

E Tecolote

Bulletin of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society
Vol. 2 No. 3 March 1964

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

- Mar. 16
Sunday FIELD TRIP TO CONDOR SESPE SANCTUARY Meet in Fillmore on highway 126 opposite the first Tidewater station after crossing the bridge, at 8:30 a.m. Take the Ventura Freeway to the Santa Paula Freeway to Fillmore. Travel time approximately 1 hour. As the road into the Sespe is narrow, it is necessary to keep the car caravan to a minimum. Therefore cars making the trip should have all seats full. Please call Mrs. Cooke-- 6-5520 or Janet Hamber -- 7-6549 if you plan on going. Let us know if you have space available in your car, or if you need a ride. Bring own snack and lunch. Be sure your gas tank is full before you leave Fillmore.
- Mar. 20
Friday REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING AT 8:00 p.m. Farrand Hall, Museum of Natural History. NOTE CHANGE TO THIRD FRIDAY. The program will be given by Dr. John William Hardy, Director of the Moore Laboratory of Zoology, Occidental College, Los Angeles. He will tell of his trip to the southern Mexico "cloud forest" to get pictures and songs of the Mexican jay. His talk will be illustrated with color slides and sound recordings. He will also display the colorful skins of the birds for study. Dr. Hardy has given this program in Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas, at UCLA, and to several bird groups. Jodi Bennett says he is a VERY interesting speaker, so invite your friends to come.
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IN SEARCH OF THE WHITE-FACED IBIS

February 16, 1964. A gale failed to hamper the enthusiasm of the 30 Audubon members and friends who took the bus for the Pt. Mugu Gun Club early that Sunday morning. Fortunately, by the time we reached our destination and were ready to take to the field, the wind had moderated and conditions were ideal for our quest. One of the interesting features of our field trips is that, even if the Advertised Attraction fails to show, something equally exciting will make its appearance. This trip was no exception. The ibis were elsewhere, but the Gun Club, with its artificially-created fresh water ponds surrounded by tules and with raised dikes for easy walking, provided excellent views of sora rails (perhaps a dozen right at our feet), one Virginia rail, yellowthroats, marsh wrens, American bitterns, common snipe and the rest. Equally exciting were the dramas unfolding in the sky. A peregrine falcon demonstrated his skill, capturing a cinnamon teal on the wing and carrying it off to devour the tender breast portion. Perhaps the rarest bird seen for this locality was the rough-legged hawk which obligingly circled overhead long enough for all to see his distinguishing white tail with the broad black band at the end. Other noteworthy birds included three white-tailed kites, several short-eared owls, tree and cliff swallows. A lesser yellowlegs reported by John Flavin is unusual during the winter season. Seventy-seven

species were seen in all.

However we may feel about hunting as a sport, we must concede that the preservation of our marsh birds may well depend on areas such as this which are maintained by sportsmen. For this reason, we must not be too critical of the hunter. He too is interested in conserving the marshes and at least the game-birds which inhabit them. We hope our Society will be able to visit this spot on future occasions.

Alice Richardson

OF ROADS, CONDORS AND WILDERNESS

About two dozen of our members attended the Forest Service hearing February 27 on the San Raphael Wilderness Area and the Sierra Madre Ridge road. I wish all of you could have been there. You would have found it a most interesting and enlightening session. We all came away with a better appreciation of the pressures under which the Forest Service works. They have a mandate to provide for maximum multiple use of the National Forests. They must perpetuate the natural resources and the beauty of the forests, protect our watersheds and water supplies, prevent forest fires and excessive soil erosion. They are under constant pressures from a wide variety of interests, including those of ranchers for grazing permits, miners, oil drillers, hunters, fishermen, campers, hikers, riders, cyclists, botanists, zoologists, anthropologists, and nature lovers of all sorts. They have no easy task.

William Hanson, forest supervisor for this district, called the hearing to sound out public sentiment on his proposal to extend the boundaries of the San Raphael Primitive Area and to complete and open to the public the Sierra Madre Ridge road. About 100 persons attended the hearing. More than 30 spoke, of whom a small majority favored the proposals of the Trail's Advisory Committee rather than those of the Forest Service.

Apparently everyone present favored extending the boundaries of the wilderness area. But the Trails Advisory Committee, with the support of the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society and many others, asked that the boundaries be extended still further to the northwest and all the way to the Sierra Madre Ridge road on the northeast. They were most insistent that the road should never be opened to public vehicles and become a "through road". The contention was that once the ridge road is improved and opened to the public it will inevitably lead to increased fire danger and to such overuse that the Wilderness Area will cease to be a wilderness. The Sisquoc Condor Sanctuary is located at the Sisquoc Falls, only five miles from the proposed road. The San Raphael Wilderness Area and the smaller Sespe Condor Refuge in Ventura County are the very last two areas that can provide the conditions necessary for the condor's survival. Up to now the joint efforts of the Forest Service and the National Audubon Society have successfully protected the condors. But there has been repeated evidence that the present Forest personnel is not as seriously concerned about the condors as were their predecessors.

Some of you may not realize how precarious are the condor's chances for survival. At the time of the Koford study in the late 1940's, it was estimated that there were 60 living condors, only 20 of whom were females old enough to breed. The condor does not breed until it is at least five years old and lays no more than one egg every two years. This means a maximum average of ten young birds a year if all goes well. The condor is a timid bird, extremely sensitive to disturbance by man. The approach of human to within 500 yards is likely to cause the birds to desert the nest all day or possibly all night with disastrous consequences. The condor is as rare and in as great danger of extinction as the whooping crane, and in far greater

danger than the trumpeter swan.

The Santa Barbara Trails Advisory Committee, the Sierra Club and this Society have been joined by the National Audubon Society and other agencies in requesting a moratorium on the completion and opening of the Sierra Madre Ridge road until, (1) the completion next fall of the research study of the condor now being conducted by the National Audubon Society and the National Forest Service with a financial grant from the National Geographic Society and (2) until a proposed study of the optimum recreational carrying capacity of the San Raphael Wilderness Area has been made.

President Carl Buckmheister of the National Audubon Society is working in Washington with government officials including the top echelon of the Forest Service. Congressman Charles Teague appeared last Monday before a sub-committee of the House Appropriations Committee to present our case. State Senator Alvin Weingand has asked for a hearing on this matter before the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Natural Resources. The County Board of Supervisors held a hearing on February 25 at which this matter was discussed. The Supervisors adopted a resolution to the effect that "they recognize the need and are not opposed to the fire road in the Sierra Madre Ridge area if assurance can be given that the road will not be opened to vehicular traffic other than that of emergency vehicles and that the Forest Service will close the fire roads now open in the National Forest".

It is difficult to say what will be the outcome of this controversy. The Forest Service holds these hearings to sound out public opinion but under the law it has absolute power to do as it thinks best. The recommendations of the local supervisor are ordinarily approved by those higher up. The public has no recourse in the courts. If any of you are interested in finding out why this situation exists and what can be done about it, ask the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions for a free copy of its booklet "Bureaucracy in Our Forests".

Any conservation battle such as this takes a great deal of time and money. Your Board of Directors voted to donate \$25.00 to the Trails Advisory Committee which is coordinating the fight. Cost of a court reporter and mailing of information to our Santa Barbara Audubon Society members were paid for by this group. They have been carrying the full load up to now. Financial assistance is needed to continue this work on the local level. If you can possibly help, send a donation to Mr. Robert Easton, Trails Advisory Committee, 2222 Las Canoas Road, Santa Barbara.

Nelson Metcalf, President

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

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| 1. Bob Blake | 4755 Chandler | Santa Barbara, Calif. |
| 2. Mr. O.L. Cunningham | 215 Bath St. | Santa Barbara Calif. |
| 3. Dr. & Mrs. E.R. Edge | 1166 Palomino R. | Santa Barbara, Calif. |

GOLDEN EAGLES

Texans who like to shoot eagles have persuaded Congressman W.R. Poage of Waco to help them put pressure on Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall. Mr. Poage, a high-ranking member of the House Committee on Agriculture, has called a hearing of his Subcommittee on Livestock and Feed Grains in Washington March 2 and 3. He probably intends to provide a sounding board for sheep ranchers who will testify eagles are about to drive them out of business unless they are permitted to shoot them from airplanes. Under the Golden Eagle Act of 1962, ranchers are permitted to trap or to shoot golden eagles from the ground. However, some kill for hire pilots have continued to agitate, and they have been given encouragement by some of the predator-control agents of the Bureau of Sport Fish & Wildlife.