

# Along The Trail

by

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The regularity with which migrating birds arrive at a given place is legend. Most famous of all these migrants is the cliff swallow which returns to the Missions at about the same time each year. Contrary to popular belief these annual arrivals are not always on exactly the same dates. However, their punctuality is, never-the-less, remarkable.

When an ornithologist arrives in a new area he can peruse a good published work on the life histories of the birds (if such works have been prepared) of his area and assure himself of almost the exact date that he can expect to see certain species.

I think the time when this fact first came to my attention was when I read about purple finches coming to Point Lobos early in January. These birds had not been seen by me and, in fact, they had not been expected. About the first of February I suddenly became aware of them and soon

they were using my feeding station.

These finch family members, which spend their summers in the mountains, are usually found in the lowlands in winter. Linnets, English sparrows, goldfinches and several species of sparrows seem to subsist mainly upon dried weed seeds early in the year, but the purple finch appears to go for green food.

I have seen them feeding at, and I surmise, actually eating, the flowers of blue gum. The same condition has been noted at willows where they also eat the flowers. When they leave for the mountains in spring many ranchers are glad to see them go, for they are said to eat the buds and blossoms of fruit and almond trees. We had purple finches at Natural Bridges in winter.

Some bird watchers have been known to confuse house finches with purple finches, and vice versa. As one becomes intimate with the two species, which are often found together, he will soon learn the differences.

To begin with, even so poor a listener as I can hear the difference in song. The purple finches' is warbling, musical and unhesitating while that of the house finch has introductory notes, is flatter, and has a ragged and often undecided ending. Adult males of the two species are easily separated by color, for the one is more purple and suggests a finch dipped in berry juice, while house finches are redder, or pinker. Some males of this latter species are almost orange.

Females, which are gray with heavy brown streakings, are a bit more difficult to separate, but the house finch lacks a dark cheek patch which is usually noticeable in the other species.

Doubtless the setting for our friend in the picture is becoming familiar by this time. It was here that I photographed the quail, the California jay, the song sparrow, and the junco as well as the female purple finch. All of these came to our feeder, but the purple finch was the least particular of all our boarders and he ate the corn put out for the quail, the suet for the nuthatches, and even drank the sugared water intended for the hummingbirds.

Many of the finches are our greatest singers. Early in the cen-

## Purple Finch Loves To Sing



The purple finch spends its summers in the mountains and winters in the lowlands. It is a lovely singer and has a warbling, musical tone.

BUY U. S. SAVINGS BONDS

tury some of these were trapped and sold as house pets. Fortunately, such practice is now forbidden and anyone who wishes to hear them sing can put forth a little effort and take himself to the places where the birds sing instead of trying to bring the bird to him.

## Val Peterson To Be Ambassador; Hoegh Heads CD

Washington (AP). — President Eisenhower today nominated Val Peterson to be ambassador to Denmark. Leo A. Hoegh, Republican,

PUBLIC NOTICE

## Varied Courses Offered At

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One of the primary operating a summer allow students to ficiencies needed division training.

Courses being offered include math D, algebra; history 17A speech 100, speech born; psychology 1 chology; biology 12 ogy; business education 22A, tennis; mathematics; algebra; political science government; development of speech

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