

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 30

FEBRUARY 1964

NUMBER 6

Los Angeles' Delegate Describes Miami Meeting

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CONVENTION

By Caroline Adams

The National Audubon Society Convention was held in Miami, Florida, November 9-13, 1963. There were 736 persons registered from 42 states and California with 57 in attendance was second only to the host state, Florida, with 230. I felt very fortunate to have been sent as the delegate from the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and can assure you that the four and a half days of the convention were filled with stimulating experiences both in the lecture hall

and in the outdoors. The New Everglades Hotel provided for all our needs very efficiently even to the serving of 650 dinners at the banquet with the hot food hot and the cold food cold! Members of the Tropical Audubon Society of Miami had worked hard to make our visit a pleasant one and their outstanding achievement was the beauty of the tables at the banquet which were tastefully arranged with exotic leaves, blossoms, and the exquisite shells of the land snail as souvenirs.

SPECIAL REPORT

ALL ABOUT THE KEYS

By BETTY JENNER

(By one who spent all of 24 hours there, and with abject apologies to our own Mr. Earle Greene, who really knows all about the Keys)

"Going down to get a Florida tan, I see", remarked the man in the airlines ticket office brightly. I smiled rather uncertainly in reply, because, in fact, my luggage consisted of clothing for every kind of weather from sun dresses to rain wear to thermal underwear, with plenty of warm wraps. I just couldn't believe those Miami weather reports in the paper--low 70°, high 72°. This was November in California and I was leaving for the field trips which preceded the 1963 Audubon Society Convention in Miami. I reasoned: maybe it's November in Florida too.

All this I mention because in fact the warm clothes were used more than the light ones; and because this article is written mainly in the hope that many other people will have the opportunity to go to Florida and see the wonders of bird and plant life that our Los Angeles group enjoyed so--these being Christine Hayden, Caroline Adams, Fran Kohn, Dr. Dick Neuman, and your reporter. I've been accused, since returning, of being on the Florida Chamber of Commerce payroll--and indeed, I wish all good birders a trip to Florida--and take warm clothes!

(Continued on page 48)

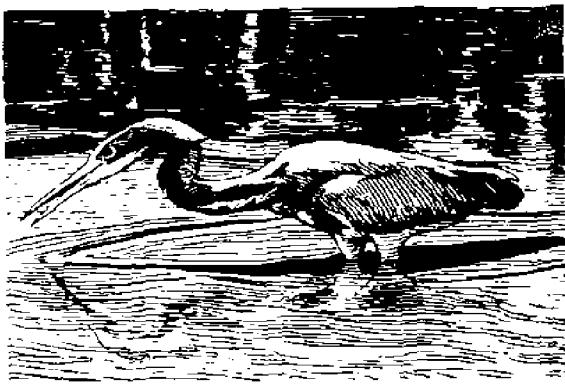
Two all-day field trips planned for the convention gave us an opportunity to leave the lecture hall and see the principles of conservation in operation. The Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary was visited by 409 people in 10 busses and was well worth the long ride (about 200 miles roundtrip) in the rain. This sanctuary is maintained and operated by the National Audubon Society and was established to preserve the last stand of virgin bald cypress and the accompanying plant and animal life, rare orchids, air plants, ferns and mosses, in an area of ponds and lakes. A fence has been erected for protection and a long boardwalk extending into the dim interior of the swamp has been built to give the visitor access for viewing the magnificent old trees and the wildlife of the swamp. Even in the rain we were able to glimpse the Limpkin, Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, and Turkey - all residents of the area.

The trip to the Everglades National Park was attended by almost 400 persons. The day was sunny, the sky was blue, and the sight of two mature Bald Eagles soaring high above the river of grass

(Continued on page 46)

NATIONAL CONVENTION CONTINUED

was a rewarding experience for those who had heard Alexander Sprunt IV give his progress report on the Bald Eagle Project only a few days before. The overlooks and the board walks provided in the park were certainly used by an appreciative group that day, and the leadership available made it possible to see many species of birds. Who could miss with Allan Cruckshank, Roland Clements, and Alexander Sprunt IV pointing them out? Great White Herons, Wood Ibis, Limpkins, Skimmers, Stilt Sandpipers, Anhingas, and Pileated Woodpeckers were among the many birds listed. And the huge alligator asleep in the pond by the ranger's house at the Anhinga Trail was probably never photographed so many times in any one day before!



Audubon members are for the most part keenly interested in seeing nature in the outdoors, and seeing birds in particular, and the convention was planned to devote about half the time to satisfying this interest. The meetings scheduled for the rest of the four days included a brilliant group of speakers, and the topics covered were all pertinent to the precarious status of nature today in our rapidly expanding world and the ways in which problems have been met and can be met. In addition to Mr. Sprunt's report on the Bald Eagle the status of the Golden Eagle was reported by Dr. Walter R. Spofford and a special study of the effects of DDT on eagles that has been conducted in Alaska was reported by Dr. John L. Buckley of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Florida's Problems Are the Nation's Problems, a panel, dealt with bulkheading ("making" land in bays and estuaries for real estate development), pesticides in relation to estuarine resources, the ecology of mosquito control, and the use of water particularly as affecting Florida's great swamps including Corkscrew Swamp and Everglades National Park.

Mrs. Duryea Morton of the Greenwich Audubon Center talked on Nature Interpretation at Audubon Centers. She mentioned "man's need for green areas and his increasing search for an understanding of the natural world which will help him retain his dignity and well being as a useful member of the community. She believes "the sanctuary lands with interpretive facilities are an ideal combination" to meet these needs.

Howard R. Stagner of the National Park Service spoke on the interpretive program of our national parks. He suggested a possible future use of our parks "as theaters and laboratories for basic research, for the advancement of knowledge, and understanding of natural laws. . . . If Rachel Carson is even partially right, will man see the productivity of his highly managed lands decline to the point where he will of necessity have to go back to the original sources, and learn anew to use nature to rectify his mistakes? Where are the lands, other than those in the large National Parks, that are likely to be preserved in all their natural integrity, where such lessons may be learned?"

Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, a particularly dynamic speaker, spoke not only of our nation's conservation problems but of Africa's as well. He warned us that "the problems of pollution, the threats of extinction, are everywhere around us -- in the atmosphere, under the seas, in the wastes of uninhabited deserts and in the jungles of overinhabited cities. But so are evidences of awareness and concern. Everywhere there seems to be awakening a conservation conscience." But "with constantly mounting population pressures the conservation fight will never be won. It can only be regarded as a continuing crusade. . . If you, and others like you, can contribute to worldwide awareness--a universal concern--a sense of global stewardship--then the great chain of life that holds our own destiny as well as that of the weakest link will endure. The whole world of nature is holding its breath, and time is running out."

Our president, Mr. Carl W. Buchheister, concluded his report with a plea for us to seek new members. Each of us could do this by using the invitation membership blank provided in the current issue of the Audubon Magazine. "We cannot be content merely to hold the line. We must grow! And we need to grow rapidly!" Mr. Buchheister stated. "Sell our Audubon cause as never before! It recognizes that we must wisely use and conserve the soil, the water, the plants and wildlife, not only because these are the resources that sustain our bodies, but because in creating all these, God has 'surrounded us with objects of unbelievable beauty' --these are for our edification."

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46 * 876-0202

ARNOLD SMALL, President MRS. RUSSEL WILSON, Executive Secretary

FEBRUARY 1964

CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Feb. 6 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M. Audubon House.

Feb. 8 SATURDAY-SUNDAY FIELD TRIP Ramer Lake and Salton Sea area. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Headquarters of the Imperial State Waterfowl Management Area at Ramer Lake, about one and one half miles south of Calipatria on State Highway 111. Those wishing to camp Friday and/or Saturday night may do so at Finney Lake, for others there are good motels in Brawley. From Ramer Lake, local signs direct you to Finney Lake. Bring your own water.

Leader: Jim Huffman 372-7124

Feb. 11 TUESDAY ANNUAL DINNER 6:30 P.M. at Raffels Restaurant, 4310 Degnan Avenue, Los Angeles (Leimert Park). Dr. James E. Crouch, of San Diego State College, will present the after-dinner program, a 16 mm motion picture entitled "Florida" Reservation form was enclosed with your January issue of the TANAGER.

Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

Feb. 21 FRIDAY WILDLIFE FILM 7:45 P.M. John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 S. McCadden Pl., Los Angeles. Mr. Eben McMillan of Cholame, California, will present "The Shandon Hills" This film will replace that scheduled for last Nov. 25, cancelled due to the tragic death of President Kennedy. Those holding season tickets should present them for admission to this film. For others: single admission \$1.00, students 50¢.

Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510

Feb. 23 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP 8:00 A.M. Los Angeles Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., go north on Rosemead to Huntington Drive, east on Huntington to Baldwin Ave., north on Baldwin to the Arboretum. Bring lunch.

Leaders: Hannah Walker and Irving Goldhaber HO 3-1078

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

Mar. 7 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 8:30 A.M. Audubon Center of Southern California, 1000 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., go south on Rosemead to San Gabriel Blvd., left to N. Durfee and left to Audubon Center. Bring sack lunch.

Host: Paul Howard, Director

Mar. 9 MONDAY or TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. West Hollywood Park or Plummer Park. Through the courtesy of the Canadian Consulate General of Los Angeles we are privileged to be able to see "Water for the Prairies" and "World in a Marsh" two 16mm color motion pictures on wildlife and conservation in western Canada.

Note: At this date it appears that Great Hall in Plummer Park will still not be available to us for this meeting. Check your March TANAGER as to the date and place, or call Audubon House 876-0202 on Mon., Wed. or Thurs. of previous week.

Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

Mar. 11 WEDNESDAY WILDLIFE FILM 7:45 P.M. John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 S. McCadden Pl., Los Angeles. Emerson Scott of Caro, Michigan, presenting "Our Changing Heritage". This film deals with the changes being wrought by man in our western United States, and with the compelling question of preserving our wilderness areas.

Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510

Mar. 14 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP Tujunga Wash. Meet at 8:00 A.M. on the north side of the Foothill Blvd. bridge over the Tujunga Wash in Sunland. Bring lunch.

Leader: Dave Robison 761-0217

ALL ABOUT THE KEYS



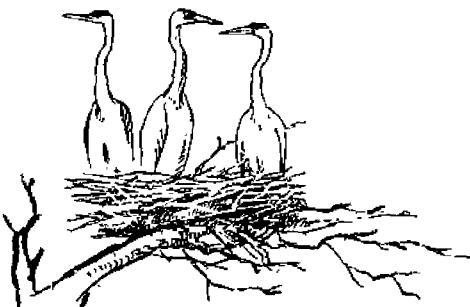
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Our first day's field trip was to Loxahatchie Refuge with Frank Ligas, research biologist. There was a heavy downpour at mid-day, but skies were clear at sunset when we enjoyed the unforgettable sight of thousands of Egrets, White Ibis, and Double-crested Cormorants flying in to roost overnight in trees surrounded by ponds--this for protection from raccoons and other predators.

The following morning we left Miami by bus for Key West in a downpour. The black skies gradually cleared as we passed gumbo-limbo trees, casaurinas, various palms, the sea-grape, also vegetable fields with many Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures. Our trip leader was the ebullient and indefatigable Dade Thornton--he is unrecognizable without that ever-present straight pipe in his mouth. His great-great-grandfather was the Dade for whom Dade County, Florida is named, so he was able to tell us the history of the places we passed, as only a native could. He is a fine birder, photographer and herpetologist.

In Homestead we picked up George Stevenson, the chronicler of the Keys, and his splendid explanation of all that we saw made the trip more meaningful. Key Largo is quite a large island, really a continuation of the Florida Peninsula. The lower Keys, of varying sizes, are of coral formation on which mangrove, pines, palms, and tropical hardwood growths have become established. This vegetation and the semi-tropical climate make it a paradise for birds.

An amazing number of Sparrow Hawks can be seen on the telephone wires along the highway. The Broad-winged Hawks were in migration to Cuba, and one was picked up that had been hit by a car; it was passed around in the bus and was indeed a handsome bird.



At Tavernier we de-bussed and were joined by "Sandy" Sprunt IV. We took small boats out past Cowpens Cut and out to nesting keys of Roseate Spoonbills, Brown Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, and Magnificent Frigate-birds. Since the Fall is their breeding time, these birds were in splendid breeding plumage. The male Frigate-birds had the striking inflated red throat pouch; the Spoonbills were dressed in vivid pinks, red and gold. We should all give thanks to the late Robert Porter Allen for his tireless research into the habits of the Spoonbills and other threatened birds; thanks to him and those who took action on his findings, our Spoonbill popula-

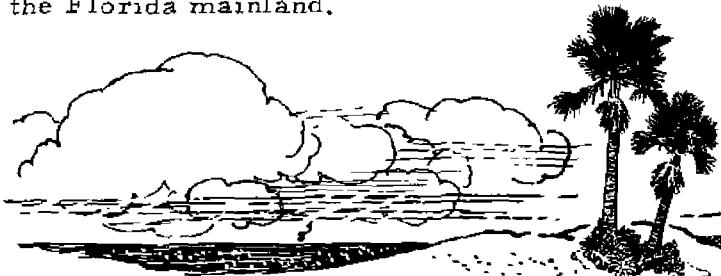
tion is gradually increasing, and those of you who go to the Keys can almost certainly see them.

The "Cowpens" refers to the area where hunters formerly herded the placid, charming manatees or sea cows and slaughtered them. Strange, isn't it, how rare the manatees are now!

The crowning experience at these roosting islands was the sight of a handsome Bald Eagle posing for us on a dead stump.

At Tavernier we also saw our first Great White Herons, as large as Great Blue Herons, very handsome birds. As we continued on our way, by bus, we saw Great Blues, Little Blues, Green, Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Herons, and Louisiana or Tricolor Herons, and Common and Snowy Egrets. It was confusing to hear people speak of seeing Ward's and Würdemann's Herons. The Ward's is the local phase of the Great Blue, and Würdemann's is disputed: it is either a hybrid between Great White and Great Blue, or it is an immature Great White.

After a lunch stop at Duck Key our weather improved and we could appreciate the scenery--Florida Bay on our right, dotted with small islands, and the expanse of the Atlantic on our left. Time doesn't allow the recounting of the history of the railroad, the highway, and the damage of various hurricanes; the fact is, the Keys are becoming overpopulated with country clubs, motels, trailer parks, and private homes. The old-timers don't like it, because the native vegetation is being torn out, ponds and bays filled in, and all the usual "progress" is occurring. Water has to be brought in by pipeline from the Florida mainland.



We stopped for some exploration on Big Pine Key. Here there is a refuge for the elusive Key deer, which should help prevent their extirpation. On this key, on trails through hardwood growths, we found several varieties of cactus, and many vines and flowers that actually are still unclassified. As in the rest of Florida, the Palm Warbler was the common bird here, but we also saw Brown Thrashers, many Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, also American Redstarts and Painted Buntings. The Mockingbird and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are also common. There is a good campground on Big Pine Key.

We continued past ever-changing scenes, over short bridges, long bridges, and keys of various sizes, all with picturesque names. Mid-afternoon we arrived at the charming town of Key West, and after checking in at a first-class motel we began to experience the hospitality of the fine people who live in this southernmost town of the continental U.S. A police escort took us to the library where we were given a reception by the leading citizens. From here we were taken to a fine restaurant where we had a typical Caribbean dinner: fresh fruit cup, watermelon rind pickle, Arroz con pollo (chicken and yellow rice), frijoles

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AUDUBON

Activities

BY OTTO WIDMAN

Saturday, 14 December 1963, the Audubon group met at the first Tips Restaurant on Highway 99. Unfortunately, because of business, George Venatta was unable to lead the group as planned. He asked Russ Wilson to lead in his place. We made several stops along the Santa Clara River bottom, where we saw Lark Sparrows, a Red-shouldered Hawk, and both Oregon and Slate-colored Junco. Dick Neuman spotted the latter. There were quite a group of Savannah and White-crowned Sparrows. Say's Phoebe was in juxtaposition with a Robin, offering an excellent study. Beside the water cress were Killdeer, plovers, and Least Sandpipers, along with Black Phoebe, Bewick Wren, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

It was the day of the woodpecker and sparrow: Acorn, Downy, and Nuttall Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Chipping, White, Golden-crowned, English House, Fox, Song, Savannah, and Lark Sparrows.

Along the Elizabeth Lake Canyon road were White-throated Swifts, Red-tailed Hawks, and a good view at a Rock Wren. Taylor Camp, where the group ate lunch under a bright baby blue sky, usually abounding with birds, had a dozen Western Blue Birds, Titmouse, and Hermit Thrush.

At Cottonwood Camp Dick Neuman was the first to see a Varied Thrush--a life bird for the majority of the group. It was in good view several times. A Sharp-shinned Hawk flew over and a Sparrow Hawk was nearby, as were Brown Creepers. In the tree tops about 10 Pine Siskins tantalized most of us trying to get a better view of them. Mountain Quail were feeding around the picnic benches, offering excellent viewing for several minutes. The only warbler seen was the Audubon.

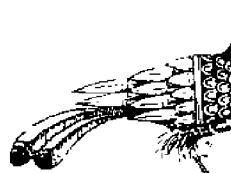
Mary Woll tried out her new scope. We welcome new birders on this field trip: William Johe, Frederick D. Haerich, and Jack and Mary Hutton.

There were 55 species observed on the trip by 36 members.

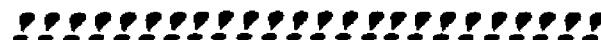


Bill Watson reported that 101 people participated in the Annual Bird Count and 124 species were counted (down from last year). He will report separately on the results of the count. We were happy to have good news coverage this year. The Hollywood Citizen News and the Los Angeles Times (the day of the count and the day after) both had articles. Ralph Story of 'Human Predicament' mentioned our count on Channel 2 11 o'clock news December 26. Bill O'Hallaren, who

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY



ANNUAL DINNER



**TUESDAY
FEBRUARY
11, 1964**

PRIME RIB

\$4 PER PERSON

INCLUDING TAX & TIP

6:30 P.M.

RAFFELS RESTAURANT

4310 DEGNAN BLVD.

LOS ANGELES



Program:

DR. JAMES CROUCH

FLORIDA

writes for Ralph Story got us the TV coverage. Bill Watson was interviewed for radio release by Dennis Bracken for the 'Story Line' on KNX.



Herb and Olga Clarke, Frieda Dutton and Bob Blackstone were chased as 'spies' along Ocean Park Beach by an outlandishly dressed elderly matron. What else are bird watchers? Helen Jordan, in charge of the bird count in Detroit, Michigan was fortunate enough to join us here in Los Angeles for the count.

Active member John V. Frederick joined us once again for the count. He was later presented to the Society for recognition for his many years of bird watching. His first bird count was in 1913.

Everyone was pleased that the Robin has returned. It was a close second to the House Finch.

Member Dennis Cockren reports that in the Massachusetts count he saw 35 Mute Swans, the Ipswich Sparrow, the Thick-billed Murre, and some Dickcissel. Our birders get around.

ALL ABOUT THE KEYS

CONTINUED

negros (black beans), plantains, tossed salad, Cuban bread, Key lime pie, and coffee. We were shown a moving picture about the rare Key deer, and were welcomed warmly by the mayor and many others.

The next morning we were conducted to the botanical garden where we saw many native and exotic plants, also many birds including the White-crowned Pigeon. A tour of the town by "conch train" showed us the typical two-story houses of Old Key West, wide verandas running around both stories. The Naval Station and the shrimp boat fleet were not as interesting to us as the shore birds we saw in shallow lagoons that escaped filling for building purposes. These were Willets, Yellow-legs, etc. --no new birds.

For those of Audubon Society, the most meaningful experience was visit to Audubon House. It is necessary to understand a little of Key West's history to fully appreciate it.

From the time of the discovery of the New World until the building of the railroad early this century, ships were the only means of transportation in this area. Frequently ships laden with rich cargoes were wrecked on the reefs off the keys, and this led to literally a million dollar industry--wrecking, or, more properly, the salvaging of wrecks. This was a reputable way to make a livelihood and Key West became a wealthy

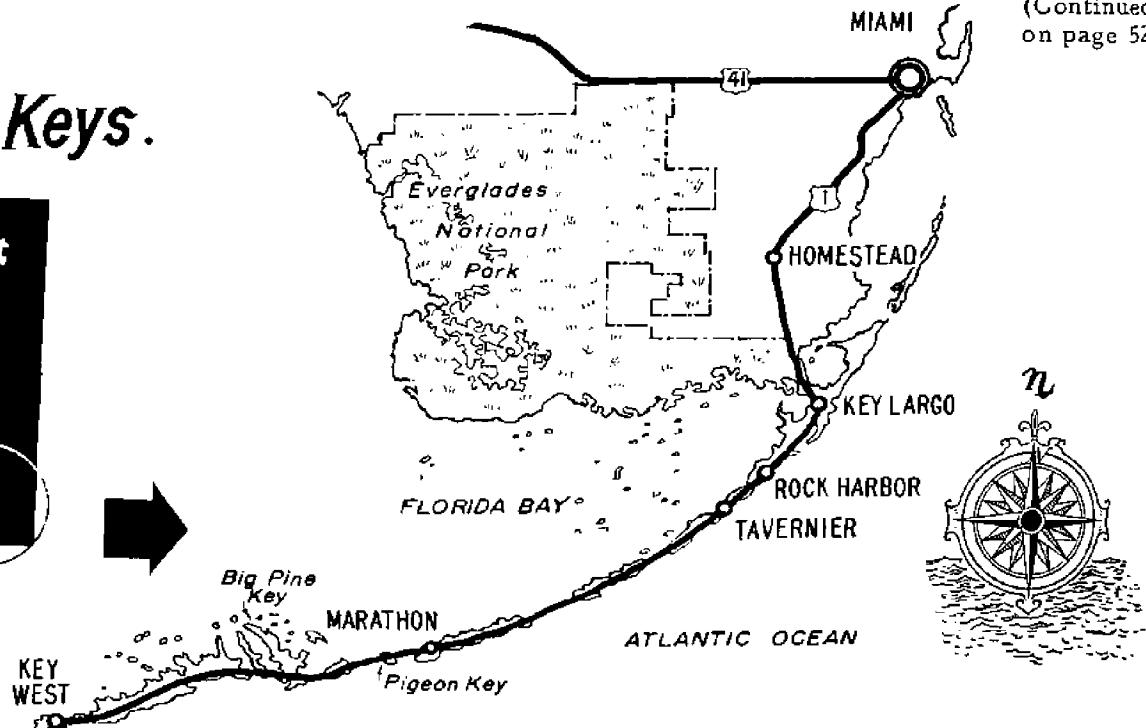
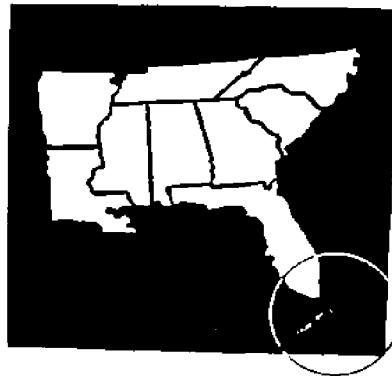
town with finely furnished homes and many cultural events. One of the salvagers, a Capt. Geiger, when he heard that Mr. Audubon planned to stay in Key West to paint the local birds for his Double Elephant Folio, invited him to stay at his charming home. This Mr. Audubon did in 1830; he found the town to be hospitable, and vice versa, the town found Audubon to be witty and cultured.

Down through the years the house fell into disrepair. A fine public spirited citizen by the name of Mitchell Wolfson who left his birthplace in Key West to amass a fortune in Miami, bought the property, had it thoroughly renovated, and furnished it with priceless antiques of the period circa 1830. This was presented to the community as a museum; more, he purchased an almost priceless "Double Elephant Folio" and it is on display at Audubon House. No matter how beautifully you have seen the Audubon paintings reproduced, nothing can compare with the glowing vividness of the life-sized originals. What a treat it was, also, to see the room where Mr. Audubon worked, looking out the window to see the same species of birds that we were seeing in the lovely garden.

Native Key Westers call themselves "Conchs", pronounced "conks" after once prevalent shellfish. This too is becoming rare as are the sea turtles--again the story of ruthless over-harvesting.

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The Florida Keys.

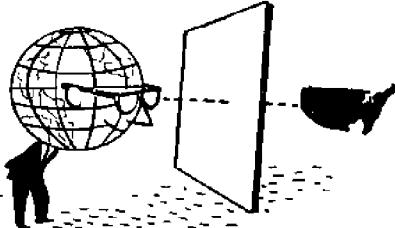


AUDUBON NATIONAL CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 7-11, 1964



TUCSON, ARIZONA
MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW!

THE AUDUBON SCENE



From the Paso Robles Audubon Society comes further confirmation of Arnold Small's rugged formula for seeing the Sandhill Cranes on the Carrizo Plain--which he stated at our January meeting. A group of intrepid birders, led by rancher and Wildlife Film lecturer Eben McMillan, braved the cold to assemble before dawn at Soda Lake on December 7, 1963. Mrs. Dugger reports, "As the first glimmer of dawn broke over the horizon, literally thousands of Sandhill Cranes rose from the lake, spread their wings and in a well-mannered and orderly fashion took off for their feeding grounds. It was an awe-inspiring sight--."

The recently formed Santa Barbara Audubon Society reports that its Board of Directors passed a resolution outlining a positive conservation policy, supporting all meritorious conservation measures in the Santa Barbara area in particular and in California in general. Their resolution further states, "---the Board of Directors favors the following conservation projects:

1. The preservation of the Channel Islands as a National Seashore or Monument.
2. The acquisition of the Devereux Slough area for use as a county park.
3. The protection of the Santa Barbara back country against the influx of tote-goats and automobiles, and against the unnecessary and expensive Sierra Madre Ridge Road project." (Note: The Forest Service appears determined to go ahead with this project despite protest of conservationists.)

We salute the Santa Barbara Audubon Society.



SPECIAL

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

Eben McMillan
"SHANDON HILLS"

Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Dale W. Auth
4636 Collis Ave., LA
Mr. & Mrs. Olaf Bertelson
327 West 1 Street, Wilmington
Mr. M. Blissett
3946 Puerco Canyon Rd., Malibu
Mr. & Mrs. Franklin S. Fowler Jr.
1859 N. Rowan Ave., LA
Mrs. Wilton Graff
2499 Mandeville Canyon Rd., LA
Miss Gale A. Hurd
13951 Mulholland Dr., Beverly Hills
Mrs. Maurice Hyman
2308 Wayne Ave., LA
Mr. & Mrs. John T. Innis
P.O. Box 1464, Long Beach
Mr. Allen R. Killgore
1057 Raymond St., Glendale
Mr. T. J. Little
1507 Rollin St., So. Pasadena
Mrs. Ada J. Loughridge
948 Granvia Altamire, Palos Verdes Est.
Mr. L. R. Marks
725 N. Edinburgh Ave., LA
Mr. Melville W. Martin
2604 Via Segunda, Palos Verdes Estates
Mr. & Mrs. Michael J. Murphy
1411 Sunset Ave., Santa Monica
Mr. & Mrs. Wilfred Olmstead
4524 Cedros Ave., Sherman Oaks
Mr. Robert Ransom
5440 Cochin, Arcadia
Mr. & Mrs. Weldon T. Spears
5482 Village Green, LA
Mrs. Grace Tillison
3114 West 77th St., LA
Mrs. Ellen E. Wallace
P.O. Box 1884, Beverly Hills

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21st.

WILDLIFE FILM for February 21... "The Shandon Hills", presented by Eben McMillan. In place of the film scheduled for last Nov. 25, cancelled due to the death of President Kennedy. Holders of season tickets may present them for admission to this film. Others: single admission \$1.00 - students 50¢. Those who were privi- to see "The Shandon Hills" agree that it was one of the finest we have ever had, and well worth seeing a second time.

John Burroughs Junior High School

600 S. McCadden Place

7:45 P.M.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

by ARNOLD SMALL

Climatologically, winter has not yet arrived in southern California. Ornithologically, it has. A strong persistent high pressure system which stabilized itself over Utah and Nevada during early December has provided storybook weather for southern California. No precipitation was recorded south of the Tehachapi Mountains since this high pressure system developed as it tended to force incoming low pressure systems (bearing our much needed winter rains) either to dissipate or to change direction. Strong Santa Ana winds which prevailed during much of December and early January testified to this. Although our weather could be compared with an eastern spring, the bird population had a distinctly winter-like flavor.

Fair numbers of Fulmars were noted offshore, especially at Newport and several very large flocks of loons (primarily Red-throated) could be found at various places along the coast. Numbers of Western and Horned Grebes, however, seemed to be low. Wintering waterfowl are present in just about normal numbers, and the Salton Sea area abounded with more than 10,000 Lesser Snow Geese plus other geese during the recently concluded hunting season. Among them were noted three rare Blue Geese. Large numbers of waterfowl were also present on Lake Norconian, in Ventura County, at Upper Newport Bay, and in the San Diego area. A pair of Whistling Swans was present at Solano Beach on Dec. 6, but no others were reported from this area.

For the third year in succession a male European Widgeon was found in the San Diego River Flood Control Channel, and a little patience and skill is required to separate it from the thousands of American Widgeon there. Black Rails on two occasions were found in the San Diego area--including one for their Christmas Census. Four Fulvous Tree-ducks were at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum in early January together with at least two pairs of Wood Ducks. Large numbers of Black-bellied Plovers wintered in and around Los Angeles, and at Playa del Rey, their numbers included at least one Golden Plover.

One of the pleasantest sights the winter has to offer is the daily evening flight of gulls over the city towards the ocean, and many thousands more can be seen sweeping along the Santa Monica cliffs and the Pacific Palisades en route to their beach roosts.

The winter Robin population was swelled by large incoming flights during December, but it was not until January that the large flights of Cedar Waxwings were noticed in many parts of southern California. The influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches probably tapered off in December, and the number of wintering individuals became stabilized. Some special winter rarities worthy of note here include a Harris's Sparrow near Borrego in late November, several wintering Western Tanagers in the Los Angeles area, a feeder-visiting Dickcissel near San Diego, single Baltimore and Orchard Orioles in San Diego County, and two Swamp Sparrows on the San Diego Christmas Census.

Watch soon for nesting Anna's Hummingbirds, migrating Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds, early flocks of Turkey Vultures moving north, and coastwise concentrations of White-throated Swifts.

All About the Keys

Continued...

The local people have determined not to let the bulldozer take all their picturesque houses and shops of 150 years ago, and have a strong program going for keeping their priceless heritage.

After being given a delicious lunch we had to leave this unique town with great regret. On our homeward trip we saw a number of terns and shorebirds, the Black Skimmer being of most interest to us westerners.

It was an unforgettable experience to attend a convention; to hear the inspiring speeches of Mr. Buchheister, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Udall, and the others. I would urge all who can to attend future conventions. Being with Allan Cruikshank's group on the Everglades National Park field trip, and going to Grand Bahama for Caribbean birds would take too much time to tell about, but I must stress what Mr. Buchheister said at the last business meeting:

"We are not a wealthy society. It is up to each one of us to constantly bring out the need for true conservation wherever we go; to try to bring in more members; and especially to help the young people to understand the challenge that confronts us in saving our priceless heritage of wild life."