

Running Afowl in the Sage

BY JAMES F. CLEMENTS



Los Angeles Audubon Society

VOLUME 29

NUMBER 11

JULY 1963

I

In order to avoid an argument, I shall have to say that I agreed to drive my new truck out onto the dancing grounds of the Sage Grouse only because Herb Clarke urged me into believing that the birds would accept it as a large brown, immobile cow.

Needless to say, as the 6,000 pounds of metal slowly sank hubcap-deep in the late afternoon ooze, my thoughts turned to other than photographing the annual spring mating dance of the turkey-sized birds. Not even Herb's cheerful recommendation to just leave it there until the ground froze hard enough at midnight to move it, encouraged me. After all, this was the end of March, and at 7,000 feet in the high sage country near Lake Crowley, I preferred the warmth and comfort of our Mammoth Lakes cabin to the wind-swept prairie where I now found myself mired a foot deep.

After fifteen minutes of violent road-building activity, we managed to move the truck to a higher location, and settled down to wait for the sight we had driven some 350 miles to see.

The area we were parked in is a large open field with a series of small rises, and appears to have been at one time a small shallow lake. Each bird on arriving chooses one of these small rises, and from this vantage point goes into his dance routine. I have read many accounts by different writers about the performances of these gallinaceous birds, but I can't imagine any naturalist having a more spectacular setting in which to watch this ritual performed than a backdrop of 13,000-foot snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

It soon became obvious that the rise we had moved the truck to was the private parade grounds of the cock that had arrived first on the scene.

The grouse cautiously, but not timidly, approached the truck with a soft inquisitive clucking noise, very much like a domestic chicken. In fact, in all their actions, they very much reminded me of the domestic fowl. The old name for this order, RASORES, refers to these birds be-

Continued on page 98

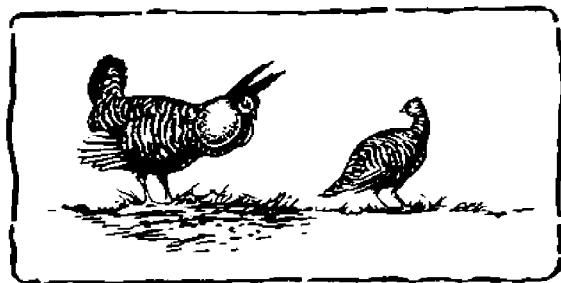
Running Afowl in the Sage

(Continued)

ing preeminently scratchers. Hen-like, they scratch for their food in the earth. All the domesticated non-aquatic fowls, except pigeons and doves, are descended from the wild ancestors belonging to this group.

After the grouse was satisfied that our 6,000-pound "blind" was going to stay put, he went into his dance. It is commonly called a dance, although a comedy might be a better description. The bird first bent forward slightly, then turned his back to us and spread his tail in a beautiful fan pattern. He next turned to face us, and with tail spread, wings bent and dragging the ground, he made the famous "booming" sound. This is done by sucking in sharply twice and then literally exploding this air into a loud resonant boom that carried over a mile in the high, clear, open sage country air. He would do this two or three times in succession, and then start the whole process all over again. Frankly, it is the closest I have ever come to seeing a bird pound on his chest!

This display was only for the other men present, as we did not observe any females at this gathering of the clan. The next morning, however, Herb and I maneuvered our mechanized bovine blind into the same field, and before five o'clock, with an icy wind blowing down out of the high sierra snow fields, we sat and shivered and waited for the first streaks of light to come over the 14,000-foot White Mountains to the east of us.



Even at this hour, before dawn, the field was alive with activity. As soon as it was light enough to see, we counted over 100 males and about 40 females in the field. If there was excitement yesterday when only the males were around, the presence of the "fairer" sex led some of the performers to brilliant feats of endurance. Surprisingly, most of the birds were almost identical in their ritual. The comical thing was the way individual groups would act among themselves.

One trio near us was obviously having one of those next morning sessions that are so prevalent in Army barracks...the kind where the first guy just doesn't stand a chance. Number one would start with the tail routine, and just as he got to the booming stage, number two would start with his part of the rondo. Number three would wait the appropriate time, and in proper sequence, each would come to the chest pounding (booming) time. As in all well-regulated schemes, this one soon turned into a riot when number two would start booming at the same time as number one, and with the breakdown of the session number three walked off shaking his tail and seeking some female sympathy.

But female sympathy in this group was not easy to come by. One energetic lothario had spied two seemingly disinterested females who were listlessly scratching about some fifty feet apart. He would give the complete unadulterated performance to one, who of course paid no attention. After this obvious lack of interest in his manly charms, he would run the distance to the other and repeat the performance...also to this one's disinterest. Back and forth he would go, and if you think running in this position is easy, just try it some time! After ten minutes this fellow was a basket case, and had to be disqualified from further dancing because of severe leg cramps.

During the course of one booming session, the bird was suddenly alarmed. His bill opened and the far-carrying resonant boom was replaced by a high, weird squawk. Watching this grouse decked out in his courting best, with his white shirt and black tuxedo, was like watching basso Ezio Pinza at the opera, and having him hit an unbelievably bad note.

Although later in the season the choosing of a mate actually becomes deadly serious, the fighting at this period was very minor. Mostly it consisted of two birds approaching one another with a lazy, half-hearted shuffle, and circling and eyeing one another for several minutes. Very much, in fact, like two young boys who know they have to put on some sort of fisticuffs for the bystanders, and prolong the preliminaries as long as possible in the hopes someone will come along and break it up. So our two avian gladiators square off, do some fancy footwork, and make a pretense of fighting by beating their wings and tails on the ground, all the while keeping time with a rapid, low clucking noise. And still the females pay no attention. Just scratch, scratch, scratch.

Continued on page 105

AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

By ELIZABETH ROSE and
CATHERINE FREEMAN

On the eve of a European trip to visit museums, Dr. Kenneth Stager generously gave a talk on "The Role of Olfaction in Food Finding in Vultures" at the Tuesday, May 14th evening meeting. The subject, which has been controversial since Aristotle and Pliny, was well advanced by the scientific work of Dr. Stager as explained and illustrated that evening. First of all, he laid the very necessary foundation for the subject and then went on to illustrate his own field experiments, which included the use of a machine that he had invented to test the response to detectable odors. After much Turkey Vulture watching, he was able to make conclusions which establish that Turkey Vultures hunt by placing themselves in a position for olfactory responses rather than by sighting. The talk was peppered with anecdotes, some strange, such as the fact that the Union Oil Company has been using Turkey Vultures for locating leaks in gas lines for years. Slides were used to point up further what he had said. A great deal was learned in many directions. For instance, that liquid rubber was used to make the molds of the various vulture skulls examined.

Twelve good people met Bill Watson, assisted by John Peebles, at Griffith Park for a general ecology field trip, Saturday, May 18th. They were truly surprised at the offerings of Griffith Park. At the entrance, for example, they found the Giant Sequoia, the Coast Redwood, and the Dawn Redwood. They studied streamside woodland plants in Fern Dell. Birding yielded a nesting robin. On the north side of the park, they studied the chaparral, coastal sage scrub, streamside woodland and southern oak woodland areas. They found many wildflowers, including Mariposa Lilies, Turkish Rugging, Golden Stars, Blue-eyed Grass and Prickly Pear Cactus in bloom.

A most enjoyable and interesting program was had by those attending the Thursday morning meeting, May 23, 1963, at Plummer Park. Mr. John D. Frederick showed us slides of many different birds taken largely in southern Arizona and California. This has been a hobby of Mr. Frederick's for a long time, and one which he still thoroughly enjoys. In fact, he had just returned from a three week trip to Death Valley where he found a good shelter from which to photograph the interesting species that watered there.

He had a picture taken some years ago of a "domesticated" pelican which a friend of his had cared for almost from birth. He also had a small puppy and when he would throw out a ball the pelican would go after it. If the puppy got it first, the pelican would pick up the puppy with the ball and bring both back to the master. A most unusual "wild" bird picture!

Among his interesting pictures was a series of shots in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona, taken where a cement watering pool had been set up by the rangers. To this spot came birds and small wild animals together, none afraid of each other. A rabbit drinking thirstily was accompanied by several birds all busy slaking their thirst, while kangaroo rats and squirrels showed the same camaraderie at other moments.

All agreed the morning was well worth while and were grateful to Mr. Frederick for his generosity and good humor.

Leading their first field trip, the Roses, Gene and Elizabeth, were overwhelmed at the large group of birders who greeted them at Irvine Park entrance, Sunday morning May 26th. Unfortunately, only a few species of birds were to be found there. The domestic birds kept there, including one very unkempt rooster, were the most interesting. But the caravan moved along to Tucker Sanctuary, birding as they went. Tucker, in the midst of renovation, was as productive as usual. For many, it was a first visit to the only place where the people are caged while looking at the free birds. The mountain path nearby yielded the elusive Black-chinned Sparrow. By lunch time the crowd had arrived at O'Neill Park, where many had camped the night before. In the early afternoon, the Lazuli Buntings were spotted by their song and some lucky birders saw the Blue Grosbeak in Trabuco Canyon. The major part of the day's list of 65 species was found at O'Neill. The overnight campers had had excellent views of a Barn Owl. The White-throated Swift and three hummingbirds were seen on the trip. A Costa's Hummingbird performed its nuptial gyration. There were numerous excellent views of Purple Martins, Phainopeplas, and Rufous-sided Towhees.

We enjoyed the Annual Dinner in the company of invited guests Dorothy and Eugene McIntyre and David Marqua. They were surprised and pleased to notice the many young people scattered about the five long tables. They noted, too, how smoothly all the plans went off at such a large banquet. We told them that this had been due to the long advance planning of Chairman Russ Wilson. They commented favorably on the economy of remarks made by President Arnold Small at the microphone. Everyone was pleased that the plaque was awarded this year to Mr. Burton M. Oliver, Supervisor in Charge of Thrift and Conservation for the Los Angeles City Schools. There was a genuine round of applause for Don Adams, the newest of the new officers installed. Everything was good at the Nikabob that evening, but the best part was the excellent "Sunroof Safari" film presented by Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Bakker, with enchanting commentary by Elna Bakker. She began with the statement: "It's not too dark on the Dark Continent as far as the conservation picture is concerned." Most memorable of the pictures were yawning hippo, a flight of Flamingos, a penguin show, and the courtship of lions. Most noteworthy to all travel film producers were the skill and self-effacement of the photographers, which resulted in the feeling that the audience were personally viewing the breath-taking scenes.

Continued on page 100

Audubon Activities

CONTINUED

More than forty birders converged at the entrance to Buckhorn Campground on Saturday, June 8th, in anticipation of being led on a field trip by polished birders Russ and Marion Wilson. The trip, which also included Upper Chinlao, was unique in the many occupied nests viewed. They included nests of the Red-tailed Hawk, Brown Creeper, Empidonax Flycatcher, Fox Sparrow, Robin, Western Wood Pewee, and Purple Martin. Certain birds were seen so well and so frequently that they became on this trip what is laughingly known as "trash birds". These included the Green-tailed Towhee, Western Tanager, Wood Pewee, Olive-sided Flycatcher and Brown Creeper. It was exciting for all to be present when Bob Blackstone got a "life" bird, the Calliope Hummingbird. Views through Vernon Mangold's Zoom Balscope helped everyone. Newly renovated Buckhorn campsite is very beautiful, as the twelve people who camped there confirmed. It would have been fun if more people could have joined in the singing around the campfire that night.

Once again the evening meeting began with the introduction of new members and guests. President Arnold Small then emphasized the importance of new members and initiated a drive for a membership of one thousand. Several reports were then given, the most outstanding of which was one carefully prepared by Christopher Adams.

The program for the evening was presented by Mr. Allen Ryan, an "outdoors man" and a conservationist. He and Mrs. Ryan, who was also present, had prepared two Fotofonic slides and sound subjects. The first dealt with the Big Tujunga Wash. It portrayed this area as a wonderful place where "a boy can go and find how he relates to the earth and sky". The second feature showed what is to be found on Anacapa and Santa Barbara, two of the group of eight Channel Islands. The Ryans presented these as examples of "Living Museums". The pictures taken on this exploration included views of Western Gulls nesting, the oystercatcher, sea lions, Brown Pelicans, and the Burrowing Owl. The "message", a hope of preserving these islands and others, was self-evident.

JUNIOR NATURALISTS OF L.A.

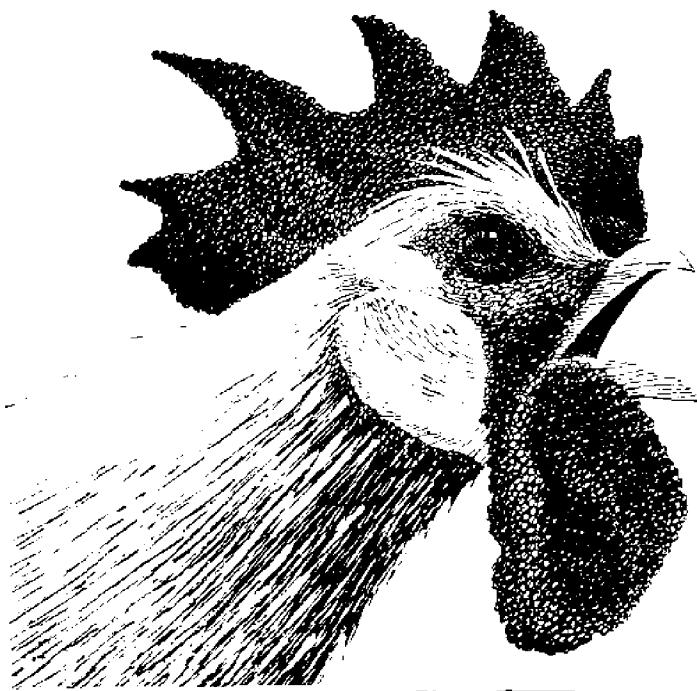
Mr. Ed Anacker announces that the Junior Naturalists are to begin using the Junior Audubon materials. The Tree Kit will be the first project. Each kit costs 25¢. The Junior Naturalists are sponsored by the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Membership is open to boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 12. Annual dues 50¢. Parents are welcome on all outings.

For further information call: Mr. Ed Anacker HO 7-1661.

THURSDAY MORNING MEETINGS DISCONTINUED

It is with considerable regret that we announce the discontinuance of an activity which has been a feature of the Society's calendar for many years. Attendance at the Thursday Morning Meeting has been declining for some time, until it reached the point where it seemed impractical to continue it. The Program Committee was reluctant to take this step, so a survey of the membership was made to determine if enough interest existed to warrant keeping it going. The results of this survey, however, were disappointing, and the decision was regrettfully made to discontinue it.

Under consideration is a proposal to begin a "study class" type of meeting sometime next year which would meet in Audubon House until such time as it might outgrow the space available there. We hope that our "morning meeting" will again become a prominent feature of our calendar of activities.



!NOTICE!

SATURDAY, JULY 27th.

Don't forget our Annual Picnic in Rustic Canyon Park in Santa Monica on SATURDAY, July 27 (not Sunday as stated in our notice last month). Consult the Calendar page for details.



HEADQUARTERS, NATURE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE,
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46, 876-0202

ARNOLD SMALL, *President*MRS. RUSSELL WILSON, *Executive Secretary*

Open Mon., Wed., Thurs., Sat. 2-4 P.M.
Youth groups by appointment 3-5 P.M.
Open before and after each meeting

| july 1963 | | | | | | |
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July --- August

July 13 - SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP 8:00 A.M. Tucker Bird Sanctuary. Take Santa Ana Freeway to Chapman Avenue; take east turnoff and drive through the city of Orange to Tucker Sanctuary which is 16 miles east of Orange via E. Chapman Avenue and Santiago Road. Four species of hummingbirds may be seen here. Afterwards group will look for early migrating shorebirds, etc. at Upper Newport Bay. Bring lunch and binoculars.

Leader: Laura Jenner RI 8-7510

July 13 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS Cabrillo Beach Marine Museum 9:45-
11:15 A.M. Note change of date.

For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661

July 27 SATURDAY - ANNUAL PICNIC 5:00 P.M. Rustic Canyon Park, Santa Monica. Take Sunset Blvd. to Brooktree Rd. (1/2 mile west of Will Rogers State Park); turn left on Brooktree Rd. to Latimer, then right to the Park. Bring: hot dish, salad, or dessert; table service; hot coffee or tea if desired. Cold drink will be provided.

For information call: Mrs. Donald Adams . FR 2-5536
or Audubon House 876-0202

Aug. 1 - THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.

Aug. 3 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M. Fern Dell Museum, Griffith Park. Plant and wildlife walk led by Bill Watson.

For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661

Aug. 10-11 SATURDAY-SUNDAY CAMPING FIELD TRIP 8:00 A.M. in Banning. Take U.S. 60-70-99 to Banning; turn off freeway onto Banning-Idyllwild highway; meet near railroad crossing. Group will caravan to Idyllwild area to bird, observe fall migration of hummingbirds at Pine Cove.

Leaders: Don and Caroline Adams FR 2-5536

Aug. 24 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 7:00 A.M. Buena Vista Lagoon. Take highway 101 south to Oceanside. Leave the freeway north of Oceanside, taking the right hand road that runs through town. Meet at the north end of the causeway that crosses the Lagoon. Group will bird the Lagoon and go from there to the Mt. Palomar area.

For information call: Audubon House

CALENDAR CONTINUED
ON NEXT PAGE

CALENDAR

Continued...

Aug. 31 SATURDAY PELAGIC BIRDING TRIP The fishing boat "Corsair" will leave 22nd Street Landing, San Pedro at 5:30 A.M. In San Pedro take Harbor Blvd. south to 22nd Street; turn left on 22nd St. to end. See announcement in this issue for further details.

For information call: Irwin Woldman - HO 7-7070
Don Adams FR 2-5536

Sept. 5 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.

Sept. 7 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS Fossils in the local area. Fern Dell Nature Museum 9:45-11:15 A.M.

For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661

Sept. 10 TUESDAY . EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Dr. Richard Boclootian of the Dept. of Zoology, U.C.L.A., will give an illustrated talk on "Sea Urchins - Past, Present and Future"

Program Chairman: Don Adams FR 2-5536

| AUGUST 1963 | | | | | | |
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| SEPTEMBER 1963 | | | | | | |
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AUDUBON BOOTH AT L.A. COUNTY FAIR

Again come September (13th to 29th), as we have for several years, the Los Angeles Audubon Society is cooperating with the four other Audubon Societies in the county in maintaining a booth at the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona. The theme of the exhibit this year will feature the Nature Centers Program of the National Audubon Society, and Nature Centers in Los Angeles County. Visitors to the Fair look for the Audubon booth in the building housing Agriculture and Natural Resources exhibits. This booth, as in the past, is manned by volunteers; if you would like to participate in this activity, contact:

Mrs. Donald Adams
705 26th Street, Manhattan Beach
FR 2-5536 or Audubon House

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Los Angeles Audubon Society

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THE WESTERN TANAGER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY



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Caroline Adams
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Bill Watson

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Bob Blackstone

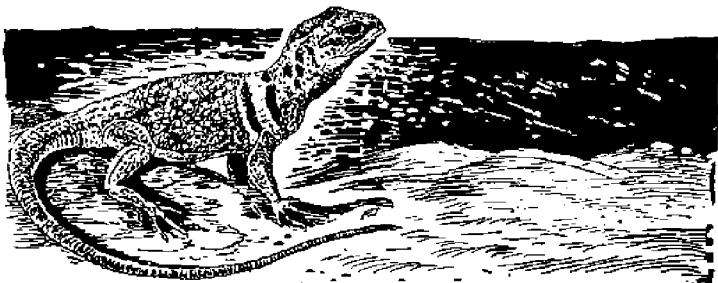
When this issue of the WESTERN TANAGER goes to press, the staff will breathe a large sigh of relief and take a month's vacation from the job. Not that we don't like our work, but everyone needs a breather once in a while. We shall be back again with the September issue, refreshed and ready to resume our efforts to give the members a WESTERN TANAGER which is gradually getting better and better, we hope. We 'modestly' feel that the TANAGER is now one of the best of its type of publication available.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed material for the TANAGER. Special thanks should go to our regular contributors: Elizabeth Rose, Frank Little and Arnold Small. Mrs. Rose is leaving us in order to devote more of her time to her other activities in the Society. Audubon Activities, beginning in September, will be covered by Kit Adams. Frank Little, who finds himself forced



OUR NEW TELEPHONE

876-0202



to retire from active participation in the Society, will turn over the Conservation News to Norman McGary. Arnold Small will continue to contribute Southern California Birds, we are happy to say.

To the small but select group who have participated in the TANAGER mailing parties, many thanks. We want to say special thanks to three who have been most faithful: Dorothy Holland, Hugh Weiser and Dorothy Harris. The time donated by participants in these mailing parties has made it possible for us to have the TANAGER printed rather than mimeographed, without increasing the cost. Bill Watson and Marion Wilson, in addition to having been present at all of the mailing parties, have 'sweated out' the deliveries from the printer so that they could organize the 'parties'.

Last, but by no means least, our thanks must go to Helen Sandmeyer, who types most of the copy for reproduction, to Caroline Adams, who types the feature article, and to Bob Sandmeyer, our Art Editor, who does a tremendous job of layout, besides contributing sketches and other examples of his talent.

We wish all of our readers a happy vacation and we will look forward to meeting you in the pages of the WESTERN TANAGER come September.

BLUE CHIP STAMPS WANTED FOR CHAIRS AT AUDUBON HOUSE

Donations of Blue Chip Stamps are requested to redeem for chairs for the library of Audubon House. Those who have had occasion to use the library know how badly new chairs are needed. If you can donate stamps for this worthy cause, please send or bring to Audubon House.



REGISTRAR'S ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERS

The following is the report of membership of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, for the year June 1, 1962 to June 1, 1963:

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| Total membership June 1, 1962 | 794 |
| Total membership June 1, 1963 | 902 |

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| June 1, 1962 | Total Membership | 794 |
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| New Members | 161 |
| Reinstates | 8 |
| | — |
| | 169 |

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|-------------|----|
| Transferred | 2 |
| Deceased | 2 |
| Dropped | 57 |
| | — |
| | 61 |

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| Net Gain | 108 |
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| June 1, 1963 | Total Membership | 902 |
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Respectfully submitted,

Rose F. Bussey
Registrar of Members

A GOOD FRIEND OF THE SOCIETY

When he retired a few years ago from a responsible managerial position with the Ralphs Grocery Company, Mr. Howard Capwell took up cabinetmaking as a hobby. In 1960 he generously offered to donate his talents as a contribution to the Society. He started by making two bookcases for our library, funds to purchase the materials having been donated by Mr. Hiram Beebe, a long-time member. Since then he has built storage shelves for the office and library of Audubon House, the reading table in the library, three cupboard storage units, three drawer units and TEN exhibit case units. Funds for the materials used were raised at our bazaars.

Altogether about \$500 has been spent on materials and, in cold, hard cash, Mr. Capwell's contribution of time and labor to date is worth not less than \$1000 to the Society. The work is still going on. As if this were not enough, the Capwells have helped at our TANAGER "mailing parties" The Society owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Capwell which we can only hope to repay in part with our appreciation and esteem.

A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARIAN

BY BILL WATSON



Quite often we buy and read a book and then decide that we do not wish to keep it for one reason or another. Perhaps we have limited space on our shelves and do not feel that we need to keep a copy. Perhaps we like the book so much that we are willing to give it away so that others will read it too. Or perhaps we "weed out" our libraries every few years or so.

If you are a nature book buyer and wish to part with a book you no longer desire, why not offer it to your Audubon Library? No library has enough books to do its job as well as it should. There is a lot of room in your Audubon Library for worthwhile nature books of any category.

One book that was donated to the Library by Otis Wade is seldom on the shelf in its place. This is "The Eye of the Wind" by Peter Scott. There are other recently donated books that our members are making nearly as popular as this.

Running Afoot in the Sage

CONTINUED

While focusing the camera on one cock that was performing a ludicrous dance on some slick ice about 40 feet from our blind, he suddenly froze right in the middle of his performance, and very slowly hunched up and in a second was huddled against the ground, motionless. Almost as if by magic, the entire assemblage of over 150 birds that had been flying, strutting, preening and displaying about in the open, had suddenly melted into the landscape. The sudden ceasing of the booming of over 100 cocks lent an uneasy, unearthly quiet to the atmosphere. Nature abhors a vacuum, and what had caused this sudden turn of events soon became evident. A Golden Eagle that Herb and I had completely missed was making a pass right over the field where 200 prospective breakfasts were lying in plain sight. I say plain sight, but I imagine that even with the eyes of an eagle the protective coloration of those Sage Grouse is so great that they look like part of the terrain from an aerial view. As soon as the eagle had disappeared over Lake Crowley, the hens were right back to their scratching, and the males to their bowing and scraping and booming.

These dances go on for about two hours each morning around dawn, and for a couple of hours each evening around sunset. Considering the tremendous activity involved, and the fact that

About the Author ..

The name of James F. Clements is no stranger to the pages of the WESTERN TANAGER ("Fiasco in Penasco", September 1962 and "European Birding", January - 1959). However, since Jim is not able to attend many Audubon events, to many of our readers it is probably a name only. This is regrettable, as Jim is extremely well liked by all who do know him.

The Clements' came out to southern California from their native Minnesota in 1952. Jim is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, but did some graduate work in the "School of Hard Knocks". He tells us he shovelled coal on a collier plying to Aruba and Curacao, Venezuela, and served in the Merchant Marine and in the U. S. Navy during World War II (here Jim says he got in 18 months of pelagic birding). He says he cannot remember when he was not interested in birds.

Though young, Jim is a successful businessman, partner in a printing business. He lives in Pasadena with his wife Mary, and sons, Bob and Dan. The Clements' are enthusiastic mountainers and skiers as well as amateur naturalists. As this was being written they were making preparations for a trip to southern Mexico with the Clarkes of this we hope to hear later.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RECORDS SOUGHT

The Librarian and Christmas Bird Count Chairman for 1963 finds that our past Christmas Bird Count records are not in the hands of the Society. We are especially interested in the records of the various parties for each year previous to 1958. Perhaps someone in the Society now has these "official" records. If so, we request that they put such records into our hands so that they can be incorporated in the Library's historical collections where they can be referred to when needed.

Since it is feared that these records are permanently lost, we are also hoping that anyone who has ever worked on a Christmas Bird Count in our area and has any personal records of their count work (checklists for the day, etc.) will help us by letting us use their records.

If you have anything that will add to our information on past Christmas Bird Counts, please get in touch with the Audubon House or Bill Watson.

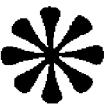
annual
picnic
Saturday, July 27th.

at 5:00 P.M. in Rustic Canyon Park in Santa Monica. Make your plans now to attend this always enjoyable event. This will be a pot luck affair.

it is extremely cold and a bird this large must eat almost constantly because of its high metabolism, it is amazing that these birds can maintain this schedule for over two months.

Next time you find yourself in the high sage country and have a yen to see the turkey-sized Sage Grouse perform its mating dance, seek out some old dry lake bed at 7,000 feet and set up your blind in the freezing pre-dawn hours. You'll be rewarded with a sight that has thrilled naturalists for centuries.

And if the first faint streaks of light in the eastern sky reveal a big brown blind solidly anchored in the mud, you'd better sneak off quietly to the sanctity of some other display grounds, or be prepared to help de-muck the Clements and Clarkes.



CONSERVATION NEWS

from FRANK LITTLE

One of the hottest conservation items of this past year has been the pesticide problem. The problem of course is far from being solved, but judging from the public clamor, it is at least being thought about.

First came Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. This immediately touched off a fusilade of protests and accusations from the chemical peddlers. Then came numerous newspaper and magazine articles, each with its host of letters to the editors. Television promptly got into the act by devoting several of its one-hour current events programs to the subject. Finally, government joined in: several states have passed pesticide bills, many have pesticide legislation in the hopper, the White House issued a report on the subject, and Senator Ribicoff has launched a Senate investigation into the matter. With so much furor, the average layman doesn't know which way to turn! Incidentally, if you are one of these confused souls, you might like to purchase a copy of the above-mentioned report, entitled "Use of Pesticides". It is well worthwhile, and it only costs 15¢ (order from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, 25, D.C.).



Actually, there is no nice neat solution, nor is the problem clearly defined. Most conservationists are not attempting to ban chemical pesticides but rather to put some sensible control on their use. Indeed, some scientists speculate that wholesale use of broad-spectrum chemical poisons poses more of a threat to life (human included) than atomic fallout. The most hopeful solution appears to be in the realm of biological pest control, but a vast amount of research must be done in this area before very many chemical poisons can be replaced. Unfortunately, research takes time (while the pests continue to gnaw), moreover, it is expensive (and the government seems to have other commitments for the taxpayers' money).

While the problem itself is very complex, and even though emotionalism on both sides often clouds the issues, there is much good to come out of all this public debate. It has started people thinking, and in a democratic society this usually initiates the reform.

NEW MEMBERS

Miss Mary B. Alexander
3276 Sawtelle Blvd., L. A. 66
Mrs. C. Borneman
10315 E. Olive St., Temple City
Mr. George F. Dascher
9311 San Juan Ave., South Gate
Mr. William H. Dow
559 N. Alexandria Ave., Apt. B, L. A. 4
Mr. William R. Lasky
3300 Brookside Dr., Malibu
Mr. Roger B. Lebon
17908 Vicino Way, Pacific Palisades
Mr. Joe Lieb
3065 Danalda Dr., L. A. 64
Mr. & Mrs. L. E. Moyer
400 S. Normandie Ave., L. A. 5
Mrs. Bill O'Hallaren
3491 Wonder View Pl., Hollywood 28
Mr. & Mrs. John M. Shields
1904 S. Edgewood Dr., Alhambra
Mr. Bert Smoor
1054 Ingraham St., Apt. 105, L. A. 17

PELAGIC TRIP AUGUST 31st.

A pelagic birding trip is planned for Saturday, August 31 aboard the fishing boat "Corsair", which will leave the 22nd Street Landing at San Pedro at 5:30 A.M. to cruise to the vicinity of San Clemente Island and return to port about 6:00 P.M. This is your chance to see albatross, petrels, jaegers, and possibly Tropic-birds or other rarities. Forty (40) reservations are available, and will be taken on a first come, first served basis. The fare will be \$8.00--checks to be made payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society. Send reservations to: Mr. Irwin Woldman, 7205 Fountain Ave., Apt. 10, Los Angeles 46, Calif. Further details will be found in the Calendar. For information call:

Irwin Woldman HO 7-7070
Don Adams FR 2-5536

The following birds are recommended for study by those planning to attend the Pelagic Trip on Aug. 31st.:

Eared Grebe; Black-footed Albatross; Sooty, Manx and Pink-footed Shearwater; Leach's, Black and Least Petrel; Brown Pelican; Double-crested, Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorant; Forster's, Common, Arctic, Least, Royal, Elegant, and Caspian Tern; Surf Scoter; Peregrine Falcon; Black Oystercatcher; Surfbird; Black Turnstone; Wandering Tattler; Red and Northern Phalarope; Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger; Western, California, Ring-billed, Heermann's and Sabine's Gull; Xantus' and Craveri's Murrelet; Cassin's Auklet.