

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

Chapter 0515 of the National Audubon Society  
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## The Avocet

TIME VALUE



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June 1975

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 9 Santa Cruz Bird Club Nineteenth annual Albatross Expedition. A Stagnaro fishing boat will take us 12 miles offshore to look for black-footed albatrosses and other pelagic birds. The boat will leave at 8 a.m. and return about noon. Bring warm clothing. Free parking at Stagnaro's lot at approach to Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf. Send \$6.00 and stamped self-addressed envelope to R. Morgan, 3500 N. Main Street, Soquel. 475-1731.
- June 10 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday at 9:30 A.M. at home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga for birding and picnic lunch at Stevens Creek Park.

### OUR NEW CHECKLIST

Enclosed in this month's AVOCET (a freeby!) is our new updated CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY REGION. This checklist of local birds was originally compiled by H. G. Weston, Jr. and H. T. Harvey and published by SCVAS in January 1963. The new list is updated and represents the work of the original authors, plus Field Notes Editor Bob Yutzy, Palo Alto Naturalist Ted Chandik, ex-Board member Mike Brady -- and a host of other people who helped to critique the final copy.

The enclosed copy is on "thin paper", but the Peninsula Conservation Center (address over AVOCET logo) will have a supply on heavier stock. The price is 15¢ if you stop in at the Center, or 25¢ for mail-outs. If you see a bird (locally) that does not appear on our new checklist, you are not entitled to a refund.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Howard Wolcott reports that the May 11th trip to Seielstad Ranch was a roaring success. The weather proved to be perfect, and the group saw a goodly number of birds (some 30 species) and a lot of flowers. The 40 people attending even got to see some buffalo on an adjoining ranch.

On Wednesday, April 23, 28 members and guests spend a cool, pleasant day at the San Francisco Watershed lands near Pilarcitos Lake. Several hiked the 5 mile round trip to Stone Dam for lunch.

Most of the rest of us enjoyed the picnic area near the parking lot below Pilarcitos Lake where all amenities were available. This included some very pretty walks on the top of the wooden flumes feeding the lake. Between the scouting party and the field trip a list of 45 species of birds were seen and heard. There were three large dead trees serving as an apartment house for several birds, easily seen from the picnic area. The most exciting were the Pigmy Nuthatches digging holes. An Olive-sided Flycatcher constantly called from above, "Quick three cheers".

Many of us got excellent views of Allen's Hummingbird and a Wilson's Warbler chasing each other for territory. Two were fortunate to see the Great Horned Owl. All of us heard the Winter Wren, which we expect on this trip and some saw it. The other bird which we hope to see is the Golden-crowned Kinglet, which some saw well. Many enjoyed seeing clearly the orange crown of the Warbler of the same name.

On the lakes we got good looks of the Common Loon in both summer and winter plumage plus a female Bufflehead. A lucky few found a Varied Thrush and the Purple Finch sang frequently.

Flowers were seen everywhere, especially on the roads, and at least 33 species were seen. Hound's Tongue, Ceonothus, Romanzoffia, Mission Bells, Forget-me-nots, and Bleeding Hearts were at their peak. We all enjoyed seeing how fit to survive the Equisetum, (Horse Tail) proved itself where it came up through macadam.

I think it was one of our most enjoyable trips to the area.

Kay McCann

Approximately 30 people ventured to the wilds of southern Santa Clara County to Chesbro Reservoir, May 14. The weather was cool and overcast early with clearing about noon. Birds seen: Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Common Marganser, Wood Duck, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, (the Osprey pulled a "no-show") Kestrel, California Quail, Killdeer, Morning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Flicker, Acorn Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black phoebe, W. W. Pe Wee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Rough winged Swallow, Barn swallow, Cliff swallow, Purple Martin, Scrub jay, Titmouse, Wrentit, Robin, Western Bluebird, Starling, Orange-crowned warbler, Yellow warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Northern Oriole, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Brown towhee, Rufous-sided Towhee, Dark-eyed junco, Song Sparrow.

Rae Schmuck

More than 35 people enjoyed the sunny weather for the two Point Reyes banding and migrant trips of May 10th and 17th. The prize sightings include the adult male breeding plumaged Black and White Warbler, the elusive Yellow-breasted Chat, Black Scoters, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Gray Fox, Gray Flycatcher, Hermit and many Townsend's Warblers. The prize bandings were a Hammond's Flycatcher, a dozen or so Swainson's Thrushes, Purple Finches (side by side comparison with House Finches) and Allen's Hummers in the nets and many on nests. We thank superscout Gene Makishima.

Bob Yutzy & Mike Rigney

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO(O):

All the Directors and Officers serving with me this year; among them are: Bill Sabbag, who will be retiring after three years on the Board, Frank Farran, who has not only given much much time as a Director, but has also been Field Trip Chairman for three years. Field Trip Chairman is probably the most time-consuming job in SCVAS.

Kay McCan gave us another great year of programs. Joyce Todd remains indefatigable with SCVAS bookkeeping, checking account, etc. Jo Combs manages a giggle even after much weary notetaking. Courtney Dawson-Roberts keeps up our image to the world at the Palo Alto Duck Pond Bulletin Board.

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Bob Yutzy's "Where It's At" column and birding experiences continue to amaze us all. Wayne Peters continues to update our lovely (and expanding) library. Tony Look manages to squeeze in some time (I don't know how) for land acquisition meetings and conservation notes.

..... and if it weren't for Dave Nauer (Editor), Ardell Marfia (typist), plus Ken and Eleanor Kidd, and Phyllis Swanson and Candace --don't know her last name -- who help mail it ... NONE OF US WOULD EVER GET TO READ THIS!!!!

About our new Directors:

Florence LaRiviere will deservedly be serving her own three year Board term, having already filled out Martha Wilbur's spot for one year, thank you for last year. Phyllis Swanson, who did such a great job on the Christmas Count, will begin her three year term, as will Tony Look; it will be nice to have Tony back with a vote.

A personal thank you to members of our SCVAS who have taken the time from more pleasant things to educate their representatives in Washington and Sacramento with even one wire or letter, this past year. A bigger thanks to you who have warmed seats or had the courage to speak at meetings of your City Council, Planning Commission and the Supervisors. This is where the habitat gets saved for the creatures we care about. I wish that our numbers would increase because the natural areas seem to be decreasing.

Thank you all again.

Nancy Holmes, President SCVAS

WHERE IT'S AT -- SUMMER '75

June is the time for the tag end of the passerine migration -- the latest migrants and possibly a real rarity. Don't expect many migrants, as you're looking for out of place ones (quality not quantity?). Summer is the time for breeding birds everywhere. For a site guide to Yosemite National Park, best towards the end of the month or later, refer to June 1974 AVOCET. Where to look for Empidonax identification follows the regular article.

There is still much to be learned about the breeding biology of our birds, and we amateurs can still add important information to the field of Ornithology.

Western Tanagers and Kingbirds seem to have been everywhere in great numbers. This also seems to be a good year for Orioles (our Hooded is usually found in close association with palm trees). In early May from Montebello Ridge above Steven's Creek Park, the migration of Hummingbirds was incredible. From 8-14 birds per minute were seen during peak morning hours, mostly Rufous. Four days later there were only 2-3 per minute. This season seemed to have more breeding-plumaged migrants around (especially Blackbellied Plovers and Loons) than in many years. When we see a breeding plumaged Sanderling (which we seldom see) it causes no end of identification trouble. The Flood Basin has the nesting Redheads (in the front left pond near the center reeds), an adult Little Blue Heron (4 years now), American Bitterns, and a Green Heron. Steven's Creek Park has many reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (nesting), Vaux's Swifts, and Dipper. One of the best spots in the park is the canyon across the road (northside) and before you get to the dam and reservoir parking lot. Breeding plumaged Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes have been at the Dumbarton area, where across from the K G O station one can always find Snowy Plovers. A Gray Flycatcher was at Coyote Hills, with another at Tilden Park and there also were 4 Calliope Hummers and 3 Poorwills. Alameda southshore had 12 Least, 3 Common, and a Black Tern, with 150 Red Knots near the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza. Nearby Newark had 2 Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Purple Martins should again be looked for nesting in a very tall dead tree on Highway 17 just west and north of the County lines. A probably California Condor was sighted recently near Anderson Reservoir. They used to be regular visitors to our valley. In San Mateo County at Pigeon Point (this is a good coastal Promontory) one can often see Pigeon Guillemots, Marbled Murrelets and occasionally shearwaters (Manx were recently sighted from here). At least 3 pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows were on Stage Road while others were 2.2 miles north of the town of Pescadero. An interesting backyard bird in Monte Serreno was a White-crowned Sparrow with a central Golden cap. Recent Farallons trips had at least 15 Tufted Puffins and a Xantu's Murrelet. In Merced County near Volta there were 2 Fulvous Tree Ducks, while at Los Banos were 1000 White Pelicans, 5 Black Terns, and 3 Cattle Egrets. Mines Road in Livermore has some great birding. The following mileposts should produce some of these: Lewis' Woodpecker .88 thru 1.09, Lawrence's Goldfinch 3.80 and 11.75, Nashville 4.73 and 5.91 and Black-throated Gray Warblers 5.75 and 5.91 (same two posts for Rufous-crowned Sparrow), Sage Sparrow 10.88 (in Santa Clara County), Lazuli Bunting 5.83, Canyon Wren 13.44, Roadrunner (shy) 5.99. Phainopeplas and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers should also be looked for. Mount Diablo is also a good place for different birds, such as Black-chinned Sparrow 2.2 miles past south gate, Calliope Hummer, Sage and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Pinnacles National Monument had Lawrence's Goldfinch, Black-chinned Hummer, 6 Nashville and an out of place Hermit Warbler. By the way, this is the time to look for Flammulated Owls near Auburn-Forest Hills.

Southern California has had some good recent vagrants, a Northern Waterthrush and American Redstart in Death Valley and an Ovenbird near the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea is the place in August for post breeding Mexican wanderers like Magnificent Frigatebird, Blue-footed and Brown Booby, Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbills and the breeding

Black Skimmers. Recently there was another Semi-palmated Sandpiper here. Gray Flycatcher and Gray Vireo should be looked for in and beyond Round Valley. Morongo Valley usually has the following breeders: Vermillion and Weid's-crested Flycatcher, both Kingbirds, Crissal Thrasher, Summer Tanager, Bell's Vireo, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Yellow-breasted Chat and Lucy's Warbler. Nearby Yucca Valley has 3 great Thrashers besides California, Bendire's, Crissal and Leconte's. Corn Springs near Desert Center has Elf Owls, the only spot in California.

Our best areas as usual were Monterey and Point Reyes. Monterey had 2 immature Black-legged Kittiwakes on Muni Wharf, a Yellow-breasted Chat, 2 fine plumaged Red-necked Grebes off the Coast Guard Pier, a cooperative Sora (usually a Virginia Rail too) at Crespi Pond and a Parasitic Jaegar harassing the terns at Point Pinos. In July at dusk one can sometimes see Jaegers chasing the Elegant Terns into Moss Landing, while an adult Laughing Gull and a Black Tern were at the Pajaro River Mouth. Point Reyes at South Point had a Yellow-breasted Chat, Black Scoters and an immature Black-legged Kittiwake. Drake's Beach had an adult spring plumaged male Black & White Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, a Glaucous Gull and nesting Ravens. Mendoza Ranch had a sleeping Gray Fox up in a low cypress (I didn't know they climbed trees) for two weekends in a row. A probable Gray Flycatcher was also there. At Abandoned Ranch were many Swainson's Thrushes and Purple Finches (some apparently nesting). A Hammond's Flycatcher was banded and an adult spring plumaged male Blackburnian Warbler were there. Both this and the Black & White are very early for rarities -- are we going to have a "hot" spring. The R. C. A Station had a Hermit Warbler (rare on coast). Common Loons were heard calling in Sausalito and at Pt. Reyes: they are seldom heard away from the breeding grounds. Of course, both Pt. Reyes and Monterey will be the places for late May early June rarities.

#### Empidonax Identification

The identification of the various genus Empidonax flycatcher is a plaguing problem to the advanced field birder. The following are various sources of helpful information. As a friend of mine says, the more sources you have to see -- the more confusing can be the problem and the more sure you can be of your identification. (So what does that mean?) See McCaskie's "Birds of Northern California" for general differences including feeding behavior, see Hoffman's "Birds of the Pacific States" for habitat and colorations, see Bent's "Life Histories of North American Flycatchers" for lengths of tails and wings and details of coloration of Hammond's and Dusky, see Dawson's "Birds of California" for color illustrations. Dr. Dave DeSante (we're losing him from Stanford to Reed College in Oregon -- we'll miss him dearly) has a soon to be published article on behavior and coloration differences gleaned from many hours of field observations and banding information. This I feel will be the paper on this tough problem, enabling us to more clearly identify these birds in migration - it can be successfully done.

Bob Yutzy

## What If The Whales Are All Gone



## Before We Become Friends?

FIELD NOTES ON THE GOLDEN EAGLE, (THE KANE-ABEL SYNDROME)

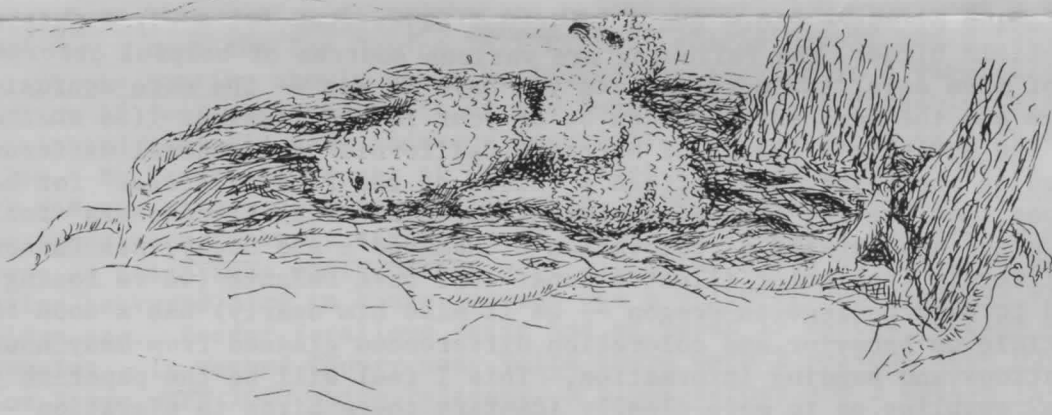
April 27, 1975, 8:25 A.M: arrived at nest site high above Anderson Reservoir. Approached the tree blind slowly and quietly down steepest part of canyon to keep out of sight of nest. Cut bay branches and slipped them through back-pack before climbing first 3 wood slats. Good view of nest and valley at this point. Seven more rungs to my firm platform, just 100 feet from nest and on same level (40 ft. high). No adults on nest. Both snowy chicks asleep and low in center. Rearranged green blanket and draped my fresh bay branches for camouflage. Many quarter-size holes in blanket. Wonder what caused them?

8:45 A.M: one eyas awake and peers skyward. Sibling still asleep.

8:55 A.M: a female Bullock's oriole lands 2 feet from me, hops toward blanket, pecks once, discovers my presence and alights nearby with a great scolding chitter. So-o-o you're the maker of holes.

9:05 A.M: second eyas lifts head feebly, does not seem very peppy, yet appears same size as his brother (or sister). Both are about 18 days old, (probably 2 or 3 days difference in age).

My feet still wet from dewy grass. Chilly wind swaying my platform gently. I close my eyes and float with it like the seed spores - scents of bay, buckeye blossom, wild gooseberry, and sweet sage.



9:15 A.M: peppier eyes jabs its beak against that of his brother. Can hear the clicking sound as the beaks hit. These jabs seem a little harder than those I saw last week. Weaker chick drops head now. "Pepper" keeps up the jabs on the downy body. No clicking sound now. Jab, jab, jab. No defense from the feebly moving chck. Pepper peers upward occasionally, then leisurely resumes his jabbing. Pulls his head back for more leverage and jabs hard. Looks toward my blind. Jabs again and again.

9:25 A.M: Pepper pulling white down from brother - still, and low in nest. More and more down takes to the wind. Can see dark area now. Tearing at flesh but not very strongly. Slower jabbing now. Looks skyward and moves his big awkward feet to span his brother. Preen's his own back. Seems to have lost interest in his unusual meal.

9:30 A.M: across the white lake yellow wildflowers form a great shield of gold dripping down the hillside as though the sun had melted a piece of itself.

9:40 A.M: high-pitched calling of white-tailed kite. Can see him perched in top of oak on nearby slope. Mate hovering above - a grand bird and always a joy to watch. Other birds calling: solitary vireo, a black-headed grosbeak, Anna's hummingbird, rufous-sided towhee, Steller and scrub jays, and crows.

Emelie Curtis

Addendum: 1970, 2 fledged; 1971 one of two left on 4-20; 1972, 2 fledged; 1973, none-fledged; 1974, one fledged.

#### REPORT ON NATIONAL AUDUBON CONVENTION 1975

New Orleans - Humidity 100% -- Everyone in sweaters or coats in meeting rooms due to air conditioning - Never heard of energy shortage - Gourmet food or even ordinary so high that many, including yours truly, sought out cafeterias in drug stores and department stores!! The Biltmore - whew!!!

A questionnaire given to all participants wanted suggestions about the future. Are bi-annual conventions good and should they be continued? How about annual local or regional meetings? How about family campings? Where should next convention, if held, be held? Your delegate, as many others I talked with, suggested finding cheaper place so that more young people could afford to attend. For instance, a college campus, between spring and summer sessions where dormitories could be used. The ornithological societies are meeting this June at Billings, Montana with such an arrangement. I am sure that if you who read this have ideas on the subject they would be most welcome in New York but I advise writing soon before the answers are compiled.

Did you know that 50% of the people live within 50 miles of the coast on 15% of the land? That only 2% of the coast is in public ownership? That 50% of all wastes are deposited there? That 60% of endangered species inhabit the coastal zone? In view of all this National made up a kit on the Coastal Zone Management Act which I will put with the Audubon material at the Peninsular Conservation Center in Palo Alto. Also a another folder about the Gulf Coast and an article about the Cache River in Arkansas. If you read the latter and if you read the articles in the March issue of Audubon on the Achafalaya and North Dakota you will soon discover that everywhere people are fighting the Army Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation. This is heartening but the big plea was for citizen involvement. We must be aware - get in on the ground floor of planning - know our facts - and be heard loud and clear. Both Mr. Train and Mr. Peterson said the environmental movement is not dying and Mr. Peterson, chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality said ecology deserves as loud a voice as economics and that environmental protection is a "powerful stimulant to our economy". Who is to speak for ecology in this loud voice? US!! Mr. Train's speech is in the Folder. I just called Nancy to read her this much and she tells me she received a copy of Mr. Peterson's speech from National. I cannot recommend it to you too highly. She will add it to the folder on the convention.

President Stahr has been appointed to the U. S. Delegation to the International Whaling Commission's 1975 meeting this June in London. So we will have a voice in this.

Audubon's work begins at the grassroots - and that is where we as members of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society come in -- let us GO OUT from there to Planning Commissions, City Halls, and other meetings and be heard loud and clear. There are many opportunities and in this way we can show support of our commitment to Audubon and to Planet Earth. Right now public hearings are being held on The Coast Commission plan for California.

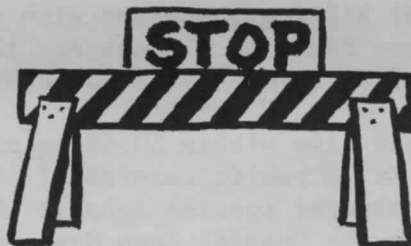
Just a personal note. If anyone plans to go to the gulf coast I have a good deal of material including bird lists of many refuges and what I saw at them. It is a very interesting and very vital, delicately balanced section of our country.

Harriet Mundy

#### RANDOM NOTES

With the permission of the author, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is going to re-type and reprint about 100 copies of Charles G. Sibley's "The Birds of the South San Francisco Bay Region". The original monograph (about 50 pages or so) was printed in 1952 and has since been out of print. These should be on sale at the Peninsula Conservation Center (the PCC address over the AVOCET logo) later on in the summer. The tentative price is \$1.00/copy; this could change however since we do not have final printing prices yet.

We might also mention a 20 page pamphlet produced by the Western Regional Office of NAS entitled "Care and Feeding of Injured Birds" is available from the Conservation Center, send 50¢ plus 10¢ for handling.



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