

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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The Avocet

TIME VALUE

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March, 1975

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 10 Board of Director's Meeting, Monday, 7:30 P.M. at the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above AVOCET logo). Members are welcome.
- March 11 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday at 9:30 AM at home of Eva Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: "Geese"
- ✓ March 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.
- March 19 General Meeting, Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center (east end of Embarcadero Rd. in Palo Alto). The program: "Manmade Wildlife Hazards" with Mr. William E. Clark of the California Dept. of Fish and Game. Please see note in this AVOCET.
- March 22 Castle Rock Field Trip and Dedication of the Emily Smith Bird Observation Point. Saturday, 9:30 A.M. South on Skyline Blvd., about 2 miles past highway 9 to parking lot on right. The hike is about 4 miles round trip and considerably more rugged than most Audubon trips. Carry lunch and water and wear hiking boots. Leader: Tony Look 968-3668 or 252-3911.
- ✓ March 26 Field Trip North, Wednesday 9:00 A.M. Coyote Hills Regional Park. East across Dumbarton Bridge, left at Jarvis Ave., left at Newark Blvd., in about one mile, left at sign to park. Meet at first parking lot on left. Leader: Phil Hand 493-5876 or call Carol Zabel 948-5671.
- March 27 Bird Discussion Group, Thursday, 9:30 A.M. at the home of Mercedes Williams, 650 LaMesa Dr., Ladera (Menlo Park in phone book) 854-5417. Topic: Thrushes - Varied, Hermit and Swainson's. Bring binoculars and get acquainted with the group.
- April 6 Field Trip, Sunday, 8:00 A.M. Bird banding and watching at the Cheeseman's in Saratoga. Sunnyvale-Saratoga Rd. or Los Gatos Saratoga Rd. to Saratoga. West on Big Basin Way, meet by Saratoga Theater parking lot on left just past Third Street. We will car pool from here to Cheeseman's so be on time. Leaders: Gail & Doug Cheeseman 867-1371.

- ✓ April 9 Field Trip South, Canyon Drive, Saratoga, Wednesday, 8:30 A.M. Saratoga-Los Gatos Rd. to Belle Ct. (about 1 mile from Saratoga or 3 miles from Los Gatos). Park near 15355 Belle Court. Leader: Manette Wittgenstein, 354-9420.
- April 12 Field Trip, Coe Park Back Pack, Saturday and Sunday. South on 101 to
 13 Morgan Hill, east on Dunne Ave. across Anderson Reservoir & up into the hills. Dunne become Mineral Springs Road; and after 10 miles or so of mountain driving the road ends at park headquarters. Be there by 8:00 A.M. Saturday. There is a fee for park use. The trip is designed so that those who do not wish to spend the night may start out with us on Saturday & return after lunch. These day hikers should bring lunch & water & be prepared for a strenuous hike. All backpackers must sign up by phone with the trip leader. Backpackers MUST be equipped with hiking boots, light weight packs, down sleeping bags, dried food, pack stove, water purification tablets and a tarp or pack tent. With proper selection of gear and food a pack should weigh about 20 pounds for an overnight trip. If you aren't in good shape or don't have previous backpack experience, please don't attempt the trip. Leader: Diana Matthiesen, 867-5363 or 277-2336 (days)
- April 14 Board of Director's Meeting, Same Time, Same Station.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Some 65 members and guests of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society met on February 15th for the trip to Merced National Wildlife Refuge and Los Banos State Waterfowl Area. It was a cold, crisp, but clear morning to study the birds of the grasslands and marshes of the San Joaquin Valley in Merced County. One of the day's highlights was seeing four wild Coyotes in the grasslands. Among the 73 species of birds observed, the highlights were: American Bittern - 25, White-faced Ibis - 35, Whistling Swan - 21, Ross' Goose - 4, Rough-legged Hawk - 10, Golden Eagle - 1 immature, Sandhill Crane - 600, Common Gallinule - 6, Long-eared Owl -1, Cliff Swallow - 4 (very early), and Yellow-headed Blackbird - 20.

Ted Chandik, Leader
 (with much thanks to Bob and Carol
 Yutzky for their scouting and co-leading
 assistance)

Sixteen people met at "The Hill" in Menlo Park on Jan 22nd. A total of 25 species of birds were seen. Several of the group then went to Lagunita on the Stanford Campus where another 6 species were seen, among them Bufflehead.

Carol Zabel

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON

Mrs. C. V. Horton has agreed to be our membership chairperson allowing Caroline Davis to retire after many many years of hard work. Although Caroline was honored at our June dinner in 1973 we want to thank her once more for her dedicated service to this organization.

Changes of address can now be sent to Mrs. Horton at 390 N. Winchester Blvd., Building 2, #4H, Santa Clara, Ca. 243-6384

March can be a dull month for birders; most of the winter birds have already gone and only the earliest spring migrants have arrived. Nesting in southern CA and parts of northern CA begins in spring and not in summer, as it does elsewhere. Many of our summer residents should be getting deeply into nesting soon (don't forget "Nest Record Cards" - see April 74 AVOCET). It is also time for our shorebirds to start moving and some will be beginning to attain breeding plumages. The 28th & 29th of March have fairly high tides for Rail watchers. The site guide is being preempted by some early migrant field identification information.

1974 brought with it six new species for the state, which now gives us 89 new species added since the publication of Grinnell & Miller's "The Distribution of the Birds of California" in 1944. That gives us over 520 species, and at least one birder has seen 499 of these, while another saw over 425 in one year. The Farallon Island list is now 322 species, with 16 first state records of which nine are still the only records for the state. The Ruff is still being seen in the Suisun Marshes with 4 Lesser Yellowlegs there also. For a few days we thought the Little Gull had left but is still regularly at Zmudowski State Beach and was once seen near Moss Landing. A Golden Plover and some Whistling Swans were also there. The incredible Bewick's Swans only stayed for a few weeks and were seen by many (an of course missed by some). It is quite possible that species that appear to have left are merely not being seen. It is interesting to note that while we had our 4th state Thick-billed Kingbird in SF, one was also in Victoria, British Columbia. You ask what is it doing in Victoria? I ask (or answer), what was it doing in SF? Seventeen Hooded Mergansers with only a very few adult males are regularly seen each winter off route 92 near Mariner's Island Blvd. They are also being seen in Tilden Park and at Lake Merritt, where the Barrow's Goldeneye are. A European Wigeon has been at the SF Zoo three winters in a row, and another was at a small SF park. They are being seen in many areas, probably because we have more birders and many who are getting sharper. Black Rails are sometimes being spied at the Benecia marshes. A Palm Warbler may have wintered in Golden Gate Park. An Eastern Phoebe stopped nearby at Scott's Valley.

Many Rough-legged Hawks have made it south to our bay area, and are specially numerous inland, where a few Ferruginous are seen. Peregrine Falcons (some with jesses, many without) have been spotted all along our area, and some Prairie's have also been seen. Inland, Mountain Plovers, over 200, have been in fields in the Panoche pass area where Chukar's are residents on both sides of the pass. Other good animals seen here are Mountain Bluebirds as well as Westerns, Lewis' Woodpecker, Vesper and Rufous-crowned Sparrows and a Bobcat. The Merced-Sandy Mush Road Mountain Plovers are usually smaller in number and more elusive than Panoche's. Five Cliff Swallows in Los Banos & Merced are about one month earlier than ever. Los Banos had 50 White-faced Ibis, many Gallinules and Bitterns, an immature Golden Eagle, Canada, White-fronted, Snow and a few Ross' Geese. Most spectacular were the numerous Sandhill Cranes, many very close to the highways. Also some Whistling Swans, the usual Tri-colored and the unusual Yellow-headed Blackbirds. More northerly; in Sutter County were Harlan's race of Red-tailed Hawk, a Lark Bunting with Vesper and Savannah Sparrows. A Northern-Shrike was at Putah Dam and another was near Sacramento where a Glaucous Gull and 18 Turkeys (established) were seen. Solano Co. also had a Harlan's, Common race of Green-winged Teal, ten Lesser Yellowlegs, and at Solano Lake was a European Wigeon and 3 Hooded Mergansers. Five Hundred - seven hundred Whistling Swans were near Rio Vista. A Grasshopper Sparrow was near Collinsville; this species might be an irregular resident but there are apparently few winter records. Two Swamp Sparrows are still in the Shield's Marsh near Olema, while a Cattle Egret was close to Stinson Beach. A European Wigeon (ubiquitous) was at Limontour in Pt. Reyes and even at Lake Merced. Golden Plovers were still near the road to Drake's Beach at Point Reyes. Monterey had a Thick-billed Murre (still being seen), Red Phalarope, and Red-necked Grebes at the Coast Guard Pier. Seven species of Alcids are sometimes in the harbor at once; Guillemot, Common, and Thick-billed Murre, Marbled and Ancient Murrelet, and Cassin's and Rhino Auklet.

A Yellow-billed Loon was at Moss Landing and another in Monterey Harbor, Near an Oldsquaw. Two Glaucous Gulls were near Point Pinos. The Broad-winged Hawk, though elusive, is still in Monterey. Carmel River mouth area had the Rusty Blackbird (still), Lucy's Warbler (same bird as a month ago?), Palm Warbler and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The Lover's Point Western Grebe flock does sometimes have a Red-necked or two in it; up to 15 have been seen in Monterey Bay. Every birding year seems better than previous ones and with the ever increasing expertise and more days in the field. a good number of rare birds are bound to continue to come our way (unless we eliminate too much habitat?).

If March is anything birdwise, it's the time for first reports. When you receive this the Rufous and Allen's Hummers and some Swallows will be here already. The Swallows, mostly Cliff, Barn and Violet-green are after the early insects. Though many migrate, some Tree and Violet-green often winter with us. Other birds to look for, out and about, are Western and Cassin's Kingbirds (mostly south), Western Flycatchers, Warbling Vireos, Wilson's Warblers, Northern and Hooded Orioles, and Black-headed Grosbeaks (nice to hear them again). A few of these can be confusing to new birders and this is a good time to study them. Male Rufous and Allen's are very much alike, both with fire-red throats and much rufous on the flanks and tail. Rufous has rufous on the upper back but if this area is green it's probably an Allen's but could still be an immature male Rufous. The females for the casual birder and many semi-pro;s are too tough to separate. Of the Swallows, Barn is often the easiest to tell by it's deeply forked tail and buffy underparts. Cliff also have buffy underparts, but their tail is square at the end, not forked. They are often our most common nesting swallow with Barn and Violet-green a close second. Tree and Violet-green are very similar, dark green above and white below, but the white on Violet-greens extends up onto the sides of the rump and onto the face above the eye. The Trees' back is more blue-black while the Violet-greens is just as it's name, but this takes excellent lighting to differentiate. The two brown swallows, Rough-winged and Bank can also be tricky; both are brown above and white below, but the Rough-wing has a brownish throat blending into the underparts. The Bank is slightly smaller and more contrasty; rich brown above with a clear white throat and belly, sharply separated by a dark brown breastband. It is by far the least common of our swallows.

Alas-again, the Ides of March,
Bob Yutzy

you can have it, free.

THE MARCH GENERAL MEETING (Wednesday, March 19th)

As mentioned in our Calendar, this months program is titled Manmade Wildlife Hazards. Our speaker, Mr. William E. Clark is Associate Wildlife Pathologist with the California State Department of Fish and Game. Though Mr. Clark's talk will cover "hazards" in general (powerlines, etc.), he has been very much involved in the States oiled bird rehabilitation program, and this is of particular interest to we people in the Bay Area. Whether we like it or not, there are spills in our future. Mr. Clark will give us a bird's eye view (no pun intened we can assure you) of these problems.

Our General Meetings are held at the east end of Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto and are open to the public. The meeting starts at 7:30 P.M. with a "social", a short business meeting about 8:00, and Mr. Clark should start about 8:15. By the way our General Meetings are co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Nature and Science Dept. Why not join us with friends?

CLASSES, TOURS, AND SUCH

From time to time THE AVOCET receives information on classes being offered by various schools, organizations, etc. The following is a sample:

Nature Expeditions International, (NEI), a non-profit educational organization based in Los Altos, presents a natural history expedition to the west coast of Mexico. The emphasis will be on the bird and plant life of the diverse habitats, which includes thorn forest, palm jungles, mangrove swamps, salt marshes, lagoons, and pine-oak mountain forests, of the areas around Mazatlan, Sinaloa and San Blas, Nayarit. The itinerary is designed so that participants in good health can investigate these varied natural environments by foot, boat and motor vehicle in the unhurried yet exciting atmosphere of coastal Mexico.

The expedition group is limited to 15 participants. The fees included all transportation and accommodations in the finest hotels or lodges based on double occupancy, two meals each day except in Mazatlan, tips, instruction and leadership, and scheduled round trip air transportation to Mazatlan from San Francisco. The leader will be Ted Chandik, professional naturalist for the City of Palo Alto, California. (For those who might have attended the February General Meeting, Mr Chandik "did" the evenings program.)

For further information and itinerary please contact NEI, P. O. Box 1173, Los Altos, California 94022 or call (415) 941-2910.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory, a nonprofit research, conservation and educational institution since 1965, offers these natural excursions to California, Arizona and Mexico.

Our aim is simply to arouse interest in the natural world. The price of these excursions reflects our desire to do this at the lowest possible cost to participants.

For detailed information concerning any of the excursions please write Meryl Stewart, P.O. Box 442, Bolinas, California 94924.

26-27 April, 10-11 May

Birds of the Bay Area

Four days of observing all kinds of birds in the best habitats of the Bay area. Particularly for those interested in the finer points of bird identification including behavior and song.

Bill Clow and Bob Stewart \$30

3-4 May

Plants of Point Reyes

A two day introduction to the flora of the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Gladys Smith and Gordon True \$20

16-18 May

Landbirds of the Point Reyes Peninsula

An intensive look at breeding birds, their nesting behavior, songs and general ecology. Field trips to PRBO study areas representing most of the habitats on the Peninsula.

Bill Clow and Bob Stewart \$20

20-25 May

Birds of Southeast Arizona

An excursion through one of the best birding areas in the country with attention to other vertebrates and general ecology of deserts. Three nights camping, three nights with lodging; all food and lodging included.

Rich Stallcup, Peter Warshall, Art Earle,

Bob Stewart \$250

9-13 June

Natural History of Point Reyes

A look at the natural history of the Point Reyes Peninsula with emphasis on birds and ecology. Explore Tomales Point, Point Reyes, Bishop Pine forests, Point Reyes Bird Observatory including a two day backpacking trip on the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Peter Warshall and Bob Stewart \$45

22-27 June

Transect of California

A 6-day camping transect of California to observe native vertebrates and flora of major habitats from Mono Lake to Monterey (very strong emphasis on birds). Cost includes all food and camping expenses. Transportation by private car pool.

Rich Stallcup, Peter Warshall, Art Earle and

Bob Stewart \$200

13-18 July

East of the Sierra

Equal emphasis on the geology, botany and birds of the high east side of central California from the White Mountains to Tioga Pass. Participants must be willing to camp in unimproved campgrounds and be in shape to hike from 1-5 miles at elevations around 10,000 feet.

Bob Stewart and Virgil Frizzell \$80

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY
1975

thru 6, that is January thru June of 1973. If anyone has such extra copies would you send them to the editor please? Dave Meyer, P. O. Box 4501, San Jose, Ca 95126 (259-1283)

WILDLIFE RESCUE TEAM

The Wildlife Rescue Team (WRT) announces their spring classes on the Care of Orphaned and Injured Wildlife. A series of classes held on three consecutive Tuesday evenings will begin March 11, 1975, 7:30 P.M. at the Baylands Interpretive Center located at the east end of Embarcadero in Palo Alto. Pre-registration is required due to the limited amount of space. To register, call 329-2568.

Classes will be taught by Jinny Collins, Wildlife Rescue Team's Director of Education and Public Relations. Mrs. Collins has been caring for wild birds and animals in the Bay Area for nearly 10 years. Instruction will include the care and feeding of nestlings and baby animals; how to administer first-aid to the injured; and the application of splints to broken legs and wings.

The Wildlife Rescue Team is a completely volunteer organization dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of wild creatures. Since beginning last spring, WRT has trained 250 volunteers who helped care for over 1000 birds and animals during 1974. Additional classes will be offered in April and June. You might call WRT at 329-2433.

WHY FALCONRY NOW? An Editorial

The following article appeared in the December 1974 issue of American Birds. We thought you might be interested:

For some months the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been in the process of writing and revising federal regulations for the practice of falconry. These regulations would not only endorse falconry as a "sport", but legitimize it throughout the United States -- wherever it was not specifically banned by a particular state. The regulations are merely minimum standards for raptor taking and keeping, and in individual states may enforce more stringent regulations of their own, or ban falconry completely if they so choose.

When the original version of the regulations was circulated for comment, your editor wrote to Mr. Lynn Greenwalt, Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, objecting strenuously to the issuance of any regulations and proposing instead a ten-year moratorium on falconry everywhere at the end of which time, hopefully we would have reliable data on continental raptor populations, and an evaluation of population trends in the various species.

It is the editor's conviction that there could hardly be a worse time than today for the promulgation of any set of regulations that will give legality to falconry. The result can only be an increased interest in the pastime and a vastly increased drain on a resource already -- in many respects -- in serious trouble.

It is further the editor's opinion, and one shared by many environmentalists that falconry is a useless and in some aspects inhumane activity attractive largely because it is persistently promoted as a glamorous activity associated with medieval nobility, with an arcane vocabulary and antique furnishings -- all of which add to the ego gratifications of the "sport."

Some serious and expert falconers can be found, but unfortunately a majority of the so-called falconers are merely pet-keepers, unable to successfully train birds and fearful of flying them.

However, each time an expert-- who is often a master propagandist with thrilling flight films and beautiful captive birds to exhibit -- stages a performance, the audience is aroused, and a dozen or a hundred youths crave hawks and instant glamor. The machismo factor is high. But there are no statistics indicating what percentage of birds taken from the wild die quickly in captivity, how many are successfully trained and hunted, or how many escape, hampered by trailing jesses or being man-dependent and vulnerable. We have evidence that man-acclimated raptors are more likely to be less wary after release than truly wild birds.

The proposed federal regulations were written with the active participation of the falconers-- and with little opportunity for conservationist to contribute. But if falconry is federally approved now, the result will be the permitting of an annual harvest of a wildlife resource at a time when there is no accurate data on the size of the resource (raptor populations), or any real estimate of the size of the harvest

(falconry drain). This same Service, which regulates the annual waterfowl harvest would never issue its annual regulations without first censusing the resource, and then carefully controlling the harvest.

The arguments against sport falconry should not be construed or misused as opposition to experimental breeding programs conducted by responsible institutions. While we believe that successful introduction of cage-bred birds into the wild is still unproved, it should have every chance to prove itself. For this purpose, limited taking of unthreatened races, where they exist, should be permitted under strict controls. But even if falconry techniques may be used in repopulation research, this is not a valid argument in favor of sport falconry.

Falconers are well organized and vocal. Until now, everthing has gone their way. It is time that public officials know the size, intensity, and cogent reasons for the opposition.

Those readers who agree with the arguments presented here might let Mr. Greenwalt, Mr. Rogers C. B. Morton, Secretary of the Interior, and their own state conservation departments know their sentiments.

Get Away.

WE WANT TO SEND YOU TO CAMP!

Actually the Audubon Camps are now called "Workshops" and we will pay half your way, \$137.50. The Directors have already filled one of the spots and would like to have a contest for the remaining two. (And hopefully at least one of those will be a woman).

The Workshops run in twelve day periods from June 22 to August 15, 1975 in Dubois Wyoming. This would be an excellent opportunity for classroom teachers, naturalists and rangers or someone planning for such careers to learn new things about nature to share with others.

Please send the reasons that you think you are the best qualified to earn this scholarship to the SCVAS Directors before the April Board Meeting. See address under AVOCET logo. GOOD LUCK!!

CHRISTMAS COUNTS IN OTHER PLACES

THE AVOCET received the following note from Bob Nansen at DeAnza College. We though you'd like to see it:

The 1974 Christmas Bird Count in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico --
This past Christmas the National Audubon Society and De Anza College sponsored a bird count in La Paz. Twenty-five college students and two staff members went on a 3,400 mile trip to study and explore the Baja Peninsula. During the 19 day trip, students were able to see examples of desert and seashore organisms that are notable all over the world. The following are some of the birds seen during the count: Brown Boobies, Brown Pelicans, Magnificent Frigatebirds, Louisiana Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, White Ibis and one Roseate Spoonbill. Aplomado Falcons, Caracaras, Elegant Terns, Roadrunners, Verins, Cactus Wrens, Sage Thrashers, Nashville Warblers and one bright red Cardinal. The other notable sighting was Bing Crosby (a mammal!) along a sandy road near his home. If anyone is interested in joining the count next year, please write to: Robert P. Nansen, 4823 Tonino Drive, San Jose, California 95123.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOTES FOR FEBRUARY, 1975

1. Tony Look, (Conservation Chairperson) reported on a proposed study of creeks in the county.
2. Nominating committee for next year's slate of officers and three board positions will be: Diana Mathieson, Betsy Peterson, Frank Farran.
3. Paul Kayfetz, attorney spearheading Warm Springs Dam legal battle, may speak at a meeting at the Baylands in March.
4. Mr. C. V. Horton is our new membership chairperson.
5. Board endorsed dedication of the Emily Smith Observation Point March 22.

BAJA REVISITED (or how do things look one year later to the Holmes')

At the General Meeting of SCVAS last June we expressed some concern over the future of Baja with (1) the new road and (2) the wooing of the American tourists by the Mexican government. In January of this year we took a trip back to some of our former haunts (though we didn't go below Bahia De Conception this time), and we did discover some of the interior mountains, high passes through granite stacked up like so many toy blocks and lovely valleys of pines, plus strawberry farms and even a buffalo herd!

More El Presidente Hotels have been built and though accommodations are not inexpensive, they are excellent as is the food. However, with so many tourists in motor homes and campers the hotels are practically empty. Many of the tourists are not just from the U. S. as evidenced by the names spray painted on every other boulder for miles in the great boojum forest.

We did not think the traffic was greater than last year, except for more produce trucks, as much of the desert is being converted to agriculture. The price of gas is a few cents higher than before, (90¢ a gallon for premium, though luckily we use regular), and the road is now paved from Highway 1 into Bahia de Los Angeles.

Two new books from the University of Arizona press are great to have along: Common Intertidal Invertebrates of the Gulf of California by Brusca and the Boojum and Its Home by Humprey. Oh yes, the landscaping around the hotels look a bit dreary except for the iceplant which is flourishing.

Nancy Holmes

AUDUBON MAGAZINES ARE ON SALE AT THE PCC

Back issues too! These make great gifts when giving an Audubon Membership. And while we're on the subject of the PCC, their gift shop is open from 10-3 Monday thru Friday. If you don't know what PCC means, just remember Peninsula Conservation Center -- address and phone number under AVOCET logo.

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. The Editor: David Nauer, P. O. Box 4501, San Jose, Ca., 95126, Telephone: (408) 259-1283.

