH VALLEY

The following course is being offered this spring through the Extension Services at San Jose State University. In years past this was an extremely popular way for SJSU students to spend part of their Easter Vacation earning a unit of upper division science credit. For the first time this class is being opened to the general public; registration is on a first come/first served basis, though SJSU students are given priority. Ages 16 and up.

Natural Science xl51 -- Death Valley National Monument

Fee: \$40 (1 unit upper division Nat. Sc. credit, or course may be audited)
\$18 (for food)

Where: at Ryan, CA -- about 20 miles from Furnace Creek in Death Valley

When: Saturday, April 5 (evening) through Friday, April 12 (morning)

You'll stay: accommodations are rather rustic but healthful (they have air down there), so bring sleeping bag, etc. You'll "live" in married students quarters or single students something-or-others. Cooking is done in groups of 10 or 12.

You'll study: the natural history of the area, including birds, insects, geology, plants, mammals, ecology, and probably some human history.

There will be a pre-trip meeting in March, particulars to be announced. If you are interested in spending a week learning Death Valley, the best thing to do is call the Extension Services at SJSU and ask for Marcia DeHart (408) 277-2211.

NATURAL HISTORY EXPEDITIONS TO EAST AFRICA

The countries of East Africa are renowned for their national parks and game reserves. As the famous naturalist/ornithologist, John Williams, has written, "No other region in the world has so much to offer the visitor who is interested in wildlife. In no other part of the globe does there exist such a wealth of big game animals, and nowhere else is there such a super abundance and variety of birdlife coupled with accessible bird haunts. No fewer than 1,033 full species of birds are found in the relatively small country of Kenya." The bird life varies from the bizarre Ostrich, Hammerkop, Secretary Bird, and Hornbills, to the beautiful Turacos, Parrots, Barbets, and Sunbirds.

Natural History and Nature Photography Mt. Kenya and the Northern Frontier. A tenting expedition led by Dr. Leslie Brown of Kenya and David Roderick of Foothill College. July 8-29, 1974. \$2,090 including airfare from the West Coast.

Natural History and Ornithology The Serengetti, Kilimanjaro, and the Kenya Coast. A luxury tenting safari in association with Abercrombie and Kent Safaris Ltd. of Kenya led by Ted Chandik, Naturalist with the City of Palifornia, CA. August 1-23, 1974. \$2,290 including airfare from the West Coast.

For further information or reservation forms write or phone Nature Expeditions International, PO Box 1173, Los Altos, CA 94022 (415-941-2910)

BAY AREA AUDUBON COUNCIL

The Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) met January 5, 1974, in Sacramento to exchange news of current conservation problems, discuss priorities for the Whittell Funds and review the Christmas Counts. One of the speakers was Michael Keffer, biologist for the California State Department of Food and Agriculture; Mr. Keffer drew our attention to the importation of exotic species of birds (particularly various parrots) into this country through the pet shop trade. Such birds may escape and breed in this country.

The future of the Suisun Marsh was the subject of another presentation by Mr. John Parrish of the State Department of Fish and Game. He outlined Department plans to save the Suisun Marsh from encroachment by barging garbage in Petreo Hills, etc.

Interestingly enough, most of the Audubon Societies that participate in this Council have very much the same struggles; to save wetlands from various "sanitary" land-fill projects. With our own focus on the Mountain View Dump last summer, and the current plan to fill another 250 acres in Alviso (for 30 years) with garbage from the city of Santa Clara, perhaps every member of the Society should take a good look at what's in his (or her) own garbage can and think about where that stuff goes. Did we ever consider that our old soup cans might land on the head of a Black-necked Stilt...or worse yet, an AVOCET?!?!?!?

Nancy Holmes,
BAAC Representative

How Important Is Being Beautiful?

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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