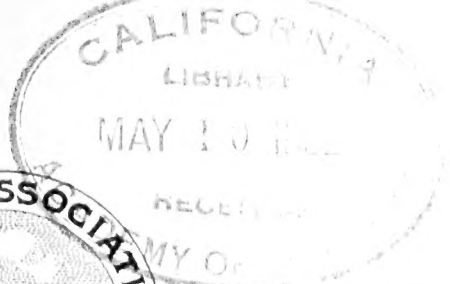


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Winter Bird Visitors at Davis, California

The grounds of the Branch of the College of Agriculture of the University of California, the "University Farm," comprise more than a thousand acres, adjoining the town of Davis on the west and southwest. Originally the only tree cover in this region consisted of scattered valley oaks on the alluvial plains and willow-cottonwood growths, together with associated brushy plants, along the scattered creeks. Development of the town and the experimental fields and orchards, and decorative plantings of the "farm" have greatly increased the appropriate winter shelter and food supply for birds. A variety of winter bird habitats is thus provided—and occupied.

The summer avifauna here is relatively sparse and inconspicuous. But with the coming of the shorter mild days of autumn a notable influx of birds begins. First come the crowned sparrows in numbers, the Gambel and Puget Sound Sparrows (September 14 to 29) and some Golden-crowned Sparrows (September 23 to October 19), although the latter seem far less numerous than in the foothill country and certainly are much less conspicuous. At about the same time Audubon Warblers appear (September 18 to October 11) and shortly Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Hermit Thrushes, all in small numbers. American Pipits throng the fields (October 1 to 28) and the fence rows suddenly are inhabited by Savannah Sparrows about the same time.

Flickers increase notably in numbers for the winter period all over the surrounding country and are especially in evidence along rows of roadside nut-bearing trees; occasional yellow-shafted birds appear among the predominant red-shafted species. A little later a few Varied Thrushes are to be found in the denser groupings of trees. The berry feeders usually appear in October, Cedar Waxwings first (exceptionally September 8, 1924), then Robins and Bluebirds. Less often species such as the Townsend Solitaire, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Sierra Creeper, Evening Grosbeak and Pinon Jay are recorded.

However, the principal "winter show" of the campus is the influx of Robins. I have resided in Davis continuously since 1923 and in seven of these nine winters there have been assemblages of Robins; in the winters of '29-30 and '30-31 the species was practically absent, only a few casuals having been noted. In the earlier years fairly large populations have been present, but this year, '31-32, has witnessed the greatest gathering of all. During the daytime only moderate numbers are to be seen in any one place; the birds are then scattered out over the adjacent country foraging on berries and, on warmer, rainless days, on earthworms and other earth-dwelling prey. Toward sunset the hosts begin to gather. They arrive literally from all points of the compass in diffuse flocks, of small or large size, of ten to two hundred birds. These circle about indeterminately for awhile, and then alight in leafless trees or on the ground. In past years the nighttime roost has been in a group of trees near the water tank, south of the quadrangle; this winter the center has shifted to trees adjacent to the dormitories east of the quadrangle. However, the bulk of the birds seem first to arrive in the trees near the former roost and then go gradually to the new location, as though still retaining some association with their former quarters.

Each evening this winter (save when rain was falling or the ground was very wet) there has been a large gathering of Robins on the furrowed land of the quadrangle. Here the birds are spaced five to twenty feet apart, remindful of a great field of gymnasts save for the irregularity of spacing and movement. Each goes at once to foraging and studies the ground adjacent. How many forage here is wholly conjectural; in the weak light of early evening birds a short distance away from an observer are obscured among the multitude of clods, but certainly not less than half a thousand, or roughly a hundred per acre, have been present on some evenings.

The supply of earth-dwelling "worms" must be enormous, since evening after evening the Robins reap a considerable repast here before finally going to roost.

While this large assemblage is on the ground, fully twice as many more are settling and resettling themselves in the trees, later to be joined by those from the quadrangle, and this continues until the observer can no longer record detail accurately. The robin aggregations are usually at their peak during the coldest weather in December and January. With the mild days songs are occasionally heard, and then the company begins to disperse until by early March or thereabouts the roost is no longer inhabited.

Tracy I. Storer, University of California, Davis, California.



April Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 17th, to Lake Merced with twenty-six members and twenty-nine guests. Dark clouds at the start gave way to the sun later in the morning. There was a cool north wind all day.

Starting from Junipero Serra Boulevard, the usual route was followed down the ravine to the larger lake where the party divided, some following one shore and some the other.

The ravine, along its entire length, was filled with the chorus of bird songs which one naturally expects to hear at this season. But the birds themselves were difficult to see, the cool wind probably causing them to seek shelter. Judging from the prevalence of their song, Willow Goldfinches outnumbered all other species.

An Allen Hummingbird's nest, discovered in a Monterey Cypress a week previously, by Miss Beryl Kautz, undoubtedly contained eggs in an advanced stage of incubation, judging from the manner in which the bird stayed on the nest with a group of people standing near. Allen Hummingbirds were present everywhere during the entire trip. Rufous Hummingbirds, though not nearly so abundant, were not to be overlooked. From their accommodating manner of posing right in front of our eyes, it almost seemed as if they wanted their presence known. No fewer than four individuals were noted.

Upon our arrival at the lake, we were greeted, not with the familiar notes of the Audubon and Myrtle Warblers, or the songs of the Willow Goldfinches, Purple Finches and Linnets, but with a scene of desolation caused by clearing away every vestige of a tree or shrub along the lower end of the lake. Along the lake shore where the Tule Wren's bubbling song and the Virginia Rail's grunting, like that of a little pig, made a shrine of the tules growing there, nothing now remains but stubbles of the closely cropped tules. This condition prevails, with the exception of one or two small patches of tules which have been spared, around the entire lake.

On previous visits, at this season, several Mallard families have been present. This year only a few pairs of adults were seen. Their nesting sites have been destroyed.

At one location where a small patch of tules had been spared, a Sora Rail, as if to console us, came out and strutted about.

A Titmouse was present in the live oaks at the lower end of the lake. A warbler-like song, puzzling at first, was later identified when a Myrtle Warbler

was discovered in the act of giving it. Tree and Bank Swallows perched on a wire afforded an excellent opportunity for study. A Bush-tit's nest containing young was discovered in a group of willows about ten feet above the ground.

The Audubon Association first visited this region on December 14, 1919. Fifty-three species were noted, one of which was the Whistling Swan. It has not appeared on our lists since. Short-billed Gulls were noted on that trip and did not appear on our lists again until this year when three individuals in second-year plumage were present. A few of the species seen on our April trip may be considered noteworthy in regard to their presence in this region. Surf scoters were first noted in April, 1920, and not again till October, 1931; Sora Rails were observed in April, 1919, and not again till October, 1931, though they have undoubtedly been present for many years. Canvas-back Ducks seem to have a regular habit of being present for three successive years, then absent for the same length of time, then starting the cycle over again. Snipes were noted in December, 1919, April and October 1920, not again till October, 1929, not noted in 1930 but present in 1931. Cedar Waxwings first noted in April, 1920, not again till April, 1930, not noted in 1931.

Baldpate and Titmouse first appeared on our lists in April, 1931. Species noted only twice before: Yellow Warbler in April, 1927 and 1931; Rufous Hummingbird in April, 1929 and 1931; Rough-winged Swallow in April, 1930 and 1931.

Our trip this spring was the twenty-first to this region. The total number of species for all trips is one hundred twenty-five.

A total of sixty-five species was noted as follows:

Eared Grebe	Mourning Dove	Warbling Vireo
Western Grebe	Anna Hummingbird	Hutton Vireo
Pied-billed Grebe	Rufous Hummingbird	Yellow Warbler
Farallon Cormorant	Allen Hummingbird	Myrtle Warbler
Black-crowned Night Heron	Red-shafted Flicker	Audubon Warbler
American Bittern	Western Flycatcher	Yellow-throat
Mallard	Horned Lark	Pileolated Warbler
Baldpate	Tree Swallow	Meadowlark
Canvas-back Duck	Bank Swallow	Brewer Blackbird
White-winged Scoter	Rough-winged Swallow	Purple Finch
Surf Scoter	Barn Swallow	House Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Cliff Swallow	Linnet
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Chickadee	Pine Siskin
Red-tailed Hawk	Plain Titmouse	Willow Goldfinch
California Quail	Bush-tit	Green-backed Goldfinch
Sora Rail	Wren-tit	Spotted Towhee
Coot	Bewick Wren	Fox Sparrow
Killdeer	Marsh Wren	Junco
Wilson Snipe	Robin	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Glaucous-winged Gull	Hermit Thrush	Nuttall Sparrow
Western Gull	Cedar Waxwing	Song Sparrow
Short-billed Gull	Shrike	

C. A. Bryant, historian.



April Study Trip was taken to the grounds of the Hotel Claremont on Saturday, the 23rd. It was a dark, cloudy afternoon and rain threatened. In the absence of the leader, Mr. Arthur Myer directed the group of four members and four guests, observing twenty-one species as follows: California Quail; Anna, Allen and Rufous Hummingbirds; Red-shafted Flicker; California Jay; Western Flycatcher; Plain Titmouse; Bush-tit; Wren-tit; Lutescent Warbler; Purple Finch; House Sparrow; Linnet; Black-headed Grosbeak; Spotted and Brown Towhees; Junco; Golden-crowned, Nuttall and Song Sparrows.

Audubon Notes

May Meeting will be held on Thursday evening, the 12th, at 8 o'clock, room 19, 2nd floor, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. John B. Price. Subject: "Some Common Birds of the Stanford Campus." The lecture will be illustrated.



May Field Trip will be taken Sunday, the 15th, to St. Mary's, Contra Costa County. San Francisco members will take 8 a. m. Key Route Ferry and Sacramento Northern Railway train at the mole. East Bay members may take train at either 40th Street and Shafter Avenue at 8:30 a. m. or College and Shafter Avenues at 8:35 a. m. Purchase round-trip tickets to St. Mary's; fare from San Francisco 75c; from Oakland 50c. Bring luncheon and filled canteens.



May Study Trip will be taken on the 21st to Lansdale, Marin County, leaving San Francisco on the 1:15 Sausalito boat. Mrs. Otis H. Smith, leader.



New Members: The following new members were elected in April: Mrs. Florence T. Barbat, Sausalito; Miss Marguerite Ellis, Oakland.



Late Dates: Mr. Rosher, April 17th, Sutro Forest, Varied Thrush.

Mrs. A. B. Stephens: April 28th, North Lake, Chain of Lakes, Myrtle Warbler.



Observations reported during the month:

Mrs. Collins: March 13th, Golden Gate Park, Mocking Bird singing at 7 a. m.

Miss Ames: March 12th, Colma Canyon, Rock Wren singing.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter: March 28th, Warm Springs, southwest corner Alameda County, Yellow-billed Magpie; April 5th, Point Reyes peninsula, about half way between Inverness and the Light House, three Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawks; over the Inverness Hills, Golden Eagle; April 12th, between Dillon's Beach and Tomales, Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk and on Tomales Bay thousands of Black Sea Brant; April 25th, Searsville Lake, Osprey and Vaux Swift.

Mrs. Cummings: April 13th, Golden Gate Park, Cedar Waxwings.

Mrs. Otis H. Smith: April 7th, Marin County, Bullock Orioles.

Mrs. A. B. Stephens: April 30th, North Lake, Golden Gate Park, Anthony Green Heron.



Lectures: According to schedule in our April issue three lectures were given during the month. Through the courtesy of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company these were held in their large auditorium at 245 Market Street, San Francisco. Though not as well attended as the series given last year, these lectures were very instructive and entertaining and called forth a great deal of favorable comment from many who heard them.



Directors' Meeting: There will be a meeting of the Directors at 6:45 on May 12th, in the Ferry Building.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

For the Study and Protection of Birds

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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.