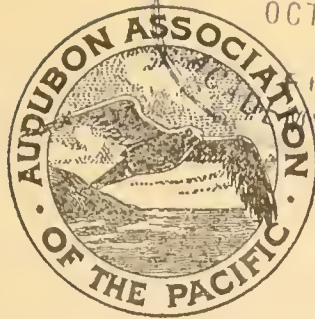


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The Condor and Its Nesting Site

On Sunday morning, July 14, 1935, at about 7:30 a. m., I reached Mr. Henley's Toll and Parking Station, which for the purpose of this article I term the entrance to Sespe Canyon, Ventura County, California. It is located about three miles in a northwesterly direction from Fillmore.

Leaving one's car at Henley's, one walks in a northerly direction up the canyon along an old roadway for about three miles, reaching what I call "Observation Rock," about ten feet in height and fifteen feet in width, from which one has a commanding and unobstructed view of all points of the compass, with the exception, of course, of the country beyond the rims. It stands a little closer to the western rim, perhaps one-half to three-quarters of a mile distant; the top of the rim is approximately five hundred feet higher than this rock. The western cliff at this point appears to be formed of the Sespe brownstone granite, while the eastern does not appear to be; the canyon here from rim to rim, I should judge, is from one and a quarter to one and a half miles in width.

The walk is not difficult, but it is a hot one, as the sun beats into this narrow canyon throughout the day. Upon your return you realize that you are hot, thirsty and tired, but, if you have fulfilled the ambition of every bird student of seeing a Condor, you are well repaid for the effort.

It was upon "Observation Rock" on September 16, 1934, I stood and had pointed out to me by Mr. Lawrence Peyton the first Condor I ever saw. It was high in the heavens and fully a mile away, but what a thrill comes over one when, for the first time, one sees this large bird soaring in the distance.

Sunday, the 14th, was a magnificent day for observation, for while there was a slight haze in the earlier part of the morning, it soon disappeared and visibility was excellent; the sky was of that beautiful blue so characteristic of the warmer climates.

About 8:45 a. m. I climbed upon the rock and expectantly looked into the western sky where I had seen my first Condor as it soared into the heavens. Several times I thought I saw the object of my visit, but upon closer observation it was seen to be a Turkey Vulture. At about 9:25 I again noted in the western sky some distance above the brownstone cliffs what I at first took to be one of the Vultures previously seen, but upon looking through my binoculars I was thrilled to see and unmistakably identify that magnificent bird, the California Condor. It was flying in an easterly direction and had it continued on its course it would have passed directly above me, which I thought it intended doing, for upon my previous visit the birds first appeared in the western sky and then crossed Sespe Canyon to the eastern rim and out of sight. This bird, however, as it reached the rim, dipped perhaps one hundred feet below the top, flew backward and forward along the cliff several times at about the same level, finally alighting upon a ledge where it remained for a brief period. Then it again arose into the air and flew to and fro at about the same level for a few minutes, when for the second time it alighted, but at a different point on the

cliff. With the granite cliff as a background, the orange-colored head, the pure white underwing-coverts and the widely separated wing tips of the Condor could be easily and distinctly seen. Presently it again arose and flew to and fro as on the two previous occasions, finally alighting on a ledge at a still different point, where it remained for fully two hours. You could now distinguish the form of the bird, but it was too far distant to distinguish the color of the head, etc.

This ledge was about one hundred feet below the top of the cliff. There is no question in my mind that here the Condor was upon its nest, for there was evidence, clearly seen from the distance, that it was accustomed to remaining here. It occurred to me regarding the three different landings, that perhaps the bird resorted to the first two as a sort of decoy to mislead one as to the position of its actual nesting site, or it may possibly be that it was a bit uneasy at my presence in the neighborhood.

Mr. Peyton on my first trip informed me that one could approach somewhat nearer to this ledge by following an old trail which led to the top of a ridge, and this ridge is, I believe, within four hundred yards or so of the nesting site. The trail is now heavily overgrown but distinguishable, so I decided to go as far as was possible. Although the day was exceedingly hot, I managed to reach this ledge from which I had a splendid and unobstructed view of the Condor as it apparently sat upon its nest. Several reasons for so believing are: first, the quantity of white excrement plainly visible and indicative of nesting sites; secondly, the bird remained there for quite a length of time; and thirdly, the fact that a Turkey Vulture flew rather close to the Condor and as the Vulture approached, the Condor rose to a defensive attitude, but as the Vulture passed, it again resumed its sitting position. I watched from this point for about an hour, the bird being there when I left at 11:30 a. m., the time for my return. Just as I was leaving I saw another Condor soaring high in the heavens over the eastern rim; this bird was easily identified although quite a distance away.

Sespe Canyon in itself is extremely interesting, as its brownstone granite walls rise to a height of probably five hundred to seven hundred and fifty feet, and at the bottom of the canyon runs Sespe Creek, a typical mountain stream of clear water running over tremendous boulders and forming beautiful pools where I noted several fishermen trying their luck.

On my walk up the canyon I had as companions, most of the way, Canyon Wrens, entertaining me with their beautiful song, that descending scale, which once heard one never forgets. Another bird seen by me for the first time was the Arizona Hooded Oriole. Many White-throated Swifts were chattering about in the sky; Violet-green Swallows were plentiful; Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Phainopeplas, both male and female, Western Warbling and Least Vireos, Western Wood Pewees and Western Flycatchers were also noted. The Ash-throated Flycatcher was heard.

I cannot conclude this article without expressing my appreciation to Mr. Lawrence Peyton, his brother, Mr. A. Peyton, and their families, for the courtesy, kindness and consideration they showed me on both my trips to Sespe Canyon.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California. July 25, 1935.



The September Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 22nd, to Alameda and Bay Farm Island. This trip being primarily for the observation of shore birds, it was taken a week later than our usual date in order to have favorable tide conditions. A high fog and brisk west wind made the day rather unpleasant.

We were privileged to have our President, Mrs. Kelly, as leader. Her studies of shore birds in this region over a long period of years make her eminently qualified to obtain the best results. Mrs. Kelly divided the party into three groups and assigned each group to a location where the best results could be

obtained. By this means favorable locations were visited simultaneously as follows: Fernside Beach, Shore Drive and the Game Refuge on Bay Farm Island. Our principal object was to determine the numbers of both individuals and species which frequent these different places, the time of their arrival in relation to the tide, and if possible to discover the location of their loafing grounds, during high water.

On the day of our observation there was a high tide 5.2 feet at 9:48 a. m., a low tide 2.7 feet at 3:14 p. m., and at 11:15 a. m. the muddy beaches along the shore line were sufficiently exposed for the birds to begin feeding.

At Fernside Beach the first bird, a Killdeer, flew overhead at 11:05 a. m.; a Marbled Godwit arrived at 11:40 and a small flock of Sandpipers at 11:50 a. m.; but none of these remained. With the Sandpipers were two Semipalmated Plovers, which stayed but did not feed. Another small flock of Sandpipers arrived at 12:10 p. m., four of which were Least Sandpipers, which remained but did not feed; the others were frightened away by a dog. Six Marbled Godwits and one Western Willet arrived at 12:20, remaining but not feeding. Four Sanderlings arrived at 12:30 and at 12:35 were joined by three others and three more Willets. Farther along on the beach at 12:55 we found thirteen Marbled Godwits and one Willet.

Opposite Fernside Beach along the East Oakland shore 50 Pintails, 200 Marbled Godwits and 150 Western Willets were present.

Along Shore Drive at 11:50 a. m. compact groups of the following species were present: seventy-five Sanderlings; Sandpipers in groups of thirty-five and fifty; Marbled Godwits in groups of five and ten; seven Black-bellied Plovers and twenty-five Western Willets. Some individuals were apparently sleeping, others preening, but none were feeding. One hour later all began to feed, no additional birds having arrived. Only two or three Hudsonian Curlew were noted.

In the Game Preserve on Bay Farm Island at 11:30 a. m. four each of Killdeer and Black-bellied Plovers, six Godwits and two Willets were noted on the exposed mud flats; the Godwits and Willets only were feeding. In a few minutes all had disappeared. Two large flocks of Sandpipers arrived at 11:50 and immediately began feeding and continued to feed for more than two hours.

Five Clapper Rail were seen in the Game Preserve and one along Shore Drive. Others were heard in the Game Preserve and also at Fernside Beach.

A total of thirty-six species, including land birds noted in Lincoln Park and elsewhere, was noted for the day as follows:

Eared Grebe	Least Sandpiper	California Jay
White Pelican	Western Sandpiper	Slender-billed Nuthatch
California Heron	Marbled Godwit	Western Robin
American Pintail	Sanderling	California Shrike
Duck Hawk	Northern Phalarope	Salt Marsh Yellow-throat
Sparrow Hawk	Western Gull	English Sparrow
Clapper Rail	California Gull	Western Meadowlark
Semipalmated Plover	Forster Tern	Brewer Blackbird
Killdeer	Anna Hummingbird	Common House Finch
Black-bellied Plover	Red-shafted Flicker	S. F. Brown Towhee
Hudsonian Curlew	Horned Lark	Bryant Sparrow
Western Willet	Barn Swallow	Song Sparrow

Twenty members and two guests attended: Messrs. and Mesdames Dunshee, Millard and Stephens; Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe and Strock; Misses Cohen, Dunshee, McConnell, Paroni, Sterne and Walker; Messrs. Bryant, Power and Webb; Masters Kirker and Lippmann. Guests: Mr. Strock and Miss Kennedy.

Chas. A. Bryant, Historian.

Audubon Notes

October Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 10th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. Elmer Aldrich, whose subject will be "Field Experiences in Southern Idaho." The lecture will be illustrated.



October Field Trip will be on Sunday, the 13th, to Lake Merced. East Bay members may take either No. 12, Mission Street car marked "Ocean" or Municipal car K, transferring to No. 12 car at Sloat Boulevard, and getting off at entrance to Fleishhacker Playgrounds, where party will meet at 10 a. m. Bring luncheon. Leader, Chas. A. Bryant.



September Meeting: The 218th regular meeting was held on September 12th, room 19, Ferry Building, with twenty-seven members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

Observations were reported as follows:

Commander Parmenter: San Mateo and Dumbarton Bridges:

	Aug. 20th	Sept. 10th
White Pelican	40±	200±
Semipalmated Plover	5	
Black-bellied Plover	20	500±
Hudsonian Curlew	4	
Willetts	300+	500±
L. B. Dowitcher.....		70+
Marbled Godwit	170+	2000±
Avocets	34	

Miss Uniacke: Golden Gate Park, male and female Western Tanager and Townsend Warbler, September 5th.

Mr. Milton S. Ray, the speaker of the evening, read a very interesting paper, entitled "Adventures and Discoveries." The first part of the paper covered experiences on the Farallon Islands. He told of once finding a nest of a Rock Wren around which were pieces of leather, glass, safety pins, battery pieces, plaster, abalone and mussel shells, nails, iron and stones, a total of 1665 items carried to the nest by the wren.

Mrs. Ray read from his book, "The Farallones, The Painted World and Other Poems," three poems entitled "Dawn on the Farallones," "Birds of the Farallones" and "Night on the Farallones."

Mr. Ray then continued with other experiences in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, at Pyramid Peak, 9250 feet altitude, where he encountered a three-day snowstorm. Here he had hoped to find the nest of the Pine Grosbeak, of which there were only nine previously recorded. After a search of over 312 miles, he found two of their nests. The eggs were a rich Nile blue dashed with purple and lavender.

After hundreds of miles of search along the crest of the Sierra, he found a nest and eggs of the Leucosticte near the top of Pyramid Peak.

At the close of Mr. Ray's paper, Mrs. Ray again read two poems, "The Sierra Nevada from Mt. Hamilton" and "The Vireo."

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....Mrs. G. Earle Kelly.....1311 Grand Ave., 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.

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