

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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The Avocet

TIME VALUE

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Nov. 4 Audubon Wildlife Film Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Spangenberg Auditorium of Gunn High School, 780 Arastrasero Road. The film: "Florida Cypress Sanctuary: Fisheating Creek". Please see note in this AVOCET.
- Nov. 5 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday at 9:30 A.M. at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Nov. 6 Field Trip South, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M., Santa Teresa Park. Take Monterey Road south past IBM plant, right on Bernal Rd. about one mile, Park is on the left, meet at picnic area parking lot. Leaders: Dotty and Ted Graf, 296-6499
- Nov. 10 Field Trip, Sunday 8:30 .AM. Coyote Hills Regional Park. East across Dumbarton Bridge, left at Jarvis Road, left at Newark Blvd., about one mile, left at sign to park. Mett at first parking lot on left. Leader: Don Brockhurst 294-9879
- Nov. 11 Board of Director's Meeting Monday, 7:30 P.M. at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 1176 Emerson St., Palo Alto, Ca. 94301
Members are welcome.
- Nov. 16 Field Trip, Saturday 10:00 A.M. San Jose State Museum of Birds and Mammals, Aviary and Aviah Biology Lab. Tour will include demonstration of Specimen prepraration and a film. Get off freeway 280 at 7th Street, north on 7th to San Salvador, west on San Salvador to 5th. Leader: Diana Matthiesen, 867-5363. Refreshments will be servied.
- Nov. 20 Field Trip North Wednesday, 9:00 A.M. Jasper Ridge (Stanford University property) adjoining Searsville Lake. From Route 280 go west on Sandhill Road about 3 miles to the toll entract at the lake. You will pass to Whiskey Hill Road on your right; the entrance is on your left bout 8/10 mile further. Plan to stay until 12. The gates must be locked behind us. Also try to car pool. In muddy weather parking may be limited because of extensive re-seeding. Leaders: Barbara Allen, 326-0521, Carol Zabel 948-5671

- Nov. 20 General Meeting, Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center. Two films will be shown: "Miracle of the Monarch" and "Wood Duck's World". Please see note in last month's AVOCET.
- Nov. 21 Bird Discussion Group Thursday, 9:00 A.M. meet at Flora Houck's, 1275 Martin Av., Palo Alto, 327-4868. At 9:15 sharp we will leave to go to Flora's beach house near Pescadero. There will be car pools. Bring lunch and binoculars. Coffee and cookies will be served. Leader: Ione Bradley, 327-5973. P.S. There will be no meeting of this group in December. Merry Christmas!!
- Dec. 22 Christmas Bird Count Sunday -- see note later in this AVOCET

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The following three reports were submitted to the AVOCET this month by our Field Trip Leaders. The first was kindly sent to us by Dorothy R. Taylor, the second by Emmanuel and Mary Taylor, and the third by Ted Chandick.

About fifty people gathered at the Palo Alto Baylands on September 25, a day that was overcast then clearing. The leaders were fortunate to have the help of Carol Zabel with the large group. Forty-six species were observed, including a large number of Black-necked Stilts and three Black-bellied Plovers.

On the October 9th field trip to Coyote River Park (Morgan Hill) some 18 people turned out for a near perfect day of birding. Thirty-two species of birds were seen despite the loss of the usual Gallinule thru the die-back and apparent loss of the rushes in the back-water. Missing also were the usual assortment of Swallows tho there are about 60 Cliff Swallow nest still clinging to the cliff face. White throated Swifts were seen and Hutton's Vireo's were still in evidence.

The October 20th jaunt to Pescadero and Ano Nuevo drew over 50 memebers and guests in fall weather while birding along the coast of our Peninsula. At least 72 species of birds were identified. Some of the highlights were many loons migrating south over the ocean off Pescadero State Beach; 2 Virginia Rails were seen and a late Pectoral Sandpiper in the Pescadero Marsh; and 2 full plumaged adult male Harlequin Ducks standing on the rocks off the south shore of Ano Nuevo Point.

OUR LIBRARY

Our Library has been augmented recently not only but purchases from our Library Fund, but by gifts from several members -- among others, Mrs. McBain, Mrs. Dorothy Wilson, and Charlotte Case. We appreciate their generosity and thoughtfulness and hope our members will avail themselves of our loaning policy. Again, if anyone has suggesions for further purchases your librarian will be glad to hear from you.

Wayne Peters, Librarian

books

WHERE IT'S AT

November should bring us wintering and land birds, the last migrating Hawks, late vagrants, Ducks, Geese, and Seabirds. This also is the time to tune-up and start scheduling for Christmas Counts. The site guide is for vagrant landbirding Point Reyes.

This has been and still continues (I hope) to be THE fall migration of migrations. California has seen no less than 35 species of Warblers (approx. 24 out of place). Many birders have seen 26-30 warbler species, with up to 23 in a weekend. Five new state records have occurred. These include a Dotterl and White Wagtail on the Farallons, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and Veery at Pt. Mugu (near Oxnard) and 3 Sprague's Pipits at the Tijuana River Bottoms. Monterey had the first mainland record for LeConte's Sparrow (found by our party and gone the next morning); this bird was previously seen only on the Farallons by two researchers. Many AVOCETS past I asked for a Central Cal. Horned Puffin and sure enough one was near the Farallons for 2 or more weeks. For my next request, I'd like to ask for a Parakeet Auklet, alive, off our coast.

Following are bird lists with some numbers for certain areas, only the extreme rarities are underlined:

Pt. Reyes -- 23 Palm, 19 Blackpoll, 10 Tennessee, 8 Redstart, 5 Magnolia, 5 Black & White, 4 Black-throated Blue, 3 Chestnut-sided, 2 Cape May, 2 Canada, 2 Virginia, 2 Connecticut, 2 Parula, 2 Blackburnian, 1 Bay-breasted, 1 Prairie, 1 Cerulean & 1 Pine Warbler, 2 Red-eyed Vireo, 1 each White-throated Vesper, and clay-colored Sparrow, 1 Indigo Bunting, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Least Flycatcher, Tropical and Eastern Kingbird, many Black Scoters and Red-necked Grebes, an early Glaucous Gull and Rough-legged Hawk. There have been 60 Chestnut-collared and 50 Lapland Longspurs, with a possible McCown's or Smith's in with them.

Bodega Head - 2 Redstart, 1 Parula, 1 Chestnut-sided, 1 Tennessee, 1 Brewer's and 1 Tree Sparrow, and a Gray Catbird.

Farrallons -- During a two week period: 15 Chestnut-sided, 10 Magnolia, 5 Bay-breasted, 4 Mourning, and 2 Connecticut Warblers, 5 Least, and 1 Great-crested Flycatcher, and 1 Gray-cheeked Thrush. On one day 50 Blackpolls were banded, another day saw 22 species of Warblers, 30 species in two weeks. A one day big day count yielded over 120 species on an offshore island -- incredible!

Monterey and Carmel -- 9 Blackpoll, 7 Palm, 2 Virginia's, 1 Blackburnian, 1 Parula, 1 Magnolia, 1 Tree Sparrow, 1 Indigo Bunting, 1 Bobolink, 1 Red-eyed Vireo, 1 Thick-billed Murre & 1 Fulvous Tree Duck. This is a very incomplete list as Monterey reports only included two weekends.

Northern Areas -- Humboldt -- (Common) Green-winged Teal, Orchard Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Cape May, Blackburnian & Chestnut-sided Warbler. Mammoth Ski Lodge had a Gray Catbird. Wash. will probably have a White-winged Crossbill influx.

Southern Area -- In one day Tijuana River Bottoms -- 5 Palm, 2 Redstart, 1 Bay-breasted, 1 Black-throated Blue Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, Summer Tanager, Lark Bunting, 3 Bobolinks, many Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Northern (Baltimore) Oriole, Prairie Falcon, and at least 2 Red-throated Pipits. Two days in Death Valley produced Connecticut, Magnolia, Blackpoll, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

Local Areas -- Napa had a Bobolink, Pleasanton sewage ponds had one of the only Solitary Sandpipers, Martinez had it's Ruff for approx. one month. Many many Broadwings have been seen at Point Diablo.



Ano Nuevo and San Mateo Coast -- many Chestnut-sided and Blackpoll, 3 Prairie, 2 Tennessee, 2 Redstart, 1 Canada, 1 Cape May and a Northern Waterthrush. Northern Cal. Pelagics -- Tufted Puffins, Long-tailed Jaeger, 6 Skuas, Flesh-footed and large numbers of New Zealand Shearwaters, Xantu's Murrelet, Wilson's Petrel, and many Fulmars. There were also Humpback, Finback, Gray & Killer Whales, Dall and Harbor Porpoise, Common and Pacific White-sided Dolphin. The Moss Landing Petrel flock has been seen but a few times, and it is suspected that these birds are dispersed and feeding individually until 11:30 a.m. or so and then begin to flock in the thousands.

Some birds to look for are: Northern Shrike, Common & Hooded Merganser, King Eider, Oldsquaw, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawk, European Wigeon (Palo Alto), (Common) Green-winged Teal, Emperor Goose, Mountain and Golden Plover, Rock Sandpiper (West side Bodega Head), and Owls should be looked and listened for. In Washington we should hope for Hawk Owl and Gyrfalcon, while in Oregon maybe the White Wagtail will reappear.

Point Reyes Side Guide - Vagrants. This is by far the best place on our coast, possible because of it's birdability. The point itself is relatively treeless, except for about 8 areas, of which many can be very productive. Going from Park Headquarters towards Drake's Beach you soon come across the double row of Cypress extending back to the RCA Station; many warblers and flycatchers have been here. Just beyond here is a circle of trees on the left; this is the Audubon Ranch, a nature sanctuary so you can slip through the fence, especially good for warblers. Next with the ranch houses on the left and trees lining the right is the Mendoza Ranch; often the most productive area is the first group of trees above the pond, for warblers, (a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was at the pond). Next comes a junction left to Drakes Beach. On the way is the Hall Ranch; check the trees but the fields are where all the Longspurs are. Down at Drake's Beach above the monument, the trees are also good for warblers and the Indigo Bunting was here. Back out and to the left just as the road heads right and up over a hill (past another ranch) is a paved single lane leading to South Point or "fish docks". This has been the place since it opened this year. Check the bay here for Black Scoters and Red-necked Grebes. The trees just in front of the first house and back up on the hillside seem to be the best. In the whole area look for Golden Plover and Hawks. Please respect property rights and obtain permission for any non-roadside birding in the Point Reyes area.

Point Reyes is some 90 miles from San Jose, approx 2+ hours of driving. Best route seems to go through Fairfax to Olema and in. All the above can be done in a day and you might want to do to Bodega Head (35+ miles) and bird their islands of trees and look for Rock Sandpipers and Surfbirds on the rocky coastline.

I Salute an Incredible Month,
Bob Yutzy

BIRD CORNER

At the request of one of our members we're going to try a "Bird Corner" at our General Meetings and see how it goes. One of our birding experts will set up a table with a few books and chit-chat about the latest birds. Interested people might stop by and trade info or whatever.

THE SOUPER-DOOPER STEWPENDOUS
CHRISTMAS COUNT 1974

Grab your binocs and mark Sunday, December 22, 1974 on your calendar. The annual Audubon madness known as the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is just a short time away. Many Audubon members don't realize the value of the Christmas Counts. The CBC has been the foundation for many scientific studies, and that alone is a valid reason for participation, but of greater concern to Audubon members, the CBC is one method of assessing and evaluating changing bird populations. It's a clue to disappearing species, changes in the distribution of birds and it also serves to pin-point burgeoning populations that may in time become pests.

But let's face it, the Bird Count is just plain fun (in spite of it's positive scientific aspects)! This year we hope it will be even more fun for all participants. We are going to try something a little different; by combining the task of compiling with a pot-luck Christmas supper. For details of where the final tallying/supper will be held and food arrangements see next month's AVOCET. Now there will be no excuse for anyone to miss this annual Audubon event! Even if you don't count birds yourself, you can support the Audubon Society by providing food for the hungry folks who walk their legs off in search of the elusive albatross. (What! Wouldn't that be the living end!)

The count area covers a circle 15 miles in diameter, as it has in the past. (See last December's AVOCET for a map of the different sections.) Section Leaders will appear in next month's AVOCET. For General Information about either the count or the tally (Ed. note: or the food!!), please call:

Phyllis Swanson
Count Coordinator
Phone: 274-2349

NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD PROGRAM

This note will serve as a reminder and a THANKS to all participants in NA Nest Record Program. For those not in the know, the nesting program is an ongoing (and monumental) effort originating from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. For those local participants in the program (people, not birds) -- it's time to turn in your nest cards for the year. Please mail them to me (Diana Matthiesen) c/o Avian Biology Laboratory, San Jose State University, San Jose Calif. 95192. By the way, if anyone has questions about the cards, or, (better yet) would like to participate next year, please give me a call, at 867-5363. A summary of this years program will appear in a later AVOCET.

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

SCIENCE

dog ate it. Will this kind lady please RE-VOLUNTEER !!

LOST IN THE TRANSLATION

The editor of the AVOCET received the following note from Kay McCann, the lady who is Program Chairlady for our General Meetings this year:

"Dear Dave,

The Program Committes got a little garbled in the October AVOCET. Please correct it in November if you have room.

Flora Houck and Barbara Allen are on the Hospitality Committee.

Barbara Houghton is Chairlady of the Greeting Committee.

I think something got lost in the translation. Thanks for the coverage.

Kay McCann"

Editor's note: Kay, I'm sorry; my spelling was pretty good -- however!!!

Be there

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS -- a small plea

The Audubon Wildlife Film series in our area is sponsored jointly by the National Audubon Society and Nature Expeditions International (NEI). Just a few days ago we received a letter from NEI, and we thought you should read it:

Dear Fellow Members of the Santa Clara Audubon Society,

On Monday, November 4th there will be the second presentation of the Audubon Wildlife Films Series at Spangenberg Auditorium in Palo Alto. The film, "Florida's Cypress Sanctuary: Fisheating Creek", is produced and narrated by Richard Kern. Dramatic photography shows the effects of rain on the creek and its inhabitants, the creek at night, resurrection ferns unfolding, and the process of decay. Larger animals that are shown include Otters, Alligators, Barred Owls, Red-Shouldered Hawks, and the nesting activities of the Rare Caracara and its close association with Black and Turkey Vultures.

We are particularly anxious to see more members of the Society attend your film series as the enrollment for the first film in September was very low. If we do not achieve an average enrollment of 200 persons per film, we will be forced to cancel the series at the end of the year. There is a possibility that the films after November will also be cancelled if we cannot reach a higher attendance than this past month (which was 80 persons). In order to break even and pay the necessary costs of auditorium rental, speakers, advertising and other minor costs, we need approximately 200 to 250 persons paid attendance. If you are interested in supporting these films, please contact me at (415) 941-2910. Your donations or ticket purchase fee are tax deductible.

Sincerely yours,
David Roderick
Director, NEI

AUDUBON LEADER'S WORKSHOP

Richardson Bay, October 5, 1974 -- by Nancy Holmes

The session was divided into four subject areas: (1) Chapter Bulletins & Publicity; (2) Meetings & Christmas Counts; (3) Conservation; and (4) Education. Dave Nauer attended (1), Phyllis Swanson attended (2) and I chaired the one on conservation.

Each workshop lasted all day and a great variety of ideas were thrashed about, and one of the more intriguing problems was just where and when the National Audubon Society (NAS) can take a stand on a certain issue. Paul Howard (Western Representative, NAS) point out the New Melones Dam controversy (Proposition 17) as a prime example. Some of the Chapters are for the dam, and others oppose, so National, by virtue of representing all the chapters cannot take a stand on this issue (though both the pro and con literature tends to misquote Audubon's involvement. By the way, look for National to take a stand on the Sea Otter/Fish and Game Proposal as well as the Peripheral Canal Controversy.

We covered many other things such as how to present the Audubon view to public bodies and public agencies. Some of the other things Paul Howard said are probably more worthwhile mentioning here. He advised us not to bombard our members with environmental problems all the time. Also, that Audubon is different than other conservation organizations, don't attempt to compare it with others. Audubon has sanctuaries, and wardens and summer camps; and Audubon is for people and for people to have fun. At which time a lovely Belted Kingfisher sailed close over our heads as we sat looking over Richardson Bay; we oohed and aahed, then broke out laughing at our pleasure in seeing the creature. We realized our National Representative was correct, fun and people are quite necessary.

DISCOVERY OF A MARBLED MURRELET NEST

Ranger Denzil R. Verardo of Big Basin Redwoods State Park recorded the sighting of a Marbled Murrelet's nest in August. The Murrelet has the reputation of being a North American breeding bird whose nest has never been discovered within North America. In 1973 an adult Murrelet was discovered (injured) near Big Basin park headquarters, but this only served as a hint of the bird's presence in the park. It was not imagined that a shorebird would nest in tall trees.

On August 7 of this year the Marbled Murrelet's nest was found by Mr. Hoyt Foster, a tree trimmer with the Davey Tree Company. Mr. Foster was 148 feet above the ground in a Douglas fir when he noticed a web-footed chick on a limb. The chick pecked at Foster and jumped off the limb. It flapped its wings and landed softly in some huckleberry bushes near the watching park staff. The bird was tentatively identified as a Marbled Murrelet by the Park Rangers and was then turned over to the California Department of Fish and Game for confirmation.

Because it was a campsite hazard, the limb containing the nest and egg shell fragments was lowered to the ground for preservation. A shiny metal plate was nailed to the spot where the limb was removed for the public to view. Another Marbled Murrelet nest was sighted the first week of September. An older chick was seen making its way to Union Creek and discovered by Ranger Denzil Verardo at Big Basin.

Tony Look

A NOTABLE QUOTE

The following is a quote from Stewart L. Udall's THE QUIET CRISIS (Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, New York, 1963):

"Far too many 'bird watchers' are just that; they contribute little or nothing to the Audubon Society or to the Wilderness Society for wildlife sanctuaries but sponge upon the accomplishments of others as they roam about enjoying themselves with field glasses and picnic lunch. Every bird sanctuary, every untrammelled field of wild flowers, every inspiring forest, every waterfall, every historic shrine is there because somebody preserved it (or is now fending off the developers) and invariably at considerable sacrifice."

BOARD NOTES

The following is a report of the SCVAS Board of Director's Meeting on October 14, 1974:

1. The Christmas Count will be Sunday, Dec. 22. Count Coordinator Phyllis Swanson is hoping for a big turnout, and the count will be followed by a potluck supper for counters and all interested members. (See note in this AVOCET)
2. In memory of Allan Cruikshank, SCVAS is contributing \$25 toward the construction of an electronic surveillance fence at Morro Rock, to halt (hopefully) Peregrine Falcon poachers.
3. The Board approved a statement to the Palo Alto City Council supporting the Open Space element of the General Plan and questioning expansion of the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor.
4. The Board approved the By-Laws of the Peninsula Conservation Legal Committee, formed to carry on environmental battles. The committee will consist of 8 members, including 2 representatives from Audubon, Sierra Club, and Comm. for Green Foothills, plus an advisory council of 5 attorneys versed in environmental law.
5. The Board authorized purchase of 9 volumes of Ridgeways' Birds of North And Middle America, to be donated to the San Jose State Vertebrate Museum Library.

THE AVOCET is published every month except July and August. It is sent without additional charge to paid-up members of the National Audubon Society who live in this area. Subscription for non-members is \$2.00 per year, payable to the Treasurer. Please notify the Editor promptly of any address change.

