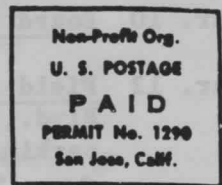


SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

1176 Emerson Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301  
Telephone: (415) 328-5313  
Chapter 0515 of the National Audubon Society



*The Avocet*

TIME VALUE

HARRY V LATHAM  
1085 394 TASMAN DR  
SUNNYVALE CA 94086

Mailed: 1-30-75

Volume 22, Number 2 (2800 copies)

February, 1975

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb. 10 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday, 9:30 A.M. at the home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: "Hermit Thrush and Fox Sparrow - similarities and differences".
- Feb. 10 Board of Director's Meeting, Monday, 7:30 P.M. at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above AVOCET logo). Members are welcome.
- 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.
- Feb. 15 Field Trip, Saturday, 9:30 A.M., highway 101 to Gilroy. East on highway 152 past Los Banos about 19 miles, north on highway 59 (toward Merced) about 7 miles to meetingplace at intersection with Sandy Mush Road. Meeting place is 100 miles from San Jose. Leader: Ted Chandik, 493-5330.
- Feb. 19 GENERAL MEETING, Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center (east end of Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto). The program: "Natural History of the West Coast of Mexico" by Mr. Ted Chandik. Please see note in this AVOCET.
- Feb. 26 Field Trip North, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M., Stanford University Campus, area of faculty homes. From either El Camino Real or Foothill Expressway take Stanford Ave., to Bowdoin Street. Park on Bowdoin. Leader: Barbara Houghton, 327-2186
- Feb. 27 Bird Discussion Group, Thursday, 9:15 A.M. at home of Jeannette Hitchcock, 203 Heather Lane, Palo Alto, 326-1355. Topic: "Hummingbirds and how to attract them to your garden" -- slides and narration by Louise Blakey. All are welcome. Ione Bradley, 327-5973

Mar. 10 Board of Director's Meeting, Same Time, Same Station

Mar. 12 Field Trip South, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M., Stevens Creek Park. 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.

#### FIELD TRIP REPORT

Monterey-Pacific Grove on January 12 --- We had a beautiful day for reasonably good birding on Sunday, January 12th. Good looks were had by all of Red-necked Grebe, Oldsquaws, Sea-otters, and California Sea Lions (in the harbor). Later some of saw Harbor Seals and Grey Whales at Pt. Pinos. Most of us saw Common Snipe at Crespi Pond.

Paul Kelly

#### GENERAL MEETING

As mentioned in our Calendar of Coming Events, the February General Meeting (Feb. 19 at 7:30 P.M. at Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center) will feature Mr. Ted Chandik. Ted will entertain us with a slide/talk presentation on the Natural History of the West Coast of Mexico. This is the coastal area from Guaymas to about as far south as Puerto Vallarta; in general we might say that this represents the most northern limits of "jungle" vegetation.

Ted is quite familiar with this area, and he will in fact be leading a birding trip to this same area later this spring. He and his wife Zoe, made the same trip 3 or 4 years ago and spent some 3 weeks photographing and enjoying. So why not join us at the Interpretive Center on February 19th --- and ENJOY. Our General Meetings are co-sponsored by the City of Palo Alto Nature and Science Department; there is no charge and everyone is welcome.

Kay McCann

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOTES FOR JANUARY 1975

1. The Santa Clara Vally Audubon Society (SCVAS) has budgeted to send three (3) persons to the summer Audubon Workshop. These scholarships will be made available to three State Park Rangers (2 women and 1 man).
2. Discussed Warm Springs Dam (please see BAAC notes in this issue for more details).
3. Mary Hallesy presented a slide show produced by Environmental Interchange, which produces such material for environmental education. The Board voted to purchase a contributing membership in Environmental Interchange.
4. Approximately 500 national members in the chapter's area will be invited to affiliate with S.C.V.A.S.



GALLINULE, Comm	5											5
COOT, American	3,246	230	120	40	30			85	3	300		1,099
KILLDEER	100	5	6	1	76	39	63	75	14	35		414
PLOVER, Black-bellied	(A) 27	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)		27
SNIPER, Comm.	5		3			3	7	55	3			76
CURLEW, Long-bill	24				42	75	47					208
WILLET	410											410
YELLOWLEGS, Great	13				2		6					21
SANDPIPER, Least	682											682
DUNLIN	907											907
DOWITCHER,									7			626
Short-bill	619											
Long-billed	12							22				34
SANDPIPER, West	1,724							7				1,741
GODWIT, Marbled	87											87
AVOCET, Am	1,235							60				1,295
STILT, Blk-neck	237							3	3			263
PHALAROPE	10											10
GULL, Glaucous-winged	16							5				22
Western	2							1				21
Herring	493					105	11	35			1	644
Cal.	208	1			3	64	80	85			2	443
GULL, Ring-billed	646	9		3	35			2	70	34	3	802
Bonaparte's	1,100											1100
Mew	13											13
Species	1,500		26		45						1	1572
TERN, Forster's	1											1
PIGEON, Band-tailed		45	3	125							1	174
ROCK DOVE	156	95	26	2	76	85	96	23	5	45		511
OWL, Barn	2			1		1				3		7
Gt. Horned		1	18							2		21
Burrowing	14				15		3	7	1			40
Short-eared	2											2
SWIFT, Sht.-throated				12							20	32
HUMMINGBIRD,								1	3	7		102
Anna's		2	24	8	44	13						3
Allen's*		1				2						
KINGFISHER,												
Belted	3			1	1	2	1		2			10
FLICKER, Red-shafted	1	1	35	53	5	32	13	6	5	36		190
R x Y						3						3
WOODPECKER,												
Acorn			10	61	2		3				1	74
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied			1	4							1	6
WOODPECKER, Hairy				2							2	4
Downy			1			1						3
Nuttal's			6	22				1			7	36
PHOEBE, Blk	1		3	2	2	8	1	5		5	2	29
Say's		2	4	1	3					1	2	13
LARK, Horned			3	34							37	7
SWALLOW, Violet-grn	1			2								
JAY, Stiller's		3	72	90	2						26	193
Scrub	2	13	70	118	24	58	20	13	3		73	394
MAGPIE, Yellow-bill		1	110	2	8	2					22	145
CROW, Comm.		85	11	8	35	22	12	3			175	356
CHICKADEE, Chestnut	4	1	12	28		27	18	7			15	112

TITMOUSE, Plain		1	29	45	1	12	5	13		12	105
BUSHTIT, Comm.		1	61	229		36	2			85	474
NUTHATCH,											
Wht. Breasted			4	21						4	29
Red Breasted				1							1
CREEPER, Brown				3							3
WRENTIT		4	2	12						3	21
DIPPER	(A)			1		(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)		1
WREN, House		(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	2				(J)	2
Winter				3							3
Bewick's			7	23		1		3		11	45
Long-billed Marsh								3			27
		24									
WREN, Rock			1	2							3
MOCKINGBIRD	1	5		10	35	21	22	2	5	5	106
THRASHER, Cal				6		2				1	9
ROBIN	2	3	1	88	228	95	170		9	2	598
THRUSH, Varied			3	150						6	159
Hermit		2	5	23		5		3		7	45
BLUEBIRD, West			19	115	8					15	157
KINGLET, Golden											
crowned			10	10		1				20	41
Ruby-crowned			18	63	3	4		2	3	15	108
PIPIT, Water	43		1		32	8		20		22	126
WAXWING, Cedar				22	105	26	90	6			244
PHAINOPEPLA				1							1
SHRIKE, Loggerhead	17		4	1	8	8	8	3	2	4	55
STARLING	16470	30	47	120	239	1023	500	223	1	41	18696
VIREO, Hutton's				2		4		8		3	17
WARBLER, Yellow-								35	4	25	273
Rumped	86		4	36	25	58					
YELLOWTHROAT	1										1
SPARROW, House	69	24		38	110	158	118	3	25	15	60
MEADOWLARK, West	336	15	118	34	125	93	22	7	20	216	986
BLACKBIRD, Red-wing											
Tricolored	227	19	200	1	23	103	300	1250		36	2159
BLACKBIRD, Brewers	245	60	611	131	707	572	50	500	233	406	3515
COWBIRD, Brown-											
Headed	50						1				51
EVENING GROSBEAK			6								6
Finch, Purple			11	17	2	8	8	175			221
House	4790	34	36	106	266	520	84	175	112	27	6150
GOLDFINCH, Am.						21	180				201
Lesser	70	45	3	52	475	121	114	7	11	46	944
TOWHEE, Rufous-											
sided		1	1	23		8	5	4		6	48
Brown	2	7	33	78	17	60	44	5	3	27	276
SPARROW, Sav.	353		3		2	1	1	17			377
Lark		1	60							8	69
Rufous-crowned				6			15				21
JUNCO, Oregon	20	17	507	250	18	54	18	135	2	82	1108
SPARROW, White-											
Crowned	537	50	102	40	82	500	96	65	48	87	1607
Golden-crn.	50	4	29	195	10	138	84	55	33	141	789
White-throat									1		1
Fox-			5	4				14		1	24
Lincoln's								8			8
Song	141			13	27	9	7	12	30	6	245

TOTAL 45092 989 3892 2952 3920 4488 2500 3484 716 2453 70,414

## SAN JOSE CHRISTMAS COUNT ----- THE LAST WORD

December 22nd dawned cold and windy, but the skies were clear and augered well for a good count. Sixty-three observers turned out for the annual San Jose Christmas Bird Count. Sixty-one scanned the skies, trees and bushes from Santa Clara to Cherry Flat Reservoir and from Alviso to Evergreen; two reported on what they'd seen at their feeders. Some of the interesting species they saw included Cattle Egrets, House Wrens, a Phainopepla, a Dipper, and Evening Grosbeaks. The brisk breezes chilled us all, but provided good hawk-watching. Even allowing for duplicate sightings, 24 Golden Eagles were seen during the course of the day. That's an impressive number of eagles, I think!

Although the sun shone on our count, the wind may have helped to keep the numbers disappointingly low when compared with last year's count. The 63 counters saw about 70,507 individual birds representing 143 species and one additional form. (For the statisticians among us, that works out to be an average of 1,119.15 birds per observer.) Last year, we had only a few more counters, but saw twice as many birds. The species list was longer last year, too. 156 species were seen on the 1973 Christmas Count.

The dinner and final tally on the evening of the count was a yawning success. The lasagne supper came as a welcome tummy warmer at the end of a long and cold day in the field. The atmosphere was so relaxing and we all felt so contented after dinner that heads began to nod as we proceeded to do the final tallying. In spite of that drowsy feeling, the totalling was fun and efficiently accomplished.

The Count couldn't have been a success without the help of my section leaders. My most sincere thanks to: Dick Mewaldt, Ed Piccolo, Don Brockhurst, Bill Mewaldt, Craig Kuziel, Mike Holst, Tony Look, Jim Hale, Dick Elliot, and Frank Farran. Special thanks to Florence LaRiviere and her husband. Their help in the kitchen left me free to devote my time to the business of tallying.

Phyllis Swanson

## WHERE IT'S AT

February is a good time for wintering land and shorebirds (usually only finches and sparrows but this year includes warblers), waterbirds, ducks and geese, pelagics and owling. The site guide is to the Palo Alto Flood Basin and Baylands Nature Center area.

An Adult Bewick's Swan (with 3 possible immatures) was seen with 100 Whistling Swans in mid January near Red Bluff. This represents only the second North American record for this bird of Northern Hemisphere high latitudes. They, like the Whooper Swan, normally migrate southward to Great Britain and Northern Europe and on the Pacific side as far as Japan and China. This may be a wild bird (which got here on it's own) or it could be an escape; waterfowl do present that problem. A Roadrunner was on the rocky edge just behind the swans, while a Northern Shrike was seen near the Tehama County line (we have had relatively few Northerns this season). Another biggie and more local, was an immature Little Gull, which represents the third California record with the two previous ones from Southern California. It was at Zmudowski State Beach, just north of Moss Landing on Highway 1, in a pond with many Bonaparte's (this is the usual gull association for Little Gulls in North America). It is a rare straggler from Europe and is becoming more regular in the East. There were some 30 individuals in New Jersey last year. The immature plumage is really quit striking (between the 2nd and 3rd year the birds

are more of an identification problem). In the area with the gull was a Golden Plover and 4 White-fronted Geese. Another Baikal Teal was reportedly taken near Tule Klamath. The Thick-billed Kingbird appears to have gone and the Ruff is not being seen.

More Christmas Count goodies. Monterey (176 species): 14 Red-necked Grebes, 2 Fulmars (numbers are down this year), an Oldsquaw which is still being seen near the Muni Wharf, more than 200 Black-legged Kittiwakes, and would you believe 12,750 Rhinoceros and 1,500 Cassin's Auklets, 20 Ancient Murrelets (Alcids can sometimes be seen either from Pt. Pinos or the wharves and piers at dawn). Many summer residents seem to be hanging around thru the season; Nashville and Wilson's Warblers, Northern (Bullock's) and Hooded Orioles, and great rarities like a Broad-winged Hawk, 3 Palm and a Lucy's Warbler, an American Redstart, a Rusty Blackbird which was still being seen roving around near the Carmel rivermouth, and Swamp Sparrow.

Western Sonoma (167 species): Red-necked Grebes, Rock Sandpiper, many Kittiwakes, 18 Ancient Murrelets, 4 Pileated Woodpeckers, a Nashville Warbler, 2 Swamp Sparrows and 2 Lapland Longspurs. Pt. Reyes Count had a Wilson's Warbler and 35+ Swamp Sparrows - Incredible! Honey Lake Count had 3 McCown's Longspurs with the 100 each Lapland and Chestnut-collared, 8 Tree Sparrows, and 2 Swamp Sparrows. Gray Lodge had a Blue phase Snow Goose. Our San Jose Count had a fantastic 24 Golden Eagles (higher than last years leader: Ruggs, Oregon with 22), 4 Cattle Egrets (expect them more and more), a Phainopepla, Dipper, Evening Grosbeaks, House Wren and 2 Rough-legged Hawks.

Bay Area Birds: Northern Waterthrush, Clay-colored Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Ferruginous Hawk, Cattle Egrets, White-throated Sparrow (still at many feeders), all in the Santa Cruz area. Zmudowski State Beach also had a White-faced Ibis and Moss Landing a Franklin's Gull. A Fulvous Tree Duck was in Monterey. A Northern Shrike was near Monticello Dam as were Townsend's Solitaires (also near Lake Solano). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was frequenting a suet feeder in Portola Valley (as one was in Fremont earlier). Two Harris' Sparrows were at Berkeley feeders - see what you might be missing. Hooded Mergansers are often seen in Belmont slough area.

Swamp Sparrows were still at Olema marsh as was at least one of the European Wigeons still in Palo Alto. Golden Plovers seem to be still increasing in numbers at the junction to Drake's Beach in the fields at Pt. Reyes. A Tennessee Warbler appears to be wintering in San Francisco. A Pileated Woodpecker was at Ano Nuevo. Dippers appear to be regular residents at Portola State Park. Only 3 Rock Sandpipers (often 6-8) are at Bodega Head. Bolinas had 5 Barrow's Goldeneyes while 1 was at Crystal Springs. Also at Crystal Springs were 2 Bald Eagles and a European Wigeon. Up in Del Norte County were 2 Snow Buntings, a Black and White and a Palm Warbler.

Palo Alto Flood Basin, Duck Pond and Bayland Interpretive Center. The Flood Basin (Mayfield Slough) contains an area of nearly 500 acres. It is located just east of 101 between San Antonio and Embarcadero Roads. The roadside portion contains two large ponds, with the left one usually full of ducks, gulls and shorebirds, while the smaller right one is often mostly vacant due to human and dog use. It is best to park by the gate between the ponds (the gate is often open, tho' I believe it is supposed to be locked). Driving the road I believe encourages erosion and misuse of the property. The best way to bird the area is to walk the central road at least out to where it bears sharply left. One should look carefully in all wet areas. There are many crossing roads to reach the outer slough. Good birds at the Flood Basin are or have been: European Wigeon, Redhead, Northern Phalarope, White-tailed Kite, American Bittern, Short-eared Owl, Cattle Egrets, Peregrine Falcon, Swifts, and Swallows in large numbers, and even Black Tern, Parasitic Jaeger, Red Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs and Little Blue Heron. The duck pond is off Embarcadero Road east, take a left at the dump-harbor junction. It is a good place to study gulls (ugh!). Some Thayer's, Mew, many Western, and rarely a Glaucous Gull are often with our

regular ones. Common Goldeneyes and many Scaup are with other ducks (including the many hybrid or domestic species). Continue on to the Baylands Nature Center and Yacht Harbor parking lot and park. Walk out the dike to the Nature Center. This is a superb place to learn our Bay natural history. The walkway out to the bay and the P.G.& E. boardwalks are good for Rails - mostly Clapper, a few Virginias, and possibly even a Sora. Red Knots have been along the Bay with the many other shorebirds. Follow the dike past the center, (European Wigeon have often been seen along here), to the airport warning signs. In the wet area near the airstrip Blue-winged Teal can often be seen with the many other species. When passable the path following the southeast side of the sewage outlet can sometimes yield views of Blue-winged or Green-winged Teal and European Wigeon. Across from the parking lot and boat docks is a mud area sometimes containing shorebirds, Mew and even Franklin's Gulls. The whole trip is a short and relatively easy half day birding.

Bob Yutzy

#### BAY AREA AUDUBON COUNCIL

On January 4, 1975 the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society hosted the Bay Area Audubon Council (BAAC) at the Peninsula Conservation Center. These were some of the items discussed:

##### WARM SPRINGS DAM

A citizens' group has launched a legal battle to halt construction of the dam, located on a tributary of the Russian River, and to force the Army Corps of Engineers to present an adequate Environmental Impact Report. The Council on Environmental Quality has requested that the Corps not proceed until some questions are answered concerning water quality control and earthquake safety. The proposed dam would be built across an earthquake fault, and the reservoir would flood an active geothermal field, an abandoned mercury mine, and fourteen prehistoric Pomo Indian village sites. A ruling against the citizens group went to Federal Circuit Court, which refused to halt construction. A motion was then filed with Justice Douglas, who issued a temporary stopping order. Project is now halted until a decision from the Circuit Court of Appeals. As legal costs are approaching \$80,000, there is an urgent need for funds.

##### SUISUN MARSH

Dr. William Coon, representing Suisun Resource Conservation District, discussed a proposed Suisun Marsh museum and roadside rest area. It was noted the area has educational value, as it is heavily used and would attract many people.

##### GOLDEN TROUT CAMP

This facility, located in the eastern Sierra, has been leased by Audubon for four weeks this summer. Individual chapters may contract for a week at the camp, and will be free to design their own programs. Minimum attendance - 35, at \$65 each.

##### PORTERVILLE HERON ROOKERY

Environmental groups in Porterville, California, are asking help from Audubon in establishing a heron rookery on a 186 acre plot on the Tule River. An estimated 60 great blue herons use the area, as well as numerous other wildlife, including the endangered San Joaquin Valley Kit Fox.

Thanks to Jo Combs for her day long excellent note taking.

Nancy Holmes