

A LONG LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

By Verne Huser

While I was interviewing a county park ranger a few months ago to collect data for a natural history column I write for a local magazine published in my part of California, I was somewhat shocked to learn that park personnel stand guard with shotguns over recent fish plants in the lake to guard against fish-eating birds that may wipe out a whole fish plant in a single day. Since the fish usually hang around the plant area for a few days while they grow accustomed to the new environment, they fall prey to cormorants, herons, and gulls that may live on or visit the lake.

My thoughts were mixed: surely the planting of fish in a lake designed partially for recreation purposes is vital if the fishing is to be any good - great crowds descend upon the lake every weekend and all summer - but does the park personnel have to decimate the bird population in the process? Apparently so, as long as fish will be fish, birds will be birds, and fishermen will be fishermen.

Then I began to think of the cause and effect relationships, of the reasons behind the dilemma, in short, of ecology - that phase of biology (and of conservation) dealing with the relationships between living organisms and their environment. The fishermen would not be there if man hadn't built the dam to create the lake, but then neither would the birds because the river would be dry for more than half the year. The fish themselves would not be there; even the deeper holes in the river would dry up in the heat of a long, hot summer and leave no stock to breed another generation of fish.

But wait a minute! What was it like before man came? Perhaps the climate was different; perhaps so, but it wouldn't matter - man has done more than any climatic change to alter the processes of nature; he has lowered the water table by using more water than the area had to offer. The stream used to flow all season slightly - and its major pools remained even

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in the drought because they were part of an effluent stream when the water table was higher instead of an influent one as they are now. The birds were there and the fish, too, were there, and surely the birds in those days fed on the fish, but before man came along the birds and fish struck a balance.

So did the abalone and the sea otter. When man first came to California, abalone were thick as kelp on the coast; so were the sea otter and there was a balance in nature. Then fur hunters all but destroyed the sea otter, and before long the commercial abalone fishermen began reaping a harvest where they had not planted (nor planned). The abalone declined before the sea otter came back, but once the otter had been re-established, the commercial fishermen would blame the otter for the lack of abalone.

True, the otter eats abalone, but his favorite food is the sea urchin, which in turn feeds almost exclusively on kelp. If you want to be practical about it, the kelp industry in California, in the United States, in the world - take your pick - is more important than the abalone industry. Perhaps the best practical reason to protect the sea otter is to protect the kelp industry; the abalone fishermen will not be as badly hurt by the otter as they will be by their own lack of foresight.

All this merely points out the fact that whatever balance nature had achieved before man came along to upset that balance is gone forever. Man may attempt to re-establish some kind of balance - it can never be the natural balance. But why cry over spoiled species? Man is here to stay - at least until he destroys another species - his own. Man's attempts then to preserve other species is noble but sometimes misdirected.

Look at the mountain lion problem. Before man began raising cattle and sheep in the California hills, the lion fed on the flesh of deer. Then man brought cattle and sheep to graze the land of the deer - and they, too, are here to stay. The lion can't be trained not to eat what flesh he finds in his domain, but his domain remains a wild one, as wild as he can find. When cattle and sheep range his inaccessible haunts, the lion will kill. Man has replaced the deer with livestock and the law of natural selection with selective breeding. Man is here to stay, but must the lion go?

The Canadian Eskimo, living on the caribou, has an interesting legend that can be summed up in this brief statement: "The caribou feeds the wolf, but the wolf keeps the caribou strong." The wolf, feeding on the sick, lame, and lazy, is the instrument of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Modern technology is the instrument operating in

our civilized society, and the wolf, the mountain lion, are no longer needed.

In my home county in Texas this month a government trapper is at work killing wolves that have been killing cattle, cattle that overgraze the range and cause erosion, killing the land. A rancher in the Santa Ynez Valley is killing coyotes this winter that have been killing his calves, but next spring when the jack-rabbit population multiplies with no controlling coyotes to keep them in check, there will be less grass for the surviving calves to graze. Look what happened in Australia.

The cowbird that followed the buffalo in ancient times lived a nomadic life; to keep up with the moving herds - they had to move to find grazing - the cowbird developed the habit of laying its eggs in the nests of other birds. Today the buffalo no longer roams the plains, but the cowbird that now follows the cows - and they don't roam far from home - still lays its eggs in other birds' nests and thrives. Man has replaced the buffalo with the cow, and in so doing has boosted the cowbird population to such an extent that the cowbird itself becomes a menace to man.

Man creates his own problems, in his war with nature as well as in his war with his fellow man. Man is here to stay - for a little while; he will come into conflict with nature and win - for a little while; he cannot leave nature alone - even for a little while, for if he were to do so, nature might emerge the winner as in Carl Sandburg's poem "Grass":

"Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo,
Shovel them under and let me work
I am the grass; I cover all.

Verne Huser's article first appeared in the January, 1966 issue of "The Sanderling," the bulletin of the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society. It is so thought-provoking that we determined to share it with our membership. Other stimulating and challenging articles are contained in exchange papers from our various Societies; these may be read in our library at Audubon House, where exchange publications are kept on file.

1965 CHRISTMAS COUNT

BY MARION WILSON

On January 2, 1966, 77 observers in 25 parties, with 9 observers at feeders, spent 212 party hours covering 384 party miles in a fifteen-mile-diameter circle centered at La Cienega Avenue and Pico Boulevard identifying 147 species, approximately 21,304 individual birds.

In the February 1965 issue of the Western Tanager an article by Bill Watson gave interesting comparisons between the 1964 count and previous years. A complete list of the 111 species seen in 1964 was given. Ten of these species were not seen this year but 47 other species were seen. They were: common, artic, and red-throated loons; horned grebes; Brandt's and pelagic cormorants; pintails, wood duck, shovelers, canvasbacks, common goldeneye, common scoter, common and red-breasted mergansers; turkey vulture; sharp-shinned, red-shouldered and marsh hawks; clapper rail; golden plover; ruddy turnstone; common snipe, greater and lesser yellowlegs, rock sandpiper, dunlin, long-billed dowitchers, western sandpipers, avocets; mew gulls; roadrunners; barn, burrowing and short-eared owls; costa hummingbird; hairy woodpecker; white-breasted nuthatch and brown creeper; cactus wren; Townsend's solitaire (first for our count); blue-gray gnatcatcher; myrtle and palm warblers; scarlet-headed oriole and summer tanager; pine siskin and Lincoln's sparrows.

The ten most numerous species have changed somewhat. Ring-billed gulls still are at the top with 3122, house finches 2804, house sparrows - 1107, white-throated swifts (new in the top ten) - 1030, Brewer's Blackbirds - 1015, mourning doves - 790, Bonaparte's gulls 694 (down from last year), California gulls 655, coots 627, lesser scaup - 542. White-crowned sparrows were down from 904 to 466. In December 1963 there was an influx of red-breasted nuthatches 69. This year 133 mountain chickadees were counted, 130 more than last year, but no red-breasted nuthatches.

Better weather and more birders in the field mean more species and individuals. Exceptional birders in strategic places means the unusual. The scarlet-headed oriole and summer tanager recorded by David Gaines; the short-eared owl (not seen since 1961), palm warbler and golden plover by James J. Smith from New Jersey; the rock sandpipers (observed on outer breakwater, ocean side from a boat) by Keith and Kit Axelson.

Space does not permit naming all the fine birders who worked hard and long, but we wish to thank them all and hope that they will join us again next year.

For those who are more than casually interested, we suggest that you subscribe to the AUDUBON FIELD NOTES and receive six issues: Winter Season, Spring Migration, Nesting Season, Christmas Bird Count (have a record of the Los Angeles Audubon Society count along with over 700 others) and Breeding Bird Census. Subscribe for \$4.00 from AUDUBON FIELD NOTES, Editorial Offices, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10028.



CLASSIFICATION OF STATUS

Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife,
United States Department of Interior

ENDANGERED SPECIES -- one whose prospects of survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy; resulting from one or many causes -- disease, depredation, competition from a more aggressive species, change of habitat. It must have help or extinction will probably follow.

RARE SPECIES -- one whose numbers are few throughout its range. So long as conditions remain stable and favorable, it may continue though in limited numbers. When habitat is limited, adverse influences are more critical and it may quickly become "endangered."

PERIPHERAL SPECIES -- one whose occurrence in the United States is at the edge of its natural range. It may be found in satisfactory numbers outside our country but its retention in our Nation's fauna calls for special attention.

STATUS QUESTIONABLE -- a group of wildlife species on which information should be sought so their status can be determined. Some of them may be in danger.

In the above categories have been placed more than 200 forms of birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles and amphibians occurring naturally in the United States and Puerto Rico. In the endangered category are 34 birds and 16 mammals.



The AUDUBON SCENE

Sacramento CHRISTMAS COUNT, Dec. 26, 1965 Most gratifying count of the day was for White-tailed Kites which came to a communal roost just before dark to the complete surprise and wonder of watchers in that section. One hundred and fifty-eight White-tailed Kites! These birds have made remarkable comeback from near extinction in California 50 years ago; all they needed was the complete protection given them a few years back. Pintails swamped even the "grid" system of counting, necessitating an estimate which that crew assures us is conservative figure of over 96,000 birds in that one rice field....Mrs. Escobar reports from Placerville a Great Gray Owl, Nov. 11. . .H. Leach, on Dec. 24, in the foothills above Fresno observed some 8,000-9,000 Bandtailed Pigeons passing overhead between 2:15-4:15, flying from their feeding grounds in the lower foothills to the timbered areas above, where they roosted. The buildup of pigeon numbers was attributed to the excellent acorn crop in the area. It is apparent from reports that the birds are concentrating in the Sierra foothills, because they are noticeably absent from the pinyon pine area in the Tehachapi Mountains where they are usually in great abundance this time of year. THE OBSERVER, Sacramento Audubon Society, January, 1966



A California Condor stricken with mysterious ailment was improving today after treatment at the Los Angeles Zoo. The 18-pound bird, rare species, was discovered in the woods near Los Alamos in Santa Barbara County, and transferred to the city zoo. When found, it was huddled under a tree, unable to move. Walter T. Shannon, fish and game director, said the bird has been given all possible aid and assistance to restore it to health.

"There are only about 40 California Condors left in the world," Shannon said, "and we intend to do everything possible to save this bird so that it may eventually be restored to its native habitat." At the zoo, where the bird is in isolation, Zoo Director Wesley Young said the bird is "making progress" and regaining its strength. Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, Sat.,

Jan. 8, 1966

(Note: As of Jan. 12, the Condor showed such improvement that it was planned to release it in the Refuge immediately.)

Mail we like to receive...

Last Spring the Los Angeles Audubon Society presented a Scholarship to Miss Sherrie Lyons, a student of Pacific Palisades High School. The Scholarship enabled Sherrie to spend two weeks at the Wilderness Foundation camp on Santa Catalina Island. Sherrie wrote this letter to Arnold Small.

August 12, 1965

Dear Mr. Small,

My two weeks at the Wilderness Foundation are almost over and I can't believe it. The time has gone so fast and there have been new experiences every day. I do wish we had 3 weeks. The instructors were new and it took about a week to get going. Right now I am immersed in the middle of plankton project which I only have another day and half to finish. We have 2 one-hour lectures a day and we were supposed to have films practically every night. However, there's no electricity in the camp and so the projector is run by a generator which has not been working correctly.

Most of the lecture material I already know from your classes. The biggest thrill for me has been the snorkeling. I had never done that before and it is a whole new world. We have spent much of our time in the water just observing the organisms in their natural habitat. I also tried using Scuba gear once. That was absolutely fantastic. It is just like becoming a fish yourself. I can't get over the beauty under the water. I must have seen 30 or 40 different kinds of sea weed alone. I hope to be able to try the tanks again tomorrow but the compressor also broke down so there is no air.

Our laboratory is known as the hula hut and is an open-walled grass shack. We have 3 microscopes and lots of odds and ends. It has been quite interesting to figure out how to use the materials to build our equipment. A couple of boys have successfully built large cages and have sunk them in the tide pools and have had octopi and a horned shark go in them. It is an excellent way for easy observation. We have a horned shark egg which we broke open and have been watching the embryo feed on the yolk. We are told that it will continue to feed on it for the rest of the summer.

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed these two weeks and I want to thank you and the Audubon Society again for providing me with this marvelous opportunity. I will probably be seeing you from time to time at school. Thanks again.

Sherrie

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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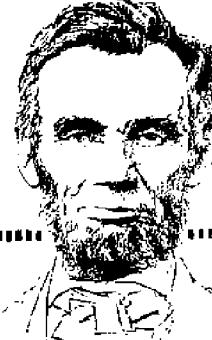
HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY & NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE,
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046.

TELEPHONE 876-0202

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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HEADQUARTERS CHAIRMAN: MRS. J. GORDON WELLS
REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: MRS. RUSSELL WILSON



FEBRUARY

Feb. 3 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING-7:30 p.m.
Audubon House

Feb. 8 TUESDAY-EVENING MEETING-Dr. John William Hardy,
Director of Moore Laboratory, Occidental College, will present
"A South American "Reconnaissance," with color slides.
8:00 p.m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.
Program Chairman: Don Adams 372-5536

Feb. 12 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. Many of us will go up Friday night in order to have
full day Saturday and half day Sunday for birding. Camping
at Morro Bay State Park; many motels available in the town
of Morro Bay.
For additional information call Laura Jenner RI. 8-7510 or
Audubon House 876-0202

Feb. 23 WEDNESDAY-WILDLIFE FILM "Essence of Life" Dr.
G. Clifford Carl of Victoria, B.C. Spadefoot toads and pillbugs,
leaf-cutter bees, tree frogs, pelicans and moose-these are among
the featured characters in this film which shows how the unique
physical properties of water make it the only substance that can
serve as the basis for living things.
8:00 p.m., John Burroughs Jr. High School, 600 S. McCadden Pl.
Single admission \$1.25; students \$0.50

Feb. 27 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. Meet at 8:00 a.m.
at the corner of Roscoe Blvd. and Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Leader: Harold Swanton 886-1721

Mar. 3 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 p.m.
Audubon House

Mar. 5 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP 8:30 a.m. Audubon Center of
Southern California, 1000 N. Durfee Ave., El Monte. Take the
San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., go south on Rosemead
to San Gabriel Blvd., then left to N. Durfee and Audubon Center.
Bring a sack lunch--there's delicious bonus of HOT TOMATO
SOUP! See and hear the Cardinals as well as many other birds.
Host: Paul Howard, Director

Mar. 8 TUESDAY-EVENING MEETING-Speaker to be announced.
Always bring binoculars and lunch on field trips. Please, no
pets and no collecting.



Audubon Activities

by OTTO WIDMAN

December 11-

December 12 FIELD TRIP CARRIZO PLAINS

It has been a long time since I have been so impressed with the countryside as I was on these memorable days. Sure it was cold, but who cares--I had on everything wool in the house! So the weather was beautiful; clouds patched the hills in shadows, and the most delicate of shades of green and brown made bird watching real fun. We fled the hordes of Starlings in the San Joaquin. Several Le Conte's Thrashers appeared on schedule just before we went over the hills into the most intense colors I have seen. Beautiful Mountain Bluebirds were with the many Mountain Plovers. Horned Larks, hundreds rather than the thousands of last year, were everywhere. There were several flights of Pipits. We failed to flush the Short-eared Owls or the Prairie Falcon, but Marsh Hawks, Golden Eagle and Red-tailed Hawks were seen occasionally.

Jim Huffman led the ten cars slowly along the dirt roads that were remarkably free of dust. The cars included the Adamses, the Wilsons, the Baxters, the Jobes (from Taft), the Huttons (San Fernando), the Axelsons, Arnold Small & Huffman, Millsap and Stephenson and Cole, the Jenners, Johnson and myself. As we neared Soda Lake we saw the Sandhill Cranes in flight and I counted 30 distinct flocks, all of which soon alighted at the north end of the lake. Here we saw a few but distantly. Later we came across a grain field that was solid gray with Cranes. From the car we could see their bright red crowns and tufted rears. There were several thousand in this one field. Grain was sprinkled liberally on the road, so the fields must have been recently cut. Rainbows suddenly became brighter and the brown hills brushed with green now were right handsome. There were Say's Phoebes by the motel and they brought our count to 29 species. Many of these were in the little park not far away. That night the rains fell mainly on the Carrizo plains!

December 14 EVENING MEETING

Our regular Tuesday Evening Meeting began with a potpourri of information, ranging from the appointment of Pat Powell as our new Sales Chairman, through admonitions on the importance of the Annual Bird Count by our President, Bill Watson, on to the Annual Dinner.

Our guests were Mrs. Elizabeth Jeffrey, Edith Gunn, Margaret Foster and Fay Albert.

Arnold Small's "Monterey to the Sage-brush Plains" was a fine cross section of Californiana: he showed not only the great variety of birds, but in good photography he showed each representative life-zone from the waterfront to the sub-arctic. Then on the Sage Plains early in the morning from

blind Arnold photographed the Sage Hens, strutting fantastically in their mating dance. We seemed to have crossed a continent, progressing from zone to zone so easily and so quickly without a time sequence or apparent barrier that we marvel and say to ourselves, "Can all this truly be found in California?" Arnold Small has made it so and with photographs and comments fine enough to make anyone envious of them. We want to thank Arnold for truly wonderful evening.

January 8 FIELD TRIP SALTON SEA

A strange paradox confronted us as we arrived at our meeting place in the Imperial Valley. Thousands of Blackbirds (Yellow-headed, Tri-colored, Red-winged, Brewer's, plus Cowbirds) swarmed over the weeds as hunters unloaded geese from their trucks, while others fired steadily from the marshland. The Conservationist vs. the Hunter! Snow Geese were nowhere to be found, as they were the prey. Canada Geese were in the grain fields, and flight upon flight were in the sky. David Gaines (our leader for the day) moved us about energetically so that we could count 60 birds in this game refuge district--a refuge so long as they did not stray across the road. We saw quite a number of Common Goldeneye, a lot of Shovelers, and some Green-Winged Teal. Avocets were everywhere. There were few Pintails, some Baldpates. Many of the "ducks" on the water on closer inspection turned out to be Coots-literally thousands. Most of the birds on the list were counted singly rather than in great numbers. Excitement reigned when David pointed out the markings of the Laughing Gull; many noted this as a life bird. And then we had a Palm Warbler; again David told us why it was Palm. Abert's Towhees were in the brush. Where we ate lunch overlooking the Salton Sea there were Rock Wren and Verdin, and several jackrabbits, not too common sight these days. Among the Canada Geese at rest, the Ranger pointed out one Ross' Goose, rather rare, and a life bird for many. At New River

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Long Beach develops 75 acres to man-made wilderness park

The Long Beach Park Department is developing a Nature Center and wild life area of approximately 75 acres in El Dorado Park East, south of Spring Street and between the Park Department Tree Farm and the San Gabriel Flood Control Channel.

The purpose of this type of area is to provide a natural open space where trees, animals, birds and insects may be observed and studied by students from primary to college age and others interested in nature. Many cities are able to acquire such an area in its natural condition somewhere in their vicinity.

Long Beach, surrounded by Los Angeles and Orange Counties crowded with subdivisions, has only a piece of flat farm land with which

NEW MEMBERS

Harris, Mrs. Catherine B.
1194 Oak Grove Drive, L. A. 90041

Hood, Jr., Col. John R.
27867 Hawthorne Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula 90274

Taylor, Mr. and Mrs.
1116 Chelsea Ave., Santa Monica 90403

AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

(CONTINUED)

Estuary, of all things, a Cactus Wren was with hundreds of Audubon's Warblers. One Myrtle Warbler and a White-faced Glossy Ibis were seen by David and Shirley. In the marshy land were Marbled Godwits and Lesser Scaup. We heard quail and saw the Marsh Hawk. Some saw Pheasant as we left the New River area. Herb and Min Gerhardt brought his brother Herman and his wife Catherine along (San Fernando). Our new members were John and Wilma Hood. We were glad to see Bob and Margaret Hawthorne.

Dennis Coskren, Shirley Wells, and David Gaines went on to the San Diego area where the next day they saw an immature Glaucous Gull at that favorite haunt of birders, a city dump. Shirley saw an Old-squaw on the waters of the Bay. Eight of our group spent the night at Finney Lake Campground where we enjoyed a typical evening marsh concert: hoots and wild laughter of Gallinules, Soras, Coots, Grebes, and what not. In the clear warm sunshine next morning we saw a female Summer Tanager, two male Vermilion Flycatchers, innumerable Audubon's and Orange-crowned Warblers, Verdins, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, plus Ladder-backed and Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flickers, Cactus Wrens, Abert's Towhees, and the usual White-crowned and Song Sparrows.

to start. From this the Park Department is creating an area with pleasantly rolling hills and valleys with a stream, meadows and a swamp area.

Water is being provided by existing wells in the area and will be distributed throughout by an underground irrigation system. This terrain will then be planted with various kinds of hardy trees, shrubs, grasses, wild flowers and berry-bearing plants to attract birds, that will simulate a natural wild wood.

The plan entails enlisting the assistance of the natural forces of the atmosphere, such as wind, rain and sunshine, to produce the beauty of foliage and flowers we are striving for. Many birds and animals are expected to adopt the area as a home without invitation but some will possibly be brought in. The lakes, streams and swamp will have aquatic animals in the form of fish.

Park director, Don Obert stated "that a Nature Center headquarters, with small museum and exhibits, will be open to the public and house a trained naturalist and assistants who will arrange educational programs and nature talks and otherwise interpret the area to the visiting public. School classes, scout troops, botany classes and nature lovers will be especially welcome. Self-guiding nature trails, with labeled points of interest and other information, will also be installed. Information about trees, soil, rocks, flowers, birds and animals will be featured. The purpose of all this is to provide, especially for children, information about their natural surroundings which few of them have an opportunity to see in a crowded community."

The area will be fenced to protect it from vandals and other destructive elements but will be open to the public, free of charge, at an attractive entrance on Spring Street where a parking area will take care of those arriving by car or bus.

A small picnic area will be provided for children bringing lunches but no general picnicking or fires will be provided within the area itself.

Picnicking, camping and other outdoor pastimes are to be fully provided in the area north of Spring Street which is also being developed and is now in the planning stage.

Our Society warmly congratulates the City of Long Beach for carrying out a magnificent concept - a truly civilized Land Use. We hope this is the beginning of State-wide, yes, a Nation-wide trend in intelligent development.

NOTICE

Because of increasing costs, it is necessary to raise the annual subscription rate of THE WESTERN TANAGER from \$1.50 year to \$2.50 a year to non-members, starting with this issue (Vol. 32, No. 6). All \$1.50 subscriptions now in effect will, of course, be honored.

southern california

BIRDS

by DAVID A. GAINES

By December most of the expected wintering birds had arrived in their usual numbers. Along the coast Loons, Grebes and Scoters were somewhat more common than usual. Large rafts of Western Grebes could be seen off Venice Beach and San Diego. Ducks and waterfowl appeared in normal numbers, despite dwindling habitat. "Fantastic" concentrations of Pintail and Teal were reported in the marshes at Alamitos Bay (normally closed to the public). Fair numbers of Godwits, Dunlin, Sandpipers and other waders stayed to winter in the southland. A few were found in greater than usual numbers, for instance, San Diego's Christmas Count totals of seven Golden Plover and over six hundred Common Snipe. Shifting to landbirds, there were no unusual numbers or flights of birds reported. Waxwings and Robins were somewhat scarcer than usual, Mountain Chickadees more common and widespread. Several Christmas Counts reported the Varied Thrush. Wintering Orioles and Tanagers appeared along the coast about as expected. Throughout our area White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows were more common than ever before.

Most Southern California Christmas Counts fared better this year than last. Once again San Diego was highest with 190 species, but the Los Angeles total of near 140 is excellent considering the available habitat. This year's higher count totals can probably be attributed to better weather conditions rather than a noticeable increase in the number of birds.

A Red-necked Grebe was located at Playa del Rey on Christmas day and what might have been the same bird was seen at Malibu Pier on January 7. The San Diego Christmas Count reported female Harlequin Duck in the bay. Two Manx Shearwaters were observed off Newport in late December. In San Diego the Cattle Egrets remained into January. Golden Plover and two Rock Sandpipers were among Playa del Rey's contributions to the Los Angeles Christmas Count. A very white Glaucous Gull was seen in the dump on Silver Strand (near San Diego) in late December. Short-eared Owl wintered (as is usual) at Playa del Rey. Two Costa's Hummingbirds, extremely rare in winter, were reported from widely separated areas of Los Angeles. A female Vermilion Flycatcher was located at Bonita near San Diego. Myrtle Warblers were more common than usual, and the Palm Warbler was seen on two separate Christmas Counts--Northeastern

Make your reservations early

AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST

Audubon Camp of the West will again offer four two-week sessions this coming summer at Trail Lake Camp in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. We urge you to make reservations soon, before enrollment is filled. All who have attended these enjoyable and congenial sessions are enthusiastic in recommending them to anyone who is interested in extending his understanding of natural forces and ecological relationships.

Ask for literature at Audubon House, or write:

Audubon Camp
P.O. Box 3666
El Monte, California 91733
Area Code 213; Tel. 448-8378

REMEMBER YOUR SOCIETY

The Los Angeles Audubon Society needs funds to carry on its work in advancing public understanding of the value and need of soil, water, plants, and wildlife. May we suggest that you help to insure the continuance of this work by remembering the Los Angeles Audubon Society in your will or when making living gifts. Contributions are tax deductible. We suggest that you consult your tax attorney with respect to bequests or contributions.

Orange County (El Toro) and Los Angeles (Playa del Rey). Bullock's Orioles and male Summer Tanager joined the other wintering birds at Rancho Park, Los Angeles. Unusual during winter was Black-headed Grosbeak and a Solitary Vireo, both at Bonita. Not far away, on Point Loma, White-throated Sparrow and Gray-headed Junco were present. A Harris' Sparrow was found in the Tijuana River Valley, but could not be relocated the following week.

February is an excellent month to search for those more elusive wintering birds. Now that hunting season is over, localities like the Salton Sea should prove excellent for ducks and geese of all kinds. Look for European Widgeon, Blue-winged Teal, Whistling Swan, Ross' Goose, Blue Goose, and even such exotics as European Teal and Red-breasted Goose. Excellent land birding can also be encountered in the desert and near the coast. Watch for Harris' Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Orioles, Tanagers, Bohemian Waxwing, Varied Thrush, Lewis' Woodpecker, and other such not-often-seen wintering specialties.