

# AN ADVENTURE WITH A RING-TAILED CAT

By RUTH A. CORDNER

Spending a number of summers in Yosemite National Park, it was my privilege to become acquainted with some of the wildlife, among which was a ring-tailed cat. My husband and I lived in a small apartment next to the Nature Center at Happy Isles. One year a ring-tailed cat made his home there, too. Our sleep was disrupted almost every night as he crawled or bumped around between the walls and the ceiling. I decided to try to trap him and perhaps get a photograph of him. One night a live trap with some hamburger in it was put out in the Nature center; next morning, there was Mr. Ring-tail in the trap!

In a large terrarium I had put a couple of small logs on some dirt and leaves, and placed branches against the glass for a background. The ring-tailed cat was put into the terrarium and a wire netting placed over the top so he could not escape, and yet would have air. In photographing him, I placed two Strobe lamps on either side of the front of the terrarium at a 45 degree angle so there would be no reflections. Using a tripod and a 400 mm. lens on a bellows attachment with a 35 mm. camera, it was close enough to fill the frame.

The ring-tail lived in his glass house for a week and he seemed to be quite comfortable and happy, being fed hamburger and other goodies. He was a very clean animal and became used to me so that I could pet him. When his modeling days were over, he was released not too far from our apartment, which was a mistake, as in a few days he came right back into the walls and ceiling again and also brought back a wife!

Ring-tailed cats live in almost all parts of the Sierra but are seldom seen, as they are active only at night. For daytime shelter they use holes in oaks and other trees, small caves, spaces within rock piles, or old cabins. The annual litter of three or four is born in May or June. Their eyes are large to help them see in the darkness, and the beautiful black and white banded tail is more than just an ornament. It serves for balance in climbing and leaping on trees or rocks, at which the animal is agile. He also uses his tail for a pillow or to keep him warm, by tucking his head beneath his chest and wrapping his warm tail about him, becoming a fluffy ball of fur.

In gold rush days the ring-tailed cat was often called "miner's cat" because miners kept them as pets to catch rats and mice. Rodents are their favorite food, but they will also eat small birds and berries of the manzanita and madrone. They are a part of nature's great plan to help keep a balance in nature's world and should be protected.



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APRIL 1966

## Colorado Interlude

By MARGE WILSON

On the western slope of the Rockies, at the end of the road that follows the south fork of the White River, we found a national forest campground, verdant, scenic, and musical.

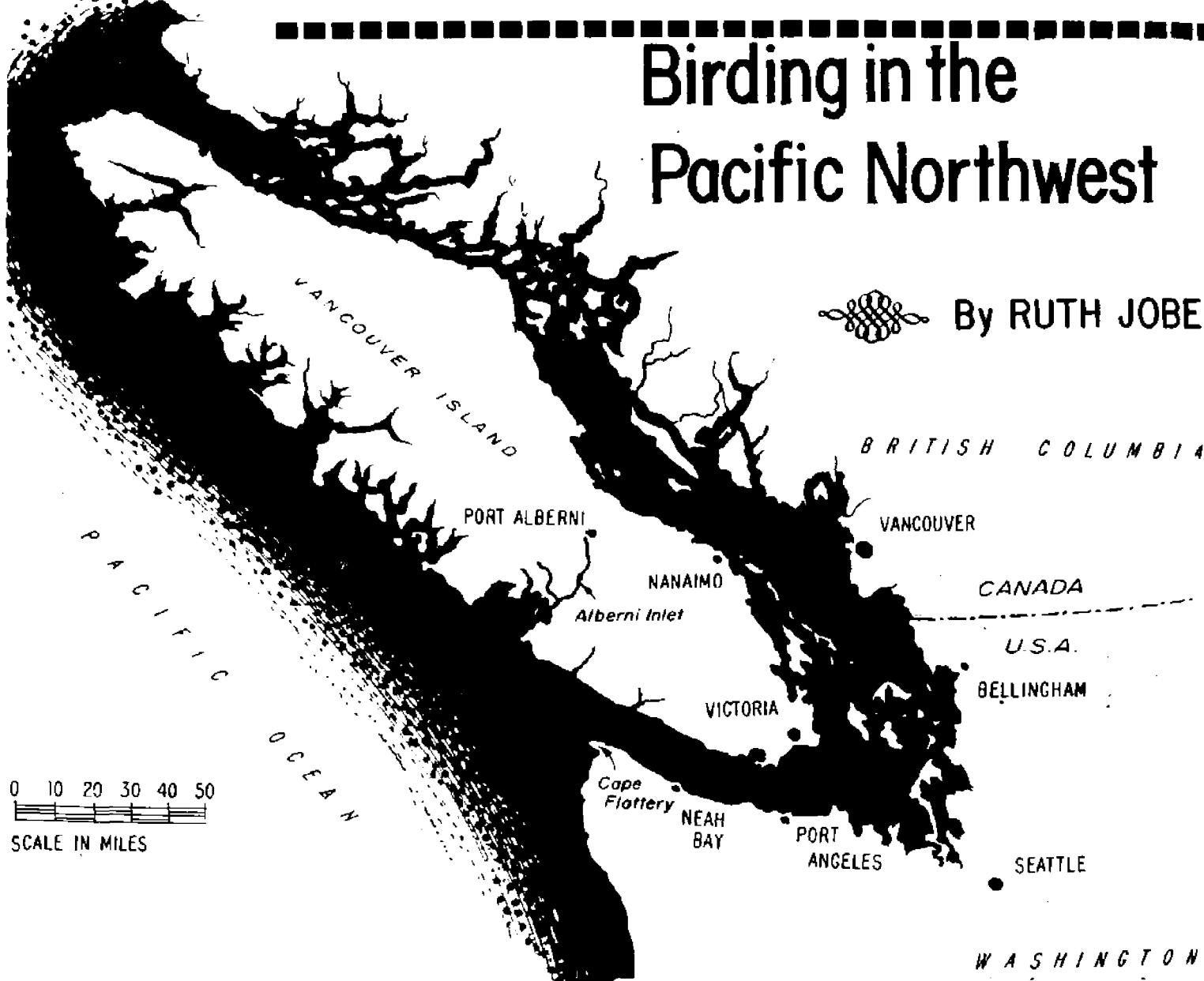
Here, on the third of July, were campsites overgrown with tall grasses and wild flowers, obviously unused all spring. We sat at a table and discussed which area to clear for our tent, and immediately became aware of bird activity all around us. We were at 7500 feet in a grove of aspen. First we heard the tiny insistent call of hungry nestlings. It was easy to locate the nest hole, about 25 feet above our camp, because both Yellow-bellied Sap-

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# Birding in the Pacific Northwest



By RUTH JOBE



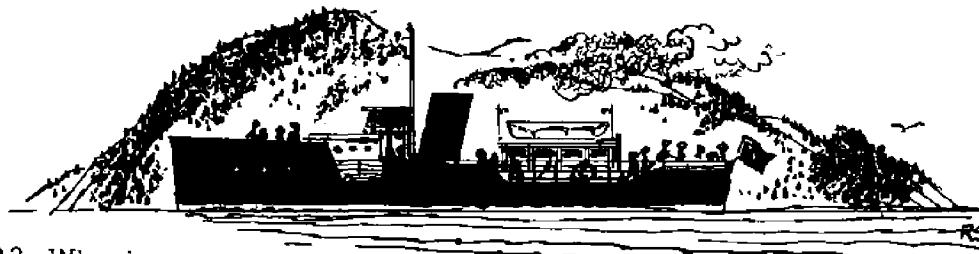
## Cape Flattery Puffins

Put on your boots and visit Cape Flattery before it becomes "civilized." This wild and beautiful headland is the westernmost corner of Washington State and is reached by a gravel road from Neah Bay. The Cape Flattery "trail" starts where the road dead-ends. Dedicated nature-lovers have beaten a route through the rain-forest growth, steeply down-hill about 1/2 mile to the Cape. Due to the frequent rains, the trail may be a morass, and the tangled roots make uncertain footing. But the trip is worth the effort, both for the scenery and the birds. The rock headland rises in a sheer wall about 150 feet above the ocean, and the off-shore rocks are host to many sea birds. We wanted, in particular, to find Tufted Puffins and we were not disappointed.

They flew and bobbed about below us -- little black birds with great red beaks and fantastic beige head plumes. Pigeon Guillemot, Murre, and Black Oystercatchers were also present, as were great numbers of gulls and cormorants.

Cape Flattery has not been developed for tourists. Except for the rough trail, there are no conveniences -- nor fences. Dense shoulder-high salicornia growth gives an illusion of protection, but this is no place for children or pets. At the extrem end of the path, there is only air between the lip of the cliff and the sea below. Caution dictated that we should sit down to do our birding observations! This is a wild and exciting area, and well worth the trouble to visit.

# Bald Eagles by the Dozen



Why does a chicken cross the road? Why do Bald Eagles shuttle back and forth across Alberni Inlet? Perhaps the fishing looks better on the other side. At any rate, a visit to this area in mid-June may reward you with virtually flocks of these handsome birds. They sit on log rafts, perch in tree tops, and flap overhead in singles and pairs. In our one-day outing on the 25-mile-long inlet, we made 28 sightings. The birds appeared to be nesting, although it is possible that they are only attracted by the presence of salmon.

Port of Alberni is reached by driving west from Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island, B.C. Monday through Friday, the M.V. Lady Rose, a 100-foot freight vessel

makes 95-mile round trip through the scenic inlet to the west coast and return; tourist fare for the day is \$6. The cruise is relaxing and delightful, and Cap't. Dick McMinn is an Irish charmer. For a brochure, write Alberni Marine Transportation Ltd., P.O. Box 188, Port Alberni, B.C. No reservations are necessary. Just be on the dock by 8:00 a.m.

Besides the eagles, we noted Pigeon Guillemot, Common Murre, and Marbled Murrelet. On the trip across to Alberni, we had a good look at three Pileated Woodpeckers. We have twice made the trip on the Lady Rose, but the eagles were seen in June. In mid-August we saw not one eagle.

## Colorado Interlude

Continued...

sucker parents were bustling in and out all the while we were there.

The next birds to attract our attention were the House Wrens, just as busy in another aspen at a height of about 18 feet. There was another active wren nest about 30 feet away, and two more in the distance. The songs of wrens filled the valley.

When we saw a Robin seriously stuffing a fledgling's throat, we knew that we had chosen the nursery of the mountain aviary. Without leaving our camp chairs we watched a pair of Flickers enter and leave their nesting hole regularly, and even spotted the nest of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird, the female patiently brooding eggs. Punctuation to the valley-full of bird song was furnished by the male Broad-tail, with his insect-like rattle and zing.

Other birds on our list for this holiday include McGillivray's and Yellow Warblers, a singing Veery, Evening and Black-headed Grosbeaks, Warbling Vireo, Cassin's Finch, Violet-green and Tree Swallows, and a couple of Golden Eagles.

For a bird watcher's Independence Day, we happily recommend this camp. If your plans include northwestern Colorado, contact us for detailed directions.

## Tern Sanctuary Successful

Fern Zimmerman

It is exciting news that this summer (1965) the Least Tern Sanctuary at Huntington Beach State Park harbored some 300 Least Terns. Once this little bird nested in great abundance on many of the beaches of Southern California. With the coming of housing developments and marinas the nesting sites have been destroyed and the terns diminished in numbers.

Two years ago the Sea and Sage Audubon Society became greatly concerned about this. An approach was made to the Division of Beaches and Parks, to Mr. Wesley Cater, Supt. of Huntington Beach State Park on the local level, requesting that a Least Tern Sanctuary be established. Splendid cooperation was given; an area near the mouth of the Santa Ana River was fenced during the nesting season. None of the Least Terns made use of the area!

Undaunted, the Park people again put up the temporary fencing at the approach of the nesting season, and this summer the area was used by some 300 Terns. The first fifty pairs to arrive nested outside the fenced area. Then about 70 pairs made nests inside the enclosure. An interesting thing happened when those nesting outside had hatched their young--they immediately brought them inside the fence as if for safety.... It is planned to continue the project next year and in the years ahead. It is hoped that the number of Terns in the Least Tern Sanctuary will be greater with each passing year.

THE WANDERING TATTLER, Sea and Sage Audubon Society, Oct., 1965

# MORONGO MONOGRAPHS

By Elwyn C. Pollock

During the month of August, one of the hottest and most humid in many a year, all activity in the Hi-desert seems to have turned into an interminable siesta. This summer finds us tethered to our Little Morongo Creek bed and the big boulders that surround "Rancho Benvenon" with little to accomplish save weathering the heat. From the standpoint of conservation, water resources, Audubon bird sanctuaries (Covington Park and Sam Levin's 160-acre ranch), Morongo Valley is indeed unique in its relation to the immense watershed of the San Gorgonio Mountains through Big and Little Morongo Canyons, which penetrate deeply into the Gorgonio wilderness area.

Thus it is that we find the enthusiasm to drive to town for another hundred pounds of bird feed. The abusive language heaped upon us by Cactus Wren leaves no doubt about our laxity. He's not much on grains but loves bread crumbs and suet. The plaintive call of Mourning Dove, and Gambel Quail's four-noted call, are pleasant if demanding sounds, not to mention the presence of cottontail, chipmunk, and the inevitable squirrel. It is a lesson in discipline and the amenities of bird life to observe the various quail families coming in for the morning drink at any one of our several pools. First, of course, Papa Gambel, plump and handsome, will appear on a rock-top adjacent to a pool. At an unseen signal the whole flock will come pouring over the rock and the next scene we have yet to capture on film: all tightly abreast around the edge of the pool (20 or 30 depending on size) safely drinking their fill while Papa Gambel watches. Before they are quite finished, however, another covey will appear over another rock. Recognizing the situation, they will patiently wait, hovered together, until the first brood has had its fill. We have observed this phenomenon from time to time and always find it a fascinating performance.

Only a few dove have shown up this year, but we remember an early morning scene when we counted an easy 100, with more strutting around the pathways. It was a marvellous sight with hardly any movement in the center of this grand coterie. They were quietly at table and minding their manners.



## News of other Societies



Active Conservation Tactics (ACT) is a new organization formed by University of California students who believe in a moral land ethic. ACT includes both conservation and clean-up tactics. Pres. James A. Conley, a senior English major from Albany, says that the organization considers itself "an activist group using current means of social protest." The members feel that conservation, or preservation, is a moral issue. ACT is not connected with any other social-action or political group.

As their first civic action project, members of ACT spent three laborious hours removing some 200 cubic feet of tin cans, broken bottles, scrap paper, and assorted litter from a steep slope below a Berkeley scenic viewpoint on Grizzly Peak Blvd. In November many energetic members of ACT sloshed in the Albany mudflats to pull out 240 old tires that had littered the shoreline. The group has also sponsored an on-campus information campaign against two proposed Interior Department high dams which would endanger the Grand Canyon, and they are selling "Save the Grand Canyon" buttons.

Warren Larson, Golden Gate Audubon Society president, sent the following letter to ACT president Conley:

"We endorse your statement that conservation is 'moral land ethic,' and particularly commend your principle of local cleanup action. This is tremendously important, as many people view conservationists as impractical visionaries....It is a magger of great encouragement to already established conservation groups that today's students of UC are taking this positive action which will enhance and beautify the area, to the credit of all public and private agencies concerned."

THE GULL, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Jan., '66

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The other morning we heard an unmistakable peck-pecking; we soon saw that our visitor was on the telephone pole some 300 feet distant. The binoculars verified that at the top of the pole, busily engaged in plying his age-old trade, was a Ladder-backed Woodpecker. Perhaps he was calling a friend?

Rarely do we see Scott's Oriole, perhaps because of the heat, and not since early spring have we seen our beautiful pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks. We have a young Road-runner that comes in and out during the day, and at least two welcome King snakes have taken up permanent residence here, an obvious answer to the total absence of rattlers. As this last day of August comes to a peak, a gusty sou'wester brings an inviting coolness and a hint of better things to come; of renewed activity, and even perhaps the end of the siesta!

# Los Angeles Audubon Society

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LOS ANGELES 90029 661-8570

MRS. DONALD ADAMS, Executive Secretary  
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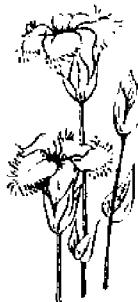
# CALENDAR

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

TELEPHONE 876-0202

HEADQUARTERS CHAIRMAN: MRS. J. GORDON WELLS  
REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS: MRS. RUSSELL WILSON

# APRIL



1966		APRIL	1966										
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
F	M	S	L	Q	12	N	M	20	F	Q	29	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

April 7            THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING 7:30 p.m.,  
Audubon House

April 9            SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Chantry Flat, 8:00 a.m. Take the  
San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., north to Foothill  
Blvd., east to Santa Anita Ave., north to the end of Santa Anita  
Canyon Road. Bring lunch and come prepared for a mile hike to  
the canyon stream. I do not promise Water Ouzels.  
Leader: Harold Baxter - 355-6300

April 12           TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - Dick Wilson will present "Just  
Birds," a program of color slides that he has taken on various trips  
around the country. Here's something to whet your appetite for  
your own vacation trip! 8:00 p.m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.  
Program Chairman ; Don Adams - 372-5536

April 20           WEDNESDAY CONSERVATION MEETING - 8:00 p.m., Great  
Hall, Plummer Park  
Chairman: Bill Watson 661-8570

April 23           SATURDAY-SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP 7:00 a.m. Meet in Covington  
Park, Morongo Valley (about 10 miles north of U.S. 60-70-99 on  
the Twentynine Palms Highway). Blue Grosbeaks, Summer Tanagers,  
Vermilion Flycatchers, and (we hope!) many warblers. Group will  
camp Saturday night at Finney Lake (about 3 miles south of  
Calipatria on Calif. 111, turn left into Imperial State Waterfowl  
Management Area and follow local signs to Finney Lake). Bring  
water and a few pieces of wood for a group campfire. Good motel  
accommodations in Brawley for those who don't camp.  
Leader: George Venatta 378-8941

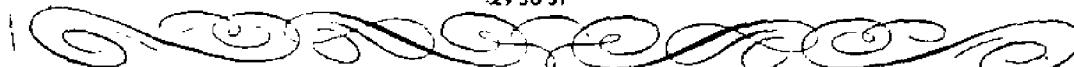
April 30           SATURDAY-SUNDAY - EXTRA FIELD TRIP Morongo Valley and  
the high desert. Meeting time and place on Saturday will be the same  
as April 23 above. This trip is designed for those wishing to remain  
in the Morongo area. We plan on spending Saturday night somewhere  
in the high desert. Motels are available in Desert Hot Springs,  
Yucca Valley, 29 Palms, etc. Those camping may wish to stay at  
Indian Cove, Joshua Tree Nat'l Monument, about 5 miles west of  
29 Palms. Bring own water and fire wood. Sunday's plans may  
include a return to Morongo Valley and perhaps Whitewater Canyon.  
Leader: Shirley Wells 757-5049

CALENDAR CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# calendar

MAY						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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	31				

Continued



May 5                    THURSDAY    EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:30 p.m.,  
Audubon House

May 10                    TUESDAY    EVENING MEETING 8:00 p.m., Great Hall,  
Plummer Park. Details in next "Tanager"

Always bring binoculars and lunch on field trips. Please, no  
pets and no collecting.



Buy or borrow a copy of the spring issue of "Cry California," turn to page 24 and read a hard-hitting article by our member Harold Swanton: THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS--ANOTHER LOS ANGELES PARK DEBACLE. What a pity that such an article must be written--but our man Swanton is the one to do it.

We would like to publicly thank the anonymous donor of the "Condor Appeal" cards which were sent out with the March "Tangers." By the way--have you returned yours yet? You are one of the people playing a vital part in saving a species from total, irrevocable, --and unnecessary-- EXTINCTION.

Among interesting sightings mentioned in "The Avocet," (Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society) is this one: Dec. 29--Seventy-two Bald Eagles at Lower Klamath Refuge. The best place to find large numbers of these magnificent birds is on the state-line highway, on the frozen water on the south side of the highway. They sit in large groups about 150 yards out on the ice.

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## MEMO \*

There's still  
time to  
Contribute  
to the  
**CONDOR FUND**



But do it  
**NOW!**



CALIFORNIA CONDOR

In "The Quail," bulletin of the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, Editor Ed Mize remarks, "Every year some particular bird has a population explosion and is reported everywhere. This year it seems to be the Varied Thrush. Most of our field trips have turned in larger numbers than usual of this bird, and 82 were spotted on the Christmas Count." The Golden Gate Audubon Society had 1670 Varied Thrushes on their Christmas Count! We in the southern area have also been seeing more than the usual number of these handsomely marked birds.

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Tests of roadside menagerie animals that died suddenly have revealed negatives of Polaroid camera film in their stomachs. Users of this film should make certain the negatives are not left for the animals to eat.

...Wyoming Wildlife.

### DEAR JOHN LETTER

Mr. John C. Borneman, Condor Warden,  
National Audubon Society  
Dear John--

We are sorry we misspelled your name  
in last month's issue!

Sincerely,

"Tanager" staff

# THE AUDUBON SCENE

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

From the Sacramento Audubon Society's "Observer" for March an item from Honolulu of interest to us all and especially those who will be taking the post-Convention tour to the Islands:



The Hawaiian Thrush, a bird which has been feared extinct since 1825, may still be around. Mr. Gordon Morse, living deep in the Waiahole Valley on Windward Oahu, heard "the most beautiful song in the world" on Sat., Feb. 12 a few minutes after his son had put out the day's ration for the wild birds. It was unlike any song he had heard. "Three of us finally saw him. Over most of his body he was dark brownish. He was about the size of a Mynah; his tail was squared at the end. He was whitish underneath. We could see no distinctive marking around the eyes. He sang in the tree for about an hour. Then he came back about 1 p.m. for another hour's after-lunch concert."

Another hopeful note, this time from the Michigan Audubon Newsletter: Dr. Lawrence H. Walkinshaw points out that the population of Japan Cranes, once only 23, is now up to 172 with 24 added to the population in 1965! The Japan Crane is similar to the North American Whooping Crane, so perhaps there is more reason for optimism than many had thought.



Nature Conservancy has done it again! This fine non-profit organization has made a down payment on that birders' paradise, the Sonoita Creek area just south of Patagonia, Arizona. More than \$100,000 will be paid for a 320-acre tract on both sides of the creek. The Tucson Audubon Society contributed \$5,000 toward the purchase price and hopes to help raise the rest to repay a loan fund of the Nature Conservancy from which the purchase money came. I am sure many of our readers will want to contribute--it's tax-deductible, of course.

The area will be kept in its present natural state. 170 species of birds have been observed there; few places are better in spring for observing Gray and Black Hawks, Rose-throated Becards, Summer Tanagers, Vermilion Flycatchers, and many more species that are partial to the great cottonwoods and willows, the fields, the scrubby brush, and the shallow water of Sonoita Creek. It is difficult to visualize the problems of the last Christmas Count as told in the Jan.-Feb. "Vermilion Flycatcher" of the Tucson Audubon Society:

"Patagonia Count--A morning snowstorm slowed down birding in the Patagonia area on the 23rd of December. The census-takers in the Patagonia Mountains withstood blizzard conditions, while those along Sonoita Creek

enjoyed a mere four-inch snowfall. The previous two weeks of rain had already washed out the birding. Water was high in the Creek.... Near Nogales, Sonoita Creek, from the dam to the junction with the Santa Cruz, was censused by Bob Norton, who was able to cross the raging torrent just once during the 14-mile hike.



Interesting figures continue to reach us regarding the 1965 Christmas Count. San Diego, with 57 observers, had 192 species, 78,500 individuals. The big Marin County count had 192 species, 157,404 birds; 94 counters from 4 states and 10 counties took part. At Morro Bay, 28 observers saw 154 species, 25,000 individuals, including Fulmar, Shearwaters, Auklets, an Oldsquaw, a Pomarine Jaeger, and 49 Horned Owls! Santa Barbara had 170 species.

Several of the reports from other California chapters mention that male Anna's hummers were performing their nuptial flights in December. This seems too early for these tiny creatures to start thinking of nesting, but then, the birds never did consult us! The male Costa's hummer is still coming to the feeder at Audubon House as of early February.



One other item may be of interest to those who are planning a birding trip to Arizona. Maybe you have already spent days there searching for the elusive Rufous-winged Sparrow. Capt. Elgin Hurlbert and his wife report seeing it last March near Oracle, north of Tucson. He states, "We had good comparisons with Chipping Sparrows and Rufous-crowned Sparrows in the same general area, although different habitat. This is a pesky bird to get. This year it may be in a different area.



Mr. Sam Levin has graciously given us permission to enter his ranch property in Morongo Valley on our field trips, as many of you know from happy experience. We previously mentioned that he is operating a restaurant, the Purple Lantern, across the highway from the ranch. It has proved so popular that he is now enlarging the banquet room to accommodate 150 persons. We congratulate Mr. Levin and look forward to enjoying the fine food and entertainment at his dining place.

# Audubon Activities

by OTTO WIDMAN

## February 8 - EVENING MEETING

The business of the Tuesday Evening Meeting was the appointing of a committee for the nomination of officers for the coming year. President Bill Watson appointed Les Woods to head the committee; Russ Wilson nominated Otto Widmann, and Mrs. Adams nominated Frances Kohn.

Dr. John William Hardy's "A South American Reconnaissance" was just that - a quick look at the Jay population. He hopped, skipped, and jumped about South America from jungle to alp, from grassland to plateau to tundra in search of as many different jays as he could find - and he found several distinct birds. He had excellent cooperation from the Museums and Universities of the various countries, few of which had studied the jay. Dr. Hardy took his sound equipment along and recorded the jay's strident calls, several of which he played back for us. His many slides acquainted us with every type of South American life-zones. His praise of Venezuela had everyone talking about going there. It was an interesting evening watching a detective at work.

Several new members attended the meeting for the first time: Louise M. Kennedy, Clara Ventsam, Robert Calkins, Larry Bomke and Edward Schaer. Welcome! We were glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wilson, members, but not with us for some time.

## February 12 - MORRO BAY FIELD TRIP

Forty-six members and friends gathered at Morro Rock. Louis H. Wilson of Paso Robles was with A. K. Wuerke; there were O. C. K. & Coraw Hutchinson from Alton, Ill. Charles K. Taubert signed in from Baywood Park. Bob Ulyang of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio was after western life-birds. Frances Kohn brought Margaret and David Chase and Bill Ingram as guests, their first time on a field trip. New on our field trips was Ben Hoffman of Los Angeles. Welcome one and all.

It was well worth their while, because 112 species were seen on this two-day trip, not by everyone, to be sure, but enough species were seen by each individual. The sight of 1000 Black Brants settling on the back-bay and paddling ashore is one that may not be seen for too long; their numbers are being depleted. All the loons and grebes, the pelicans and cormorants on the Los Angeles Audubon A.O.U. check list were noted. A glance down the list shows Teals (2), Scaups (2), and Mergansers. On the Rock we saw a

nesting Peregrine's Falcon and several Rock Wrens. Both have returned since the blasting has stopped. Surf Scoters were at the breakwater. In the marsh were Long-billed Curlew, Avocets, and Yellowlegs. Russ Wilson spotted

Black-legged Kittiwake; There were Bonaparte's and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Two owls-Barn, up the canyon, seen by all of us, and the Great Horned first reported by Richard Milne. Marion Wilson says the Sunday group saw a Varied Thrush, Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers, Pine Siskins, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. Spring must be here: both Rufous and Allen's Hummers were busy nectar-ing. We had a chance to see both Western and Mountain Bluebirds. The day was clear and until noon, the fog and wind held off shore, not coming in until after we had lunched.

## February 27 CHATSWORTH LAKE FIELD TRIP

I think we all look forward to the Chatsworth Lake trip as something special. It's one of those sylvan affairs with blue skies, open water, green hills dotted with Johnny-jump-ups, lupine, brodiaea, where the deer and antelope play - well the deer, anyway. Somehow there is the feeling that the landscape is untouched, especially when you see 157 Canada Geese and one Snow Goose saunter across velvet-like grass with Richard Milne stalking them with camera and binocs. The coreopsis seem that much brighter with American and Lesser Goldfinch perched on them, with California Quail talking it up in the underbrush. How pleasant it is to sit down by the lake and count the Mallards, the Teal, Green-winged and Cinnamon, and to see Lesser Scaups and Buffleheads bobbing up and down. It is truly a surprise to find a Common Snipe and Spotted, Least and Western Sandpipers on an inland lake, along with Dunlins. Overhead Swifts (White-throated) and Violet-green and Tree Swallows talk among themselves. In the oak grove the Flickers, Sapsuckers (Yellow-bellied) and woodpeckers noisily move about. Here also was the Plain Titmouse with two distinct songs. There was the White-breasted Nuthatch, searching, searching. Here we saw the Warblers, Orange-crowned, Audubon's and Yellowthroat. And everywhere there were hundreds of Meadowlarks. A Yellow-headed Blackbird showed up in a marshy lagoon. Hundreds of Baldpates nuzzled the geese out of the way for choice grasses, and circling through the trees, a Sharp-shinned Hawk patrolled the area with a Sparrow Hawk following close behind.

By slowly circling the lake the group led by Harold Swanton saw 70 species in this closed area. That's why 59 people showed up for this perfect day without wind (remember last year & two years ago?) The Daywalds must have known it would be nice. Haven't seen them in months. Sandy Wohlegemuth brought his family along. The Milnes brought

Continued on page 79

# Le Sacre du Printemps

By BETTY JENNER

"This insatiable desire to be inside other forms of life - to see the things that I see with their eyes and their minds this is a thread that has run through all of our seasonal wanderings."

Edwin Way Teale -- "Wandering through Winter"

The frail, nearly transparent, honey-colored aphid walked along the bamboo leaf with all the speed her wispy legs could muster. For her six days of life, she had lived with her mother, her grandmother, her sisters, in seeming safety, having nothing to do but drink the delectable juices of the leaf; and it was nearly time for her to produce a hundred daughters of her own. But now a dragon-like creature approached; gray-black, with orange markings, it resembled an alligator except that it had six legs instead of four.

It quickly overtook the young aphid, seized her, and voraciously ate her in the manner of a hungry boy eating a hamburger. You might say the creature was a walking appetite; from the time it had broken out of a tiny waxy golden egg, through several molts as its skin grew too tight, it had consumed innumerable aphids. This particular meal stretched the creature's skin to an unbearable tightness, and he began seeking a safe pupating place.

A wooden fence post promised immobility and near-invisibility. The ladybug larva, for this is our dragon, made haste to find a protected spot, and, head down, secreted a strong glue-like substance from his abdomen tip, fastening himself securely to the wood. He undoubtedly breathed in enough air to assist internal growth so that soon his skin was stretched to the breaking point, it split down his back, and rolled off like an old glove. The creature now to be seen fastened to the wood was bright orange-yellow, formless and soft. It soon hardened on the outside, and resembled a kernel of corn hanging there. During the days that followed, if touched, this pupa would irritably move up and down, but showed no other signs of the remarkable change taking place inside. Continued on page 80

## Audubon Activities

CONTINUED

their guest, Mrs. Margaret Johnson. The Jenners brought Jonathan Kane of N. Y. State, now doing graduate work at U.S.C. Glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Oreon Myrup. All in all it was a very successful day.

## Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Julia H. Dembrowsky  
777 E. Valley Blvd., #63, Alhambra 91801

Mr. W. E. Dillon  
800 N. Las Palmas, #403, L. A. 90038

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. Dunn  
511 1/2 Glenrock Ave., Los Angeles 90024

Miss Eunice Hammond  
2728 Clarendon Ave., Huntington Park 90256

Miss Carol H. Hulbert  
613 Ocean Drive, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Mrs. F. A. Odenheimer  
8006 Yorktown Ave., Los Angeles 90045

Mr. and Mrs. George S. O'Leary  
3217 Sherwood Ave., Alhambra 91801

Mrs. Berne Tabakin  
1583 Sorrento Dr., Pacific Palisades 90272

Miss Elizabeth F. Watson  
6069 Lexington Ave., Hollywood 90038

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Williams & Family  
401 17th Street, Santa Monica, Calif.

Family of Mr. Sandford Wohlgemuth  
19354 Calvert, Reseda, Calif.

### DECEASED:

Mrs. Enid Benson - local member for over  
35 years

Miss Edith Eichel joint member since 1959  
Miss Charlotte Hamilton - local member since  
1933. President 1936-1937

## The Western Tanager

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## **southern california**

# BIRDS

by DAVID A. GAINES

For the first time in several years Southern California has experienced a relatively wet winter. Rainfall has been markedly above average, and an abundant snowpack has accumulated on the higher mountains. Even the desert has received notable quantities of rain. As a result, we can expect a lush growth of green in the mountains and foothills, water in the streams and lakes, and a spectacular display of spring wildflowers. Unfortunately, an excess of rain can put a dampener on spring birding. Migrants do not need to congregate in areas where permanent food and water are available, e.g., Morongo Valley. With this in mind, it will be interesting to note the comparative numbers of migrants to be seen this spring.

By late February, with many wintering birds on the move, the first early migrants made their appearance. Allen's and Rufous Hummingbirds were on the coast and in the desert. At the Salton Sea hundreds of Tree and Violet-Green Swallows circled the fields and ponds. Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers began to move north. An early Scott's Oriole was found at Morongo Valley. On the negative side, geese and other water-fowl began to depart for the north. By the end of the month most of the Canadian Geese at Salton Sea had vanished. Waders, sparrows, and other wintering landbirds should be departing within the next few weeks.

Concurrent with the northward migration is the nesting of resident land birds in the lowlands. By the end of February, the pairing, nesting, and territorial behavior of such species as Towhees, Finches, Mockingbirds, Bushtits, and Scrub Jays was underway.

As expected, a few less usual wintering species were spotted during February. Shirley Wells, spending an active month, reported a Red-necked Grebe at Malibu Pier, a Golden Plover at Playa del Rey (two located the following day, D.G.), Ferruginous Hawk in eastern San Diego County, large flocks of Pinon Jays at the summit of Mt. Pinos, a Vermilion Flycatcher at Finney Lake, and four Cattle Egrets at the Salton Sea. Also at the Salton Sea were three Blue Geese (until mid-February-Bob Praether), an adult male American Redstart, and a Western Gull of the yellow-legged Baja California subspecies. Two European Widgeon were found in Orange County, one at Irvine Lake and the other at Newport Bay. Common Scoter and Black Oystercatcher were found at Laguna, the latter wintering considerably south of its normal range along the coast. The Wood Duck appeared at Malibu Lake in the Santa Monica

Mountains. The vanishing Peregrine Falcon was observed at Morro Bay. A wintering male Costa's Hummingbird remained in west Los Angeles for the duration of the month.

During April, watch for incoming migrants. Orioles, Tanagers, Grosbeaks, Peewees, Flycatchers, Warblers, Vireos, and all the rest will soon be with us. Best localities should be in the desert--Morongo Valley, Salton Sea, and the Colorado River (Parker Dam). In addition to the typical western migrants, look for eastern strays such as Redstart, Black-and-White Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Indigo Bunting, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.



## Spring Wildflower Tours Announced

This spring promises to be one of the best wildflower years in local history, due to early and heavy winter rains. Free tours of five Los Angeles County Wildflower and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Antelope Valley will enable the public to see these areas in bloom April 23 and 24. Experienced naturalists will explain the flora, fauna and ecology at each sanctuary.

Spring Wildflower Tours, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, will start at 9:00 a.m. (none after 10:00 a.m.) Saturday and Sunday at Antelope Shopping Center, just east of Pearblossom on Hiway 138. Individual tour maps will be available at starting point. Visitors are advised to bring water, lunch, a full gas tank, outdoor clothes, walking shoes, camera, binoculars, hand lens, and a guide to desert flowers.

## *Le Sacre du Printemps*

**Continued...**

Depending on weather and other factors, in a week or so the creature inside would begin straining and stretching, and if not disturbed during this critical time, would burst open its pupa shell and slowly emerge - a soft, pale ladybug beetle. If lucky enough to emerge on a sunny day, it might sit quietly for several hours, raising its armored chitin wings to stretch the filmy, long second pair of wings. When sufficiently hardened, and accustomed to its strange new shape, it would again feel intense hunger and begin looking for aphis and other small insects. Perhaps some time would elapse before it would experiment with the magic of flying and, later, know the ecstasy of the early summer mating flight.

For those of us who must stay home instead of exploring the far places - the ancient rites of spring are taking place in our own yards, and the mysteries of sacrifice and of rebirth are there for all to see . . . mysteries re-enacted each spring for 350 million years.