

KITE TALES

REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VOL. 6~ N^o 7 SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA MARCH 1972

MARCH MEETING.....

The regular meeting of the RROS will convene at 8 P.M. in Room 221 of the Charles Darwin Hall of Science, Sonoma State College, Rohnert Park, on Thursday, March 9. The speaker for the evening will be Lee J. Shea, former Captain of Game Wardens in Sonoma County. His topic will be Problems of Conservation as Viewed by a Game Warden.

Plan to be present, and do bring a guest. Please use the parking permit provided on the cover sheet. It's a courtesy of the college that we should respond to in kind.

MARCH FIELD TRIP.....

This will be the usual spring outing to the vicinity of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. It will be held on Saturday, March 18. We shall meet at the junction of Hall and Willowside Roads at 8:30 A.M. This is an easy and leisurely affair but one which generally is very productive of species to be found. Lists of 96 and 99 were obtained in our last two efforts there. Bring a lunch and make a day of it if you choose, however the main birding will have been accomplished by noon.

APRIL OFFSHORE TRIP.....

This popular outing has already been over-subscribed and we're sorry if you are among those not included. An effort will be made to charter a suitable craft with a larger passenger capacity in the future. The popularity of such birding runs surely has not been overlooked by the skippers of the party-boats. Those who will be aboard should keep in mind the improved sightings resulting from the use of bite-sized (for the birds, that is) portions of suet and fat scraps from the butchers. Any flock of feeding birds on the open ocean is sure to attract others from a distance. Also, it is a very good idea to check out the field markings of any expected species ahead of time. A rolling deck discourages the most effective use of a field guide and, besides, the time is better spent viewing the birds!

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP.....

The weatherman owed us a good day for what he did to us in February of '71 and he came through. On February 26 of this year we were on a trip to the vicinity of Thornton. The stormy weather broke just right for us and by the middle of the afternoon it was a beautiful clear day. And the birds kept pace!

Eight of the eleven participants started with the "early shift" from the outskirts of Fairfield and were immediately greeted by a group of rather early Cliff Swallows at the city dump. Their early appearance is indicative of the generally advanced season we've been experiencing this year. (But I'll bet they will be recorded at Capistrano "right on schedule"). East of the river White-fronted Geese were soon in evidence and they remained the predominate goose throughout the day. At one point a large gaggle of Snow Geese were feeding in a field which was being plowed. As the tractor roared by, the geese would merely walk aside a short way and then close in behind the plow to resume their foraging. How quickly they accept the presence of man once he lays down his shotguns! In among the "regular" Snowies were several Ross Geese which were easily picked out due to their smaller size and stubbier bills. On the entire run from the river to Thornton Road there was no open water. One Bittern, flushed from a small roadside ditch, and a single Whistling Swan, grazing in a greener patch, gave small hope for a good day. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds and a few Tricolors were located in the midst of a large flock of Red-wings and Brewers at Terminus. Neither species was seen again during the balance of the day. The quest for birds became a quest for water. The fields were dry and the birds were few. Eight cranes were noted in flight south-west of Thornton but the dryness continued to thwart our efforts. Even the lower area along the Cosumnes River were without any ponded waters.

We finally retraced our steps a bit and turned west along Woodbridge Road. JACKPOT!! We reached some flooded fields and immediately began seeing large numbers of Sandhill Cranes along with groups of Whistling Swans and thousands of ducks, mainly Pintail. The spectacle of the cranes was truly tremendous! Great masses of them at close range, in the air and on the ground, under near perfect lighting conditions, created unforgettable scenes. Our estimate was that there were approximately 3600 of them. We also figured that the swans numbered about 10% of that.

The sudden eruption of a great swirling cloud of ducks was soon seen to have been caused by an immature Bald Eagle hunting across the area. It was not seen to catch anything but it certainly caused considerable confusion among the waterfowl all the time they had the eagle in sight. Initially it was at a fairly close range and its under-wing pattern could be clearly seen. The trip list of 86 is in keeping with the 89 and 88 of the past two trips there.

Pied-billed Grebe	California Quail	Red-shafted Flicker
Great Blue Heron	Ring-necked Pheasant	Acorn Woodpecker
American Bittern	Sandhill Crane	Nuttall Woodpecker
Whistling Swan	Virginia Rail	Black Phoebe
Canada Goose	Common Gallinule	Say Phoebe
White-fronted Goose	American Coot	Horned Lark
Snow Goose	Killdeer	Tree Swallow
Ross Goose	Black-bellied Plover	Cliff Swallow
Mallard	Common Snipe	Scrub Jay
Pintail	Long-billed Curlew	Common Crow
Green-winged Teal	Greater Yellowlegs	Common Bushtit
Cinnamon Teal	Least Sandpiper	Wrentit
Shoveler	Dunlin	Bewick Wren
Canvasback	Long-billed Dowitcher	Long-billed Marsh Wren
Ruddy Duck	Marbled Godwit	Mockingbird
Turkey Vulture	Glaucous-winged Gull	American Robin
White-tailed Kite	Herring Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Sharp-shinned Hawk	California Gull	Water Pipit
Red-tailed Hawk	Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Bald Eagle	Mew Gull	Loggerhead Shrike
Marsh Hawk	Mourning Dove	Starling
Sparrow Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Audubon Warbler

Yellowthroat	House Finch	Oregon Junco
House Sparrow	American Goldfinch	White-crowned Sparrow
Western Meadowlark	Lesser Goldfinch	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Rufous-sided Towhee	Fox Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird	Brown Towhee	Lincoln Sparrow
Tricolored Blackbird	Savannah Sparrow	Song Sparrow
Brewer Blackbird	Lark Sparrow	

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Autographed, first editions of "THE LEAF BOOK, A Field Guide of Plants of Northern California", \$4.75, by Ida Geary, author of "Marin Trails", are being sold for the benefit of Audubon Canyon Ranch. THE LEAF BOOK is illustrated with 360 of what John Thomas Howell calls "your wonderful prints", the plant prints which have appeared in Audubon Magazine, Pacific Discovery, etc. The prints, like the book itself, combine scientific accuracy and artistic beauty. THE LEAF BOOK covers Marine Algae; Fungi; Lichens, and Mosses; Ferns and Fern Allies; Grasses, Sedges, and Rushes; Wildflowers; Shrubs and Trees. It is an original and effective guide for students and naturalists of all ages.

Signed copies will be sent post-free to our members or as gifts to their friends by the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Coast Highway 1, Stinson Beach, Cal. 94970. Only orders accompanied by a full payment at the rate of \$4.75 plus 24¢ tax (\$4.99) per copy will be accepted.

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A FEW RECENT SIGHTINGS.....

Allen Hummingbirds... Were reported as being in San Rafael before Feb 10 by Clarence Tucker; in Napa on Feb. 11, John Parmeter; at Timber Hill on Feb. 13, G. Bolander; and at Kenwood on Feb, 17 by Bob and Stella Young.

Swamp Sparrow near Timber Hill on Feb. 11, G. Bolander.

Tufted Duck at Stowe Lake in San Francisco, Baron McLean (and others!) Feb. 18

Violet-green Swallows in Bennett Valley on Feb. 19, G. Bolander.

Northern Shrike still at Bodega on Feb. 20, Joel Hornstein.

Pygmy Owl in Sugar Loaf State Park campground, and

Golden Eagle on upper Los Alamos Road on Feb. 20, Parmeters and Bolander.

Rough-winged Swallow at Timber Hill on Feb. 27, G. Bolander.

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