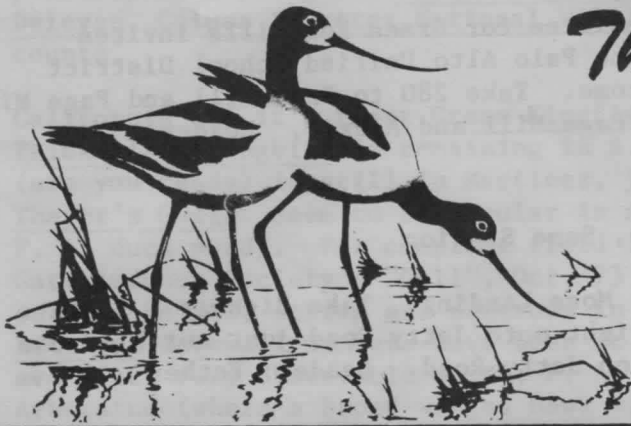


SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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

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# The Avocet

TIME VALUE

HARRY V LATHAM  
1085 394 TASMAN DR  
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Volume 22, Number 1 (2500 copies)

January, 1975

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan. 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR, Starting December 31, 1974 at 12:00 (midnight) to December 31, 1975 at 12:00 (midnight).
- Jan. 8 Field Trip South, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M., Mt. Hermon. Highway 17 to Mt. Hermon Rd. turn-off, 4 1/2 miles on Mt. Hermon Rd., to Safeway store, left at Safeway one block and then left again onto Conference Drive. One mile to parking lot on right. Bring lunch. We will eat at Mary Lou Grunigen's cabin. Birding Leader: Frank Farran, 252-3874.
- ✓ Jan. 12 Field Trip, Sunday, 9:30 A.M., Monterey-Pacific Grove. Meet at Coast Guard Pier on south side of Monterey Harbor. Leader: Paul Kelly, 494-1735
- Jan. 13 Board of Director's Meeting, Monday, 7:30 P.M. at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above AVOCET logo). Members are welcome.
- Jan. 14 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday, 9:30 A.M. at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Hummingbirds-continued, winter birds in your garden and their food - especially the plants that attract them.
- Jan. 15 General Meeting, Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center, East end of Embarcadero Rd. in Palo Alto. The program: "California Orchids" by Mr. and Mrs. J. Ed. McClellan. See note in this AVOCET for a little more info.
- ✓ Jan. 22 Field Trip North, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M. "The Hill" in Menlo Park, an area soon to be developed. From Route 280 take the Alpine Road exit east to the Santa Cruz Ave. - Junipero Serra Blvd. intersection. Continue left on Santa Cruz to the Alameda de las Pulgas. Follow the Alameda to Valparaiso Ave., turn left for one block. Meet at the intersection of Valparaiso and Altschul. Prepare for muddy shoes. Leaders: Barbara Allen, 326-0521; Carol Zabel, 948-5671 and Dolores Norton.

- Jan. 23 Bird Discussion Group, Thursday, 9:30 A.M. at home of Muriel Jones, 530 E. Crescent Dr., Palo Alto, 323-7536. Topic: Kinglets, Golden & Ruby-crowned and other "little birds" on page 214 of Peterson. Bring binoculars and get acquainted. Leader: Ione Bradley, 327-5973
- ✓ Jan. 26 Field Trip, Sunday, 10:00 A.M. The committee for Green Foothills invites us to join them for a nature walk on the Palo Alto Unified School District land on Page Mill Road. Children Welcome. Take 280 to Page Mill and Page Mill to Alexis Drive. Meet near corner of Page Mill and Alexis. Leader: Ellie Huggins, 328-6818
- Feb. 10 Board of Director's Meeting, Same Time, Same Station
- Feb. 12 Field Trip South, Wednesday 9:30 A.M. Moss Landing. Take Highway 1 south from Santa Cruz about 20 miles, turn right onto Jetty Road just north of the bridge by the P. G. & E. plant. Meet on Jetty Road. Leader: Esther Ollis, 353-2271.

#### FIELD TRIP REPORT

Thirty persons were present at the Jasper Ridge-Searsville Lake trip on Nov. 20th. A total of 51 species were seen that day and on the scouting trip. Notable among them were four Common Snipe feeding, many Gadwalls and Ring-necked Ducks, a flock of water pipits and several brown creepers.

Carol Zabel

#### A SMALL COMMITTEE PLEASE

Additional funds may become available to the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society from the George Whittell Estate (this item is mentioned again in the Board notes of this AVOCET). To plan wisely in advance for such money, the Society would like to submit a priority list of land in areas that should be permanently preserved.

If you are interested in saving our dwindling open land, please volunteer for a committee being formed to furnish this priority listing. This would include descriptions of such lands, its wildlife values, pressures to develop, ease of acquisition or problems related to acquisition such as litigation, availability of other funds toward purchase, and an idea of costs.

Conservationists in the Bay Area have for years had visions of extensive open space systems on ridglands or in wetlands, with corridors connecting the two. Any suggestions for land purchases will be enhanced if we are able to document the fact those lands are already thought valuable enough to be included in ABAG's open space plans, BCDB's long range plans, or in any regional, county, or city plan.

For information on this worthwhile project, please call Mrs. Florence LaRiviere, 493-5540.

## WHERE IT'S AT

January is the time for wintering land shorebirds, waterfowl, calling owls, and possibly rare pelagics (Parakeet Auklet anyone?). Site guide is to Sacramento, Delevan, Colusa & Sutter National Wildlife Refuges. Hope you made some Christmas counts.

California had it's first Green Kingfisher record near Los Angeles. The immature Thickbilled Kingbird is remaining in S. F. at the McClaren Park area, and the Ruff (are you ready) is still in Martinez, just barely starting to change it's plumage. Thayer's Gulls seem to be regular in small numbers in many gull flocks (try the P. A. duck pond). For complete field identification notes search out the Golden Gate Audubon Society's "Gull", Oct. 73 issue. Regular winter and resident raptors seem to be very active and numerous in some local areas (best in 3-4 years). American Bitterns in small numbers have been at the Flood Basin. The two male European Wigeons are often very observable at the P. A. Yacht Harbor, and one has been at Strybing Arboretum (where a Broad-winged Hawk was recently seen). Red Knots and Lesser Yellowlegs may possibly winter in small numbers. Knots have been at East & West Dumbarton, Alameda, and other bay and shore areas. The Yellowlegs were at Pescadero, P. A. dump, and Suisun marsh area. A Lucy's Warbler was at Carmel river mouth with a Black & White, another of which was in Marin. Two-three Orioles (generally unheard of in winter) are possibly wintering at a Menlo Park feeder. Tule-Klamath had 2 Harris' Sparrows, while a Baikal Teal was brought through their hunting check station. Two Harlan's race Red-tailed Hawks were seen in far N. Cal. area, and a Blue phase Snow Goose was at Gray Lodge. Ospreys can often be seen at Bodega & Tomales Bays and at many reservoirs and rivers. The Inverness Yellow-billed Loon probably only stayed thru Dec. 11th. Many areas were invaded with Swamp Sparrows, with 20 or more in the Olema-Shields Marsh area (as was a Tennessee Warbler), another at east Dumbarton and on the Oakland Christmas Count. Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs were dwindling in numbers at Hall Ranch in Pt. Reyes. A Palm Warbler was in Santa Cruz. Kittiwakes can usually be found at Princeton Harbor and Pt. Pinos, Monterey. Muni Wharf #1 in Monterey is the non-pelagic place to get excellent views of Fulmars, The Common race Green-winged Teal and Barrow's Goldeneye (at Lake Merritt) were at Bolinas Lagoon. A Northern Shrike stayed a short while in the Solano area, while Fulvous Tree Ducks were in Oroville. Hooded Mergansers were and can be seen at Tilden Park, Luck Drive (Marin), Belmont Slough and in Napa. More Rock Sandpipers are at Bodega Head. Dr. Mewaldt had a Tree Sparrow near San Jose. White-throated Sparrows are being seen everywhere. They seem to do best at feeders, it is thought that they otherwise have a difficult time competing with our White-crowns. A Cattle Egret (expect them more and more) is still in the fields at the flood basin rear, while up to seven are in the Solano area.

Some early Christmas Count results: Oakland - A Black & White Warbler (Tilden Park), Northern (Bullock's) Oriole, Swamp Sparrow, more than 20 Barrow's Goldeneyes and an Oldsquaw in the Bay and a large number of Red Knots. Palo Alto - White-throated Sparrow (ours is still here) at Stanford and a day earlier at Foothills Park, Cattle Egret and the two European Wigeons, a Phainopepla, Common Gallinules and 26 Blue-winged Teal, who waddle out at low tide and feed like shorebirds (Green-wings will do this sometimes). Hayward - 2 Evening Grosbeaks, Hermit Warbler, Elegant Tern, Red Knots and most exciting a Clay-colored Sparrow.

Notes from Southern California (thanks to Shum Suffel of the "Western Tanager"). Tropical Kingbirds seemed scarcer and later than usual. The 3rd mainland record for Great-crested Flycatcher in San Diego (PRBO had one also). Five Gray Catbirds (2 in one place) in Cal. this year equal all previous sightings. Cal. also had it's 5th Yellow-throated Vireo seen on Catalina Is. Twenty plus Tennessee Warblers this fall

make this and American Redstart our most common "Eastern" warblers (for us it's probably Blackpoll, Palm, Redstart and last in the top four Tennessee - the first two are by far our "two"). A Yellow-throated Warbler, less than 10 Cal. records, was in Santa Barbara. There were more Rusty Blackbirds than usual, with some away from Death Valley. Tree Sparrows are very rare west of the mountains, although expected in Death Valley. Clay-colored Sparrows have probably been overlooked, it seems they are more regular than ever thought to be (immature Spizellas specifically Brewer's, Clay-colored and Chippingare a definite field identification problem).

Sacramento, Delevan, Colusa, & Sutter National Wildlife Refuges. Any one or two of these is a leisurely one day birding trip, approximately 2 hours from San Jose on Route 505. They offer spectacular views of waterfowl concentrations, impressive to birder and non-birder alike. If you missed snow for Christmas try fields of thousands of Snow Geese, and also abundant numbers of Cackling (Canada) Geese and many White-fronteds. Each year there are a few Blue phase Snow's and sometimes (as two years ago) an Emperor. Whistling Swans in small numbers are quite impressive along with many Duck species; also look for White-faced Ibis, Rough-legged Hawks, the Harlan's race of Red-tailed, Peregrine Falcon, herons and shorebirds. At Sacramento the staff are extremely helpful (probably true at the others) and it is the largest refuge. The fairly new tour route offers superb views (quite close) of wildlife and can easily be seen in 1-2 hour tour time.

Have a Good Birding New Year  
Bob Yutzzy

#### UNsung HEROES

As all of our members are well aware, THE AVOCET is the joint effort of a group of BRILLIANT people (ahem!) who VOLUNTEER their time to bring you this STUNNING newsletter almost every month (ten out of twelve months to be exact) and more or less on time. MODESTY prevents us from blowing our own horn, but we would like to take this opportunity to sound off for Mr. Rich Hilovski, who is Director of the Data Processing Lab at Del Mar High School in San Jose. Mr. Hilovski and his students have been "programming" our mailing stickers for some two years or so. This personal attention to our labels is much appreciated, and we can only say THANK YOU again and again. By the way, when your mailing label is stuck on in a crooked manner, this is not due to Mr. Hilovski or his students. Others get the credit for that! Also, since we're talking about mailing lists and such, please see the article following.

#### A VOLUNTEER PLEASE????

The Chapter needs someone for about 10 hours each month to update our membership records. We prefer someone willing to commit his/her self for at least a year. A small salary will be paid if an unpaid volunteer cannot be secured.

The job consists of checking and transferring monthly membership data to an alphabetic card file and sorting and filing IBM cards both numerically and alphabetically. The job requires close attention to details. Most of the work occurs near the 15th of the month and must be done promptly to coordinate with the Programmer and Mailer. Anyone interested please call Ken Kidd, 379-6498 (6 pm - 9:30pm only).

LEGAL COMMITTEE IS ESTABLISHED

The Santa Clara Audubon Society has joined the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Committee for Green Foothills, and the Peninsula Conservation Foundation to establish an environmental legal defense committee whose purpose is to fund lawsuits to protect our local government.

For a long time now we have recognized that one of the major problems in protecting our environment is not being fully met. Governmental and other decisions are being made every day which are contrary to law and which are resulting in the piecemeal deterioration of our local environment and wildlife. Although we often become aware of such decisions, many times we learn a lawsuit is the only means we can use that would be effective. It is rare, however, that we have the wherewithal to fund a suit. Also the legal defense funds already set up for this purpose (for example, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and NDRC) are overloaded with suits having a significant national impact, such as the Alaskan pipeline and the Mineral King development. They are, therefore, generally unable to handle cases having only local significance. It is because of this vacuum that we are participating in the PCF Legal Committee.

The initial effort of the Committee will be to raise funds. In this connection, it has set a goal of \$2,500.00 for seed money. All contributions are tax deductible and should be made to the PCF Legal Committee, c/o Peninsula Conservation Foundation, 1176 Emerson, Palo Alto, Ca. 94301. Contact Nils Nilsson at 326-6200, Ext. 2311 for more information.

## Concentrate.

ORNITHOLOGICAL POETRY

The following bit of verse was submitted to us by a "Bewildered Birder" named Pat Lewis:

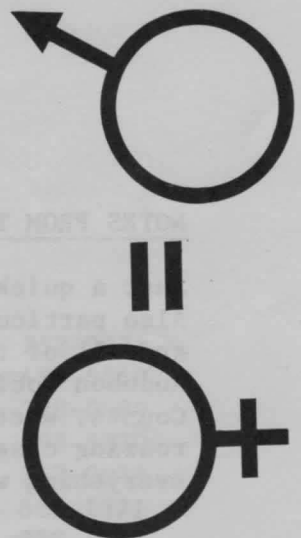
NO HELP FROM NOAH

A remarkable bird: the American Plover.  
From stories I've heard, he's a bit of a rover.  
But the sound of his name causes problems to hover,  
For removing the "P", the word then is lover.  
Change the "P" to a "G" and at once you have glover,  
But attach just a "C" and we say "all's in clover".

Is he plüver?

Or plöver?

I must think this over!!



## JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

The January General Meeting will be on Wednesday evening, January 15th, at 7:30 for socializing, 8:00 for a short business meeting, and 8:30 for the program. Our meetings are held at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center at the east end of Embarcadero Road. Our program this month will be given by Mr. and Mrs. J. Ed. McClellan of the Sequoia Audubon Society; the McClellans' will present a slide/talk shown of California Orchids. We understand from those who have seen them that the photography is beautiful and the McClellans are delightful people, as well as very knowledgeable about their subject. Why not bring your friends and join us? All our meetings are free of charge and the public is invited.

Kay McCann

## CHRISTMAS COUNT 1974

Since the Christmas Count was quite late in the month, we will not be able to run the final figures in this January, 1975 AVOCET (present item was typed less than 24 hours after the close of Count Day). However, we can offer a few preliminary numbers. The total birds counted should run just a shade over 69,000 with a total of perhaps 145 species; last years figures were much higher, almost 146,000 birds with 156 species. This year we did see some interesting birds though: a Phainopepla, four Cattle Egrets, and an encouraging total of 32 Golden Eagles (hopefully no duplications!). Somewhat less encouraging perhaps is the number of Starlings; the Alviso section alone yielded more than 16,000, the greatest total for any one bird on the Count. The weather was certainly clear with some wind and chilly at least earlier in the day. Luckily, by evening the lasagne was hot and the wine was about room temperature. Anyway, the more complete story will be run in the February AVOCET.

# NEWS FROM MOTHER

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Just a quick note to all of our members: PLEASE HAVE A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Also particular thank you to our Board Members, Officers, Committee Chairpersons and all of those people who volunteer their time for the Santa Clara County Audubon Society. A special tip-of-the-hat to people who worked on the Christmas Counts, whether as Section Leader, Counter, Lasagne Maker or Cookie Bakers. (A roaring case of the flu shot me down on County Day, but my "spies" tell me that everything went well). Again and Again -- Happy New Year and Thank You.

Sincerely,

Nancy Holmes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOTES FOR DECEMBER 1974

1. Funds from the George Whittell Estate may become available to Audubon. The Board is compiling a priority list of lands in the area that should be permanently preserved, and members are invited to submit recommendations. Descriptions of lands should include wildlife values, any immediate development pressures, costs to acquire, any deterrents to acquisition, and availability of other funds to apply toward purchase.
2. A request was received from the Conservation and Education Center, Kenya National Parks, asking for educational materials to establish information and library facilities.
3. National Audubon has taken a stand against the proposed Peripheral Canal.
4. The Board voted to back Project Jonah's proposal to boycott light meat tuna to protest the slaughter of porpoises caught in the tuna nets.



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2914 Emerson, Palo Alto, Ca 94301 327-5746

Library:

Miss Wayne Peters 430 Bay Road, Menlo Park, Ca. 94025 325-3947

Editor:

Mr. Dave Nauer above

**Thanks.**

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*The Editor: David Nauer  
PO 4501 Shore Lane, Av. 95126  
Telephone: (408) 859-1203*

