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San Blas Birding

**by T. DENNIS
COSKREN**

For several weeks I had planned a trip to San Blas, Mexico, to add a number of tropical birds to my life list. I had invited one other birder, Larry Sansone, and another non-birding friend, John Tataronis; they appeared at my room at CalTech at the scheduled time, 11:00 p.m. on March 21. We only had eight days, and San Blas was in the tropics 1500 miles away, so we had decided to leave early Palm Sunday morning. My truck was loaded with the necessary paraphernalia -- sleeping bags, cameras, food, reference books, binoculars, and clothes -- and we left at 1:00 that morning. By dawn we were across the border, and attended church in Sonoyta.

The first day's driving took us to southern Sonora. Only one bird new to me was identified, the pyrrhuloxia. Monday was better; we woke up to find scarlet-headed orioles, Inca doves, and flocks of white-faced ibises nearby, just north of Ciudad Obregón. Later that morning we saw, next to the highway, caracaras, gilded flickers, curve-billed thrashers, and several Harris' hawks. Our first truly Mexican bird was seen by Larry, north of Los Mochis; he spotted a flock of parrots flying not far away. As any enthusiastic birders would do, we immediately slammed on the brakes, backed up, and took off into the desert brush. We were rewarded, after some searching, with a good view of two white-fronted parrots.

SAN BLAS BIRD- ING

Nearer Los Mochis, we stopped at a small pond near the road and carefully studied its occupants. A flock of swallows caught our attention; at first we saw it as composed of tree swallows and rough-wings. Then Larry noticed that many of the "tree swallows" flashed white rumps -- our first mangrove swallows! Other birds at the pond included least grebes, a white ibis, kiskadees, and white-winged doves.

One of our most interesting trip records was seen near Culiacan, the capitol of the state of Sinaloa. A large field next to our highway contained a herd of cattle, and numerous white herons. Yes, they were -- cattle egrets, that is. Of about two dozen birds, two thirds were the new immigrant, the others being common egrets. Larry photographed them; we are praying now that the photographs will substantiate the record.

Later that day we entered the tropics, pausing a monument on the Tropic of Cancer at dusk just north of Mazatlán. Our riding ended a few hours later, as we finally camped along a river near San Blas, in the state of Nayarit.

The next day was one of the best birding days I've ever had; I saw twenty-four life birds, sixteen of them not occurring in the United States and most of the others being marginal. The day's opener was a flock of high-voiced Sinaloa crows. In quick succession followed yellow-winged caciques, jacanas, olive-backed warblers, cinnamon hummingbirds, golden-cheeked woodpeckers, and rufous-backed robins. Then a pair of Collie's magpie-jays flew across the road and perched in a nearby tree. They were not unfamiliar birds, surprisingly enough; most of us have probably seen a picture of them. Audubon's painting of a pair of them recently graced a stamp honoring the painter. Then, after we had looked at some lilac-crowned parrots, we found a squirrel cuckoo, a large chestnut cuckoo with a long floppy tail. An attempt to get a better view of it resulted in the discovery of a russet-crowned motmot, with a prominent racket tail.

We left the camping area and proceeded towards town, pausing en route to observe anis, a white-striped woodcreeper, and a citreoline trogon next to the road. Lunch was in San Blas. A small coastal resort town, it has fairly good accommodations and enough tourist facilities to satisfy those who find such things necessary. My high school Spanish turned out to be a considerable aid.

The town itself yielded only flocks of magnificent frigate-birds, soaring with black vultures high overhead. We soon returned to the forest east of town, and plunged into one small area thickly overgrown with palms and unknown exotic trees, shrubs, and vines. Bar-vented wrens seemed to be

quite common. A pair of masked tityras and the related rose-throated becard were among the earlier birds found; the best of the remaining birds seen were the coppery-tailed trogon, the ivory-billed woodcreeper, a bronze-winged woodpecker, red-crowned ant-tanagers, and a flock of orange-fronted parakeets. More prosaic birds were abundant; flocks of blue-gray gnatcatchers were present, redstarts were everywhere, and Nashville, Wilson's, and MacGillivray's warblers were common.

Again we returned to town, where we visited the local beach and cooled off. Great numbers of boobies, blue-footed and brown, could be seen perched on and circling around a small rocky offshore island. Thereafter we visited the local cemetery, a small unpretentious affair set on a hill among banana groves. Red-billed pigeons were common, a thick-billed kingbird was seen, and Larry tentatively identified a roadside hawk. Later that evening our search for a potoo was rewarded, not with the bird, but with the eerie sight of the pallid tombstones shining in the light of the full moon. Our appreciation, unfortunately, was notably lessened by hordes of biting insects.

The next day we had scheduled a search for birds in the coastal mangrove swamps. At 8:00 we met our guide, one "Jungle Jim" Mendoza, and embarked up the Río del Rey, a wide, sluggish stream bordered with a dense growth of mangrove. Around the first bend, we appeared isolated from civilization, aside from occasional clearings and primitive huts. Herons proved to be abundant. Louisiana herons, great and little blue herons, and yellow- and black-crowned night herons often flushed ahead of us, as did snowy egrets and white ibises. The best of the herons, though, was the bare-throated tiger-heron, which we watched as it stalked and caught a crab. Ospreys were also common, and we saw one common black hawk. Green and belted kingfishers often flew in front of us.

Our route took us some distance off the main river. We left it and returned to it several times, as we detoured into small, narrow jungly channels, where we scraped past the mangrove stilt-roots and had to duck mangrove branches. At other times we rode through great open ponded stretches, very shallow with a mud bottom. We were amazed by the

lack of insects in the swamp; Señor Mendoza commented that we were lucky it wasn't summer.

Other water birds present were a roseate spoonbill and numerous sandpipers, including both curlews. At one point, we stopped on the shore and wandered a bit on comparatively high ground. A "carpintero," or lineated woodpecker, was the best find; it strongly resembled a pileated woodpecker. Mangrove warblers were singing everywhere. Blake's guide calls them a brown-headed race of the yellow warbler, which was also present in its more familiar form.

The most rara of the rarae aves was spotted (as usual) by the sharp eyes of Larry Sansone: a large bird, obviously a rail, reddish to the fore and black to the rear. He frantically pointed it out to me: "There it is! Among the mangrove roots on the bank! Can't you see it? It's walking right there! No! -- Yes! Over there!" All the while I, equally frantic, searched wildly, seeing nothing but a confused tangle of mangrove. My disappointment on missing it was not lessened when we looked it up in Blake and found it to have been a rufous-necked wood-rail, listed as "uncommon to rare," and unlikely to be seen.

However, my eyes were sharpened, and I assiduously scanned the banks in the hope that lightning would strike twice. And it did! I caught an excellent view of the second wood-rail, just before it slipped away through the tangled growth. A little later, a brief glimpse of still a third convinced us that the status of the bird has been mistaken, at least in the San Blas area. The inaccessibility of its haunts, combined with its elusiveness, perhaps has given a false impression.

Continued... San Blas Birding

The remainder of the day's birding was done in and near a patch of shrubbery and small trees near the beach at the mouth of the Río del Rey. Rudy turnstones on the beach, and a black-capped vireo and ovenbird in the shrubs, were the result.

Thursday, March 26, was our last full day of Mexican birding. We began early in the morning high on a hill over-looking San Blas, near picturesque overgrown ruins about which Longfellow had written in his last poem, "The Bells of San Blas. Flocks of social flycatchers and blue-rumped parrotlets were found in bushes clinging to the brink of a cliff, grayish saltators and a Wied's crested flycatcher perched in treetops, and a fork-tailed emerald, a tiny gem of a bird, hovered in a bush.

We circled around to the base of the cliff, where we saw flocks of white-collared seedeaters, a summer tanager, and a painted bunting; however, our interest was caught by a series of caverns along the base of the cliff, from which issued the chittering of bats. Entering one cave, we decided to attempt to capture and identify a bat, but this proved to be difficult. Larry finally hit upon the idea of throwing a firecracker into a bat-occupied crevice. Success was ours; we caught one stunned bat. It was small and reddish, with a foxy face and a patch on the nose. After photographing it, we released it.

Before we had left on our journey, we had inquired to find out where we should go to see the best birds; our next objective was thirty miles away, to the southeast. We drove to the appointed place, where we were able to gaze from the road out over a deep wooded canyon and beyond to the distant Sierra Madres. We had barely arrived when our objective made itself known with a loud, raucous screeching; a flock of military macaws flew on the far side of the canyon. Beautiful birds they were; bigger than ravens, they were bright blue and green on the back and wings, vivid chartreuse under the wings, and red on the forehead and long tail. They were veritable flying rainbows, and the most beautiful birds I've ever seen.

Late that afternoon, and Friday morning, we spent in the forest east of San Blas. Long-tailed hermits (elegant little hummers), and a blue mockingbird were the best records, but warblers also commanded attention; besides those already mentioned, we found fan-tailed warblers, northern waterthrushes, a hooded warbler, and a Kentucky warbler. The latter two should not have been present, according to Blake. Pale-billed woodpeckers and a flushed parakeet completed our list of birds for that locality. I must also mention the fact that ticks and chiggers

Continued on page 11

NOTES from the HI-DESERT

by Elwyn C. Pollack

Just 10 miles north of State Highway 60-70-99 -- via the 29 Palms off-ramp, Devil's Garden, and Dry Morongo Canyon Freeway -- we arrive in Morongo Valley, the "Gateway to the High Desert." There are two places of widely divergent interests located in this tiny valley, one of which existed long before man himself arrived on the scene; the other is a 20th century phenomenon. Mr. Sam H. Levin built the Purple Lantern Restaurant recently not only because he felt the Hi-Desert deserved a better place to take the wife out to dinner, but because he felt, as a life-long restauranteur, that the Gateway to the High Desert was a proper place for his type of service. We think it is only incidental that Sam Levin's fabulous ranch is located across the highway where beef cattle may be seen feeding in lush meadowlands made possible by the Big Morongo Lakes. As a part of Sam's 160 acre domain, these lakes are made possible by underground waters impounded by the natural fault that runs the length of Morongo Valley at the base of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Seeking outlet these impounded waters rise to the surface at the lower side of the valley and form lakes, the surplus of which flows over into Big Morongo Canyon and subsequently into Coachella Valley below. This phenomenon is duplicated at the Little Morongo Lakes owned by the McKinney family.

Best of all, these beautiful green meadows, cool and lush under the tall cottonwoods and numerous evergreens, are a natural habitat for desert wildlife and dozens of species of migrating western birds funneling through the Big Morongo Canyon on their mysterious way to climates best suited to their metabolic needs. Many western birds have gone no further; they recognize a paradise in their flight and it is now known that the gorgeous Vermilion Flycatcher has taken up permanent residence at the lakes.

As a true conservationist, Sam Levin long ago established open-house to the members of the Audubon Society of Los Angeles. - Birders with a purpose - who have been making innumerable field trips to Morongo Valley during the past several years. Their listings of birds studied and observed range from the indigenous to the exotic, from the Hooded Oriole at the Little Morongo Lakes to the Vermilion Flycatcher at the Big Morongo Lakes plus some 93 others!

It was during one of these field trips that Mrs. Donald L. Adams, Executive Secretary of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, and Mrs. Russell Wilson, Registrar of Members, in arrangement with Mr. Levin, established the entire ranch as a bird sanctuary. Signs are now in evidence in various strategic places around the 160 acre oasis, which reads as follows: Wildlife Refuge. Do not enter with gun, dog, axe or trap; no fires allowed. All birds, animals, and plants are protected in this sanctuary. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Sam H. Levin, Owner, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

The Morongo Valley Community Services District, also through the good offices of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, set up Covington Park as a Bird Sanctuary last year under Ordinance #4. Separated only by a fence, Sam Levin now joins the community and Covington Park in the spirit of conservation, so vital to the preservation of our natural resources.

Back at the Purple Lantern we see Sam Levin's propensity for service to the public demonstrated in an outstanding cuisine at moderate prices. Again we see these favorable circumstances reflected in the double capacity of the Ranch's lovely meadows, which serve not only as a bird sanctuary, but as grazing land as well. Mr. Levin raises his own cattle, feeds them scientifically, and assures his patrons of the highest quality of steaks and prime ribs, aged to perfection.

We indulged in the restaurant two nights in a row and can attest to the high quality of both food and drink, and to the attending personnel. George Fisher is something more than the manager of the Purple Lantern; he knows and understands people, and knows how to cater to their individual peculiarities. He has made this a life-time job, and a successful one in many of his own enterprises. In like manner Hostess Florence Peet runs an able second; by which we mean second to none in her capacity to meet people with a welcome smile. We had the opportunity for a moment's chat with Chef Durward W. "Andy" Anderson, and as we watched intently while Andy carved out some neat slices of choice prime ribs, we realized that here is where the Purple Lantern effectively begins, with the chef himself, the real "Piece de Resistance."

With choice decor, which includes the retaining of the "Russellesque" cow-boy murals in the lounge room, done by an itinerant painter, together with the chic color scheme for personnel achieved in lilac shift, attractive and purplish, we end up with one of the most modern and up-to-date restaurants on the Hi-Desert, and one that bids fair to put Morongo Valley on the map!

Burton M. Oliver Retires From City School District

"My connections with the Audubon Society have meant more to me than anything else on the job."

So stated Mr. Burton M. Oliver at the farewell tea held in his honor on the afternoon of June 29, 1965. As supervisor of Thrift and Conservation for the Los Angeles City School Districts for the past twenty-two years, he was the valued liaison man for Wildlife Films, and was instrumental in inaugurating the immensely popular El Monte Audubon Center field trip for school children. He also helped introduce "Junior Audubon" in the public schools.

He was deservedly honored with citations and gifts at the retirement tea. We hope for continued association with Mr. Oliver, for he says, "Now I can spend more time looking at birds!"

T. DENNIS COSKREN *About the Author . . . San Blas Birding*

Dennis Coskgren was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and has done a great deal of birding in that area. Our society had the pleasure of his company on field trips while he attended Cal Tech, taking his Master's degree in geology. At various times he has banded in Mexico, Central America, and South America, as well as the United States. Since he is now working toward his Ph.D., we hope to see him on future field trips and to hear his further adventures.

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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SEPTEMBER

CALENDAR

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REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: MRS. RUSSELL WILSON

SEPTEMBER 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	29	30		

- Sept. 2 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7.30 P. M. Audubon House.
- Sept. 11 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP Malibu Lagoon to the mouth of the Santa Clara River at Ventura. Meet at 7.30 A. M. on Pacific Coast Highway, just north of the bridge over Malibu Lagoon.
Leaders: Les and Ruth Wood - Phone 256-3908
- Sept. 14 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - Eben McMillan will discuss the current state of the California Condor. Refreshments.
- Sept. 15 WEDNESDAY CONSERVATION MEETING - 8.00 P. M. in Great Hall, Plummer Park. The sound film "Auto U.S.A." will be shown. It calls for sound transportation planning and wider use of traffic engineering techniques. Other current conservation matters will be discussed.
Chairman - Bill Watson
- Sept. 19 SUNDAY PUBLIC FIELD DAY IN ELYSIAN PARK - 8:00 A. M. 5:00 P. M. This will be one of our efforts to "Save Elysian Park. Everyone is welcome. Bring friends, lunch and enjoy nature walks galore.
Leader: Bill Watson Phone 661-8570
- Sept. 25
26 SATURDAY and SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - San Diego (Tijuana River Bottom). Meet at 8:00 A. M. at Oscar's Restaurant on Palm Ave. in Imperial Beach. This is reached by going south on 101 to the Imperial Beach turnoff, which is Palm Ave., and proceed 3/4 of a mile to the restaurant, which is on the right hand side of the street.
Leader Larry Sansone UP 0-6400
- Oct. 2 SATURDAY SPECIAL PELAGIC TRIP - Monterey Bay, in cooperation with the Golden Gate Audubon Society. See details elsewhere in the Tanager.

Invitation

HELP NEEDED FOR COUNTY FAIR BOOTH

An automatic slide projector which can use a minimum of twelve slides will be the feature of this year's Audubon Society booth at the Los Angeles County Fair.

Anyone who can volunteer to man the booth for a six-hour shift, or furnish slides of interest, or both, should contact:

Mrs. Donald L. Adams
Los Angeles County Fair Booth
Coordinator
705 26th St.
Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266



National Audubon Society

AUDUBON HOUSE
1130 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 28, N. Y. ENRIGHT 9-2100

June 17, 1965

Mrs. Donald L. Adams, Executive Secretary
The Los Angeles Audubon Society
705 26th Street
Manhattan Beach, California 90266

Dear Mrs. Adams:

You made us all here very happy indeed with your heartwarming letter and its enclosed check for \$1,000, a contribution from the Los Angeles Audubon Society to our Society's Condor Sanctuary Fund. It is difficult for me to tell you how deeply and warmly this is appreciated by the directors and officers. It represents not only a large and substantial gift, but the great spirit of helpfulness to the National Audubon Society's sanctuary effort that pervades your Society -- our valued branch. Please relay this expression of the gratitude of our directors and officers to all of your members. We are not unaware that this contribution comprises a large number of donations from your individual members.

I hardly need tell you that the Society did not have the funds in its budget to put on a condor warden and provide him with a four wheel drive jeep and other equipment to enable him effectively to carry out his protective and educational activities. Our Board immediately supported the recommendation of the administration to provide a warden because of the critical need of his services. Therefore, it pleases us no end that your Society is, as you so warmly said, "Delighted with Mr. John Borneman's work" We too are happy that he is doing such a good job and is so well thought of, not only by our Audubon members, but by the personnel of the U. S. Forest Service and the California State Fish and Game Department.

Our biggest fight will come next fall or winter when the issue of the Topatopa Dam finally comes to Congress and to the Interior Department for final decision. I hardly need add that we are happy we can count on the great help of your Society at that time.

The action of your Society in making a drive for funds to provide protection for the condor, and to turn them over to our Society, will be a stimulating example to our other California branches and affiliates. We are enormously grateful. With all good wishes,

Very sincerely,

Carl W. Buchheister

Carl W. Buchheister
President

CWB:es

AUDUBON

Activities

By OTTO WIDMAN

26 June - FIELD TRIP - GREENHORN MOUNTAIN

Everyone seemed to have gone in other directions but the birds didn't. Before the day was out (there were even some in the brown velvet-like hills), we counted 54 species. At our first stop we were rewarded with Gallinule, a beautiful specimen. A Sora Rail was in the same tule-filled water. In the distance a Red tailed Hawk had built its nest in the cross-bars of the telephone lines: we saw two young being fed. Further along the road all saw the Marsh Hawk, apparently nesting in more tules. As we moved up into the Oak-covered and boulder-strewn foothills, the Phainopepla and Acorn Woodpecker appeared. The Western Wood Peewee, Red-shafted Flicker and the Black-headed Grosbeak all were besides the road where we stopped for our picnic lunch. Marjory Holm and Clara Weedmark stated that the Olive-sided Flycatcher, Hermit Warblers, and Townsend's Solitaire were new birds for them. These we saw in the cold wind that blew at Tiger Flats. There were the usual Chickadees, making no attempt to hide their nests. While we watched the Warbling Vireos, some Band-tailed Pigeons flew over. The Adamses and the Wilsons stayed overnight in the below freezing weather and birded in much nicer weather the next day, adding more birds to their lists.

24 July - FIELD TRIP MT. PINOS

We went to see the Condors! Five were seen at Mt. Pinos under the guidance of Herb Clarke. Meanwhile Russ Wilson had set up his watchers at other points; the results of their watching he will write about separately.

Twenty-six of us made our way to the top of Mt. Pinos, all 8800 feet of it, and then spread out in all directions to wait and see. At 11:10 A.M. the first birds appeared for those watchers who were looking north and the three birds remained in view for about 15 minutes. At 4:15 P.M. the 4th Condor appeared and at 4:55 P.M. the 5th soared over, heading for the nesting area. Meanwhile there was the wait. Our glasses riveted on anything that moved. An immature Golden Eagle landed briefly near us and then circled away. Western Bluebirds were everywhere, feeding on the low-lying shrubs. Violet-green swallows swept overhead in the busy wind currents. Once a Sparrow Hawk preened himself on a stump nearby. Overhead I heard Mountain Chickadees.

July 10

Once again we come to our annual Pot Luck dinner and get-together, this year again in the Fernell area of Griffith Park. The largest table in the area began piling up with favorite recipes in casseroles, salads and meats, until I had counted 47 separate main dishes*, and wherever there was room, pickles, relishes, cottage cheeses were squeezed in and watermelons and icecream were on the benches. At the given signal the table was surrounded and all I saw was heads and arms ducking and bobbing about the ambrosias, the hams and fried chicken. Spoons were dipped in jello and in tossed and potato salads. Swedish meat balls and a special casserole of chicken were attacked with a *joie de vivre* that every birder has for good things. While plates were being piled high and while thoughts verging on panic were racing through our head -- Oh dear, I won't be able to sample them all -- decisions, all the time decisions -- which shall I take? "Which way does the line move?" Who cares, have another spoonful of this. After all 65 members and friends had retired to their benches, I heard, "have you tasted this one; it's great?" That's when second and third trips were made for the cakes and compotes and baskets of plums, and Russ Wilson dipped out great scoops of ice cream - home made. That's what made this picnic a success. It was all home made and all assembled with care and brought here for all to enjoy.

*Ed. Note: I've heard of the lure of the list, but this is new one on me.

July 21 - CONSERVATION MEETING

Something is being done to save our city parks. Bill Watson pointed out the various committees and citizen groups that are working toward equitable solutions for at least four major problems that confront us at the moment in our city parks. In one at least we have won a victory in that a proposed sewage disposal plant will not be placed near Pt. Fermin as planned.

Dr. Henry Weber, from Coachella Valley, spoke at length from first hand experience about the wasteful destruction that takes place during dove hunting season. He said as many doves are lost as are retrieved. The hunter does not stop at shooting of doves, but shoots song birds as well. Twenty million doves are officially recorded each year as shot. This year the catch will be increased from 10 to 12 per person, and a second season will be opened in October -- not only those present will go in the first shoot, but those doves migrating south will be caught in the second.



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By BETTY JENNER

Since joining the Audubon Society in 1960, I have been deeply impressed by the excellence and dedication of the editors of "The Western Tanager". Mr. Hubert W. Weiser was editor in September, 1960, and George T. Hastings of green memory was Editor Emeritus. In September, 1961, Arnold Small was editor; he and Assistant Editor Robert Sandmeyer produced a paper of outstanding content and format. In September, 1962, and until now, Robert E. Blackstone, with Bob Sandmeyer's able assistance, put out "The greatest little newspaper in the West" as Bob Sandmeyer rated it in the July-August, 1965 issue.

Now we hope to continue with the same high quality of publication. This is a team job, as Bob's call for volunteers indicates.

We are especially pleased that our membership rolls continue to grow; we invite participation in the Society's work: in the field of writing, of staffing Audubon House; in the area of publicity for Wildlife Films; in continuing to make our field trips and youth programs meaningful.

Conservation is a many-faceted word; our Society's facet is Enlightened Conservation -- the realization that we are all a part of this growing, pulsating world, and that accurate knowledge of the things we stand for is imperative. In the Tanager we shall try to bring you accurate and readable information concerning the problems of keeping our world livable.

Birds are our joy and despair and delight and frustration -- but we know that neither man nor bird nor tree nor any living thing is sufficient unto itself. We shall try to bring you part of the pattern of the beautiful mosaic of life on this, our own small planet.

Welcome! New Members

Mr. Andrew Black
625 N. Hillcrest Rd., Beverly Hills
Mrs. W. Roy Brown
9000 8th Avenue, Inglewood, California
Mr. James N. Herrington
645 Sunnyhill Drive, L.A. 90065
Mr. William F. Horton
29956 Cuthbert Road, Malibu 90265
Miss Corinne M. Klaussen
273 Avineda Sevilla
Laguna Hills, Calif. 92653
Mr. H. F. Lasiter
3216 Santa Ana St., South Gate
Mrs. Marie D. Montavon
3728 Ocean Ave., L.A. 90066
Mr. Ken Nelson
1630 N. Edgemont St., L.A. 90027
Miss Grace A. Nixon
1278 1/2 Devon Ave., L.A. 90024
Mr. William W. Ruby
1678 San Onofre Dr., Pacific Palisades

The
**Western
Tanager**

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Margery Green

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Shirley Wells
Marion Wilson

AUDUBON HOUSE

Bulletin Board

We wish to thank those who answered our call for workers at Audubon House. We need members willing to act as hosts and hostesses on the first and second Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. and on the fifth Saturday when it occurs. Please contact the office 876-0202 Monday through Thursday. Be sure to register your name, address and telephone number for the Western Tanager mailing parties.

Please notify Audubon House in case you change your address. The Post Office Department charges the Society eight cents for each returned "Western Tanager".

Needed: January 1962 and 1963 issues of "The Western Tanager". Please mail to Audubon House.

SAVE ELYSIAN PARK

The Los Angeles Audubon Society is sponsoring a Public Field Day in Elysian Park on Sunday, September 19, 1965. This will be one of our efforts to "Save Elysian Park." We will inform the public about what Elysian Park is, its value, and the city's need of it. Everyone will be welcome, so bring your friends, yourselves and your lunches for the day-long nature walk that will be conducted by noted field trip leaders from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. on that day. It is our hope to attract attention to the park and to publicise its value. Meet at Picnic Area No. 6.

CONSERVATION NOTES

By
BILL
WATSON

"Vandals!"

One of my favorite places is the little Bird Sanctuary in Vermont Canyon, Griffith Park. There I can find the peace and comfort of natural surroundings close to my home. It was a hot evening and I wanted some fresh air, so I went up there one Friday recently. The cool, little stream, with its own music augmented by that of the frogs that live along it, and its quiet pools were polluted with Rinso Blue. From one end of the Sanctuary to the other, the stream and its pools were coated with the scum and suds of the detergent.

The Sanctuary is more luxuriant than ever, and the late afternoon sun poured down through the leaves of the trees and shrubs in a very refreshing manner. I went back on that Saturday afternoon, but there was no one on duty there on weekends. A boy and an older lady came along, the boy holding a sick Band-tailed Pigeon in his hands. The pigeon was obviously ill, but it still had sufficient strength to get away from us into the underbrush.

There is a new population of gray tree squirrels there now, friendly and actively looking for handouts. What a handout we polluters gave the wildlife in that little beauty spot! Detergent in its drinking water from some, to offset the seeds and nuts of others! It is a running stream, the water was clearer Saturday afternoon than it was Friday evening. The stream will run clear again for awhile

Detergent in a park stream - obviously a boy's prank. Youthful vandalism. I long for the day when nature lovers and knowledgeable people will take sufficient interest in Griffith Park's little Bird Sanctuary to man a station there on weekends to tell the Sanctuary's human visitors about the wonder and beauty of the area and its significance. Either that or pressure our City Recreation and Parks Department to station a full-time naturalist there.

Pollution of natural beauty is going on all around us. Witness the proposed pollution of a certain park that a convention center (now camouflaged with the false name of municipal auditorium) will accomplish if our own Recreation and Parks Department has its way. Witness the pollution of another park that a proposed veteran's hospital will pollute, again with the Recreation and Parks Department's endorsements seconded by our own Federal government's Veteran's Administration already in the business of condemning one of our city's parks!

The Rinso Blue in the stream of the Bird Sanctuary was surely the act of vandalism perpetrated by youngsters. But what example do we adults give our youngsters? How can we criticize them when we are about to pollute Grand Canyon - National Monument and Park and its river, with two more dams, prompted by our Bureau of Reclamation and that great conservationist Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall? Can we criticize them when we are trying to destroy the intent of our own Wilderness Act? We are, you know. Through the offices of our Bureau of Reclamation again which wants to build a Sun Butte Dam within the newly created Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

The Rocky Mountain Power Company hopes to build a hydroelectric power project in the Flat Tops Primitive Area, which is being examined for inclusion in the Wilderness System. There are many other examples of adult vandalism. There are freeways to be built through primeval redwood forests; dam-building roads through the heart of the California Condor's last refuge; at least six bills in Congress to make a ski resort in the heart of the newly created San Gorgonio Wilderness Area; more ski facilities in the Mineral King area of the Sequoia National Game Refuge in the Sequoia National Forest; Oregon's Governor Hatfield striving to scuttle the Point Reyes National Seashore Project.



Is there really a difference between schoolboy vandalism and the endless adult vandalism of the greatness of the United States of America?

If you want to do something about these and many other acts of continental vandalism along with vandalism in your own backyard of Los Angeles, come to the Conservation Meetings and let's discuss it together.

REPORT ON THE CONDOR COUNT

"Only by a simultaneous count by many trained observers at strategic locations could one discover the total number of condors." This sentence in the Koford report germinated the idea of a condor count around the periphery of the Condor Refuge to see if it were possible to determine the number of birds using this resting and roosting area on a regular basis.

Nine strategic locations were selected by Mr. John Borneman: Squaw Flat, Lake Piru, Whitaker Peak, Frazier Peak, Mt. Pinos, Mt. Abel, Rose Valley, Reyes Peak and Figueroa Peak. Volunteers from the Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Audubon Societies were invited to help on three dates, July 24, August 28 and September 25.

On Saturday, July 24, 37 people participated and condors were sighted at all locations except Lake Piru, Whitaker Peak and Rose Valley. Observers on the peaks had a much better day of it. The earliest morning sighting was at 9:31 below the summit of Reyes Peak and the last at 11:47 at Mt. Abel. For the next two and

From RUSSELL WILSON

a half hours no condors were seen at any station. At 2:38 the first condors that, from the direction of flight, appeared to be returning to the refuge were observed, with the high point of this movement falling between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. By plotting each condor observed on a chart and noting the time and direction of flight it is apparent that some birds were seen and counted at more than one station. For example, a condor observed from Mt. Abel at 11:25 flying east is doubtless the same as one reported at 11:30 from Mt. Pinos. After making allowances for such duplicate observations, it appears that we counted 12 condors outbound from the refuge in the morning and 13 individuals returning in the afternoon.

If you are interested in participating in the count on September 25, please contact John Hopper, P.O. Box 266, Woodland Hills, DI 7-6313, or Russ Wilson, 4548 Farndale Ave. No. Hollywood, 761-7635

San Blas Birding

Continued...

abounded there, as we found to our discomfort. We returned to the ruins overlooking San Blas, there adding a gray hawk to our list, and departed northward.

The return journey was less eventful ornithologically; the most interesting bird seen was a female broad-billed hummingbird, near the Tropic of Cancer monument. Sinaloa and Sonora rolled beneath our wheels, and we passed through customs at Nogales late Saturday afternoon. An all-too-brief pause at Madera Canyon yielded Arizona jays, a painted redstart, and whiskered and elf owls, and a night-long drive returned us to Pasadena on Easter Sunday morning. On reaching CalTech I could barely stand; the trip cost more in exhaustion than in money. A long sleep, however, returned me to normalcy.

The net result of the trip was the addition of 59 life birds; the trip list within Mexico was 153 species; 36 of these were not in Peterson. Yet we had had no previous experience in Mexican birding, and scant time. I am afraid that far too few birders take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Mexico.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2nd Monterey Pelagic Trip

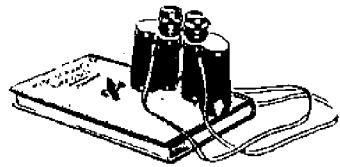
The annual pelagic trip from Monterey in cooperation with the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be on Saturday, October 2. Monterey at this time of year provides one of the finest pelagic birding opportunities in the country. On previous trips we have seen New Zealand, Sooty, Slender-billed, Manx and Pink-footed Shearwaters; many Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Skuas, Fork-tailed Petrels, as well as Ashies and Blacks; Black-footed Albatrosses, Fulmars, Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auks, Pigeon Guillemots and thousands of Phalaropes.

The cost of the trip is still only \$4.50. Make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society and mail to Mrs. Val Da-Costa, 2090 Pacific Ave. San Francisco, Calif. 94109. If your check covers more than one person, please list the names of all who are included. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish an acknowledgment.

The boat will leave from Sam's Fishing Pier at 9:00 A.M. and will return at 3:00 P.M. This will leave some time for shore birding Saturday and again Sunday morning. Many members of both Societies traditionally meet for dinner Saturday evening at the Bamboo Gardens.

southern California BIRDS

By DAVID A. GAINES



Birders afield during June and July met with cool and cloudy weather along the coast, warm and dry conditions inland, and occasional thunderstorms over the mountains and desert. During early June, while the last spring migrants were straggling north, the nesting of small birds in the lowlands and chaparral reached its peak. At higher elevations, the height of the nesting season came later in the month. Man-made changes in vegetation and habitat, however, have resulted in the visible decline of certain species. Especially along the coast, the continued clearing of native trees and brush for highway construction, new housing tracts, and other developments, have greatly reduced the suitable nesting habitat for many shade-seeking birds. Among the nesting species increasingly hard to find in Southern California are the Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow Warbler, Western and Traill's Flycatchers, and Blue Grosbeak. In contrast, the Starling population continues to increase. The Hooded Oriole, as a city bird, is becoming much more common due to increased usage of the fan palm, in which it nests.

A most unusual nesting species in Southern California this summer was the Cedar Waxwing. A mating pair was closely studied by Eleanor Pugh at Doheny Beach State Park. Young were out of the nest by July 11. The normal breeding range of the Cedar Waxwing extends no farther south than the coast redwood belt, over four hundred miles north. Thus a nesting record on the southern coast is quite remarkable.

As expected, several pairs of Vermilion Flycatchers and Summer Tanagers bred at Morongo Valley. Another, and more unusual nesting species was the Wied's Crested Flycatcher. This species, formerly considered casual along the Colorado River, is expanding its range westward. During late June of this year, it was found fairly commonly in the vicinity of Imperial Dam on the lower Colorado. On July 25, Larry Sansone found a total of six in Morongo Valley, four adults and two young. The young were being fed by the parent birds. This is the first nesting record for the Wied's Crested Flycatcher west of the Colorado River valley. Probably it will establish itself as a rare summer resident at Morongo and perhaps elsewhere.

During the summer, the Salton Sea provides an interesting variety of birdlife for those able to withstand the heat. At the south end, Fulvous Tree Ducks, Laughing Gulls, and Gull-billed Terns are breeders, and the Wood Ibis is a common post-breeding wanderer. The north end is also excellent,

as many birds wander north and become "trapped." On July 24, at the north end, Larry Sansone found a sick Brown Pelican and two Snowy Plover, both rare birds inland. Most interesting was Sansone's report of a sub-adult Blue-footed Booby, the fourth California record within a year's time (the lone remaining Booby at Puddingstone Reservoir apparently departed in early June).

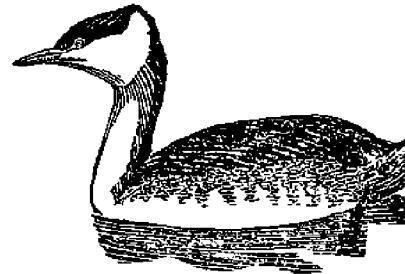
Deep Springs in the White Mountains is proving to be an excellent locality for "eastern" vagrants during late May and early June. Four American Redstarts, a Parula Warbler, and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak were there May 29, and a Black-and-White Warbler was at near-by Oasis the next day. An immature Laughing Gull was in San Diego during May. A singing Ovenbird was found July 3 by Eleanor Pugh at Doheny State Park, but it stayed for only one day.

During September, the fall migration will be in full swing. Expect large influxes of shorebirds and land birds in the lowlands. The Tijuana Riverbottom, coastal areas, and desert oases should provide the best birding. Thorough examination of all shorebirds, warblers, buntings, icterids, and sparrows should reveal a variety of interesting species.

Late notes: A White-tailed Tropic-bird has been observed flying among the gliders on weekends, just west of the Loyola campus, near Lincoln and 83rd.

These rarities have been photographed:

1 Brown Booby: July 4, San Miguel Island
1 Adult male Chestnut-sided Warbler
late June, Tijuana Riverbottom (2 days)



We are indeed fortunate that this column will be in the capable hands of David A. Gaines. For those not acquainted with David, allow him to introduce himself:

"A native of Los Angeles, I was first introduced to bird study while in junior high school. Since that time, my interests have expanded to embrace all aspects of natural history. Literature, philosophy, photography and music are included among my other interests. Currently, I am completing my senior year at Alexander Hamilton High School in West Los Angeles. I hope to attend the University of California, although my future plans are largely indefinite."