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NOVEMBER TRIP TO WILLOWS AND GRIDLEY REFUGES

On Saturday, November 7, about 40 people met at the Gray Lodge State Game Refuge near Gridley where we had unusually fine views of Sandhill Cranes, both standing and flying. From the lunch spot we saw a flock of about 300 cranes milling about and giving their rolling cry. Ross' Geese were fairly common among the flocks of Lesser Snow Geese and were observed through telescopes.

Late in the day we drove west to the vicinity of Willows, and 24 of us had dinner together at the Blue Gum Inn, just north of Willows.

Several people were out on the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge at dawn watching the high skeins of geese and ducks come back after feeding in fields all night. Then at 9:30, when we were joined by several people from the Bay region, Eugene Kridler, the refuge biologist, gave a talk on what takes place behind the scenes on a refuge. This was followed by the escorted tour that is always thrilling—masses of Snow and White-fronted Geese taking wing only a short distance in front of the cars. Two Golden Eagles were seen, and Guy McCaskie picked a European Widgeon out of thousands of American Widgeon—the same feat he accomplished on last year's trip.

The weather was beautiful both days, and all told it was a very satisfactory weekend. The following 95 species were seen in the Willows-Gridley area: Eared, Western, and Pied-billed Grebe; White Pelican; Double-crested Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Common and Snowy Egrets; Black-crowned Night Heron; American Bittern; Whistling Swan; Canada, White-fronted, Snow, and Ross, Geese; Mallard; Gadwall; Pintail; Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal; Shoveler; European and American Widgeons; Wood Duck; Redhead; Ring-necked Duck; Canvasback; Lesser Scaup; Bufflehead; Ruddy Duck; Hooded and Common Mergansers; Turkey Vulture; Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed Hawks; Golden Eagle; Marsh and Sparrow Hawks; California Quail; Ring-necked Pheasant; Sandhill Crane; Virginia and Sora Rails; Common Gallinule; American Coot; Killdeer; Common Snipe; Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper; Dunlin; Long-billed Dowitcher; Western Sandpiper; American Avocet; Herring and Ring-billed Gulls; Rock and Mourning Doves; Barn, Great Horned, and Burrowing Owls; Red-shafted Flicker; Acorn Woodpecker; Black and Say's Phoebes; Tree Swallow; Common Bushtit; Brown Creeper; Bewick's and Long-billed Marsh Wrens; Western Bluebird; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; Loggerhead Shrike; Starling; Hutton's Vireo; Audubon's Warbler; Yellowthroat; House Sparrow; Western Meadowlark; Yellow-headed, Redwinged, Tricolored, and Brewer's Blackbirds; Brown-headed Cowbird; House

Finch; American and Lesser Goldfinches; Brown Towhee; Savannah Sparrow; Oregon Junco; White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Lincoln's and Song Sparrows.

HARRY ADAMSON, *Leader and Historian*

NOVEMBER TRIP TO CONN LAKE

On Saturday and Sunday, November 28 and 29, a new type of field trip was tried out with about 50 birders participating. Having two separate trips on the same weekend to Conn Lake was found by the members and guests to be an excellent method for assuring that all would see species otherwise frightened off by a large unwieldy group. The weather on both days was superb. Although the mild winter showed its effect in the lack of numbers of some species (especially Wood Ducks which were not found!), there was much of interest to be seen. A Red Phalarope, positively identified at a range of twenty feet, was not in his usual pelagic situation. A Merlin (Pigeon Hawk) gave many people a thrill as life lists went up another notch. Beautiful views of a Red-shouldered Hawk and a prolonged look at the common, but seldom viewed, Lincoln Sparrow added to the weekend. The Saturday trip picked up 69 species, while the Sunday trip managed to get 83 for an overall total of 86 species.

In addition to the above mentioned the following species were seen: Common Loon, Horned, Eared, Western, and Pied-billed Grebes; Double-crested Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Whistling Swan; Canada and Snow (3) Geese; Mallard; Gadwall; Pintail; Green-winged Teal; American Widgeon; Ring-necked Duck; Canvasback; Greater Scaup; Bufflehead; Ruddy Duck; Hooded and Common Mergansers; Turkey Vulture; Red-tailed Hawk; Osprey; Sparrow Hawk; California Quail; American Coot; Killdeer; Common Snipe; Ring-billed Gull; Mourning Dove; Anna's Hummingbird; Belted Kingfisher; Red-shafted Flicker (also a hybrid seen); Acorn, Downy, and Nuttalls Woodpeckers; Black and Say's Phoebes; Steller's and Scrub jays; Common Crow; Plain Titmouse; Common Bushtit; White-breasted Nuthatch; Wrentit; Winter Bewick's and Rock Wrens; Mockingbird; California Thrasher; Robin; Hermit Thrush; Western Bluebird; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; Cedar Waxwing; Loggerhead Shrike; Starling; Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers; House Sparrow; Western Meadowlark; Redwinged and Brewer's Blackbird; Brown-headed Cowbird; Purple and House Finches; Pine Siskin; American and Lesser Gold Finches; Rufous-sided and Brown Towhees; Savannah and Lark Sparrows; Oregon Junco; Chipping, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox and Song Sparrows.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Leader and Historian (Sat)*.

C. JOHN RALPH, *Leader*, and RICHARD STALLCUP, *Historian (Sun)*.

DECEMBER TRIP TO SAN ANDREAS AND CRYSTAL SPRINGS RESERVOIRS AND MOSS BEACH

About 32 members and friends gathered in Millbrae on December 12 and proceeded by car caravan to San Andreas Dam, where, with permission and a key from the San Francisco Water Department, we hiked up the road west of the lake for 1-1/3 miles. In addition to good views of a Winter Wren many nests of Wood Rats, and various woodland birds plus some water birds on the lake, it was in the first deep canyon in this area that the high point of the day's obser-

uations was reached. Following up the unusually vehement scolding of several Golden-crowned Kinglets and a Chickadee we found the cause of their excitement to be a Saw-whet Owl perched quietly some twenty feet up in the canopy of a California-laurel tree. After considerable effort in pointing out the well-hidden bird and in getting telescopes trained on it at the unusual upward angle, several of us went upslope to directly below it. Still it sat, and still it looked at us—even when John Ward finally climbed into the same tree and almost on its level. Finally, however, when he stepped across to the limb on which it was perched, the owl took flight—for all or about 20 feet to another tree across the road. So far as is known, not one of the observers present and enjoying such excellent views had ever seen a Saw-whet Owl alive before, though some had heard their calls.

Driving on down Spring Valley Road we stopped and used our entry permit again to walk to the far side of the north end of Crystal Springs Reservoir, where we ate lunch and looked over the waterbirds on the lake, which was at an exceptionally low level. Only a little birding was done in the adjacent woodland here, as the sudden build-up of clouds culminated in the first rain since September in the Bay Area. Accordingly, the lake was scanned from various points along the road from there southward through the welcome wetness. Gadwalls, Shovellers and American Widgeon were exceptionally numerous, but only the Bufflehead among the diving ducks was at all common and no Ring-necked Ducks or Redheads were found, although this is usually one of the best areas for them.

Many waterfowl in the distance were not identified and large parts of the lakes were not scanned. The following 56 species of birds were found at the two reservoirs and vicinity, the numbers given for some being those counted or estimated by the leader except where otherwise noted: Eared Grebe 15; Pied-billed Grebe, 30; Double-crested Cormorant, 1; Great Blue Heron, 2; Canada Goose, 200; Mallard, 150; Gadwall, 100; Pintail, 50; Green-winged Teal, few; Shoveler, 700; American Widgeon, 1200; Canvasback, 3; Common Goldeneye, 2; Bufflehead, 60; Ruddy Duck, 20; Hooded Merganser, 1 male (Aileen Pierson); Turkey Vulture, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Sparrow Hawk, 4; American Coot, 1300; Killdeer, 1; Spotted Sandpiper, 1; Greater Yellowlegs, 2; Herring Gull, 2; California Gull; Ring-billed Gull; Band-tailed Pigeon, 30; Saw-whet Owl, 1; Anna's Hummingbird; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Red-shafted Flicker, 6; Black Phoebe, 5; Steller's Jay; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Common Bushtit; Brown Creeper, 1; Wrentit, 3; Winter Wren, 2; Robin, 100; Hermit Thrush, 5; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 15; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8; Water Pipit, 12; Cedar Waxwing, 5; Loggerhead Shrike, 2; Hutton's Vireo, 3; Myrtle Warbler, 2 (but no Audubon's); Townsend's Warbler ?, 1; House Sparrow; Western Meadowlark; Pine Siskin, 2; Lesser Goldfinch; Oregon Junco; White-crowned Sparrow; Golden-crowned Sparrow; Fox Sparrow.

Despite the rain (which soon stopped) five cars of observers continued on to the shore at Princeton, at the north end of Halfmoon Bay, but did not find any Red Phalaropes on the pond where they had been two weeks earlier. Along the coastal side of the Halfmoon Bay airport, however, a flock of about 50 Starlings was seen in a brushy pasture area and a group of gulls, mostly Mew Gulls, on the airport strip itself was studied. At Moss Beach, where we

This lake is a good place to observe many species of water birds at close range. Some unusual birds may also be seen in the pens and on display in the dome. A visit to the Rotary Natural Science Center is interesting and educational. This nationally known wildlife refuge is becoming more important to this community every year. Many groups use its facilities to learn about nature and wildlife. Meet at the Rotary Natural Science Center in Lakeside Park near the feeding area at 9 a.m. Bring lunch, warm clothing, binoculars, telescopes and interested friends. Leader, PAUL COVEL, KE 6-4120.

Those wishing to go to Joaquin Miller Park and the Robin Roost meet again at the Rotary Science Center at 1 p.m. From there travel will be by auto to the above area. This is the area frequently mentioned by Howard L. Cogswell, Vice President. If the weather and robins cooperate, a demonstration of bird banding will be given by members of W. B. B. A., at this point. One of their members will be guide to this place.

Saturday, January 30, to RICHARDSON BAY and other MARIN PENINSULA AREAS. We will visit the Richardson Bay Wildlife Refuge established through the efforts of the Richardson Bay Foundation and the National Audubon Society. (See The Gull, September, 1957). This area was patrolled by an Audubon warden during the last waterfowl hunting season. The concentration of ducks and other water birds in this bay is spectacular. Belevedere, San Quentin and San Pedro Points (McNears Beach) will also be visited if time permits. Meet at the parking area just north of the Richardson Bay Bridge on U. S. Highway 101 at 9 a.m. Bring your lunch, warm clothing, binoculars, telescopes, and interested friends. Leader, ELIZABETH S. LENNON, EDgewater 2-1641.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Field Trips Chairman*

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

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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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