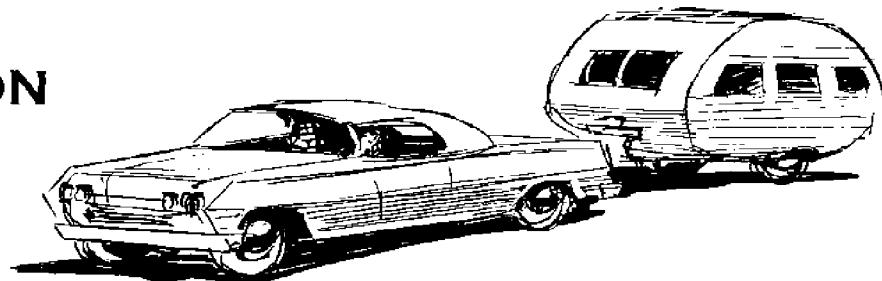


Alaska

by trailer...
plane...and ferry

By RUSSELL WILSON



Whenever mention is made that we drove to Alaska, the first question invariably has been: "How was the road?" In all truth we are compelled to say that we found the road much better than we had been led to believe. This may not be very descriptive and may also not be very high praise, for we set out expecting the very worst. But to one whose early driving experience goes back to a time when our own trans-continental roads were mostly gravel and dirt, the former mostly washboard and the latter deeply rutted when wet, the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks presents no real difficulty at all. The road is broad, well graded, topped off with gravel, does not become rutted when it rains, as it did a great deal this summer, and in my opinion could be negotiated by anyone who has had a reasonable amount of driving experience and has enough time for the trip to be unhurried. It is my firm belief that fast driving is the real source of trouble. At any rate we made the entire round trip of 9,840 miles without changing a tire.

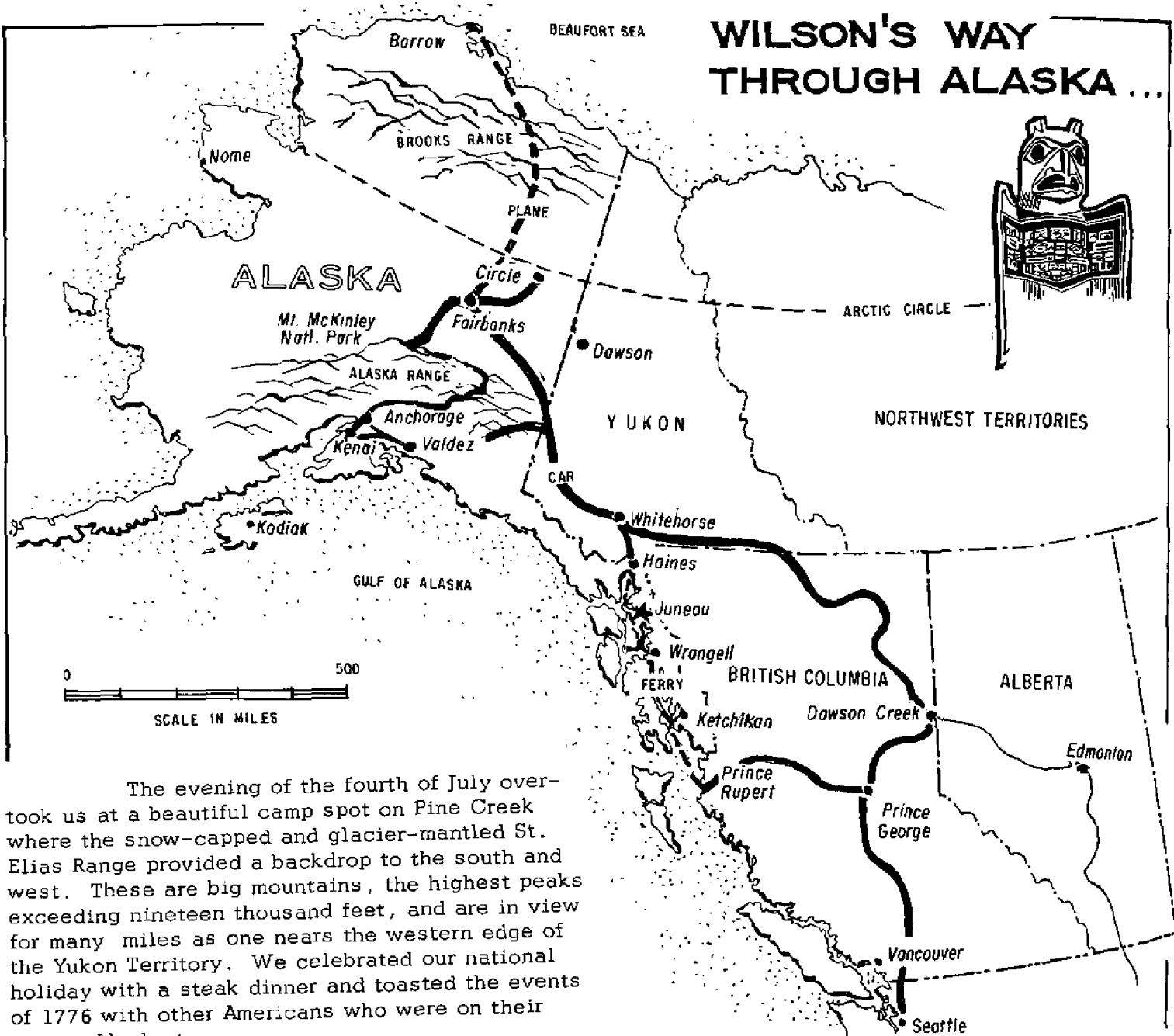
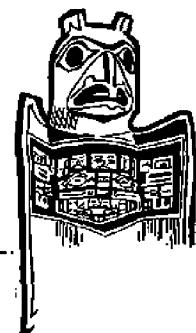
We towed a fifteen-foot trailer and this mode of travel is highly recommended for birders, in fact we look back on it now as having been a continuous birding experience from start to finish. We camped each evening in one of the many public camp areas which are usually located by a river or a lake, often in a spot of real scenic beauty, and as we ended our day's run between four and five o'clock, we had several hours each evening and each morning for birding. Days in the northern latitudes are very long, light at three o'clock in the morning and twilight still at 10:00 p.m. We had

prepared a list of the birds that might possibly be seen along our route through British Columbia, the Yukon Territory and Alaska, even the casuals and accidentals, and had studied their descriptions, so we drove each mile with the subdued excitement one experiences when at any moment a life-bird is a distinct possibility. Our first life-bird came early one morning before we reached Dawson Creek; a Ruffed Grouse crossed the road and I stopped no more than fifty feet from it. It didn't fly but continued at a slow pace, stopped twice, spread its tail and extended its ruff in a fine display and disappeared finally into the growth along the roadside.

Shortly after crossing the Peace River we saw our first Harlan's Hawk, a hawk that proved to be quite abundant in Northern Canada and interior Alaska. By the time we had reached the Alaska border we had added to our list the White-winged Crossbill, Bohemian Waxwing, Boreal Chickadee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Magnolia Warbler, and Northern Three-toed Woodpecker.

(continued on page 72)

WILSON'S WAY THROUGH ALASKA ...



The evening of the fourth of July overtook us at a beautiful camp spot on Pine Creek where the snow-capped and glacier-mantled St. Elias Range provided a backdrop to the south and west. These are big mountains, the highest peaks exceeding nineteen thousand feet, and are in view for many miles as one nears the western edge of the Yukon Territory. We celebrated our national holiday with a steak dinner and toasted the events of 1776 with other Americans who were on their way to Alaska too.

Our first destination in Alaska was Fairbanks, where we met Don and Caroline Adams who had flown to Anchorage and had come on by train with a four-day stop in Mt. McKinley National Park. We have found Don and Caroline such good travel companions, they share so completely our enthusiasm for birding, that the ensuing nine days which we spent together are among the most delightful that we can remember. They found lodging in a motel but we made our meals together in the trailer which we had spotted in a combined motel and trailer park in College. College is the site of the University of Alaska and is about four miles from downtown Fairbanks. Here Redpolls were about as common as Finches are in Los Angeles, and a short walk from our lodging was a small marsh where a Solitary Sandpiper was nesting and always became very agitated when we approached.

The University of Alaska has a small but quite worthwhile museum where we studied mounted specimens of birds we hoped soon to see, especially Arctic species. We visited Warren Flock, whom we found in the final stages of preparations for a flight to Europe; however, he took time out to take us to Smith Lake for an hour's birding. Joann had already left for New York by way of Los Angeles, and so we missed her. Warren sent greetings through us to his friends in Los Angeles Audubon.

The Steese Highway leads northeast from Fairbanks to Circle on the Yukon River. Circle was given its name by the gold rush parties, who mistakenly thought they were on the Arctic Circle, and is the most northerly point to which one can drive on the American Continent by continuous road. The route leads up the Chathanika River, which provides a good illustration of what happens

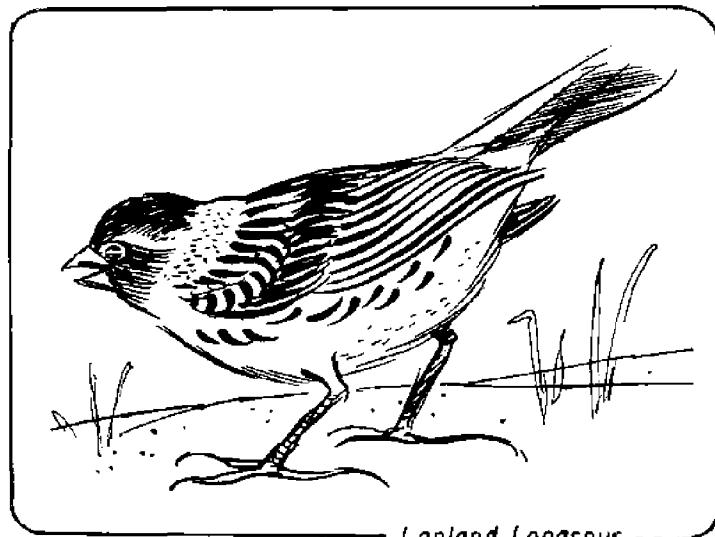
ALASKA

to a river and its tributaries when gold dredging turns everything upside down, and eventually crosses Eagle Summit before dropping down to the Yukon at Circle. Although the summit is only about thirty-eight hundred feet in elevation, still at this latitude it places you in arctic tundra. Early in the day we saw our first Northern Shrikes and were fortunate to see both mature birds and immature ones with their brown plumage. For us also the Tree Sparrow was new, although Caroline and Don had seen it in McKinley Park. At the summit Rock Ptarmigan were numerous, and you can appreciate our excitement when we found several Wheatears and Lapland Longspurs as well as Golden Plovers with young. Evening found us still some distance from Circle and we made our dinner in Bedrock Creek State Campground. The main entree was a delicious canned ham that Castella Fisher had given us as a going-away gift just before we left home. In the evening twilight we had a fine observation of a Great Grey Owl.

When we wrote to Wien Alaska Airline to make reservations for a flight to Point Barrow, the northernmost tip of the continent, and mentioned our interest in birds, the president's secretary wrote us a very nice letter and suggested that we get in touch with Mr. Tom Brower. Mr. Brower is the son of Charles Brower who established the Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Co. at Barrow in 1886 and helped in the collecting and preparation of many of the specimens of arctic birds and mammals which are to be seen in various museums of natural history in the United States. Mr. Brower of course knows birds and made many helpful suggestions to us, and we made reservations for our lodging and meals at his hotel and cafe.

When the morning of our departure arrived, however, we found our flight delayed by unsatisfactory landing conditions at Barrow. After several hours delay, and after lunch at the airport, we finally took off and disappeared almost immediately in the clouds. This condition continued all the way, and although we knew we were flying over the Brooks Range and other spectacular country, we saw none of it. When the plane broke through the cloud layer, we were directly over the village and in thirty seconds our wheels touched down on the runway. Before we left the airport we added two life-birds to our list: Snow Buntings, which were abundant, and a Spectacled Eider. The weather remained overcast and cold (33 degrees) during all of our stay, which ran into three days, but we were excited by this totally different environment in which we found our-

selves. Here we were, right on the Arctic Ocean, with a great ice pressure ridge about a mile off shore and pack ice that drifted on shore or off shore depending on the direction of the wind. Great white Glaucous Gulls were everywhere; we soon spotted two Yellow-billed Loons and later saw another. Common Eiders flew by in long strings and two male King Eiders in excellent plumage floated by on a great block of pack ice. Old Squaws soon became "trash birds," we literally saw thousands of them. We also saw several Hoary Redpolls, more Lapland Longspurs, and eventually two Steller's Eiders.



Lapland Longspur

The afternoon of our second day we were introduced to Dr. H. E. Childs of Cerritos College, who was doing research at the Arctic Research Station on the lemmings and their relationship to birds and mammals that depend on them for their principal food supply. Dr. Childs described his work to us, showed us some of the specimens he had taken, and then took us several miles out onto the tundra in weasel to the area he had marked off for his study. The land here is very flat and very wet. Everywhere there are puddles and ponds, and drainage is very poor since permafrost is no more than eighteen inches below the surface. Dr. Childs showed us Baird's Sandpipers and Red Phalaropes with young just hatched, Golden Plovers' nests and Jaegers' nests all three Jaegers nest in the area. Our principal disappointment here was our failure to see a Snowy Owl. Mr. Brower said that in a good lemming year they could be seen right from the village sitting on every hummock, but all of our efforts went unrewarded.

At Barrow we had to learn to go to bed when reminded by fatigue or by a glance at a watch that it was time to retire, for at this season the sun doesn't set but continues its journey around the sky in an endless circle

(continued on page 80)

AUDUBON

Activities

BY OTTO WIDMAN

The March evening meeting was well attended. Among the interesting bird reports were: the Hepatic Tanagers still in Hillcrest Golf Club, along with two Red Crossbills, Rose-breasted Grosbeak still frequenting Dick Neuman's feeder, and an Oven-bird at the home of Richard S. Wilson in Bellflower. The Wilsons were visitors at the meeting. The Librarian, Bill Watson, reviewed Senator Udall's book, "The Quiet Crisis" Two films from the Canadian Consul's office were shown. The first on forestry management and the second on life in the marsh. During a short period between films, Mrs. Evelyn Gayman brought before the group interesting facts and a display on the Santa Monica Mountain Park, an issue of interest to all.

March 14

The day before the holocaust in our San Rafael and Verdugo Hills was perfectly calm, sunny, almost windless, and 49 of our members and guests banded in Tujunga Wash and environs. The goldfinches are back; the group saw both American and Lesser. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, and Phainopepla were in or about the canyon floor. Dick Neuman, near a Canyon Wren's nest, stirred up a 6-rattle rattlesnake, which disappeared down a hole. Regulars on the birding trips were Eva Millsap, Pauline Cole, and Freda Dutton. Others seen on almost every field trip were William Johe, Jim Denholtz, Fred Haerich, Ray Fisk. President Arnold Small and family joined us on this perfect day. At Hansen Dam were Common Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, Western Sandpipers. Near the Quarry ponds and cuts were White-throated Swifts, Rough-winged and Violet-green Swallows. Out on the water were Gadwalls, Cinnamon Teals, Canvasback Ducks and a Green Heron. In the brush and trees were Red and White-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadees and Rock Wren and a Hutton's Vireo. Sixty-six birds were seen.

March 22

It was 50 degree weather and finally after 3 P.M. rain rounded out the day, but 20 members chose to seek out 70 different species of birds on Irvine Ranch. Mrs. Ruth Lohr joined us after a long absence from the field trips. The stand-bys: the Adams, the Dicks, the Epplers, the Watsons, the Siemens, were thrilled to see the Virginia and Sora Rails, the Gallinules and Coots all in one pond on the Peters Canyon Road. Here also were Ring-necked, Ruddy, and Canvasback Ducks. Along the way were Red-shouldered, Marsh, and Red-tailed Hawks. At Tucker Sanctuary, life bird for most of us, the White-throated Sparrow fed openly for all to see. Costa's, Anna's, Rufous, and Allen's Hummingbirds drank from the feeders. As many as 30 Valley Quail crowded the

feeder at one time. At O'Neill Park Purple Finches fed with White and Golden-crowned Sparrows. White and Red-breasted Nuthatches searched the tree trunks. Somewhere along the way we saw Vesper and Sage Sparrows. Then after a hike up the Tucker Canyon, Norm and Ruth Fleming invited 14 of us into their canyon home. Every member votes a volley of thanks for their thoughtfulness. The bird list is long with thrushes, swallows, wrens all represented, even two flying Canada Geese at Irvine Park. Laura Jenner is heartily thanked for leading a very successful day in Orange County. We welcome guests Norma Varden and Beverly Vidana. A few wild flowers were out: poppy, phacelia, blue-bells, miner's lettuce, meadow rue. California Ceanothus was in bloom in many shades of white and light blue. Lemonade and Holly bush are also in full bloom.

April 9

How can I compress in a few words the essence of the two hour film and joyous comments by Dr. Alfred G. Etter? "Awake to Nature" was heralded in by the crowing of a rooster, a nice fanfare for a romp through nature's yard, covering every aspect from crawlers in the mud to pollinating bees, from blackberry juice on turtles faces to Sparrow Hawks dismembering a cricket.

Then in the second half of his film Dr. Etter takes some student teachers on a trip through an island in Lake Superior and again in Porcupine State Park and finally back to the campus. The trembling birds are tragic evidence of the effects of spraying to save the Dutch Elm. Then the harvest of dead birds fills the laboratory where analyses progress in an attempt to pin-point the killer and how he kills. Is the live bird important?, the Doctor asks. Earth is a sanctuary and we are part of it and we are going to be around for some time. Will the cycle of DDT ultimately reach us?

Note: In the Audubon Activities column of our April issue it was mistakenly reported that Russ Wilson led the field trip at the Arboretum in the absence of Hannah Walker. Russ has brought it to our attention that it was actually Irma Rogers, of the Pasadena Audubon Society, who led the trip and made the arrangements with the Arboretum management for us. The Arboretum is her specialty and we were most fortunate to have her leadership there.

Ed.

There's still time to give to the
CONDOR SANCTUARY FUND
...but do it today!

Contributions to the Condor Fund as of April 8th totaled \$700. This fund helps maintain the refuge for California's only threatened species. Money received by May 15, 1964 will be included in the 1964 fund, contributions after this date will go to the 1965 fund. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society and send to Hugh Weiser, 3749 Shannon Road, Los Angeles 90027.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

ARNOLD SMALL, President MRS. RUSSELL WILSON, Executive Secretary

CALENDAR

MAY 1964



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	30

MAY

May 2 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS Field Trip, 9:45-11:15 A.M.
For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661

May 3 SUNDAY PELAGIC TRIP 6:00 A.M. on the boat "Corsair" from (Skipper's) 22nd Street Landing, San Pedro. This is just a reminder; details of this trip were published in the April TANAGER.

May 7 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M., Audubon House.

May 9 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP Santa Clara River bottom and Elizabeth Lake Canyon. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the first Tip's restaurant on U.S. 99 (about ten miles north of the point where the Golden State and San Diego Freeways join). Bring lunch.
Leaders: Don and Caroline Adams FR 2-5536

May 12 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING 8:00 P.M. in Great Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. "A Quickie Course in Bird Identification" will be presented by Herb Clarke. This will be a different kind of program, featuring audience participation. You will have a chance to test your skill at identification. The program will be built around a selection of Herb's famous color slides.
Program Chairman: Don Adams FR 2-5536

May 24 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP Mt. Pinos. Although this is scheduled as a Sunday trip, some may want to camp Saturday night in one of the Forest Service campgrounds on Mt. Pinos. The scheduled trip will start at 8:00 A.M. at the turn-off to Frazier Park, about three miles beyond Gorman on Highway 99. This is a good trip for montane species such as Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finches, White-headed Woodpeckers, and there is always the possibility of Condors.
Leader: Jim Huffman FR 2-7124

June 4 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 P.M., Audubon House.

June 6 SATURDAY JUNIOR NATURALISTS 9:45-11:15 A.M.
For information call: Ed Anacker HO 7-1661

June 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8:00 P.M. in Great Hall, Plummer Park. Program to be announced in June TANAGER.
Program Chairman: Don Adams FR 2-5536

June 13 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP Buckhorn Flats and Chilao. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at parking area near Buckhorn Ranger Station on the Angeles Crest Highway (State Route 2). Some of us will camp Saturday night at Buckhorn and make the hike to Mt. Williamson on Sunday.
Leader: Russ Wilson PO 1-7635

Audubon House

In the April issue of the TANAGER an appeal was made for members to help staff Audubon House on the 1st and 2nd Saturdays of each month, days the House has remained closed to the public because help was lacking. We are happy to re-

port that Audubon House will now be open on the 1st and 2nd Saturdays thanks to Miss Shirley Hallcom, Secretary to William Goodall at Audubon Center, who has offered to serve as hostess on those days.

Plan to visit your museum and library at Audubon House soon. You may see the Band-tailed Pigeon or the Black-headed Grosbeak, seen there on April 20 or the Evening Grosbeak seen there April 21.

Audubon News Release

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

1130 Fifth Avenue • New York 28, N. Y. • ENright 9-2100



A Special Release to California Newspapers

4/22/64

NEW YORK CITY -- The National Audubon Society announced today that a two-year investigation of the population status and habitat of the California condor, one of the largest and rarest birds in the world, would be completed by late summer.

It will be the first such thorough study since the original biological research on the condor done by Dr. Carl Koford for the National Audubon Society in the early 1940's. It was the Koford study that resulted in the estimate that not more than 60 to 70 of the big birds remained alive.

The present study, made possible by a National Geographic Society research grant to the Audubon Society, is being directed by Dr. Alden H. Miller, noted ornithologist and head of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Miller also directed the Koford study.

The current field work is being done by two widely-known naturalist brothers, Ian and Eben McMillan, ranchers of Shandon, California, with the cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service.

The central part of the condor range is in the Los Padres National Forest where the Sespe Wildlife Refuge was set aside as a result of the Koford findings. Other protective measures were instituted, and since 1948 the National Audubon Society has provided half the salary and expenses of a special Forest Service patrolman who



watches over the condor. A number of local Audubon Societies in California have contributed funds for this purpose.

Audubon President Carl W. Buchheister said a report on the present investigation would be released by autumn, probably in November. He thanked Regional Forester Charles A. Connaughton and Supervisor William H. Hanson of the Los Padres Forest for postponing a decision on whether or not to build the so-called Sierra Madre Ridge Road in the Santa Barbara district of the National Forest. The National Audubon Society had asked that a decision be put off until the condor investigation is completed.

The proposed road, which has generated considerable local controversy, has been opposed by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society and the Sierra Club who have argued that increased traffic and human disturbance will further endanger the condor. Others have advocated the road for fire control and to provide public access for recreational purposes.

Mr. Connaughton recently assured Mr. Buchheister that no decision would be made until the research report can be studied. The findings may also result in a revision of the cooperative condor protective program that has been in operation for nearly twenty years.

No announcement of the investigation was made prior to this time, Mr. Buchheister said, because it was feared premature publicity might attract photographers and curiosity seekers in such numbers as to interfere with both the study and the birds. The condor is extremely sensitive to human disturbance. However, the road controversy produced publicity that could not be avoided.

CONSERVATION NEWS

By BILL WATSON

As the new Conservation Chairman, I would like to inform the Society that we now have a Conservation Committee. Under my Chairmanship, the Committee consists of Kenneth Barr, Jim Denholtz, John Peebles, and Bob Sandmeyer. We are still getting organized, but we are dedicated to making our Los Angeles Audubon Society as effective as possible in conservation matters.

The Los Angeles Audubon Society was represented by Valerie Cooley, William Jone, Jim Denholtz and myself at the hearing before the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors on the matter of putting the Santa Monica Mountains Regional Park Proposal on the ballot in November. Apparently this hearing was a mere formality. It was obvious that not one of the Supervisors was going to support this petition. Supervisor Debs excused himself early in the proceedings and never voted. The remaining Supervisors all voted against the petition.

Due to the limited time available at the hearing, many of the proponents of the Regional Park were not able to present their statements. Supervisor Hahn even groaned and complained every time anyone stood up to present a rebuttal, even though rebuttal time was allowed by the Board at the beginning of the hearing.

Edward Ornitz, of the Santa Monica Mountains Regional Park Association, assured me before and after the hearing that the Association will not give up in its splendid efforts to gain this sorely needed park acreage for the Los Angeles area. It must not be felt that the Association has wasted any efforts. It is my firm conviction that its tremendous effort in this matter has shown all concerned that many people in Los Angeles are tired of remaining silent while our parks are wasted and lost and while nothing is done to gain the lands this metropolitan area needs for parks now and in the future.

Apparently this has had some effect. Our representatives in government have been given a healthy shove by all this. Look for more action on this parks problem.

It is interesting to note that the State and Local Park Bond Act Proposition I on the November Ballot - not only seems to favor the proposals made by the Santa Monica Mountains Regional Park Association that a new Regional Tax District be formed to acquire and administer such a park; it also seeks to encourage such action.

First of all, the local grants that the Act proposes to make to counties are based on a figure of \$1.25 per person. This would bring Los Angeles County an apportionment of \$10,538,500.

Furthermore, the 1964 Bond Act seeks to encourage areawide or regional planning for park and beach purposes by "sweetening the pot". An extra 25 cents per person would be added to the amount given above in those counties which plan to acquire and develop larger parks on a regional or district basis, or which assume planning responsibility for an urban area as a whole. This would bring a maximum total of \$12,646,200 to Los Angeles County.

It seems that our county wants the state to create the Santa Monica Mountains Park, while the state wants the county to do it, and is willing to help if the voters and the county are willing. The State and Local Park Bond Act - Proposition I on the November ballot - can do a lot for this state and its citizens. There is a lot more to it than what I have mentioned at this point. I intend to discuss it further in future issues of the Western Tanager.

Another way in which we can all help our country and state preserve our remaining outdoor resources is through our Congress in Washington. It is now considering the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill (H.R. 3846). The sources for this Fund will be from fees for recreation use of designated federal areas and facilities, sales of surplus federal lands, and the existing 4-cent tax on motorboat fuel.

The Fund will be used for grants to states for up to 50% of the cost of planning, acquiring, and developing state and local outdoor recreation areas. It will also be used for land acquisition for the National Park System, National Forest recreation lands, and the lands for recreation use at National Wildlife Refuges; and it will be used for preservation of endangered species.

Carl Buchheister has said that the National Audubon Society endorses "both the proposed programs and the method of financing." Those who favor the passage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill (H.R. 3846) have been writing to their congressmen at the House of Representatives, Washington 25, D. C.

Keep your eyes and ears open for information that the Conservation Committee ought to know about. We will appreciate receiving it.

While extending regrets to the many who tried to attend Camp this summer only to find it full, Bill Goodall suggests you let him hear NOW if you are interested in the 1965 program. Already, many have placed their names on a PRIORITY LIST to receive information in advance early in the Fall. We would be glad to add YOU to the rapidly growing roster, so don't delay.

CONSERVATIVELY SPEAKING.

I USED TO BE CALLED A
SUBDIVIDER, BUT NOW
I'M A HOME-BUILDER
AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPER...

FOR INSTANCE
YOU SEE THESE
NICE HILLS HERE,
JUST GOING TO
WASTE?

WELL, I'VE GOT
PLANS FOR
2640 HOMES
ON NICE, BIG
60X100 LOTS,
IN SORT OF A
CAPE-COD-MODERN
ORIENTAL-PRO-
VINCIAL STYLE.
THEY SELL LIKE
MAD!

THESE HILLS ARE
PRETTY STEEP SO
I'LL HAVE TO CUT
BENCHES AND FILL
THE CANYONS BY
CLIPPING OFF THE
HILLTOPS - IN SIX
WEEKS WE CAN
UN-DO WHAT IT
TOOK NATURE
SIX MILLION YEARS
TO DO!

BUT PEOPLE HERE
WILL HAVE A
NICE VIEW OF
THE SURROUND-
ING HILLS - AT
LEAST 'TIL NEXT
YEAR WHEN I
SUBDIVIDE
THEM TOO...

THE AUDUBON SCENE

The rare Kirtland's Warbler has become a political issue in Michigan. The question is whether, as the Michigan Audubon Society has proposed, it should be officially made the State Bird. The Robin has long been regarded as the State Bird of Michigan, but the MAS points out that it has never been officially so designated. In favor of the Kirtland's Warbler Eugene Kenaga, past president of the MAS says, "Several states have adopted the Robin. But only Michigan can claim the Kirtland's Warbler. There are just 1,000 of these birds in existence, and they have become a symbol of conservation in America. Federal and state agencies, private and local organizations, naturalists and sportsmen, all are working in its behalf. No member of Michigan's wildlife family is as unique, or more a symbol of our state's wonderful out-of-doors."

From the MICHIGAN AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER of March 20, 1964.

Mt. Greylock, the highest mountain in Massachusetts and one of the outstanding scenic attractions of New England, is threatened by commercial exploitation in the shape of a proposed tramway and other ski and tourist developments. "...the summit of Greylock was given to the citizens of Massachusetts as a perpetual reservation--to preserve this mountain in its natural beauty. While the terms of the gift are unfortunately drawn sufficiently loosely as not to prevent the development planned, the intent seems clear that the donor would not approve were he living today."

From the MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON NEWSLETTER of April 1964.

AUDUBON NATIONAL CONVENTION NOVEMBER 7-11, 1964 TUCSON, ARIZONA

It is NOT too soon to REGISTER for the exciting 1964 National Convention, the first in the history of the Society to venture to the West. It will be a noteworthy occasion. Send your Registration fee (\$5.00) to Mrs. Dur-yea Morton, National Audubon Convention, 613 Riverville Road, Greenwich, Connecticut and you will receive FULL information about Convention activities and housing procedures. Make check payable "National Audubon Convention". ACT NOW--then RELAX.

ALASKA

CONTINUED...

Upon returning to Fairbanks we left Don and Caroline to fly home, while we started south for our visit to Mt. McKinley. At our first night's stop we added the Grey-headed Chickadee and Arctic Warbler to our life-list and just before we entered the national park had our best observations of Barrow's Goldeneye and of a Gyrfalcon. We were enjoying good weather and the Alaska Range was magnificent with its great peaks and enormous glaciers and we had our clearest view of Mt. McKinley at a distance of over a hundred miles. Then the weather changed abruptly and we were plagued with overcast skies and intermittent rain and had no satisfactory view of the great peak from the Eielson Visitors Center or from Wonder Lake. Big game animals abound in the park and we saw many fine moose and grizzlies, several hundred caribou, and everywhere the bighorn sheep of Alaska, Dall's Sheep. We were given some directions by one of the Ranger Naturalists to a place where a Hawk Owl family had been seen; we were to stop at a certain tree, proceed at a right angle to the road, and go a certain number of paces, etc., and look in the tops of the spruces for this medium sized owl with a rather long tail. Somehow we missed the tree. We turned around to go back and have another try, and as we neared the place, our bird suddenly flew across the road and perched in good view a short distance away. For the next ten minutes we watched him as he flew off and returned repeatedly, at one time sitting in the top of a low spruce no more than thirty feet away.

Compensating in no small way for the unfavorable weather was our delightful visit with Les and Alva Cammack, who are known to many of you who may read this. Les is now Chief Ranger and it was really the Cammack's Christmas card that started us planning our Alaska trip for the summer of 1963. Alva fed us such gastronomic delights as real sourdough pancakes, broiled moose steaks, blueberry pie made from native berries and home-made doughnuts. Best of all was our chance to renew acquaintances with these close friends of many years standing.

Our only misfortune of the trip came as we left McKinley National Park; we broke the springs of the trailer while crossing a particularly bad stretch of road that was under construction. By putting a two by four block under the trailer and wiring it in place we were able to limp slowly into Anchorage where we could have the springs rebuilt. But even this small mishap was offset by the adding of two new birds to our life-list. At our first night's stop after McKinley we found our Snowy Owl and on our evening walk flushed three Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Before leaving home Marion had started a correspondence with Mary Smith, whose name she had taken from the Audubon Field Notes. Mrs. Smith is the compiler for the Alaska region and we directed some questions to her about the best birding opportunities in her part of the Kenai Peninsula, questions which she took pains to answer in some detail. And so a visit to Cohoe and to Homer became a part of our plan from which we did not let ourselves be deterred by endless reports of bad road conditions. We found Mrs. Smith to be a charming person and spent a very enjoyable evening discussing birds with Mary and Alaskan political and economic affairs with Eugene, who has been very active in local civic matters. The Smiths live on a homestead which includes a considerable portion of a lake on which a variety of birds nest and still others rest on their spring and fall migration. Mary finds time to do some birding every day, summer and winter, and has excellent records for this region. Her big excitement this summer was the nesting of a pair of Aleutian Terns at a nearby lake, which was a record for this area, but our arrival was too late for nesting activities and so we still do not have an Aleutian Tern on our life-list. Of interest to us was a great abundance of White-winged Crossbills which were literally everywhere and filled the woods with their fine song. Homer, which is at the tip of the Kenai Peninsula, produced fine observations of Horned Puffins and Tufted Puffins as well as a male Harlequin Duck.

Coastal Alaska is an area of great scenic beauty with the most extensive glaciers on the North American Continent: the Columbia, Worthington, Mendenhall, Taku, Malaspina glaciers, to name but a few. These are produced by the very heavy precipitation of the region, which comes down as snow on



ALASKA

CONTINUED...

the heights, forms itself into ice, and descends to the sea in great rivers of ice. Precipitation usually exceeds 150 inches, and so I imagine that good clear weather is rather less than common; in our case it was non-existent. Our visit to Seward and to Valdez, the latter often called the Switzerland of Alaska, was a great disappointment as rain was continuous and the clouds remained scarcely above treetop height.

For our return trip we took the "Marine Highway," which is what Alaskans call the ferry service from Haines to Prince Rupert, B.C. This is a new service just started this summer and enables the motorist or trailer traveler to travel the inland passage, with stops at Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Ketchikan. You simply drive your rig onto the ferry, drive it off at each place you wish to stay over and continue your journey on a later date without extra cost. There are good dining service, fine lounges, but a very limited number of staterooms, and people with trailers or campers slept in their own rigs. Again we were plagued with rain at Haines and at Juneau but the day we embarked for the last leg of the trip the weather turned clear and we had a beautiful day for our visit to Petersburg and Wrangell, and we stayed up most of the night, enjoying the stars and watching the lights along the shore. The next day arrived with a beautiful sunrise but as we neared Prince Rupert we entered a bank of fog. Soon the skipper placed an extra deck watch in the bow, a bit later he set two more lookouts, one on each side. Then he started sounding the ship's whistle at intervals. Suddenly after the echoes of our reverberat-

ing blast died away we heard a responding whistle and knew we were approaching some outbound ship. These exchanges continued, at shorter intervals and always closer, but our untrained ear could not discern with any accuracy the exact direction. Now the motors were stopped and we drifted slowly forward with just what way was on the ship. Then our ship sounded two short blasts and we turned slightly to port and on our starboard bow the great bulk of the Alexander Mackenzie began to materialize out of the fog and we passed at about three hundred feet. In a short time we were in Prince Rupert.

We find ourselves somewhat at a loss in advising our friends about Alaska. We talked to some fellow travellers who said they were bored. "Nothing but mountains," they said. Some complained that it was so far. One party said, "I shouldn't have come." And one couple we talked to simply gave up after reaching Whitehorse and came home.

It is a mountain trip and it is far and sometimes the road is dusty and the fine dust sifts into everything not enclosed in a pliofilm bag. But we think we had a glorious time. We found Alaska different, particularly the Arctic. It is still frontier country. And we enjoyed making some new friends, Mr. Brower at Barrow and the Smiths at Cohoe. We would like to go again.

About the Author

Russ Wilson, our very able and dedicated Field Trip Chairman, certainly needs no introduction to those who regularly attend Los Angeles Audubon Society field trips, and to whom Russ and his wife Marion are old friends. The Wilsons' interests have been focused on the out-of-doors for a good many years. An interest in hiking and nature in general has seemingly over the years become increasingly oriented toward birds, and they became active in the Los Angeles Audubon Society some eight years ago. Besides the National Audubon Society, Russ and Marion are members of the Sierra Club, of the Wilderness Society, of the National Parks Association, and of the Nature Conservancy.

Russ is a teacher by profession, teaching International Relations and German at Hollywood High School, where he is Chairman of the Social Studies Department. He attended U.C.L.A. and spent his graduate year at the Berkeley campus.

Mrs. Marion Barlow

Mrs. Marion Brooks Barlow, member of a pioneer Los Angeles family, passed away on March 16th at the age of 91. Mrs. Barlow had been a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society since 1946.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Leonard Christian
24245 Neece St., Torrance
Miss Mary Ellen Dye
6506 Westward Beach Rd., Malibu
Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Haber
1403 N. Orange Grove Ave., LA
Mr. & Mrs. M. M. Levenson
1042 S. Ridgeley Dr., LA
Mr. David Marqua
175 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena
Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Powers
1104 S. Norton Ave., LA
Mr. James H. Seaman
2311 Dorothy St., La Crescenta

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



BY ARNOLD SMALL

Birds

NEW CHECKLISTS AVAILABLE NOW

As mentioned in the March issue of the *TANAGER*, the Field Check List of Birds of Southern California, published by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, is again in print. This checklist was recently revised by Irwin Woldman and Bob Blackstone to bring the nomenclature into line with the latest A.O.U. Check List of North American Birds and with the latest information regarding range and occurrence as published in the Annotated Field List of the Birds of Southern California, by Robert L. Pyle and Arnold Small.

A further aim in this revision was to put it in such a form as to provide an easy and practical method of keeping a record of field trips. Keeping this in mind it was decided to list only those birds which are of regular occurrence, and the list is designed (and punched) so that it may be filed in a small loose-leaf notebook of a standard size. For this purpose it is printed on paper stock. However, for those who prefer, it may be obtained in cardboard form. Our Service Department will stock the loose-leaf binders if there is sufficient demand. Your comments are invited regarding this checklist. We welcome any suggestions you may have for improving it; these will be considered when a new printing is in order.



cerning Black Rail since we succeeded in seeing one at Little Lake on April 5, which was found originally by Richard Neuman and seen on March 28 by Don and Caroline Adams, Fran Kohn and Dick Neuman. A single very white Glaucous Gull was found in a dump at Balboa Park on March 23, and an adult Laughing Gull was there on the same date. Migration of Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds was much in evidence during February and early March, but visits to desert oases in early April did not reveal any great numbers of migrants as yet in evidence. Swallows of all species were noted in migration rather steadily during late March, and small numbers of the earlier migrants were being reported.

By the time this issue reaches you, migrants should be flooding the countryside--especially Western Tanagers and warblers. By the first week in May, almost any lowland area will do for good birding.

Coming as somewhat of a surprise to most people, southern California finally received some substantial rains during the latter part of March and into early April. This added considerably to the mountain snowpack and should go far towards keeping streams running well into summer. Unfortunately the timing of the rains was not conducive to spectacular floral displays in the deserts, but it did cause considerable "greening up" of desert areas. Strong desert winds again prevailed--blowing generally from the east and northeast raising great clouds of dust and blowing sand.

Spring migration of small landbirds was well underway by the end of March. Many of these birds enter the greener parts of California after a long and difficult journey across the deserts to the south and east, and for this reason tend to "jam up" at desert oases, especially during unfavorable weather and wind conditions. Winds blowing through San Gorgonio Pass (which is an important "Port of Entry" into green California from the deserts) almost invariably are from the west. This is due to several factors (even though one would expect winds from the east to be blowing from the rather steady high-pressure areas to the east of here). One of these factors is the existence of the high mountain ranges which surround San Gorgonio Pass and from which emanate the strong and constant winds. Air, cooling on the high slopes gains in density, and flows downhill, and the peculiar topography of that area channels these winds into the pass from a westward direction. Here, they meet the drier winds from the eastern deserts and cause great turbulence.

But the remarkable thing is, that into this atmospheric maelstrom, pour hundreds of thousands of migrants from the south and southeast. A few hours spent in Whitewater is most rewarding in early April and through early May. Diurnal migrants (such as swallows and swifts) can be seen (and counted) as they battle their way into the teeth of the unfavorable winds. Many of them crouch exhausted in the safety of the few small shrubs at the mouth of Whitewater Canyon. Many of them make their way at last into the canyon itself, following the natural riparian vegetation there, and this might explain why this area acts as such an effective bird trap in the spring.

Two American Brant together with six Black Brant rested temporarily on Malibu Lagoon on March 21. There were still several Black-legged Kittiwakes present there on that date also. A Cattle Egret was present in the Tijuana River Valley until at least April 1. Expect no more wry comments from me con-