

KITE TALES

REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

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“IT'S AN ILL WIND_____”

The need for specimens as teaching aids in the laboratory is essential for the most effective learning. Previously it went without question that the intentional collecting of such specimens through the barrel of a shotgun was entirely commendable. As more people are acquiring interests in the field of nature, however, such deliberate sacrifice of our wildlife is no longer considered to be so meritorious. Our own Dr. John Arnold, who certainly has a great need of an extensive array of specimens, has long been an advocate of reducing the number of deliberate collections. He is very keen, therefor, in taking advantage of materials which are made available through other channels.

Our busy highways take a terrific toll of wildlife. Radio or T-V towers, overhead wiring, and picture windows add their quotas. It is from such sources that Dr. Arnold gathers the bulk of his materials. He really appreciates the donations of those who have brought such specimens to him. If you should find a fresh-killed bird or mammal in reasonably good condition, save it. Wrap it in a plastic wrapper, along with such appropriate information as; date, locality, cause of death, and your name, and pop it into the freezer until you can get it to him.

At our November meeting Dr. Arnold will show us what happens to those contributions from that point on. It will certainly be an informative and interesting session.

Be on hand for this "behind-the-scenes" demonstration which will be in Room 221 of the Darwin Hall of Science at Sonoma State College. The time will be at 8P.M. and the date will be Thursday, November 11.

NOVEMBER OUTING TO GRAY LODGE _____

Our field trip for the month will be held on Saturday, the 20th, to the Gray Lodge Refuge in Butte County. The fastest route is across Highway 80 to 505, go north on it to Highway 5 and continue on to Williams. The turn east on 20 to Meridian. Turn north there to circle the west side of the Sutter Buttes (GOOD birding along here). Take first road to the north, it is Pennington Road, and the refuge entrance is on the west side, well marked.

An alternate route, which is slower but affords more birding opportunities, is to go over Mount St. Helena on 29 to Lower Lake, cut across on 53 to Highway 20 and follow it eastward to Williams. The proceed as above. A good bird to watch for along this route is the Vesper Sparrow.

Our group (there will be others) will start into the refuge area at 10 A.M. from the checking station at the entrance. Warm clothes may be in order. Do bring a lunch.

The fabulous masses of ducks and geese there are always a thrilling sight and are even more so if you haven't had the experience before. Sandhill Cranes and Whistling Swans are usually on hand as well.

"FILMING IN NO MAN'S LAND"

The second in the current series of Audubon Wildlife Films will be shown at the Luther Burbank Memorial Auditorium of the Santa Rosa Junior College on Saturday, November 13. The program starts at 7:30 P.M. If you do not already have a season pass, tickets may be purchased at the door.

the "Top Ten"

Which ten species do you suppose have appeared most often in the trip lists of the R.R.O.S.? Keep in mind that we do not usually have mid-summer outings. The ratings, in order from 1 to 10, will be given in the next issue of KITE TALES. Make up your considered list and see how closely it fits. Two species are currently tied for the lead spot.

BIRDING ON THE BRINY.....

A full boat-load of birders sailed out of Bodega aboard the FINBACK at 7 A.M. of October 17. Reports were being heard of high winds which were preventing even sizeable trawlers from reaching port so we expected rough going. As it turned out, however, the seas were very quiet and our excursion was quite comfortable.

Black Oystercatchers provided moments of interest as we passed by the headland. Scoters and Cormorants and an occasional Loon varied the more abundant sightings of gulls as we pushed toward the open sea. Then Murres began to appear and soon our first Shearwater, a Sooty, was noted. All of a sudden, it seemed, the air and waters about us were full of Shearwaters. The dark Sooties predominated but there were plenty of the larger, lighter Pink-footeds whose slower wing motions quickly caught one's eyes. Very soon after encountering this concentration a large, dark birds with a pink bill scaled by very close to our boat. The field marks left no doubt that we had finally met up with the Pale-footed Shearwater, a bird which had always eluded us on our previous offshore trips. And so No. 271 was added to the "life list" of the RROS.. At least four times this(?) individual appeared close to the boat so that everyone could obtain good views of it. Then we saw it no more. Our enthusiasm was raised to such a pitch by this bird that several Sooty Shearwaters with darker than usual under-wing surfaces were called as Slender-bills but further observing led to the more realistic conclusion that they were indeed of the more common species.

A sparkling array of very white birds on the horizon led to conjectures of terns or small gulls feeding but a closer approach soon disclosed that the flashes were from the snowy underparts of New Zealand Shearwaters which were present in large numbers throughout the time we remained out from the shore five miles or more. They are certainly the most attractive of the Shearwaters.

The day belonged to the Shearwaters without question but several Fulmar put in appearances at scattered intervals and submitted at least two differing plumages for our perusal and pleasure. At one point a single Tufted Puffin flew by quite close to the boat only to be quickly lost in the morning sunlight as he headed shoreward. We finally located several Marbled Murrelets very close inshore as we cruised the east shoreline of the outer bay. Pigeon Guillemots had not yet donned their full winter dress and some of them proved a bit puzzling before their identity was established.

Species noted:

Pied-billed Grebe	Fulmar	Pelagic Cormorant
Common Loon	Pink-footed Shearwater	Great Blue Heron
Arctic Loon	Pale-footed Shearwater	Snowy Egret
Red-throated Loon	New Zealand Shearwater	Black-crowned Night Heron
Red-necked Grebe	Sooty Shearwater	White-fronted Goose (1)
Horned Grebe	Brown Pelican	Pintail
Eared Grebe	Double-crested Cormorant	American Widgeon
Western Grebe	Brandt Cormorant	Shoveler

Greater Scaup	Willet	Ring-billed Gull
White-winged Scoter	Least Sandpiper	Mew Gull
Surf Scoter	Dunlin	Bonaparte Gull
Ruddy Duck	Short-billed Dowitcher	Heermann Gull
Turkey Vulture	Western Sandpiper	Black-legged Kittiwake
Red-tailed Hawk	Marbled Godwit	Caspian Tern
Marsh Hawk	Sanderling	Common Murre
Sparrow Hawk	Northern Phalarope	Pigeon Guillemot
American Coot	Pomarine Jaeger	Marbled Murrelet
Black Oystercatcher	Skua	Tufted Puffin
Killdeer	Glaucous-winged Gull	Belted Kingfisher
Black-bellied Plover	Western Gull	Black Phoebe
Ruddy Turnstone	Herring Gull	Common Raven
Black Turnstone	California Gull	Red-winged Blackbird

Other species not noted from boat:

Green Heron	Pectoral Sandpiper	House Finch
Semipalmated Plover	Anna Hummingbird	Savannah Sparrow
Snowy Plover	Long-billed Marsh Wren	White-crowned Sparrow
Whimbrel	Audubon Warbler	78-Song Sparrow

GOOD OLD POINT REYES AREA!....

The October field trip to the Pt. Reyes area turned up a very satisfactory total of 113 species. This somewhat outdid the total of observers, six! (The number of bird species was nearly balanced out, however, if the numbers of the Golden Gate Audubon Society members was added to ours!)

It takes a lot of good birds to make a list of that length and the selection of some as stars of the show would probably be a controversial issue. Who knows what appeals certain species have for other observers? The list will reveal all, of course, but it won't yield the delightful display of a "full-blooded" Yellow-shafted Flicker on the top of a sun-drenched power pole, or the sprightly antics of an endearing Pygmy Nuthatch as he observed us. Nor could it possibly supply the pulse-quickenning experiences of having an unexpected Gadwall, an evasive Lincoln Sparrow, or a smartly attired Tri-colored Blackbird suddenly appear in your field of view. Even so, though, it does seem that there was a super-star to capture the enthusiastic interest of all.

Among the ground-feeding Horned Larks were a few somewhat drab individuals of another species who were surprisingly difficult to separate from their surroundings. But picked out they were and with sufficient clarity to establish their identity as Lapland Longspurs. It is little wonder that they have been recorded here so rarely. They are HARD to see! Thus within a month two species have been added to our club list and the Longspur holds No. 272.

Species noted:

Common Loon	Mallard	Red-breasted Merganser
Horned Grebe	Gadwall	Turkey Vulture
Eared Grebe	Pintail	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Western Grebe	Green-winged Teal	Cooper Hawk
Pied-billed Grebe	Cinnamon Teal	Red-tailed Hawk
Brown Pelican	American Widgeon	Red-shouldered Hawk
Double-crested Cormorant	Shoveler	Marsh Hawk
Brandt Cormorant	Canvasback	Sparrow Hawk
Pelagic Cormorant	Lesser Scaup	California Quail
Great Blue Heron	Bufflehead	Virginia Rail
Common Egret	White-winged Scoter	Sora
Snowy Egret	Surf Scoter	American Coot
Black-crowned Night Heron	Ruddy Duck	Semipalmated Plover

Killdeer	Black Phoebe	Hutton Vireo
Black-bellied Plover	Say Phoebe	Audubon Warbler
Common Snipe	Horned Lark	Yellowthroat
Villet	Steller Jay	House Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Scrub Jay	Western Meadowlark
Dunlin	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Short-billed Dowitcher	Common Crow	Tri-colored Blackbird
Western Sandpiper	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Brewer Blackbird
Marbled Godwit	Pygmy Nuthatch	Brown-headed Cowbird
Sanderling	Wrentit	Purple Finch
Glaucous-winged Gull	Winter Wren	House Finch
Western Gull	Bewick Wren	Pine Siskin
Herring Gull	Long-billed Marsh Wren	American Goldfinch
California Gull	Rock Wren	Lesser Goldfinch
Ring-billed Gull	Mockingbird	Rufous-sided Towhee
Bonaparte Gull	American Robin	Brown Towhee
Heermann Gull	Hermit Thrush	Savannah Sparrow
Band-tailed Pigeon	Western Bluebird	Oregon Junco
Mourning Dove	Golden-crowned Kinglet	White-crowned Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Water Pipit	Fox Sparrow
Yellow-shafted Flicker	Cedar Waxwing	Lincoln Sparrow
Red-shafted Flicker	Loggerhead Shrike	Song Sparrow
Acorn Woodpecker	Starling	Lapland Longspur

At Nicasio Reservoir only:
 Northern Phalarope and a late Olive-sided Flycatcher.

REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, established 1962

Officers for 1971-72

President Clarence Tucker 1309 Denlyn Street, Novato 94947
 Vice-pres. Dr. Leland Gralapp 6177 Batesole Dr., Santa Rosa 95405
 Secretary Linda Hanes 3237 Midway Drive, Santa Rosa 95405
 Treasurer Merton Roberts 1400 Spring Hill Rd., Petaluma 94952

KITE TALES editor
 Gordon Bolander 1650 Timber Hill Rd., Santa Rosa 95401

Handwritten notes:
 returned to sender
 80248