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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AUDUBON CONVENTION

Since the Asilomar grounds could not accommodate all of the 750 enthusiastic people who thronged to the Convention, many had to find lodging elsewhere. However, all were able to attend the meetings and field trips. At 7 p.m., on March 21, the group assembled for a buffet dinner in Crocker Hall. Mr. Bill Goodall, who deserves great credit for the success of this conference, introduced the guests of honor: Mr. John Baker, National President, Mr. Carl Buckheister, Senior Vice-president, who will become president when Mr. Baker retires in November, Mr. Roger Tory Peterson, famous author of field guides on birds and painter of birds, and Mrs. Alma Stultz recently retired as head of the Audubon Center at El Monte for the past ten years. Mr. Baker presented Mrs. Stultz with a scroll from the Audubon Society and a Roger Tory Peterson painting of swallows.

During the following morning, Sam Hinton of Scripps Institution of Oceanography spoke on *Tidepools* in preparation for the field trip on the following day. Dr. James Crouch of San Diego State College and staff member of Audubon Camp, showed slides of the camp. Early afternoon was enlivened by a bird-sketching contest for grade-school children. Each child was given an easel and colored crayons. He was then allowed to sketch from memory any bird he wished during the allotted time of fifteen minutes. Sketches of the winners were displayed in the auditorium during the remainder of the convention. Following the contest, officials of the wildlife, recreation and forestry service participated in a panel on *The Shape of Things to Come*.

During the meeting, the exciting announcement was made that a King Eider Duck could be seen at a location not far from Asilomar. This duck is a rare migrant here, though common in Alaska. (I am informed that follow-

ing the enthusiastic response of the group at an opportunity to see this rare bird, Bill Goodall was heard to say, "I wish that bird would go away. He's breaking up the convention!"—ED)

At dinner that evening Pearl Chase was commended by Mr. Baker for her outstanding service in the field of conservation. The highlight of the evening, as well as of the whole conference, was the talk and film by Roger Tory Peterson, *Flamingos on Four Continents*. There are six species of flamingos in the world, two in South America, the others in Florida, southern France and in Africa. Mr. Peterson is the only person who has photographed all six in their native habitats. He vividly described the difficulties encountered in his trip to the Andes to photograph a species, at an altitude of 16,000 feet, where one could scarcely breathe, plodding through a lake up to his waist in mud, towing meanwhile, on the surface of the water a heavy, crudely made blind.

At six o'clock on the following morning, Mr. Crouch acted as coordinator for a before-breakfast bird-santer. Later in the morning two symposiums were held: *Conservation for California* and *Past, Present, and Future of Western Nature Publishing*. Mr. Peterson announced that his long-promised new edition of *Western Birds* will go to the printers, positively, this summer and that it will contain thirty six instead of six color plates.

Though the afternoon was rainy and windy, all field trips were held. Dr. Lawrence Blinks, Director of the Hopkins Marine Station and Dr. Andrew Olson of San Diego State College led the tide pool trip pointing out the rich flora and fauna of the Monterey peninsula. Verna Vadon of the museum led a trip to Moss Landing to see both water and dune birds. Those who did not want a trip attended a meeting of the California Conservation Council led by Miss Pearl Chase, executive vice-president.

In the evening, the group was entertained by Sam Hinton, talented folk singer. Mr. Buckheister showed a film taken at the Audubon Maine Camp.

At breakfast on the following and final day, Bill Goodall announced that the theme of the next Biennial Conference would be *Conservation in Our Two new States—Alaska and Hawaii*.

—Condensed from HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AUDUBON CONVENTION by Mae Wilson, THE PHAINOPEPLA, *San Fernando Valley Audubon Society*.

SEA BIRDS DRINK SALT WATER

"A jolly old bird is the pelican.
His beak can hold more than his bellican."

Well, take another look at that beak and the two eave-troughs running

from his nostrils to the tip. They are not for laughs. An article in the *Scientific American* for January tells how seabirds drink salt water, then by means of a gland just above their nostrils eliminate the salt in a very concentrated solution. If this ran overboard instead of down the gutters, our pelican would get it back in his shopping bag and would have his salt water conversion job to do all over again.

This gutter scheme is fine for this slow moving bird but not for the petrel almost continually on the wing. He carries a water pistol on top of his beak to expel the solution so it won't blow back into his air intake.

—Reprint from THE CALIFORNIA THRASHER, *Paso Robles Audubon Society*.

FIELD TRIP TO TOMALES BAY—On January 10, a group of Golden Gate Audubon Society members met at Point Reyes Station and discussed the plans for birding. Since the road to the last ranch on the point was impassable, the group split up and many went to their favorite birding spots in the area. A group of 16 observers, however, obtained permission to take three cars to the gate of the last ranch and hike the rest of the way to the point. The main birds of interest there were Harlequin and Old Squaw Ducks, Common Scoters and five species of Alcids. These are not usually seen from land but are to be expected at the point. A total of 148 species were seen here during the weekend.

—GUY McCASKIE, PAUL OPLER, RICH STALLCUP, *Leaders*
RICH STALLCUP, *Historian*

FIELD TRIP TO RITCHIE RANCH—On February 14, fifteen members and guests met at the town of Thornton, San Joaquin County, early in the morning. One guest was a visitor from Denmark. The sky was overcast and there was a mild, though slightly cold, wind. Sandhill Cranes were among the highlights of the trip. About 1,000 were seen. A Glaucous-winged Gull was observed and in the shallow ponds on an abandoned farm there were seven species of ducks plus fifteen Whistling Swans. We, also, watched a little cottontail rabbit which stood still until we were within a few feet of him. We drove along the Sacramento River to the vicinity of Courtland to see the Longeared Owls, but they were not there this year. However, we did observe a Barn Owl a palm tree. During the day a total of 62 species of birds were seen.

—LORIS P. SMITH, *Leader and Historian*

FIELD TRIP TO RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY—Umbrellas, raincoats and rubber boots were in order on Washington's Birthday when 26 intrepid birders gathered, at 9 a.m., at the north end of Richardson Bridge, Marin County, on Highway 101. A visit to the historic nine acre knoll, donated to the Marin Conservation League and the Marin Audubon Society by Mrs. Rose Verrall, was of great interest. We were greeted in the rain by Mrs. Verrall and told we might, also, walk around the mansion which is being remodeled by Mrs. Donald Dickey as a memorial to her husband, the noted ornithologist. Fortunately, the rain subsided for an hour or so before lunch and the caravan drove to Strawberry Peninsula following the east-shore drive to the end. A walk here was highly rewarding with many remarkably close observations. Lunch was eaten in our cars but a few avid birders stood under umbrellas with binoculars poised! Further exploration for the day was abandoned because of poor condition of the roads in the heavy rain. However, a total of 52 species were observed during the day. Enroute home I stopped at Richardson Bay Lagoon for a last look and watched fifteen avocets land in the De Silva's Island lagoon.

ELIZABETH S. LENNON, *Leader and Historian*

FIELD TRIP TO GOLDEN GATE PARK—On March 14, a clear, cool day, about twenty-five members and guests studied birds and their songs in Golden Gate Park. The Fox Sparrows gave out with a few notes of their songs but the Ruby-throated Kinglets and Yellowthroats were more generous with theirs. Among the highlights of the day were the Violet-green Swallows and two very early Western Tanagers that had arrived from their wintering grounds.

FLORENCE PLYMELL, *Leader and Historian*

MAY MEETING

The 496th regular meeting of the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be held Thursday, May 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the Rotary Natural Science Center on Lake Merritt, in Oakland, near the duck-feeding area. Our speaker will be Bert Harwell. A special treat in the form of *Bert's Best Shots* is being edited by him for showing to this society. Bert is well known for his Audubon Screen Tour lectures, his work with Walt Disney and his bird calls. (Perhaps he will end this program with some of the calls!) Guests are welcome. Come one and all.

Note: A no-host dinner preceding the meeting will be held at Conover's Restaurant, Perkins and Grand Avenue, a short distance from the Rotary Center. Six o'clock.

—BONNIE SMITH, *Program Chairman*

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Golden Gate Audubon Society: from Berkeley, Miss Margaret Breck; from Oakland, Mr. John H. Featherston.

—AGNES OCZKEWECZ, *Membership Chairman*

FIELD TRIPS FOR MAY

On Sunday, May 3, to McCoy Ranch, Arroyo Mocho, southwest of Livermore. Few places so close can equal the pastoral beauty of this foothill canyon in the springtime. Orioles, Phainopepla, Western King Bird, Yellow-billed Magpie and many other birds are usually seen. Meet in Livermore, one block down Livermore Avenue beyond the flagpole, at 9:30 a.m. Allow one hour driving time from Oakland. A side trip to San Antonio Valley is planned. The valley is about 10 miles past Livermore on the Mt. Hamilton road. *Leader*, Lee Stallcup, LO 9-3185.

On Sunday, May 10, to Jack London Ranch, Glen Ellen, Sonoma County. This is now the home of Mrs. Marianne Shepard, a Sierra Club member who has invited us to visit there. This area has probably never had a bird census or been visited by the society. It is wooded slopes covered with oaks, conifers and shrubs, an ideal habitat for birds. The rolling meadows will be covered with wildflowers. There is a creek and a small lake on the ranch. Meet at 9 a.m., at Glen Ellen post office, which is about one mile from Highway 12, 7 miles from Sonoma and 15 miles from Santa Rosa. Travel time is about two hours from bay area points. "Sonoma Route" Greyhound leaves San Francisco at 7:35 a.m. and arrives at Glen Ellen at 9:40 a.m. It will be met by members of the group and rides will be furnished members coming by bus. Bring lunch, binoculars and interested friends. *Leaders*: Howard L. Cogswell, NE 6-1575, Natalie Mestechin, LIBERTY 6-4122, Marie Mans, TH 8-5186.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 16-17, to the Sierra foothills to observe wildflowers, listen to the spring songs of birds and view the romantic Mother Lode country. Mrs. Gladys Smith, vice-president, lecturer on wildflowers at Audubon meetings, will talk to you, this time, in the field. The area chosen is rich in plant life and flowers. The color pattern of fields with buttercups, poppies and lupins, may be seen. Birds will be observed and early mining towns visited. Proposed route of travel is Highway 50 to Stockton (77 miles)

and Highway 88 and 12 to Valley Springs (40 miles from Stockton). Travel time is about 3 hours. Meet at Valley Springs at 12 noon. Accomodations are available at National Hotel and El Campo Motel at Jackson. Reservations should be made in advance. Camping at nearby Pardee Dam is \$2.50 per car.

If at yeast 33 persons sign up a bus will be chartered. Bus will leave Fulton Street entrance, San Francisco public library, 8 a.m. and Leamington Hotel, Oakland, at 8:30 a.m., Saturday. Return will be about 6 p.m., Sunday. Fare is \$6.50 and covers travel only. Send reservations to Field Trips Chairman, Harold G. Peterson, 3548-65th Ave., Oakland 5, with checks made payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. Picnic lunch for both ways should be provided. *Leader*, Mrs. Gladys Smith, SK 1-5382.

—HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Field Trips Chairman*

ANNOUNCEMENT: The annual meeting of the Western Section of the American Nature Study Society will be held in San Diego, June 18-19. Roger Tory Peterson was one of the society's recent presidents. Audubon mnmbers are invited to attend.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

Established January 25, 1917

A Branch of the National Audubon Society since 1948

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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint Membership, Local and National, \$6.50 per year, includes AUDUBON MAGAZINE and THE GULL. Subscription to THE GULL separately, \$1.50 per year.

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