

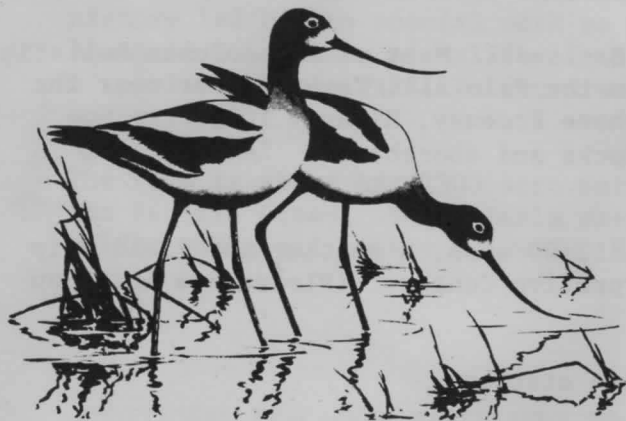
SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, Inc.

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# The Avocet

TIME VALUE



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October 1975

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 7 Bird Discussion Group, Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. home of Eve Case, 20537 Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga. Topic: Wrentit and Bushtit.

*Wed.* Oct. 8 Field Trip South, McClellan Park, Cupertino, Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd. one half mile south of Stevens Creek Rd. to McClellan Rd., west on McClellan past Monta Vista High School and down into the canyon. The park is on your right just before McClellan crosses the creek. Leaders: Jean and Frank Farran, 252-3874.

Oct. 12 Field Trip, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. Moss Landing and Zmudowski State Beach. Meet on Jetty Road off Highway 1. Take highway 1 south from Santa Cruz about 20 miles turn right onto Jetty Road just north of the bridge over Elkhorn Slough by the P. G. & E power plant. (See the excellent article on Elkhorn Slough in the Summer 1975 issue of The Nature Conservancy News). Good area for Brown Pelicans, Elegant Terns, Heermann's Gulls, loons, grebes, and many shorebirds. Leader: Esther Ollis 353-2271.

Oct. 13 Board of Directors Meeting, Monday, 7:30 p.m. at the Peninsula Conservation Center; members welcome.

Oct. 15 General Meeting, Wednesday, 8 p.m. at Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center at the end of Embarcadero Road. Refreshments and social time 7:30 P.M.; meeting 8 P.M.; Program about 8:15 P.M. Speaker: Al Wool showing Audubon Wildlife Film, Ranch Life and Wildlife. Public invited. Cosponsored by Palo Alto Nature and Science Department. Please see article in this AVOCET.

Oct. 17 Bird Discussion Group, Friday, meet at Flora Houck's home, 1275 Martin Ave., Palo Alto at 9 A.M. to leave at 9:20 sharp for Flora's beach house below Pescadero. Topic - shore birds. Bring lunch - coffee and dessert will be furnished. Phone 327-4868 for more information if necessary.

Wed. Oct. 22 Field Trip North: Foothill Park, Palo Alto, Wednesday, 9:00 A.M. Meet at the entrance on Page Mill Road. Leaders: Barbara Allen, 326-0521 and Lucie Burian, 323-0166

Sat. Oct. 25 Field Trip, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Palo Alto Baylands. Meet at the Audubon Bulletin Board at the Duck Pond across the road from the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor near the end of Embarcadero Road (East off the Bayshore Freeway, Highway 101). Identification of adult gulls, migrating ducks and shorebirds. Leader: Bob Dyer, 493-5742.

Nov. 1 Our Changing Palo Alto Baylands, Saturday, 12:00 noon, a meeting and field trip with three guest speakers: Palo Alto Interpretive Center. (Please see write up in this AVOCET for more details.

Nov. 10 Board of Director's Meeting, same time, same station.

Nov. 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 and Bruce Vesey, 354-8966.



#### OUR CHANGING PALO ALTO BAYLANDS

We mentioned this item in our calendar of events, so perhaps we should elaborate a bit. The days program will begin at 12:00 noon and will feature three guest speakers. Dr. H. Thomas Harvey, Professor of Biology and Ecology at San Jose State university and one of our former presidents will talk on the ecology of the area. Following him will be Mr. Jim Hudak, Palo Alto Manager of Capital Projects, who will present the changes taking place in the Palo Alto area. To complete the discussion, Mr. Charles Rockwell, Senior Engineer with the County Parks and Recreations Department will tell us of the changes in the part of the Palo Alto Baylands leased by the County. The talks should conclude about 2 p.m. After that maps will be distributed showing the significant areas to be seen. There will be knowledgeable people at each of the designated areas. They will give information and answer questions until about 4 p.m.

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is co-sponsoring this day along with several other environmentally conscious organizations. These are the Palo Alto Branch of the American Association of University Women, The Committee for Green Foothills, the Mid-peninsula Conservation Center, the Environmental Volunteers, the Palo Alto League of Women Voters, and the Palo Alto City Nature and Science Department.

This is an unusual chance to find out what is happening in the Palo Alto Baylands where many changes are proposed and to get acquainted with this unique park open to the public. The affair is free. Do come and enjoy the area.

Kay McCann, Chairman

## OUR FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF THE SEASON

We are extremely fortunate to be able to present for our opening program an Audubon Wildlife Film put on by one of our own members. Since we no longer have these films shown in our area, it is of special interest. Do come.

Albert J. Wool, one of our members and a past president lives on a ranch in La Honda. He grew up on his father's mountain ranch and became interested in wildlife as a child. While a student at Stanford University, Mr. Wool's knowledge and interest in natural history led him to special work on problems involving conservation of deer and the economic importance of California birds of prey. He is an authority on wildlife and is a regular Audubon Wildlife lecturer. His wife, Dorothy is also a past president of our society.

The film is about his 1300 acre cattle ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The animals seen are the bobcat, gray fox, badger, red-tailed hawk, golden eagle and turkey vulture. He also shows wild life along the Pacific Ocean.

Kay McCann, Program Chairwoman

## ADDITIONAL PESCADERO MARSHLANDS TO BE PURCHASED.

The Sequoia Audubon Society needs \$50,000 to preserve more of the Pescadero marshlands. They have raised \$14,000 so far and are now asking members of other local Audubon Societies to donate \$3.00 or more to their Pescadero Marshlands fund. If you can spare it, please mail your contributions to Sequoia Audubon Society, P. O. Box 5273, San Mateo, Ca. 94402

## PLANNING COMMISSION

On Saturday October 18, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. in the Palo Alto City Council Chambers the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on all aspects of the Palo Alto and East Palo Alto Baylands. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the many pressures on the Baylands, especially those that would diminish wildlife habitat. With the recent changes in the Palo Alto City Council the months ahead could be crucial. Our many, many members who enjoy birds in these lands may wish to get to City Hall occasionally in order to preserve them, instead of leaving the matter to a handful of dedicated souls.

N. Holmes

## SOME THINGS TO DO

Have you sent your name to Rose Beatty, our Conservation Chairlady, to get on the Action Alert list?

Any of you who can part with your lovely Audubon Magazine can take them to the Peninsula Conservation Center. They will be put to good use.

Send 25¢ to the PCC for the new "BOOST SUN POWER" - an Audubon Society Energy Message Bumper strip; it's pretty yellow and white and the price is right. In fact if you drop into the Center you can pick one up for a dime. Great idea for redecorating your bicycle.

WHERE IT'S AT -- OCTOBER, 1975

Does anyone out there know where it's at? Please send any sighting to Bob Yutzy, Field Notes Editor, 1625 Hazelaar Way, Los Altos, 94022.

October is still a time of land bird migration -- most notably of Eastern vagrants, multitudes of shorebirds, early ducks and geese, migrating hawks and a few possibilities for good pelagic sightings.

October is really for us rare-bird watchers! The flood tide of the passerine migration peaked in September, but the rare off course vagrants from the North and East are not only lost but usually late. It is widely accepted that more species will occur this month than during any other month and this is unique to California. In Northern California about 17 species of Flycatchers, 35 plus species of Warblers (we saw 16 in one week-end in mid-September) and 42 species of Seed-Eaters from Rose-Breasted Grosbeak to Longspurs will undoubtedly be seen. Many of these species occur because fall is a time of change with a few summer residents lingering on, first winter residents arriving, migrants peaking early in the month, and the incredible vagrants bringing the total numbers to maximums. Few single birders (or married ones for that matter) will see even most of these species but birders concentrating their time in the most likely places (such as Point Reyes - see Nov. 74 AVOCET and Monterey-Carmel - May 74, heading the list by far) will certainly see their fair share.

Point Reyes has been (and usually is) the place to be for Eastern vagrants in Northern California. Some of the sightings thru mid-September include one weekend of at least 8 American Redstarts, 6 Blackpolls, 3 Tennessees, 2 Blackburnians, 2 Black & Whites, a Chestnut-sided, an Ovenbird, a Northern Waterthrush, and a Clay-colored Sparrow (which were almost all seen by members of our banding-birding group). Other sightings of vagrants include total of 5 Black & White, 7 Tennessee, 3 Chestnut-sided, 3 Blackburnian, 1 Black-Throated Blue and a Mourning Warbler (it stayed 1 day), an Ovenbird, (1 day stay) and a Northern Waterthrush (2 day stay). Other good sightings include a possible Least Flycatcher, a Red-Eyed Vireo, (1 day stay) and Swamp and Clay-colored Sparrows. Our Abandon Ranch Yellow-Breasted Chat was present for 3 weeks and a day at least and was banded and recaptured a minimum of 6 times. It somehow lost its tail by the third capture and molted a new one in 11-14 days -- not bad. The overall point area has had at least 18 Pectoral, 6 Baird's Sandpipers, 6 Red Knots, Common Terns, 15 Golden Plovers, and early Oldsquaw, 6 Red-necked Grebe and 2 Black Scoters. Banding and birding indications are that this probably will be somewhat of an invasion year for Red-Breasted Nuthatches. Nearby Marin area had a Black & White Warbler in Fair fax, a Solitary Sandpiper at Nicasio Reservoir, 10 Pectorals, many Baird's Sandpipers, and Lesser Yellowlegs at Bolinas Lagoon. At Fort Cronkite-Rodeo Lagoon a few Swainson's and Broad-winged Hawks are already being seen from Bunker Hill, along with over 400 Black Swifts. Birders found 4 Tennessee, 2 Blackpoll Warblers, and a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak near Sonoma. Woodland Sugar Ponds near Sacramento (see Sept. 75 AVOCET for directions) had a Stilt (also at Yolo bypass), some Pectoral, Bairds and Solitary Sandpipers, and Lesser Yellowlegs. Nearby Chico also had a Solitary Sandpiper, while nesting Davis Chimney Swifts were seen at least thru Sept. 4th. The Bay Bridge Toll Plaza -- you always wondered what birders did while waiting in toll lines -- had up to 60 Elegant, 15 Common and an Arctic (with Forster's, Caspian, and an occasional Least Tern make 6 species total). There was also a Golden Plover there. The ever surprising Farallons had a visit from a 4th year sub-adult Red-footed Booby for 1 day only. This is a bird found on many islands in the Caribbean, South Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, including the Galapagos and is one of the two (of the six species in the world) Boobies which nest in trees. It is an accidental

bird seen but a few times along the Texas coast and never before in California. Also a Painted Bunting (10 records), Indigo Bunting, Black & White Warbler, and a Northern Waterthrush were there.

Closer to home we've had some good visitors to the Flood Basin and Interpretive Center in Palo Alto -- among them sightings of 2, 4 & 7 Lesser Yellowlegs, a long staying Least Tern, 3 and 6 Baird's, 2 Pectoral Sandpipers, many Wilson's and Northern Phalaropes and a Parasitic Jaeger circling around like and with the gulls. While scouting Stevens Creek Park I spotted 2 Lawrence's Goldfinches -- funny we can seldom find them on Mines Road where a few are even permanent residents along with many others as summer residents. At milepost 6.28 on Mines Road a Roadrunner family was recently spied. In San Mateo County there were a Chestnut-sided, Tennessee, Blackpoll Warbler, 4 American Redstarts, 3 Purple Martins, and at Pescadero and San Gregorio were 7 Lesser Yellowlegs, 2 Baird's, 3 Pectoral and 2 Solitary Sandpipers. Pigeon Point had many sightings of Pomarine and at least 13 Parasitic Jaegers. Ano Nuevo yielded only one Harlequin Duck, an adult male in breeding plumage. A Lesser Yellowleg was at Coyote Hills. Monterey had a Ruff (18 records since 1961) at the Carmel Sewage Ponds with a White-faced Ibis, Northern Parula, and Chestnut-sided Warbler. An early Mont. Pelagic trip saw 6 Black-footed Albatross, a Fort-tailed Petrel, 2 New Zealand Shearwaters, 4 Arctic Terns and 2 Skuas along with the usual pelagic birds. Merlins have been liberally seen around the Bay Area. Did you know that Swainson's Thrushes nested along a man made stream recently -- they usually nest in our fast disappearing riparian areas -- it's both interesting and heartening to note their adapting to this artificial environment. Two of our most notable sightings were the Worm-eating (6th Cal. record) and Canada Warblers in Humboldt County, where they also had a Blackpoll. Honey Lake had a Black & White Warbler -- as you can see one of our more common vagrants with American Redstarts, Blackpolls and Palm Warblers being even more common. We should start seeing the later arriving Palm Warblers any day now. Did you know Gray Jays have been seen as far south as Russian Gulch and Van Damme State Parks in Mendocino County. Southern California had a good summer with but only a pair of Black Skimmers nesting at the south end of Salton Sea (18 were later discovered at the North end near Whitewater Cove -- probably nesting). Wood Storks and Laughing Gulls were seen as expected but no Boobies, Spoonbills or Southern Herons have shown up. Royal Terns (usually only seen in winter) were seen in small numbers this summer. At least 4 Magnificent Frigatebirds were seen at the Salton Sea or along the Coast. A Red-billed Tropic bird was near Santa Rosa Island. Two good yard birds were Chimney Swifts in Monrovia and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Palos Verdes, while a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in El Monte. Up to 6 Bendire's Thrashers were seen in Yuccas along the road from Yucca Valley to Arrastre Creek (LeConte's, Bendire's, California and Crissal are all possible near here). Also, in June and July near Arrastre Creek was a Grace's Warbler and an American Redstart -- both at an odd time of year. Death Valley had an Orchard Oriole, 10 Northern Waterthrushes, 2 American Redstarts, a Northern Parula, Virginia's Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow and a Solitary Sandpiper.

For the traveling birder a new reprint of the National Directory of Rare Bird Alerts can be ordered for 50¢ from American Birds, 950 Third Ave., New York, N. Y. 10022. The number for Northern California is (415) 843-2211 and Southern California is (213) 874-1318. Lucas Bookstore in Berkeley has bumper stickers saying "I'd rather be Birding" for \$1 each.

I'm off to the Farallons for a week.

Best Birding,  
Bob Yutzky

POINT REYES BIRD OBSERVATORY FALL BIRD WALKS

In case you haven't heard - Bob Stewart, biologist for PRBO is offering a series of free walks starting at 9:00 a.m. on the following Sundays:

October 5 - PRBO headquarters and Arroyo Hondo Creek. Meet at PRBO headquarters.

October 12 - Muddy Hollow - Limantour Estero. Meet at the Limantour parking lot.

October 26 - Bolinas Lagoon, meet at the NW corner of Bolinas Lagoon on the Bolinas - Fairfax Road, bring knee boots.

Bring - knapsack, lunch, cup and binoculars on all walks.

Please note: The above was taken from the September 1975 issue of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory Newsletter. The Point Reyes Peninsula area is one of the very best birding areas in California, particularly in the fall for migrant land and water birds, including many rarities.

Ted Chandik

BIRD STUDY IN PALO ALTO

A mini-course of five evening lecture-discussions and at least two field trips to study the living, wild birds of the Palo Alto area. The lectures will deal with such topics as the unique external and internal features, evolution, classification, identification, and the life cycle of birds. Colored slides and museum study Specimens will be used to illustrate the lectures. The emphasis will be on identification and field study techniques of the 250+ species of birds that have been recorded in the Palo Alto-Stanford area.

WHEN: Lecture-Discussions - Thursdays, October 23 through November 20  
(5 sessions) 7:30 to 10:00 p. m.

Field Trips - Saturday, November 8, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Saturday, November 15, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: Lecture-Discussions at the Baylands Nature Interpretive Center  
Field Trip locations to be announced at the first evening session.

WHO: Senior High School Students, College Students and Adults.

FEE: Students - \$3.00; Adults - \$5.00 Family - \$7.00  
Fee double for non-residents or students not in a Palo Alto Unified School District school.  
Registration at the first class meeting.

Sponsored by:  
Nature and Science Department  
City of Palo Alto

TO: ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE NORTH AMERICAN NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM:

We would like to collect the Nest-Record Cards from the recent nesting seasons to print the results in the AVOCET and send them to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Please send the cards you completed to Mrs. Gail Cheeseman, 20800 Kittredge Road, Saratoga, Ca 95070

## A NEW OWL BOOK IN OUR LIBRARY

On occasion we have mentioned the Society's Library in the Peninsula Conservation Center (address above AVOCET logo); we strongly urge that our members and their friends stop in and see the place. The Peninsula Conservation Center (the PCC) is not only our official office of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, but also the home of other erstwhile organizations such as the Sierra Club, the Committee for Green Foothills, and the Environmental Volunteers.

And now, about that owl book: "The Book of Owls": -- by Lewis Wayne Walker, (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1974). This is a short sweet treatise on all the major species of North American owls, or as the dust cover says, "a rich compendium of owl lore".

Lewis Wayne Walker was a field naturalist, ornithologist, and natural history interpreter, and tells us what he saw with his photographs, writings, and museum displays. Mr. Walker's interest in owls' started by what might be called the total immersion technique; as a young man he spent 96 consecutive nights in the bell tower of the First Congregational Church in Flushing, Long Island studying and photographing a pair of nesting Barn Owls. For the record those owls brought back some 758 rats and mice; certainly the Pied Piper of Hamelin could have done no better!

Mr. Walker's photograph (black and white all) are delightful, and not the usual "wise old owl" shots either. His book is filled with little sections on such topics as voice nesting, food, hours of activity, and the last chapter he titles "A Potpourri of Facts" about such things as the relatives of owls, the eyesight, color blindness, eyeshine, hearing, feathers, eggs, juvenile cannibalism, and of course owl pellets (so dear to the hearts of science teachers). We highly recommend that you stop in the PCC and check it out or, get it at one of the better bookstores --- it's delightful reading.

## NAMES, NAMES, NAMES

Last month we ran a note from our Society's president Nancy Holmes and scrambled some titles of people at the PCC. We'll try again:

Mrs. Rose Beatty is Executive Director and also Director of Conservation of the PCC. Mrs. Barbara Silberling is Business and Education Director of the PCC.

Both of these ladies may be reached at the Peninsula Conservation Center, 1176 Emerson Street, Palo Alto, Ca., 94301, (415) 328-5313.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SEPTEMBER 8, 1975

Treasurer Joyce Todd presented the proposed budget for the 1975-1976 year. It received the Board's approval with some minor changes.

A presentation was made by Diane Conradson on behalf of graduate student, Richard Vessel, O. S. U. Mr. Vessel is researching diet and energy balance in Kingfishers for his doctoral studies. The Oregon Fish and Game Dept. contends that the Kingfishers are decimating the fish populations. The department is contemplating a project to remove the birds. Mr. Vessel hopes his research will clarify the Kingfisher's position in the food chain. D. Cheeseman moved and F. LaRiviere seconded a donation of \$350 to Mr. Vessel so that he can continue his valuable research.

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1975-1978

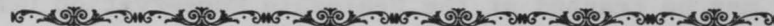
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1974-1977

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