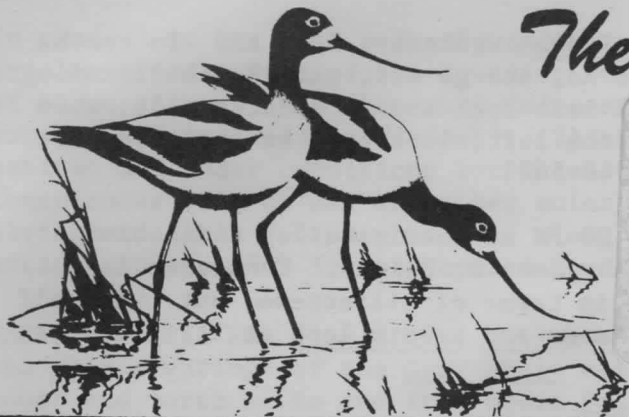


SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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

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The Avocet

TIME VALUE

HARRY V LATHAN
1085-374 TASMAN
SUNNYVALE CA 94086

Volume 21, Number 3

March 1974

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ✓ 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 Arastradeo Rd., Palo Alto, CA. The film: "Queen of the Cascades" by Charles T. Hotchkiss (see note in last months' AVOCET for particulars).
- March 11 Board of Director's Meeting Monday, 7:30 PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above logo at top of page). Members are welcome and in fact encouraged to come.
- ✓ 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 Vesey 354-8966.
- March 16 Castle Rock Park Field Trip Saturday, 9:00 AM. South on Skyline Blvd. about 2 miles past Highway 9 intersection to parking lot on right. We
- ✓ March 16 Castle Rock Park Field Trip Saturday, 9:00 AM. South on Skyline Blvd. about 2 miles past Highway 9 intersection to parking lot on right. We will hike 4 miles round trip to Emily Smith Memorial. Carry Lunch and wear hiking boots. Leader: Tony Look 968-3668
- March 19 General Meeting North County Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretative Center. "The Fascinating Hummingbirds" by Louise Blakey. Please see note in this AVOCET for more particulars.
- March 23 Mines Rd. Field Trip Saturday, 9:00 AM Meet in Livermore near the flag pole on North Livermore Ave. near the Post Office. Leaders: Betsy & Pete Peterson 326-9090.

- March 26 General Meeting South County Tuesday, 7:30 PM. Mr. Clyde Beulter of the California State Dept. of Food and Agriculture will present a program on the exotic birds of California. Meeting held at the Rose Garden Branch of the San Jose Public Library -- see note in this AVOCET for details.
- ✓ March 27 Field Trip Duveneck's Hidden Valley Ranch Wednesday, 9:00 AM. To reach Moody Rd. take Route 280 to El Monte Rd. and go west past Foothill College. Where the road ends at a Y, take the left fork and go about a mile; when you see a stretch of open fields on the left, look for the entrance gate on your left. Leader: Carol Zabel 948-5671
- March 27 Audubon Wildlife Film Wednesday, 8:00 PM at Morris Dailey Auditorium at CSUSJ. The film: "Wild Tennessee" by John D. Bulger. Tennessee is not a state that's generally thought of in terms of wilderness, but over half of it is evergreen timber. Why not come and have a look at it. See past AVOCETS for ticket information.
- ✗ March 28 Bird Discussion Group Thursday, 9:30 AM at the home of Nell Sleeper of 861 Harvard Ave., Menlo Park, CA. (phone 323-9370) Nell will show slides of local garden and shore birds. Bring binoculars and get acquainted. Ione Bradley 327-5973.
- April 8 Board of Director's Meeting Monday, 7:30 PM -- same as was mentioned earlier in this stunning Calendar of Events.
- April 9 Bird Discussion Group Tuesday, 9:30 AM at the home of Catherine Lintott 17150 Buena Vista, Los Gatos, CA. Topic: "To look for Double-crested Cormorants in breeding plumage."
- April 10 Field Trip South Santa Teresa Park, Wednesday, 9:30 AM. Monterey Road south past IBM plant. Right on Bernal Rd. about one mile. Park is on the left. Meet at picnic area parking lot. Leader: Juliette Wheeler 867-9597.

THE CARE OF BABY WILD CREATURES

This is a series of classes being offered through the Palo Alto Junior Museum at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretative Center; meetings are from 7:30-9:30 PM on the following days: March 5 (Care of Baby Birds), March 12 (Care of Baby Animals), March 26 (Care of injured Birds and Animals). The instructor is Gary Bogue, Curator of the Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum in Walnut Creek and Chairman of the new Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. Please pre-register at the Museum as class size is limited; fee is \$1.50/series and children under 16 (with parents) are free. For further info please call these numbers: 329-2111 or in the evening 851-1198.

THE SCVAS LIBRARY AND WHAT TO DO WITH SAME

We mentioned in an article a few month's month back that the Society library is maintained in the Peninsula Conservation Center. Now our erstwhile librarian, Miss Wayne Peters, would like to hear from potential library users: what do you want in it? Bird identification books? General Nature? Specialized bird books? Do members want a place to come and read -- to check out books -- or what? Would people like to donate their book to the Society's collection? Please let us know your thoughts on these matters by calling Wayne Peters at 322-7777 or write her at 430 Bay Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

WHERE IT'S AT

March is the time for early migrants, waterfowl, waterbirds, and the first regular spring migrants. This month's site guide is to Los Banos Wildlife Area and Merced National Wildlife Refuge.

In general it has been a pretty exciting and productive winter -- so far as good birds are concerned. Most of the invading Snowy Owls have probably failed to survive for one of three reasons: (1) the newly independent young of most birds of prey don't reach maturity (survival of the fittest), (2) the adults are forced to hunt for food in unfamiliar habitat and under conditions for which they're not adapted, (3) these birds are quite conspicuous both to man and other animals. Late January gave us a Snowy in Sunnyvale-Alviso and early February had one along the shore in downtown Alameda (roosting on a TV antenna on top of a 5-story apartment complex).

Monterey still has King Eider, Yellow-billed Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Fork-tailed Petrel, and good sightings of the Gray Whale migration; the whales are apt to be seen going both south and north -- to and from their Baja breeding grounds. Coyote Hills Park is a good place for Common Gallinules, Sora and Virginia Rails, as well as Redheads. A Lewis's Woodpecker has been acorn woolpecking in Palo Alto. Pine Siskins have been down to many lowland backyards this winter (Ed. note: Alum Rock Park has many of them). Watch for Rufous and possibly Allen's Hummers coming thru; they are harbingers of the landbird migrants. Varied Thrushes seem to be everywhere. The Palo Alto duck pond had a 1st year Glaucous Gull (told by its overall pale buffy appearance, pink bill with black tip, and light tips on the primaries).

The January 26 Pelagic trip produced sightings (between swells) of Black-footed Albatross, Black-legged Kittiwake (which we saw few of last winter), Fork-tailed Petrels, Short-tailed and Sooty Shearwaters (it's often difficult to distinguish the two), Marbled and Ancient Murrelets, Cassin's and at least 3,000 Rhino Auklets. The day's best was four Killer Whales (Life Mammals for most of us), a male with 3 females or immatures.

Barrow's Goldeneyes are with the Commons at Lake Merritt, and this affords an excellent chance to photograph wild (and captive) waterfowl. The European Wigeon is still at the Palo Alto Baylands, as are Blue-winged Teal and an immature male and a female Common Goldeneye. Wood Ducks and Common Mergansers are often at the Chesbro Reservoir. Incidentally these Mergansers were just recently sighted in Foothills Park after more than a years absence. Hooded Mergansers are often seen near San Rafael in the residential marinas off Lucky Drive and 101. There was a European race of Green-winged Teal (formerly called Common) at Belmont Slough. The Harlequin Ducks are in full plumage at Ano Nuevo, where one can also see Black Scoters. Moss Landing had 4 Oldsquaws (all were seen in one day), while Monterey had 1. Three Bald Eagles have been at Crystal Springs Reservoir and 2 at Calaveras. Rough-legged Hawks are still around. Saw-whet Owls seemed fairly common in some areas (like the Santa Cruz Mountains). Bob Gill of State Fish and Game saw at least 17 Long-eared Owls in one small tree roost. By the way, the specific locations of Owls, Hawks, and Falcons will be avoided in this column; these "pet" species need all the protection they can get.

Los Banos State Wildlife Area and Merced National Wildlife Refuge are a good long one-day birding trip, some 90 or so miles from San Jose thru Pacheco Pass, near Route 5 (thus gas may be available). The Los Banos tour route offers excellent views of American Bittern and Common Gallinule (for these two birds, this is by far the best place) as well as White-faced Ibis, waterfowl, and hawks. There are Rough-legged and Ferruginous in winter and Swainson's in summer (especially at the neighboring San Luis Refuge). Los Banos also harbors White-fronted, Canada, Snow, and some Ross's Geese, plus many other waterfowl, shorebirds, swallows, and in summer-- Black Terns. It can be very rewarding to walk some of the roads and paths. Merced, while having some of the same species, also has Whistling Swans, White Pelicans, more Ross's Geese and Sandhill Cranes. The tour here is less defined than in Los Banos.

Above Los Banos there is a fine lake (or pond) for Whistling Swans; approximately 2 miles north of town; go west on the Henry Miller Road to the other side of the town of Volta and look on your left. On the way to the Merced Refuge between 152 and the town of Merced, go left 1-2 miles on Sandy Mush Road and check the pastures for Mountain Plovers, then continue on for the Refuge.

Alas, the Ides of March is upon us,
Bob Yutzy

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

HR 10796, sponsored by Representative McCormick of Washington, would remove the control of DDT from the Environmental Protection Agency and put it under the Secretary of Agriculture. Presently no other pesticide is regulated by the Dept. of Agriculture and this move is probably designated to negate the existing DDT ban. HR 10796 is awaiting vote on the floor of the House. If such regulation becomes law, it could undermine the regulatory function of EPA by subjecting pesticides to political rather than scientific regulation. You might let your own Representative know how you feel...

CHRISTMAS COUNT

On December 15, 1973, the annual SCVAS Christmas Count was held. All things considered, it was our best count. We saw an all-time high of 159 species (some 9 more than last year) and the total number of individual birds was also a record, more than 145000. This figure is about three times last year's total. As you go through the next 3 pages, you will note that 3 species, Eared Grebes, Ruddy Ducks, and Starlings account for more than 40% of the entire count.

We saw some interesting birds this year, birds that are uncommon or even rare in the count area; for example, the Sage Thrasher had been around for several weeks and was seen on Count Day. The number of raptors was high; Rough-legged, Ferruginous, and Pigeon Hawks (Merlin) were seen in several sectors. We did miss some obvious species that are usually found in the count area: Bald Eagle, Dipper, Wood Duck. Then again, that should give us something to look for next year!

The December 15 Count turned out 66 observers in good weather (broken into 23 parties). We spent a total of 482 party hours (316 on foot, 166 in cars). We traveled a total of 1219 miles (gas was cheaper then), 306 on foot and 913 via car. Since we do not have room to run the map again (see December AVOCET) we'll refresh your memory on the section breakdown again:

A	Alviso Section	F	South Section
B	Fremont Hills Section	G	Southwest Section
C	Calaveras Reservoir Section	H	Agnew Section
D	Alum Rock Park Section	I	Milpitas Section
E	Evergreen Section	J	Berryessa Hills Section

Finally, I would like to thank all of those people who helped with the Count. All of you did a good job, from the Section Leaders to their recorders, from the experienced birders to the neophyte. You will be a hard act to follow in the years ahead.

Thanks again,
Mike Brady



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total	
SANDPIPER, Least	1353							30			1383	
DUNLIN	1792										1792	
DOWITCHER, Sh-billed	219										219	
Long-billed	44							124	1		169	
SANDPIPER, Western	4570		8					125			4703	
GODWIT, Marbled	108							4			112	
SANDERLING	1										1	
AVOCET, American	6118							20			6138	
STILT, Blk-necked	1030								1		1031	
PHALAROPE, Red	2										2	
Wilson's	4										4	
GULL, Glaucous-winged	3										3	
Western	3										3	
Herring	2302					330					2632	
California	872		10	3	8	30				270	1193	
Ring-billed	1976		15	1	1			50	80	580	2703	
Mew	20										20	
Bonaparte's	2844		1						50		2895	
TERN, Forester's	3										3	
PIGEON, Band-tailed			42	50					5	1	98	
DOVE, Rock			individual counts not taken									500
Mourning	156	8	5	82	36	99	155	40	175	10	766	
OWL, Barn						1					1	
Screech			2	2							4	
Great Horned			10	3							13	
Pygmy			2								2	
Burrowing	14				1	1		3			19	
Short-eared	6										6	
HUMMINGBIRD, Anna's	2	4		35	11	29	5	7	10	3	106	
KINGFISHER, Belted	3		2	1	1	6	1	1	2		17	
FLICKER, Red-shafted	7	4	42	52	2	20	7	8	11	2	155	
WOODPECKER, Acorn		2	23	54	3						82	
Lewis'				1							1	
SAPSUCKER, Yel-bellied			7	6	4		1			2	20	
WOODPECKER, Hairy				1							1	
Downy	4		4	3	2	3	1				17	
Nuttall's		3	12	5						5	25	
PHOEBE, Black	1	1	7	8	1	23		8	2	2	53	
Say's		13	9	1		1				6	30	
LARK, Horned			37	123						81	241	
SWALLOW, Vlt-green	1										1	
Cliff			6								6	
JAY, Steller's		5	6	113	5					2	131	
Scrub	11	16	129	90	51	66	8	5	17	21	414	
MAGPIE, Yel-billed			187	62	30	3				20	302	
CROW, Common			77	1	8	59		2		4	151	
RAVEN, Common				12							12	
CHICKADEE, Chest-back	20	6	16	25	5	35	3	18	7	1	136	
TITMOUSE, Plain		4	44	117	8	9			1	4	187	
BUSHTIT, Common	3	34	32	147	24	20	3	50		16	329	
NUTHATCH, Wht-breasted			18	10	1						29	
Red-breasted				2							2	
CREEPER, Brown			5	3							8	
WRENTIT			10	21	4	1					36	
WREN, House				2							2	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total
WREN, Winter	1										1
Bewick's	4	7	13	18	4	3		7			56
Lg-bill Marsh	135							2			137
Canyon				1							1
Rock			4	3							7
MOCKINGBIRD	4	4		35	14	49	14	3	6	2	131
THRASHER, California			11	13	2						26
Sage				1							1
ROBIN	1	1	428	499	33	170	70		17		1219
THRUSH, Varied	3	5	49	42				2	1		102
Hermit	2	3	16	22	1				2		46
BLUEBIRD, Western		5	137	33							175
SOLITAIRE, Townsend's	1			2							3
KINGLET, Gld-crowned		2	2	11							15
Ruby-crowned		9	40	30	2		1		3	4	89
PIPIT, Water	73	15	83						25	11	207
WAXWING, Cedar			12	51		60	40				163
SHRIKE, Loggerhead	10	8	1	3		5		4	8	3	42
STARLING	20270	564	152	786	350	837	198	26	219	99	24001
VIREO, Hutton's				5				4		1	10
WARBLER, Orange-crn	2						2				4
Myrtle	1							1			2
Audubon's	28	38	17	15	21	62	4	15	25	7	232
Townsend's			3	1							4
YELLOWTHROAT	8					2		1		1	12
SPARROW, House	93	40	2	153	47	1071	90	23	10		1529
MEADOWLARK, Western	183	92	86	106	85	96	62	210	37	59	1016
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	1406	400	9	30	10	605	12	40	25	15	2552
Tri-color	264	1									265
Brewer's	843	1420	1022	682	171	550	1000	230	340	240	6498
COWBIRD, Brn-headed	6			1			6				13
FINCH, Purple		62	1	5	7	20					95
House	1754	28	97	133	276	488	130	400	59	28	3393
SISKIN, Pine				200							200
GOLDFINCH, American			22	125		4	20	3			174
Lesser	109	34	95	26	61	243	35		10	24	637
Lawrence's	2										2
TOWHEE, Ruf-sided	2		23	27	1	1		1			55
Brown	13	3	46	71	23	106	18	5	8	3	296
SPARROW, Savannah	392		9	4		30				1	436
Lark		6	52	11							69
Ruf-crowned			15	14							29
JUNCO, Oregon	15	5	170	125	42	103	8	11	5	11	495
SPARROW, Wht-crowned	291	8	115	362	100	496	27	120	48	68	1635
Gld-crowned	60	100	87	283	16	317	8	52	50	31	1004
Wht-throat		1		1							2
Fox	6		6				1	3			16
Lincoln's	6			1				2	1		10
Song	1154			21	4	17		80	4		1280
UNIDENTIFIED SPECIES											
DUCK spp.	1000										1000
GULL spp.	12600	7	2000	32			400				15039
TOTAL SPECIES 159	110939	3461	9309	5115	1571	6285	2343	2349	1421	2092	145385

MARCH GENERAL MEETINGS

Palo Alto Baylands Interpretative Center
East end of Embarcadero Rd.
Palo Alto, CA

Tuesday, 7:30 PM
March 19, 1974

"The Fascinating Hummingbirds" by Louise Blakey. This will be a slide/talk show about Hummers, and what you can grow in your own garden to attract them. We'll have a social hour plus refreshments at 7:30, a short meeting at 8:00, and the talk will start about 8:15. As usual, the meeting is open to the public, there's no charge, so why not join us with your friends?

Kay McCann

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

Tuesday, 7:30 PM
March 26, 1974

The South County program will feature a presentation by Mr. Clyde Beulter of the California State Department of Food and Agriculture on the exotic birds of California. Mr. Beulter is with the Exclusion and Detection Division of Plant Industry, and this is the group that monitors birds such as the Monk Parakeet, Crested Mynah, Boat-tailed Grackle, Red-whiskered Bulbul and others; in particular he will discuss their present and future intrusion in the State. Using a combination of slides and specimens, Mr. Beulter will bring us up to date on the problem as well as answer our questions. Like all of our meetings, it's free, and open to the public, so why not join us?

Florence La Riviere

SOME MORE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

If this issue of THE AVOCET seems a little sparse in content, you shouldn't be surprised. The Christmas Count material uses about 3 and 2/3 pages, about 1/2 of the whole newsletter! There was a deluge of items available this time if we just had the room. We are getting many requests to print "classes available" material, and we will run some of them next month. Here are a couple (shortened) items to stew about:

- (1) The Army Corps of Engineers is considering a permit application by the Santa Clara Valley Water District to raise levees in Saltpond #2. The end result would be the raising of 1 mile of levee to a 9½' elevation and widening the existing roadbed to 25' or so. It should be pointed out that the Mountain View Slough is Clapper Rail habitat; we've not heard from the Rails, but I suspect they'd pooh-pooh the idea.
- (2) Now that the energy crunch is upon us, there will probably be a spate of anti-environmental organizations formed. The idea is to make sure that "bird & bunny people" do not make California autoless, homeless, and penniless. Current activities of such groups include overturning the ban on DDT and repealing the Coastal Zone Protection Act (Proposition 20). Keep in mind that most such groups have "environmental-sounding" type names. Along somewhat the same line is the recent US Supreme Court decision to restrict class action suits. Each plaintiff in such a suit must claim damages of \$10,000 or more. Such financial restrictions do not apply in State Courts however. At any rate, try to keep abreast of what's going on.

THE AVOCET is published monthly except July & August. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month, but some people pay no attention to it. Editor: Dave Nauer PO 4501 San Jose, CA 95126 (295-9917)

