



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

There will be no regular meeting in December.

Next regular meeting will be January 12, 1961, Thursday at 8:00 P. M. Washington School in Burlingame. At this meeting, Mr. Harry Campbell of Belmont will show his pictures taken during a photography trip to Fiji and Tahiti in the South Pacific last summer. This should prove to be a scenic delight to all lovers of nature, so come and bring your friends.

"Peg" Smith

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FIELD TRIPS

December 4, 1960 - Sunday

Annual field trip to Los Banos to see migratory water fowl.  
Eugene Hebborn, Leader.  
Meet at Tiny's restaurant on Highway 152 at 8:30 A. M., at Los Banos. Take lunch. Dress warmly.

January 1, 1961 - Sunday

Annual Christmas bird census.  
Neil Dickinson, leader, and in charge of arrangements.  
Meet at Pulgas Water Temple on Canada Road, at 8:00 A. M.

There will be no bird walks in December.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again we are approaching the holiday season. Unfortunately, the inevitable "Christmas rush" tends to obscure the true significance of the holidays. Surely the greatest joy of the Christmas season consists of the forgetting of self and the helping of others even to "God's lesser creatures". The annual national Christmas Bird Count is a fine expression of the true Christmas spirit. If you have never participated in the Christmas count, why no plan to do so now? You don't have to be an expert, and you will find it a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Happy Holidays to all!

Ruth Breckenridge

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FIELD TRIP AT LAKE MERCED -- OCT. 29

A beautiful, clear, warm, "Indian Summer" day added to the enjoyment of the Lake Merced trip.

Although we missed Jed, who was unable to lead the trip because of a cold, we appreciated the able and efficient guidance of Nicholas Kroll. "Nick" led a conducted "tour" to several sections of Lake Merced where most of us had never been previously, and where the birds were abundant and close!

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In the "bag" for the day's observations were: Coot, Ruddy Duck, Mallard, Ringneck Duck, Scaup, Pied-bill Grebe, Eared Grebe, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, Northern Phalarope, Virginia Rail, American Pipit, Green Heron, Bonaparte Gull, Black Phoebe, Audubon Warbler, Yellow-throat, House Finch, Anna Hummingbird, and song sparrow.

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November 10th meeting

The November meeting was a success both from the standpoint of attendance and the quality of entertainment.

Our president, Ruth Breckenridge introduced Mr. and Mrs. McGehee and Mr. and Mrs. John Larsen. Mr. McGehee is our new warden on Greco Island and serves under the general direction of Mr. Larsen, who spends most of his time at the Richardson Bay Sanctuary.

Mrs. Cleary very kindly invited any of our members who wished to do so to visit the area adjoining their home, at any time, for bird watching. Such thoughtfulness is appreciated by our group and doubtless there will be those who will avail themselves of this opportunity.

Mr. Silas Hayes showed his remarkable slides of Morocco taken in 1951 and 1953. They were taken in an area 300 miles south and 300 miles north and east of Casa Blanca. His pictures of Casa Blanca itself looked very modern with its fine hotels and beautiful cathedral. The shops of the city appeared as a colorful conglomeration of pottery, brassware, leather goods and tapestries with merchants in native dress weighing all goods sold.

A glimpse into a bake shop showed great loaves of bread stacked on the floor waiting to be called for. It seems the custom is to take the dough to the baker to have the actual baking done. Sanitation did not appear to be a prime consideration---flies were happily walking all over the baked goods.

There were several pictures of donkeys, almost invisible under their huge burdens plodding along to market. The camel was much in evidence and one slide showed a herd of two hundred. Mr. Hayes pointed out that the camel serves as a beast of burden, as food, as a source of leather, as a partner for the donkey in pulling the plough and is even blindfolded and used to draw water.

Pictures of Roman ruins reminded us of our ancient history, and the Tower of the Lions the days of the Christian persecutions. A stork's nest high on the top of an old Roman tower lent a gayer note. It seems there are many storks around Rabat and glorious fields of red poppies grow just outside the city.

We saw interesting shots of Agadir where the bug tital wave struck and Fez where the finest leather goods are made and Marakesch where many French live - but water boys still sell water carried in animal skins and story tellers attract huge crowds.

We want to thank Mr. Hayes for showing us these very artistic and very human pictures.

"Peg" Smith - Program Chairman

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BOAT TRIP SCHEDULED FOR GRECO ISLAND

A boat trip to Greco Island was scheduled and announced; but at six o'clock on the appointed morning, Sunday, November 13, rain was pouring down and the wind was blowing strongly from one end of the County to the other. A council was held by telephone and it was decided that it would not be safe to take a loaded boat either through the Belmont Channel or into the comparatively shallow water off Greco Island under such stormy conditions.

A few brave souls arrived at the Redwood City Yacht Harbor at 7 o'clock A. M., notwithstanding the weather; and we all went over to Princeton and the Pillar Point breakwater and had a very fine time.

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## THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS

The rain continued until approximately 8:30 A. M. and then the weather cleared up and eventually the sun came out.

We ended the day with a bird list in excess of forty species including such favorites as: snowy plover, northern phalarope, western grebe, ruddy duck, black turnstone, sanderling white winged scoter, surf scoter, American scoter, common loon, brown pelican, least sandpiper, and cormorant.

J. Ed. (Jed) McClellan,  
Field trip Chairman

OUR BIRD SANCTUARIES

In the November bulletin I misspelled the name of our new warden. His name is Clifford McGehee; and he is very much on the job, also a very delightful gentleman.

On October 24th I visited all three sanctuaries and checking their boundaries from the boat, Mr. McGehee and I drove across the Dumbarton Bridge and approached the two sanctuaries on the Alameda County side of the Bay by land.

Mr. Montgomery is now assisting Mr. McGehee in completing the installation of new signs on the sanctuaries so that all who approach the sanctuaries may know that the areas are reserved as bird sanctuaries and that shooting is forbidden.

J. Ed. (Jed) McClellan,  
Conservation Chairman

When he initiated the Annual Christmas Census about the turn of the century, the late Dr. Frank Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History, intended it as a device to help stem the appalling slaughter of birds, both song and game, then being pursued for the pot as well as for sport. This innovation by Dr. Chapman has been a very successful part of the program which has led to the outlawing of pot hunting and to higher concepts of hunting for sport.

Thousands of watchers compete each Christmas over the United States against previous counts and against each other. Ornithological values are claimed for the count by the more serious minded to lend it scientific respectability, but basically it is a sport which causes no damage to the birds.

Our own Crystal Springs Christmas Census was originated by the late Jim Rigby and first carried out by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society in 1948 (112 species noted). Jim very shrewdly drew the 7.5 mile radius circle to encompass almost every type of habitat—salt marsh; fresh water lakes and marshes; homes and gardens; cultivated areas; high hills with chaparral and meadows; redwood filled canyons; ocean fronts of sandy beach and rocky cliffs; even Pillar Point jutting out into the Pacific where pelagics are often seen.

Since 1955 the Sequoia Audubon Society has surveyed the area in boats, cars and a foot bringing our count to 163 species (1959) which ranks among the best ever recorded in the nation. But 1959 was exceptional with just the right balance of warm weather and storms to cause summer residents to linger while driving in the vanguard of our winter birds. Also two years of drought may have had an influence in enticing unusual birds to our area.

Year after year the Crystal Springs area should yield good counts if we can secure the observers.

Note: Watch your feeding trays for freeloaders. Individuals who should have gone south. They are legitimate on the count.

Neil Dickinson

## BIRD WATCHING IN EUROPE

For all of us who take pleasure in bird watching and in field identification of birds, the enjoyment of any trip away from our familiar home territory can be much enhanced by "birding" as we go.

This year we traveled for eight months in our car from Gibraltar and Morocco on the south to Norway on the north (even rounding the North Cape by coastal steamer), starting in February and following the spring northward until it was mid-summer in Norway, then doubling back into the high Alpine countries before again moving north through the Swiss Jura, Alsace and the Ardennes to Holland, sailing for home in late September. In the car our binoculars and bird books, of which the "Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe" by Petterson et al was the most useful, were always at hand. This field guide has a check list, and from this we determined that we positively identified 148 species. We had the advantage of having done some birding by ourselves while on a six-month trip there in 1954, so we started out with a little familiarity with European birds, but bird watching was always incidental to sightseeing, and we had the great handicap of having no person with us who knew the native birds; consequently, we certainly saw many we either did not recognize as different, or which we saw but failed to identify. The European warblers, for example, seemed to us mostly impossible to identify with certainty, being generally similar and lacking the distinctive markings and colors that our wood warblers have.

Three days particularly stand out in our memories. One was a lovely, warm day in February in the mountains of southern Spain when we took a picnic lunch and spent the day birding along an unfrequented road dug out of the slopes overlooking trees and valleys below. The second was in late April on Texel Island off the northwest coast of Holland, where preserves are maintained for bird nesting. It was a cold raw day. We were conducted by a

warden in a brown corduroy suit, with rubber boots, and carrying a short walking stick behind his back, who, although speaking only Dutch, knew the English names for some of the birds or could find them in our books. He knew the birds well, and could locate with amazing ability the wonderfully camouflaged nests of the lapwings, oyster catchers and others which were incubating eggs at this season. We were thrilled at seeing spoonbills both forenoon and afternoon. Common were the oyster catchers, lapwings, black-headed and herring gulls and shearwaters. (Incidentally, gull eggs were generally for sale at this time of year in the stores along with hen's eggs.) We saw many black-tailed godwits, red shankers, shovellers and mallards; but we also saw and heard skylarks, saw the wheatear, teal, coot, snipe, curlew, moorhen, ringed plover and avocet. New to us then were the ruff, the Kentish plover and the Jackdaws in a rabbit burrow. It was quite a day.

But the most satisfying day of birding came to us on September 10 in London when our friend, John Lieftinck, an outstanding amateur ornithologist, who had been with us on an eleven-day Bird Watching Tour in Mexico in 1959, and who has lived many years in Luxembourg, took us out for three and a half hours in territory well known to him. It was a poor time of year for birding and not the best weather for it, yet on that short morning trip, in varied habitats, we saw 42 species, several of them new to us.

We had with us on this entire trip a couple from Chicago who knew little about birds at the start, but who gained an increasing knowledge during the time aboard and who came to have a keen interest. It is likely they will never be able to go anywhere again as a tourist without keeping their eyes open for birds along the way. Could they have formed a more rewarding habit than that?

Mr. & Mrs. A. E. Montgomery