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An Eventful Experience with Black-footed Albatrosses

It is well known that the Black-footed Albatross, *Diomedea nigripes*, prefers the wide expanse of the ocean to coastal waters. Some believe that it is a wary bird and difficult to observe closely, but our recent experience would indicate that this viewpoint is not entirely correct.

On Sunday, May 7, 1939, at 5:30 a. m., Mr. and Mrs. Laidlaw Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Stephens, Mr. Guy Emerson of New York, and the writer left the Pebble Beach wharf for the open sea in the launch "Sea Hawk." The morning was ideal. A clear and beautiful sky, a light wind, and a little later warm sunshine, presaged a delightful and, all hoped, a successful trip. With small fish and ten pounds of finely chopped suet to toss overboard to attract the birds, we expected success, but little did we dream of having it in such good measure.

When about a mile offshore we saw the Sooty Shearwater, *Puffinus griseus*. A little later and some distance ahead an Albatross came into view with its long, narrow wings arched like a crescent. Seemingly without any motion of wing or any exertion it soared along, gliding upward and downward over the waves as they rose and fell. Tireless in flight, it is truly a master of the air. A second soon came into view, then a third. Hoping to draw them closer, we commenced throwing small fish and suet into the water, which immediately attracted the gulls, but before many minutes had passed the Albatrosses altered their course, circled and came close to the boat, thus giving us an excellent opportunity to observe them and to note distinctly the white face as well as the white at the base of the tail.

We continued to throw out the food and others appeared until thirteen in all were counted. They became bolder, dropped upon the water, found the suet excellent, until finally all thirteen were eagerly eating, some within a few feet of us, uttering a peculiar note, not exactly musical but not displeasing, and surprisingly soft for such a large bird. At one time nine in a group were within twenty feet. Several came much nearer and we thought that one or two would overcome all fear and eat from Mr. Emerson's outstretched hand. With a little more time and patience this might have been accomplished.

Fortunately, Mr. Stephens had his camera and we are pleased to report that visible evidence of this unusual occurrence is available.

Another interesting observation was that this bird *walks* upon the water. Approaching with considerable forward momentum, its wings arched, it prepares to alight by thrusting its expanded, webbed feet forward and downward until they reach the water. Then it walks upon the water for some distance until its body finally rests upon the ocean's surface. Undoubtedly the arched wings aid in supporting the bird as it moves forward.

By constantly feeding the birds, they were induced to follow the boat toward shore until they had passed the buoy off Pebble Beach Point, but beyond this they could not be tempted.

Some other birds noted were two Oyster Catchers, a number of Cormorants, many Northern Phalaropes evidently in a northerly migration flight; Pigeon Guillemots, Murres, a Pink-footed Shearwater, Pacific Loons and Bonaparte Gulls.

An enthusiastic group thoroughly satisfied returned to the wharf about 9 a. m., all looking forward to another such day.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, May 11, 1939.



April Field Trip

On Sunday, the sixteenth, the Association once again returned to its regular field trip site, Lake Merced. Except for one short period in the forenoon the weather was cold with wind and fog the order of the day.

Our walk down the canyon yielded nothing out of the ordinary, but birds were a little more in evidence as we approached the lake. A Red-tailed Hawk, a Turkey Vulture, and a Raven, flying over in quick succession, seemed to indicate a successful day; and such it proved to be. A total of seventy-eight species were observed, any one or all of which would have been traded for a sight of the Crossbills that were seen there before,—and since. However, fine views of Great Blue Herons fishing, Bitterns performing, and a Sora with all the audacity of an English Sparrow served to smooth over the deficit to a great degree. Our luck continued as we moved on. Warblers of several species held our attention and admiration for some time as they displayed their spring finery before us. A Barn Owl was found that consented to sit still to the entire satisfaction of everyone. The one Florida Gallinule we found was not nearly so obliging and vanished into the water growth after the briefest of glimpses.

The small pool at the head of the larger lake again proved the need for shallow water and an open shore line in the area. Cinnamon Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Western Sandpipers, Killdeer and Snipe, as well as several more common species, were all concentrated on this one bit of "natural habitat." A larger area of this type could easily be maintained at the lake and would prove a boon to both the birds and the birders, I am sure.

After circling the larger lake the party disbanded at its northern end. Three or four members found it desirable to return to the starting point and cut across the golf course to get there. Three species were added to the day's list by this move, one of these being a new species to the district, the Band-tailed Pigeon, three of which flew over. The other two were Red-throated Loon and Mourning Dove.

List of birds seen is as follows:

Red-throated Loon	Western Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eared Grebe	Herring Gull	Pipit
Western Grebe	California Gull	Shrike
Pied-billed Grebe	Short-billed Gull	Lutescent Warbler
Farallon Cormorant	Band-tailed Pigeon	Myrtle Warbler
California Heron	Mourning Dove	Audubon Warbler
American Bittern	Barn Owl	Townsend Warbler
Mallard	Anna Hummingbird	Yellow-throat
Cinnamon Teal	Allen Hummingbird	Pileolated Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Red-shafted Flicker	English Sparrow
Canvas-back Duck	Willow Woodpecker	Meadowlark
Lesser Scaup	Black Phoebe	S. F. Red-wing Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Horned Lark	Tricolored Blackbird
Red-breasted Merganser	Tree Swallow	Brewer Blackbird
Turkey Vulture	Bank Swallow	Purple Finch
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Rough-winged Swallow	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Barn Swallow	Pine Siskin
Sparrow Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Willow Goldfinch
Quail	Raven	Green-backed Goldfinch
Sora	Chickadee	San Francisco Towhee
Florida Gallinule	Bush-tit	Savannah Sparrow
Coot	Wren-tit	Junco
Killdeer	Vigors Wren	White-crowned Sparrow
Western Sandpiper	Tule Wren	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Wilson Snipe	Western Robin	Fox Sparrow
Glaucous-winged Gull	Russet-backed Thrush	Song Sparrow

Members attending were Messrs. and Mesdames Millard, Stephens; Mesdames Courtright, Kelly; Misses Blake, Danz, Giddings, MacIver, Sterne; Messrs. Bolander, Greenwood, Holmes, Kirker, Myers, Power and four guests: Mrs. A. H. Knox of Washington D. C.; Miss M. Rhoda; Messrs. Blair and McClintock.

As a footnote to the field trip report I might add that Mr. McClintock and myself were again present at the lake during the morning of the following Thursday, April 20th, and noted ten species that we did not obtain during the trip. Evidently we had passed too lightly over our chances of seeing the Cross-bills for they were again present and very noisy. The other nine were as follows:

Common Loon	Western Flycatcher	Creeper
Buffle-head Duck	Violet-green Swallow	House Wren
Semipalmated Plover	California Jay	Yellow Warbler

Gordon Bolander, Leader and Historian.



May Field Trip

May field trip was taken on Sunday, the 14th, to Saint Mary's, Contra Costa County, by twenty members and eighteen guests, eleven of whom were members of the Nature Study group of the Sierra Club.

There was a heavy fog in the early morning and although it lifted somewhat as we neared Saint Mary's, not until noon did the sun come out. From then on the day was perfect; in fact, it was so lovely at the luncheon spot that many of the group remained there either to botanize or to study the many birds which were attracted to a nearby creek. Others of our group continued on up the canyon enjoying the birds and their songs and noting many beautiful wild flowers. The opinion was quite generally expressed that this is the outstanding trip of the year—for on no other trip do we hear so many bird songs nor see so many beautiful wild flowers.

Our list of fifty-four species for the day is as follows:

Mallard female	Cliff Swallow	Long-tailed Chat
Turkey Vulture, 7	Purple Martin	Pileolated Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Coast Jay	English Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	California Jay	Meadowlark
Sparrow Hawk	Plain Titmouse	S. F. Red-wing Blackbird
Quail, nest 12 eggs	Bush-tit	Bullock Oriole
Killdeer	Slender-billed Nuthatch	Brewer Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Wren-tit	Western Tanager
Anna Hummingbird	House Wren	Black-headed Grosbeak
Allen Hummingbird	Vigors Wren	Lazuli Bunting
Red-shafted Flicker	Russet-backed Thrush	House Finch
Cabanis Woodpecker	Western Bluebird	Green-backed Goldfinch
Willow Woodpecker	Shrike	Lawrence Goldfinch
Nuttall Woodpecker	Cassin Vireo	San Francisco Towhee
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	Brown Towhee
Black Phoebe	Lutescent Warbler	Junco
Western Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler	Chipping Sparrow
Wood Pewee	Macgillivray Warbler	Song Sparrow

Members attending were: Mr. and Mrs. Stephens; Mesdames Burd, Kibbe, Saunders; Misses Blake, Cohen, Danz, Giddings, MacIver, McConnell, Papina, Paroni, Sterne; Messrs. Davis, Greenwood, Holmes, Johnson, Kirker and Myer, and eleven members of the Nature Study Group of the Sierra Club; Mrs. J. H. Henry of Providence, R. I.; Mesdames Anabel, Davis and granddaughter, Elizabeth Holmes; Messrs. Burd and Stewart.

Audubon Notes

June Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 8th, at 8 p. m., in Pacific House, Treasure Island.

The speaker will be Mr. Philip N. Yountz, Consultant and Director of the Pacific Area, whose subject will be "Exploring the Pacific."

Each member is urged to come and bring a friend, if possible, also to have some observations or other item of interest to report, to make the meeting a successful one.

A few of the members are meeting for dinner at the cafeteria in the north end of the Science Building. Others wishing to join them may do so. Miss Blake will be there at 5:45 to greet you.



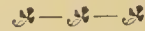
June Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 11th, to Ross, Marin County, under the leadership of Mr. Dunshee. Purchase round trip ticket, 50 cents, to Ross.

A longer walk will be taken under the leadership of Mrs. Courtright from Kentfield, joining with the main group at Phoenix Lake.

Those wishing to go on the longer trip take the 8:15 a. m. boat and the others the 8:45 a. m. boat.

Those desiring to remain for supper should bring food for two meals. There are fireplaces where cooking can be done. Also bring a cup for delicious

coffee, again to be made by Mr. Otis H. Smith.



May Meeting: The 261st regular meeting was held on the 11th, in room 19, Ferry Building, with thirty-three members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presided.

Mr. E. L. Sumner Sr. of Menlo Park was proposed for membership by Mrs. Kenneth Saunders.

The following observations were reported:

Miss Danz: Glenbrook (Cobb), Lake County, Calliope Hummingbirds nesting April 27 to May 4; male Rufous Hummingbird, May 2, and Chat seen and heard during the entire time.

Mrs. Kelly: Lake Merced, Western Sandpipers and 24 Semipalmated Plovers, May 2; Ross, Audubon Warbler, near Phoenix Lake; Black-throated Gray Warbler 6th; Alameda, 60 Semipalmated Plovers, 8th; one pair of Cowbirds, 7th.

Commander Parmenter: San Mateo Bridge, 50 Knots, April 11; 32 Knots, 500± Northern Phalaropes, 24th; Land's End, Brandt Cormorants nesting, 22nd; Presidio, Raven, May 5; near Mussel Rocks, 3000± Shearwaters in large raft, May 11.

Mrs. Saunders: Arroyo Mocho Canyon, Phainopepla, Cassin and Western Kingbirds, May 3.

Mr. Webb: East end of Bay Bridge on turn-off to Berkeley, Whistling Swan, April 26.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President..... Mrs. G. Earle Kelly..... 1311 Grand St., Alameda, Calif.
 Corresponding Secretary..... C. B. Lastreto..... 260 California St., San Francisco
 Treasurer..... Mrs. A. B. Stephens..... 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.