

# GREAT WEATHER FOR DUCKS...

by Bill Watson

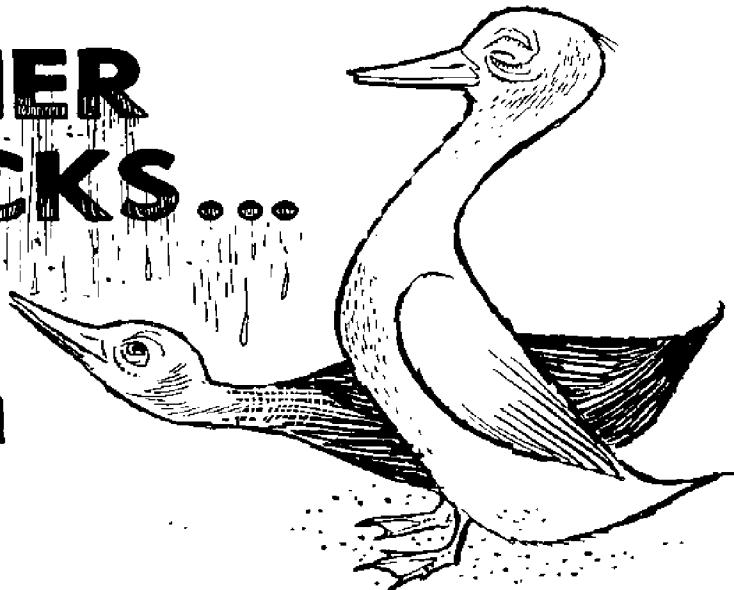
**D**ecember 27, 1964, was a day that will be long remembered by those Christmas Bird Count compilers who had selected it for their Count Day in our area of the country. Arthur Langton, Jr., is compiler for the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. Here is what he suffered as reported in the *Phainopepla* after that Society's Count:

All the previous evening and on the morning of Sunday, December 27th, the Langton phone rang and rang, as one timorous birder after another decided that it would be too wet to venture out and begged off.

When I found the weather to be so appalling on the night before this fateful December 27th, I had cold feet myself. My solution was to go visit a friend and spend the evening watching television, keeping myself completely incommunicado. Again, in the morning, I rose at 5:30 and found it raining miserably. I had wild thoughts of rushing out and

## Conservation World Mourns Alma Stultz

As this issue of the WESTERN TANAGER was going to press, we were saddened to learn of the passing away on Sunday, 24 January, of our beloved Alma (Mrs. O. M.) Stultz. She was a Life Member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Director of the Audubon Center of Southern California for many years, Mrs. Stultz and her husband, Miller, moved to Los Osos (near Morro Bay) in 1959 after her retirement from that position. Alma Stultz was loved by all who knew her and her death will be mourned by many.



calling off the whole thing. But then I realized that I couldn't possibly reach enough people by phone to stop the Count. Someone surely would still go out and count, and then find that his or her work was wasted. So I left my apartment, had a good breakfast, and set out for Echo Park. I was to meet a party of eleven others there at 7:00. By 7:30 two others showed up, one of them bringing a third, unexpected worker along with him.

Our dampened spirits rose when we walked over to the lake and began to count the Double-crested Cormorant, the Ruddy Ducks, the Lesser Scaups, the Coots -WAIT! That's no Coot! It's a Common Gallinule! All of a sudden it seemed worthwhile to be out there in that rain. Our only other records for the Gallinule were in 1945 and 1947, when two each year had been counted.

This was how the 65th Christmas Bird Count began for me. I knew of four of us who were out and about, counting birds in the intermittent rain. That evening, at our little dinner meeting, I found others who had counted. In the following days, I received reports for each area I had assigned anyone to. Someone had been out to cover each area, rain or not. In the end, I found that forty-eight of us had gone out in that weather, and eight others had counted the birds around their homes. So, with a good feeling that the Los Angeles Audubon Society had done its part in the 65th Christmas Bird Count, I went to work and totalled up what we had found.

Continued on page 50

# GREAT WEATHER FOR DUCKS

It certainly was good weather for the ducks, or rather, for duck counting. Our Circle produced one Canada Goose, two White-fronted Geese, ten Green-winged Teal, two Cinnamon Teal, twenty Redheads, 632 Lesser Scaup, three Buffleheads, 203 Ruddy Ducks, and even three, little, female Ring-necked Ducks among the Lesser Scaups in MacArthur Park Lake.

It was a good day for counting a lot of other birds, too. In fact, our total number of species came to 111, and we counted approximately 19,470 individuals. This was in the rain and shorthanded. Last year, with a Santanna condition prevailing, we had 124 species. But the year before, with good weather, we came up with 134 species. Both of those years, we had 100 Christmas Bird Counters working. This year we only had 56 Counters.

The twenty Redheads was the highest count we have ever had of this species on a Count Day. In 1948 we had fourteen Redheads, with less than ten in any other year. We had a Wandering Tattler, too. This was the second time a Wandering Tattler has been counted. The first time was in 1961. Among the owl species, we did get three Great Horned Owls, but that was all the owls we counted. Six Steller's Jays were counted, which is good, too. This makes only the fourth year we have found Steller's Jays. The other years are 1949, 1951, and 1961.

If you had been with David Gaines, you would have participated in producing two species that we have never been able to count before. David counted the Hepatic Tanager and the White-throated Sparrow, both of which have been spending some time in Rancho Park, and which have been verified by others prior to the Count Day.

For the third year in a row, we have produced a single Slate-colored Junco. But our most noteworthy Junco was the lone Gray-headed Junco that was counted at the feeding station of Bob and Margaret Hawthorne at Silver Lake where it has been a regular visitor for some weeks.

Many of you have read Frank Donohue's article about Dr. John Hardy of Occidental, and the parrots, in the Herald-Examiner. Dr. Hardy did go out and find two Yellow-headed Parrots for us, and Dr. W. A. Davis found another one for us to bring our first report of parrots on a Christmas Bird Count to a total of three. It may seem strange to some of you, and maybe even Allan Cruickshank who edits the National Count will balk at accepting parrots. But then we have always counted Spotted Doves, Ringed Turtle Doves, and House

## Continued

Sparrows, even though these are not native birds. But they have established themselves, and so, apparently, the Yellow-headed Parrot and other parrot species are successfully establishing themselves.

So much for unusual observations. Conspicuously absent this year were Horned Grebes, Pin-tails, Shovelers, Greater Yellowlegs, Dunlins, Western Sandpipers, American Avocets, Mew Gulls, and Acorn Woodpeckers.

There was nothing unusual about finding Ring-billed Gulls in our Circle, but when Ring-billed Gulls outnumber even the House Finches, which they did, almost two to one, something unusual is happening. The storm at sea sent the Ring-billed Gulls and Bonaparte's Gulls to us, for we had unusually high counts of these gulls.

My records show that, as we all know and dread, the Starlings are on the increase. The first year we reported any on the Christmas Bird Count was 1960, when we had two of them. In 1961, there were 12; in 1962, there were 16; in 1963, there were 186; and this year, we counted 320 Starlings! Who wants them?

While the Starlings were steadily increasing, other species's numbers have gone down. With the marshes disappearing before "civilization," so are the Common Egrets, the Snowy Egrets, the Marsh Hawks, and the Yellowthroats in our Circle. We haven't had any of these for some years now, and we used to get them all in good numbers.

Other species that showed up in especially good numbers this year were Brown Pelicans, Green Herons, Redheads (already mentioned), Ruddy Ducks (more than we've had in eleven years), Least Sandpipers, Forster's Terns, White-throated Swifts, Western Meadowlarks, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Lark Sparrows.

Although we did not count any this year, Roadrunners are still with us in the Baldwin Hills where they have been observed recently. No one counted in those hills this year. Both the Roadrunner and the Belted Kingfisher have been maintaining their numbers with astonishing regularity through all the years we have been counting in our Los Angeles Circle. We never get more than a handful of either of these species, but we have been getting that handful consistently year after year. That's kind of nice to know.

Continued on page 51

# GREAT WEATHER FOR DUCKS

Continued

House Finches still outnumber the House Sparrows by two to one. The ten most numerous birds this year were, in order, Ring-billed Gulls, House Finches, House Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Brewer's Blackbirds, Bonaparte's Gulls, Lesser Scaups, Mourning Doves, Willets, and White-throated Swifts.

All in all, I cannot find any fault with the results of our Christmas Bird Count this year. If we had had more people out that day, we would have had had a few more species, Burrowing Owls, Road-runners, Cactus Wrens, for example. But it was poor weekend, even in the best of weather, with a number of our bird watchers understandably involved in Christmas affairs. The rainy weather kept down our number of counters. But I am afraid that the entire country was having bad weather for the Christmas Bird Count this year, and it will be interesting to see how other circles made out when the Christmas Bird Count issue of Audubon Field Notes comes out in April.

To all of those who did work, and in every case, they worked hard, I want to extend my personal thanks for helping me perform my duties as Christmas Bird Count Chairman for this Society. We turned in a report that did us nothing but honor, and I am proud of it.

For the record, here is the final Christmas Bird Count list for December 27, 1964:

20	Eared Grebe
312	Western Grebe
22	Pied-billed Grebe
53	Brown Pelican
3	Double-crested Cormorant
6	Great Blue Heron
4	Green Heron
1	Canada Goose
2	White-fronted Goose
24	Mallard
10	Green-winged Teal
2	Cinnamon Teal
20	Redhead
3	Ring-necked Duck
632	Lesser Scaup
3	Bufflehead
1	White-winged Scoter
5	Surf Scoter
203	Ruddy Duck
3	Cooper's Hawk
16	Red-tailed Hawk
24	Sparrow Hawk
107	California Quail
1	Common Gallinule
468	American Coot
4	Semi-palmated Plover
7	Snowy Plover

85	Killdeer
259	Black-bellied Plover
45	Surfbird
33	Black Turnstone
4	Whimbrel
8	Spotted Sandpiper
1	Wandering Tattler
507	Willet
194	Least Sandpiper
9	Short-billed Dowitcher
100	Marbled Godwit
64	Sanderling
24	Glaucous-winged Gull
56	Western Gull
1	Herring Gull
158	California Gull
3697	Ring-billed Gull
801	Bonaparte's Gull
150	Heermann's Gull
100	Forster's Tern
6	Band-tailed Pigeon
585	Mourning Dove
269	Spotted Dove
65	Ringed Turtle Dove
3	Great Horned Owl
503	White-throated Swift
2	Black-chinned Hummingbird
99	Anna's Hummingbird
6	Belted Kingfisher
63	Red-shafted Flicker
2	Downy Woodpecker
2	Nuttall's Woodpecker
11	Black Phoebe
12	Say's Phoebe
6	Steller's Jay
326	Scrub Jay
3	Common Raven
42	Common Crow
1	Mountain Chickadee
2	Plain Titmouse
295	Common Bushtit
72	Wrentit
2	House Wren
20	Bewick's Wren
2	Rock Wren
387	Mockingbird
25	California Thrasher
189	Robin
8	Hermit Thrush
9	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
246	Water Pipit
264	Cedar Waxwing
33	Loggerhead Shrike
320	Starling
1	Hutton's Vireo
333	Audubon's Warbler
1187	House Sparrow
196	Western Meadowlark
7	Red-winged Blackbird
17	Bullock's Oriole
830	Brewer's Blackbird
60	Brown-headed Cowbird
5	Western Tanager

Continued on page 55



# CONSERVATION NOTES

By  
**BILL WATSON**

The reasoning behind our system of wildlife refuges eludes me. In thinking over the entire matter it seems to me that some things have been forgotten by some of the human race.

We have learned that the wealth of wildlife in our nation has proved to be not inexhaustible. The great forests were cut down, hunting was carried on indiscriminately and wastefully, urbanization has extended into important breeding and resting grounds. Because of these and other pressures, such as radiation and pesticides, we have been responsible for the extinction of many species of animals.

Recently the Los Angeles Times reported that we are now facing the extinction of the caribou and the harp seal. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published a long list of birds and animals that have become extinct in North America, and an even longer list of endangered species. Certainly it is obvious that we human beings have a terrible record of destruction when it comes to diminishing the number of species and number of animals.

With our seemingly inborn proclivity for wastefulness, we annihilate vast numbers of our wildlife for sport, profit, "progress" itself. Some intelligent hunters and non-hunters became concerned and began to try to save the wildlife of North America. The passenger pigeon was gone, the bison were nearly gone. The Tule Elk, the California Condor, the sea otter were obviously all going, too. So were the egrets and the whooping crane.

It made sense to try to save the breeding grounds of all sorts of animals, and roosting areas, and wintering grounds, marshes, lakes, mountains, plains, or whatever. The National Audubon Society and others established sanctuaries and worked for legislation that would save our vanishing wildlife.

The U. S. Government began to set aside areas for wildlife refuges. Refuges from what? I know what, and so do you. From us! The system of National Wildlife Refuges was established and developed, and all Americans know that these "sanctuaries" were absolutely necessary, even insufficient, if we were to have any of our unique and thrilling wildlife left for future generations. (Future generations? I'm a part of a generation that still has some future left. How about my generation too?)

Every hunter who buys a license and a duck stamp is contributing to the Wildlife Refuge program. He knows it. He is told it over and over

again. He feels he owns these refuges and their wildfowl because of this.

There are getting to be fewer wildfowl per hunter. The number of hunters is increasing; the numbers of wildfowl is decreasing. I don't mean since last year -- I mean since Columbus discovered America. Hunters are starting to cry out for more ducks and geese. "TURN LOOSE REFUGE DUCKS, SAY HUNTERS," said a newspaper the other day. The ducks are hiding in the refuges. It seems that this isn't fair. The hunters want to get into the refuges, too. For some reason or another there aren't enough ducks outside the refuges. This must prove something, but obviously some people can't see it.

The way I see it, no one group or individual owns the wildlife of North America, or any part of this earth for that matter. Here in America, we own our resources in common. We merely have temporary custody of our land as individuals. So with ducks and condors. As in our airwaves, they belong to the people of our nation. Everybody. There are those who dispute this, as in the television scene and the air we breathe.

The reason hunters have to pay for refuges is because they use up the ducks, a natural resource of our country. Do you shoot ducks? Shouldn't you pay for taking this property from the people of the United States who own it? If there are fewer ducks, and make no mistake, there are, in the overall picture, then there must be some program to protect ducks sufficiently so that there will never be an extinct Redhead or Canvas-back. And those who are contributing to the extinction of a species should have to pay for it. However, this does not mean that henceforth, for the price of a duck stamp, they will own all the ducks of North America.

There must be some sanctuary for our wildlife. Our wildlife must be allowed to live and maintain its numbers. There must be some sort of balance. There is no balance left in our wildlife refuges. Not with every refuge in California now open to hunting. It doesn't matter if the hunting is controlled. I say again and again, you can not afford to spend the capital and the interest when the capital is the last there will ever be.

If the Mexican Government can so wisely set aside Isla Raza in the Gulf of Mexico for the complete protection of the nesting colonies of the Heerman's Gull and the Elegant Tern that are found there, it seems pitiable that in our state of California the last sanctuary for the wintering waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway must support a mandated 40% of its area for hunting.

We, who understand the extreme importance of sanctuaries for wildlife, must continue to fight the opening of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge and the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge to hunting.

The California Garden Clubs, Inc., has officially protested the opening of the refuges to hunting pressures. Its resolution to this effect is being sent to the Secretary of the Interior, the Governor of California, and to members of Congress.

Have you protested yet?

# Los Angeles Audubon Society



# calendar

HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY AND NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE  
 PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46. 876-0202  
 HEADQUARTERS CHAIRMAN: MRS. LAPRELL EDENS  
 REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: MRS. RUSSELL WILSON

ARNOLD SMALL, President

MRS. DONALD L. ADAMS, Executive Secretary

## February



1965 FEBRUARY 1965						
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	~	~	~	~	~	~

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

Feb. 5 FRIDAY LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER 6:30 P.M. - Roger Young Auditorium, 936 W. Washington Blvd. Program Herb Clarke, "The Lure of Florida Birding"  
 Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

Feb. 10 WEDNESDAY WILDLIFE FILM "Wilderness Trails", by Charles T. Hotchkiss of Homestead, Florida 7:45 P.M., John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 McCadden Place. In this film, produced and narrated by Mr. Hotchkiss, a great variety of animals, large and small, feathered and furred, are shown in their natural environments. Four national parks are represented. Single admission.... \$1.25; Students...\$.50.  
 Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510

Feb. 13 SATURDAY-SUNDAY FIELD TRIP Morro Bay. This is one of the best areas in southern California for wintering coastal migrants. Meet at 8:00 A.M. Saturday at the foot of Morro Rock. Most of us will go up Friday night in order to have a full day Saturday and a half day Sunday for birding.  
 Leader: Bob Blackstone CR 6-3879

Feb. 18 THURSDAY - CONSERVATION MEETING 7:30 P.M., Audubon House. A lively discussion of current conservation issues is anticipated. These meetings are open to anyone interested in conservation. Come and learn what YOU can do about conservation.  
 Chairman: Bill Watson

Feb. 28 SUNDAY FIELD TRIP Chatsworth Reservoir. Nowhere else so near to the center of Los Angeles can mergansers, geese, ducks and other water birds be seen so well. Lewis' Woodpecker is a possibility. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the corner of Roscoe Blvd. and Topanga Canyon Blvd. Bring lunch.  
 Leader: Reg Julian CR 4-3685

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

Mar. 6 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP 8:30 A.M. at 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. then left to N. Durfee and Audubon Center. Bring sack lunch. The Sea and Sage, Pomona Valley and Whittier Audubon Societies are also invited on this field trip.

Host: Paul Howard, Director

—CALENDAR CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE—

# calendar ..... Continued...

Mar. 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8:00 P.M., Great Hall, Plummer Park. "Call of the High Country", by James F. Clements. Jim Clements will tell of the Clements family's mountain climbing and high birding experiences in the Tetons, the Sierra and the Cascades, illustrating his talk with color slides.

Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

Mar. 10 WEDNESDAY - WILDLIFE FILM "New England Saga", by John D. Bulger. 7:45 P.M. at John Burroughs Junior High School, 600 S. McCadden Place. The rugged beauty of New England from the mountains to the sea, and the story of its wildlife an absorbing narrative in color produced and directed by Dr. Bulger. Single admission...\$.25; Students...\$.50.

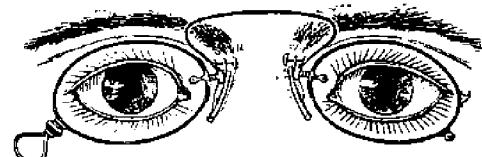
Chairman: Laura Lou Jenner 748-7510

Mar. 13 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.

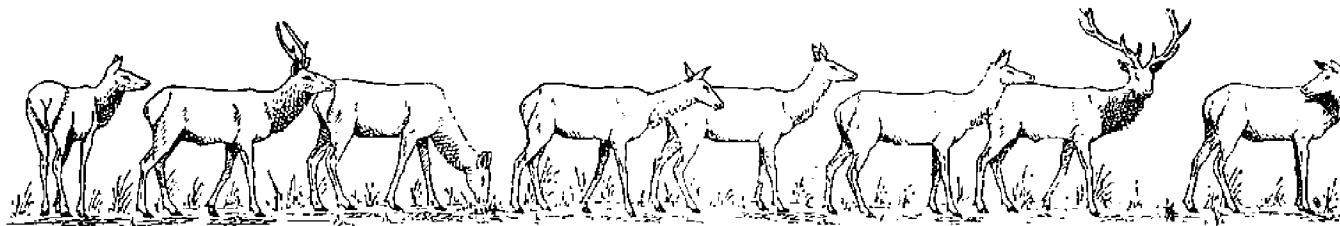
Leader: Dave Robison 761-0217

## Audubon Wildlife Films

Wednesday, February 10th  
Wednesday, March 10th



SEE CALENDAR FOR DETAILS



## COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE TULE ELK

A FIELD EXCURSION to eastern California's Owens Valley, habitat of the rare Tule Elk, will be held April 24 and 25, under the sponsorship of the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk.

Prominent naturalists and conservationists, authorities in the fields of zoology, botany, history and natural history, archeology, geography, and geology will participate in the week-end meet which is open to all interested persons.

For information regarding the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk; the Field Excursion, registration forms, accomodations and approximate costs, write:

COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE TULE ELK  
5502 Markland Drive, Los Angeles, Calif. 90022

(The Owens Valley is reached via U.S. Highways 6 and 395. If requested by sufficient numbers, special busses from Los Angeles and San Francisco can be chartered for the Field Excursion.)

# Helen S. Pratt

## 1883-1965

by Clara Weedmark

A member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society for over half a century, Miss Helen Pratt passed away quietly in an Eagle Rock nursing home on the 16th of January at the age of 81. Her friend, Mrs. Weedmark, has written the following tribute to her for the TANAGER. Ed.

For many years to come, Audubon members, Campfire Girl, Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders and conservation chairmen will feel deeply the loss of Helen Steele Pratt.

Helen was born at Joy Prairies near Concord, Illinois January 26, 1883. Her father, Lyman Pratt, was pastor of a church and also a farmer. She said she gained her first love of nature walking through the fields with her father.

In 1906, Helen received a Liberal Arts degree from Oberlin College. While there she started her life study of ornithology.

After the death of her father, Helen and her mother moved to Los Angeles. They selected a view lot in the Eagle Rock area and built a home, the typical California bungalow, in 1914. Here Miss Pratt has lived all these years. The yard was planned to attract birds, with a miniature brook and bird's bathing pool.

Miss Pratt joined the Los Angeles Audubon Society in 1913, and was active in the support of the Sanctuary, which has now become the Audubon Center of Southern California, at El Monte.

## Great Weather for Ducks...

1	Hepatic Tanager
5	Purple Finch
2239	House Finch
30	American Goldfinch
157	Lesser Goldfinch
1	Lawrence's Goldfinch
11	Rufous-sided Towhee
351	Brown Towhee
25	Savannah Sparrow
104	Lark Sparrow
1	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
1	Slate-colored Junco
398	Oregon Junco
1	Gray-headed Junco
3	Chipping Sparrow
904	White-crowned Sparrow
38	Golden-crowned Sparrow
1	White-throated Sparrow
3	Fox Sparrow
33	Song Sparrow
3*	Yellow-headed Parrot

TOTAL: 111 Species

Because of its wider scope at that time, and its Audubon Junior work, Miss Pratt became interested in the California Audubon Society (now the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society). She was made secretary of that organization in 1921. In the 36th Annual Report of the California Audubon Society of 1942 she writes, "For twenty years you have been listening to my reports, seven years as Secretary of California Audubon, and thirteen years as Junior Audubon Secretary. Ten of those years I have also been a representative of National Audubon... My work has covered the Pacific Coast... in distribution of materials (Junior Audubon leaflets) and I have traveled pretty thoroughly the state of California." This work was largely getting the cooperation of the teachers and talking to the children.

Miss Pratt instructed many Campfire Girls, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and tested them for their Bird Study merit badges.

For several years bird banding was a special interest of Helen's. There were plenty of birds right in her own yard to band. In the meantime she had become interested in making and showing color movies of birds and other nature subjects. Perhaps the most beautiful of these is one of the summer birds right in her own back yard.

At the time of her death, Miss Pratt was Historian of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. All birders and any interested persons were welcome to view the birds from the north windows of her home. Perhaps the most popular birds here are the almost-tame Hermit Thrush and the Virginia's Warbler.

In addition:

Continued...

2	Unidentified hawks
1	Unidentified hawk (accipiter)
295	Unidentified gulls
4	Unidentified hummingbirds
38	Unidentified sparrows
2*	Unidentified parrots

\* One baby parrot found on ground near Canyon View Drive recently. It was dead.

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: Approximately 19,470.

### TEN MOST NUMEROUS SPECIES

3697	Ring-billed Gull
2239	House Finch
1187	House Sparrow
904	White-crowned Sparrow
803	Brewer's Blackbird
801	Bonaparte's Gull
632	Lesser Scaup
585	Mourning Dove
507	Willet
503	White-throated Swift

### About the Author

Bill Watson, our dedicated Conservation Chairman, has also directed the Christmas Bird Count for two years. An enthusiastic and tireless worker in the Society, Bill also serves as Librarian and aids in the production of the TANAGER. His monthly column establishes him as our official conservation "conscience". a ready fighter for the protection of our wildlife heritage.



**AUDUBON**

# Scene

"Second Mondays". a new kind of field trip, will begin January 11...under the leadership of Elizabeth Terwilliger. Mrs. Terwilliger has been exploring Marin County's little-known waterways and in November guided 30 birders in 11 canoes through the canals and sloughs of Corte Madera Creek...In December, 14 went out in 7 canoes...Inexperienced canoeers (they are mostly Californians, Mrs. Terwilliger says easterners seem to know how to paddle) can sign up for canoe lessons...

THE REDWOOD LOG (Marin Audubon Society)

The most notable local bird visitor of the past month has been a Wood Ibis which has been at Goleta Slough and the Devereaux Slough since December 12... The specimen in the Bird Hall at the Museum (Santa Barbara Natural History Museum) was taken at the Devereaux Slough more than thirty years ago, and this is the first reported in (the) Santa Barbara area since that time.

EL TECOLOTE (Santa Barbara Audubon Society)

The Massachusetts Audubon Society recently searched for a hat decorated with egret plumes for a historical exhibit and learned that the founders of the Society had done their job too thoroughly. The Society was organized to halt abuses of the plumage trade and not only stamped out the slaughter of egrets in breeding plumage but also snuffed out all egret-trimmed bonnets. And bonnets bearing a stuffed tern on the crown or muffs made of grebe skins seem nonexistent also.

MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

December 1964

According to the Sacramento Audubon Society, "Wildlife along the Sacramento and Feather Rivers is in danger of losing its natural habitat... The U. S. Corps of Engineers is initiating a study of a navigation project on these rivers which could be seriously damaging to riparian habitat. Tentative plans under consideration are to eliminate all bends in the Feather River and build barge locks and dams which would flood the trees and habitat."

THE OBSERVER December 1964

Members of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society were on hand to testify at a hearing by the Palo Alto City Council to review recommendations for the development of the Palo Alto Baylands, some 1887 acres of flood plain and marsh owned by the city. They "again encouraged the City Council to seriously consider our conservation project: a staffed nature-study center, walkways, observation platforms, and enough open space for sanctuary to be used by students or individuals of all ages, as well as the birds".

THE AVOCET December 1964

## Death Takes Audubon Lecturer W. Emerson Scott

W. Emerson Scott, Audubon Wildlife Film lecturer, died of lung cancer December 21 at Cairo, Michigan where he lived. His superb photography and dramatic narration had influenced audiences for 14 years until illness forced him to suspend work last fall. His best known films were "Pika Country" and "Our Changing Heritage". (Many of us saw and heard the latter when Mr. Scott was here in February of last year, and the former during an earlier year's series. Ed.)

As a measure of the good will and affection in which he was held, his fellow lecturers, friends, and lecture sponsors collected more than \$2,500.00 during his final illness to assist him and his family financially.

...from Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide

Members of the Tucson Audubon Society, looking for new fields to conquer, conducted a Christmas count in San Blas, Nayarit (Mexico). They counted 215 species, 13,242 individuals!

THE VERMILION FLYCATCHER (Tucson A.S.)

GARDENING WITHOUT POISONS, by Beatrice T. Hunter: A Book Review by Mildred Collins

This book attempts to explore the middle road of safe and effective pest control on the farm and in the home garden plot. Miss Hunter says there is a general lack of knowledge in keeping safe distance between poisons and famine. She suggests developing a bold new approach to the whole problem; we may not be one hundred per cent successful after reading her book, but it will be a step in the right direction.

Insects play a vital role and we should understand their importance to other living things. Some insects improve soil; some control weeds; one vital function is pollination; so we come to the conclusion--no insect is all "good" or all "bad". There are many predators and parasites encountered in a garden; this diversity is an aspect of nature's plan for a balanced supply of insect life and is a means of preventing one insect from assuming pest proportions. Many baits and traps are suggested for various insects and these are effective for only the one you are trying to eliminate. Certainly different from the poisonous insecticides which kill indiscriminately. Instructions are given on how to make safe and sane sprays and dustings. Never are these suggestions made to eliminate an insect completely--only to control it. The insect you feel is a pest may be very necessary to the existence of another insect that is beneficial; the balance of nature must be maintained, and this can be done with botanical insecticides. Emerson once said, "Everything in nature contains all the powers of nature."

# AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

We didn't go on the Carrizo Plain Field Trip to see the raven, Sparrow Hawk, Meadowlark, House Finch or Sparrow, even though they helped swell our list to 30 species. Of far greater interest was Le Conte's Thrasher, the thousands of Horned Larks, the Mountain Bluebirds, and the Mountain Plovers.

The Plains yielded hawks and eagles that made the trip noteworthy. There were several Marsh, Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks, but not as many as last year. Of special note were the number of Golden Eagles--12 different sightings were made. The Yellow-billed Magpie was observed on Sunday farther up into the canyons.

The Sandhill Cranes were in flight when we drove up to Soda Lake at noon. There were four distinct flights, numbering from 150 to well over 500; our final count was about 2000. Hunters had set the birds into motion, thus cheating us of the pleasure of studying the birds at close range telescopically. Mrs. Jenner writes that later "Great flocks of them returned: 2000 birds must be a conservative figure. The sight of the great flocks, wheeling and turning, flying across the big silver moon, and the constant bugling, made this one of the great moments of birding for most of us. Hart Kivett spent the night in his camper by Soda Lake and (he) told us that after dark the birds settled on the dry lake beds; all night there was sound and movement in the flocks.

"December 13. The next morning we found our cars covered with frost in 20 degree temperature. Fewer birds were seen at dawn, since they apparently take off in smaller flocks in all directions.... From... low hills we could look out over the fields and see flocks of cranes feeding here and there."

Some of the 44 members and guests present on the Lake Norconian Field Trip got "Life Birds" at Norco Lake. I never expected to see Wood Ducks in California, but there they were--3 males and 1 female. The rarity for the day was the European Widgeon.

The lake was literally covered with ducks and gulls with Eared and Pied-billed Grebes here and there. Of the 15 different ducks, the Baldpates seemed to out-number the others, but there were teals (Green-winged and Cinn-

BY OTTO WIDMAN

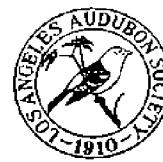
mon), Lesser Scaup, a few Bufflehead, a good many Canvas-back and Pintail. A thrill was the arrival of 115 Canada Geese, who honked their way in in two flights. A Virginia Rail was spotted along the shore and a Red-shouldered Hawk and a Barn Owl in the woods. The surprise of the day was the number of shore birds: Snipes, dowitchers, Greater Yellow-legs, Killdeer and Western Sandpipers, Double-crested Cormorants. In the tules the yellow-throats made no attempt at hiding.

We had visitors: George R. Hall and J. R. Schlesinger joined us from Virginia. Barry White, an ardent British birder, came with Arnold Small and Brian. George Brailsford began his birding with this trip along with George Hall. They had a list of 78 birds to add to their life list. The Pasadena Audubon Society also birded the lake with us, and we were glad to see Mr. Quattlebaum and Mrs. Rogers, whom we have met before on field trips.

After the group had birded the lake area, we met at Puddingstone Dam where we renewed our acquaintance with the Blue-footed Booby.

Continued on page 58

## The Western Tanager



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA  
FREE TO MEMBERS ... OTHERS \$1.50 ANNUALLY

EDITOR

Robert E. Blockstone  
10363 Colvin Ave. Los Angeles 25

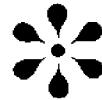
## Welcome! — NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. E. A. Bower  
2020 El Arbolita Dr., Glendale  
Dale Guthormsen & Family  
10854 Martha St., Encino  
Jean B. Hart  
1631 N. Alexandria, Hollywood  
Dr. Lillian H. Hellstrom  
301 East 21st St., New York  
Mrs. Carole C. Horn  
943 Iliff St., Pacific Palisades  
Mrs. Louise Lasser  
6539 Commodore Sloat Dr., L. A.  
Albert Mogul  
940 Larrabee St., L. A.  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Phillips  
1517 Merced Ave., Space 44, El Monte  
Miss Marie A. Riggs  
3376 Rowena Ave., L. A.  
Mr. John Thomas & Family  
670 Echo Park Ave., L. A.

Contributions to the Society in memory of Mrs. Elma Killgoure, member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, who passed away on January 12, were received from the Dann Houghs and the Richard Houghs of Manhattan Beach and from Bessie Jane and Betty Hunter of San Carlos. Mrs. Killgoure was the mother of Nancy Killgoure, who died in 1960.

southern California

# BIRDS



By Arnold Small

Since the advent of the Blue-footed Boobies at Puddingstone Reservoir, no really special birds have been located in our area, although the winter season thus far has had its share of bright moments. Wintering loons are not yet really common, and all grebes seem somewhat below normal. A Red-necked Grebe was located near Goleta in December, while a lone Wood Ibis lingered in the same vicinity. The flight of waterfowl generally was very good, although no especially good sea ducks were located. Upper Newport Bay proved to be an excellent resting ground for more than thirty-thousand ducks as well as four White Pelicans. Two Whistling Swans were located: one was at Malibu Lagoon for a brief while early in January, and another was at Hansen Dam at about the same time.

It appears to have been an exceptional winter for Hooded Mergansers as they were reported from scattered lakes and sloughs from San Diego to Santa Barbara. Wood Ducks, as well, seemed to have arrived in small force this winter with as many as five at Lake Norconian on January 10. A male European Widg-eon was also located on Lake Norconian at that time, and Gadwall seemed more numerous than ever. Good flocks of Canada Geese were noted on Lake Norconian, Chatsworth Reservoir, and Lake Mathews. Black Brant were scarce everywhere locally, but some hundreds were found on the large bay south of Ensenada on January 3.

Birds of prey seemed to be holding their own pretty well--all except the Peregrine Falcon whose declining population all over the world has attracted much concern and interest. Despite continuing urban sprawl and elimination of much suitable habitat, the White-tailed Kites continue to hold ground, but this kind of progress has displaced the Burrowing Owls to an alarming degree. Cooper's Hawks and Red-tails continue to do well, but Sharp-shinned Hawks have become scarcer. Two Rough-legged Hawks were found by Hart Kivett at Santa Ana Airport January 11, and he also noted at least 5 eagles of undetermined species at Lake Mathews January 10. A single Bald Eagle flew over Pacific Palisades on the same date.

Parrots continue to attract attention in the greater Los Angeles area and many observations have been made of Yellow-headed Parrots in the vicinity of Olympic Blvd. and Sawtelle, Wilshire and Bundy, and Olympic and Westwood as well as in Pacific Palisades and South Pasadena. There seems to be little doubt that these parrots have established themselves in our region, probably subsisting on the abundant fruits, nuts,

## Audubon Activities

CONTINUED

At the Tuesday Evening Meeting of January 11 Earl Mahaffie was elected to be the third member of the nominating committee, the president and the executive board having already selected Frieda Dutton and Jim Huffman in accordance with the Society's by-laws. Russ Wilson reported on the recent field trips. Other observations of interest by members were: Whistling Swans seen at Malibu by Hart Kivett, Louisiana Heron at Bolsa Chica by David Gaines, a Bald Eagle off El Segundo by Arnold Small and a kittiwake off Santa Monica pier by Frank Little.

Dr. Kenneth Stager's talk on his expedition to the Uluguru Mountains of east Africa related how this region was chosen because of its isolation and prospect of finding endemics. He spoke of their setting up mist nets, which revealed more species of birds than they had expected, including many which were hitherto believed to be extremely rare. He brought with him a good selection of the specimens obtained for the Los Angeles County Museum by the expedition. Birders who are interested in the further study of African birds were invited by Dr. Stager to visit the museum.

and berries grown in the semi-tropical environment of Los Angeles. Other parrots and parakeets have been seen from time to time, and some nesting evidence has been obtained. In order to keep abreast of the status of this group of birds, we should like to establish a running file on sightings and nestings of all parrots and parakeets in this region. Please send such observations to Audubon House.

Wintering shorebirds did not offer anything unusual, and Black Turnstones and Surfbirds could still be found on the Playa del Rey breakwaters, and a single Wandering Tattler was noted there on the day of the Christmas Census. However, some interesting landbirds were found, especially orioles and tanagers. Single Summer and Hepatic were located by David Gaines at Hillcrest and Rancho Golf Courses, and in addition, a single Bohemian Waxwing was there on January 16. The large flocks of Cedar Waxwings finally arrived in force in late December, but Robins continued to be scarce, as were Band-tailed Pigeons. David Gaines reported more than thirty orioles were roosting at Rancho parks, and among them (which were mostly Bullock's) were a few Hooded Orioles and a single Baltimore Oriole. An Orchard Oriole was seen coming to a feeder in Monrovia during December, and then reappeared in early January.

Although it is but February, the first spring migrants should be appearing soon, and some nesting of Ana's Hummingbirds should be taking place. The first Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds will soon arrive, Turkey Vultures will be moving, and migrant waterfowl should be drifting north during the latter part of this month.