

A Tropical Triangle Tour...

By BETTY JENNER PART I



Cuba is green!

Looking down on that verdant but inaccessible island from the window of our Pan-Am airliner, I almost wished that we would be hijacked so that I might have a sporting chance of seeing the exquisite Bee Hummingbird, the tiniest bird in the world, which is found only in Cuba.

We -- eleven seekers of new species to add to our life lists -- were leaving the apex of the tropical triangle, - the southern tip of Florida. We had seen many of the beautiful birds of the Everglades, - the majestic Great White Heron, the Roseate Spoonbill, the White Ibis, to name a few, - and were now en route from Miami to Jamaica. We would continue on this leg of the triangle down to Panama, then south to Cali, Colombia; then across to Caracas, Venezuela, and to Trinidad and Tobago; then we would start up the final side of the triangle, stopping in Puerto Rico, then back to Miami. The time was September, 1968.

In a surprisingly short while we were disembarking at the hot and windswept airport of Kingston. Precious daylight hours - prime birding time - were being used up while we waited for the takeoff for our destination on the northwest side of the island - Montego Bay. When we finally arrived there, we were welcomed by Russell Loe-sell, Director of the Caribbean Biological Station; he was our genial guide and mentor for the next two days. As we drove eastward along a scenic shoreline highway, he told us something of this island paradise, "the fairest isle that eyes have seen." Since we were driving on the left side of the road, English style, the ride was truly exciting.

Leaving "Mo' Bay" we passed luxury hotels, great estates, and poverty-stricken villages, where entire families lived in tiny huts. Even the poorest village was clean, and the people were gay. School is compulsory, and health care is available, so that even though unemployment is high, the people don't have a hopeless feeling. It was market day, and in the town squares were stalls heaped high with (to us) exotic fruits and vegetables.

In 1962, Jamaica achieved independence after 300 years as a British colony; now, many of the huge British plantations have been turned into hotels, each using the name of the original estate. Sign Great House, Brimmer Hall, Runaway Spice Estate, Rose Hall, are a few of the places where the great tradition is carried on; the last named boasts a lurid 150-year-old legend of beautiful Annie Palmer, the "White Witch of Rose Hall", who practised voodoo, murdered three of her husbands, and was finally slain.

In order to understand the present ecological situation of the island, it is necessary to sound like a Chamber of Commerce for a moment. Tourism is the second largest industry, bauxite being first. Sugar, bananas, coffee, pimento (all-spice), cocoa, and tobacco are the chief crops, and of course rum is an important product. The original Sarawak Indians lived on corn, fish, and yams, but since that long ago time the island has been planted to mangoes, citrus, breadfruit (brought by Capt. Bligh), coconuts, and many other varieties of fruits and vegetables. Along the road we travelled, only a small stretch looks as it did when Columbus landed and stayed for two years.

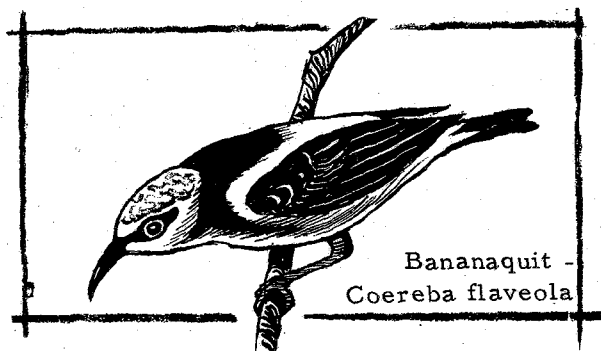
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A Tropical Triangle Tour...

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As we drove along, fact and fiction, present and past, seemed intertwined. The town of Runaway Bay is where the Spanish generals fled in the face of British conquest. Ocho Rios, another town, has a Spanish name but is pronounced with a long "i" -- o-ko-rye-occe. (Toss that off when you're place-name-dropping to your friends.) This is James Bond country. James Bond wrote the local birders' bible, "Birds of the West Indies" and is alive and living in Philadelphia. Yet, the James Bond of fiction seems to haunt the place. We were shown where the late Ian Fleming made his home, part of each year for eighteen years, and wrote his famous stories. We passed the very locale where a James Bond movie was made. Every bend of the road disclosed an unforgettable vista of shore and sea; we could understand how Fleming came to dearly love this fabulous island.

Our hotel at Port Maria, the Casa Maria, has extensive landscaped grounds and a patch of woods so we lost no time in seeing new birds. At the flowers were Doctor Birds - hummers - and in every shrub and tree, the ubiquitous Bananaquits or Honeycreepers, which we were to see for the rest of the trip. This is the "Yellow Bird" of the song of that name, and charms hotel guests who dine in patios by coming to the table for food. Gray Kingbird sat on a wire; clouds of Cave Swallows were insect-catching overhead; the handsome Jamaican Woodpecker, indigenous to the island, was in the patch of woods; and in coco palms sat the only protected bird of Jamaica, the Turkey Vulture. At dusk we were serenaded by myriad voices of crickets, frogs, and tree toads. Of course our group, being typical birders, did full justice to a delicious dinner featuring native foods of the island.



Bananaquit -
Coereba flaveola

From the balcony of our room, my roommate and I had magnificent views of the sunset and moonrise, and of sunrise the next morning, over the blue Caribbean. We rose early in order to drive up into the Blue Mountains, el. 7,402'. Our taxi drivers were very cooperative, and would stop whenever someone spotted a good bird. It was fascinating to hear the men's dialect as they chatted together. English is the official language of the island, but the language spoken by the majority of Jamaicans is a lilting dialect liberally sprinkled with colorful colloquialisms. Koo-ya is look here! Galang is go on! Cho de-

notes scorn or skepticism. Faba is to resemble, - "him faba a fool."

Our cars climbed the road which wound upwards through a lush growth of bromeliad-covered trees, tree ferns, bamboo thickets, and vines. As we hungrily ate our box lunches at Hardwar Gap picnic grounds, I could hear the echoing flute-like notes of solitaires in the canyons. When we started walking along a dirt road away from the main road it was not long before we saw one of the fabulous singers: the Rufous-throated Solitaire. Among the birds seen this day were Stripe-headed Tanager, Dusky-capped Flycatcher (Little Tom Fool), Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Loggerhead Kingbird, Smooth-billed Ani, and Arrow-headed Warbler, - this last found only in Jamaica. We could hear many tantalizing voices in the forest, but rain started to fall, and it developed into one of the major storms of the year; so we headed home again to the hotel and a delicious dinner.

Our great treat the next day, in beautiful weather, was a visit to Rocklands Feeding Station. This is the home of Miss Lisa Salmon, in the hills at Anchovy, near Mo' Bay. This gracious lady has bird feeders of all kinds set up, and welcomes the general public each afternoon. The handsome Streamertail Hummer will light on one's hand to feed. A shy hummer, an almost incredible morsel of vibrant life, was the male Vervain Hummingbird, only 2 1/2 inches long. He is also called the Bee Hummer but is not as colorful as the Cuban Bee Hummer. White-eyed and White-chinned Thrushes, Jamaican Euphonia -- these three indigenous to the island; Saffron Finch, Olive-throated Parakeet, and several Grassquits, made our visit most enjoyable.

All too soon we had to return to the airport, fly across the mountains to Kingston, and embark at sundown for Panama. Soon after our very good dinner in the air, it was announced that our first stop would be Barranquilla, Colombia. We were told that all disembarking passengers would be searched as a precaution against arms-carrying hijackers. We decided to stay on board instead of stretching our legs! A man with a metal-detecting device passed along the aisle. From recent reports of hijacking, it would seem that none of these precautions are effective.

When we landed at Tocumen Airport, Panama, we felt for the first time that we were in a foreign country, since Spanish was the language we heard in the busy air terminal. For the next three days we were to see more colorful fauna and flora under the expert guidance of Dr. Horace Loftin. He is not a professional ornithologist but is one of the finest field men in Panama - or anywhere for my money.

The subject of tropical birding is so absorbing and so involved that I shall not try to tell of our group's further adventures until a later issue of the "Tanager." Meanwhile, I'd like to make a few more observations regarding West Indian birds. Many species are to be found on one island only, so it would take a great deal of time and money to

"I hope that it (this book) will serve as a stimulus to further research, in particular on the life-histories of the endemic species, which have been inadequately studied. . . . Natives on all the islands are extremely pleasant and hospitable, and one should accept and reciprocate as far as possible the many courtesies that are offered to strangers. Some country people can be helpful in locating rare birds or other animals. . . . I have never found it necessary to boil water for drinking purposes in the West Indies. . . .

James Bond
The Academy of
Natural Sciences
of Philadelphia

No true conservationist puts birds above people; if our own children were hungry, we probably would kill songbirds and parrots for food too. But, some solution must be found, and quickly, or there will be nothing but barren, leached-out land over the whole earth, -- then what will we all eat? Medical miracles are saving human lives; and many of these lives will be spent just eking out a bare existence. We conservationists believe that each child born deserves the opportunity for a full and meaningful life, - but that the world can't go on doubling its population every few years.

and Latin America, so that the tourist dollar will bolster the economy of these countries. It is amazing how quickly one can fly to Central or South America or the Caribbean; and frequently, off-season prices coincide with the best birding seasons!

There are few experiences more rewarding than hearing a chorus of bird voices in the cloud forest, or seeing a rookery of egrets and ibises. We should be planning, not for only the next generation's enjoyment of our beautiful planet Earth, but for the generations of five hundred or one thousand years from now.

..... To Be Continued



The Seduba Foundation, of Los Alamitos, Calif., has announced the establishment of a wildlife research grant program. The program was conceived due to the special problems faced by wildlife in Southern California, where human population growth has resulted in diminished habitat.

The first grants are to Dan Monette of Long Beach State College, and Howard Moss, of California Polytechnic College, Pomona, who will be studying the ecology of Nelson's Bighorn Sheep in the San Gabriel Wilderness and the Cucamonga Wilderness Areas, respectively. The Seduba Foundation is also supplying photographic and field equipment for these projects.

The grant program is under the direction of L. A. Audubon member Dr. Charles Jenner. He states that Seduba hopes to extend the program into marine and coastal research, including studies of that rapidly disappearing local resource, the salt marsh.

HELPERS NEEDED ON TOUR

During the past three years, an average of two thousand persons have attended each of the NATURE CONSERVANCY SPRING WILDFLOWER TOURS. The 1969 tours, to be held the weekend of April 12-13, will be broader in scope,--designated as NATURE TOURS - Geology, Ecology, and Wildflower Tours.

From Lancaster, tours will caravan through the Elizabeth Lake-Pine Canyon area, with tour stops featuring wildflower displays, riparian woodland, sag ponds, earthquake geology, pine-oak woodland, fire ecology, etc. We hope to have displays showing birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects of various natural communities.

YOU ARE INVITED to assist at one of the four stops. Those who have helped in the past have earned the gratitude of thousands. We hope that you will join us for another great adventure in conservation education.

71

AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

Note: Our March 8 field trip to Chatsworth Dam was cancelled due to flood conditions. Here is a report of a successful field trip which took place on the same day:

The joint San Fernando Valley Sierra Club and S.F. V. Audubon Society Porter Ranch Hike-In on March 8 was an overwhelming success, thanks to the abilities of Ben & Miriam Romero, who planned and coordinated everything; the 60 Sierra Club leaders; the 20 Audubon Student Naturalists; and all the many others who had volunteered to help.

Over 600 people turned out in nearly perfect weather to find out about beautiful Porter Ranch Park, recently acquired by the Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department. The consensus was practically unanimous, --

"Leave it (the Park) just the way it is, but keep the motorcycles out!" Even with the huge turnout, everything went along without a hitch. Only one very unpleasant incident marred the day. One of the last groups of hikers for the day went further along the trail than the others. One of the group noticed a Turkey Vulture on the ground in a fairly level open sandy area about 70-100 feet off the trail. The group found that the Turkey Vulture was caught in a heavy steel trap! A parka was thrown over the bird while the trap was released, - the parka was removed, and the vulture flew off. A number of vultures were noticed circling in the area; we found out why. About 15 feet from the trap was a dead fawn. The reason for the fawn's death was not apparent. We don't know the reason for the trap being there or why the dead fawn should have been so near the trap, but we do know that much of the land adjacent to Porter Ranch Park is used for grazing herds of sheep. It is hard for us to believe that the sheepherders don't know that Turkey Vultures are completely beneficial, and completely incapable of harming their sheep in any way. Aside from the stupidity or ignorance connected with the setting of these traps, there is a definite danger to humans. The trap that was found by the group, - which is now in our possession, - weighed perhaps 10 to 15 pounds. The open jaws of the trap would easily accommodate a man's foot or a horse's hoof. The area the trap was in had a quantity of footprints, hoofprints, and motorcycle tracks. While we don't feel the motorcyclists belong in the park, we don't favor this way of getting rid of them! The area was off the trail but very accessible, and although near the boundary of the park, we believe the trap was on park property. There were NO SIGNS ANYWHERE advising that traps were set.

The setting of these traps is a very dangerous and harmful practice. If the sheepherders are setting the traps, they should be informed that they are harming themselves by killing vultures, hawks, owls, and other predators. If they continue trapping and shooting they will doubtless be in for a siege of mice, rats, ground squirrels,

gophers, rabbits, and other rodents. All rodents compete with the sheep for edible grasses. Predators do not eat grass, they do not eat sheep, they eat rodents. Hawks and many other predators are protected by law, so it is illegal to kill them. Coyotes would only attack an animal as large as a sheep if it were sick or injured and away from the flock. Coyotes eat rodents.

The case is quite clear. The persons responsible for setting these traps should be educated, and perhaps your elected representatives should be educated too. It is intolerable to have this situation existing in or near a park.

-- Joann Leonard

On Saturday, March 8, the scheduled field trip to Tujunga Wash had to be cancelled because of flood damage to the wash. A substitute trip was taken in Brush Canyon, the farthest southwest part of Griffith Park. On a cool, gray morning, 21 people had the pleasure of seeing and hearing many of our chaparral birds in close-up view; such ordinarily elusive species as Wren-tit and Hermit Thrush were easily studied at close range. The sun came out at an opportune time -- just as we were watching a male Rufous Hummer feeding at a red-flowered bush. All agreed that this is exciting as watching fireworks! Another interesting observation was that of watching a mother Anna's Hummer feeding her two young in the nest. Thirty species were seen and three additional were heard.

Betty & Laura Lou Jenner, Co-leaders

SIERRA CLUB HIKE-IN -- HARBOR PARK

On Sunday, March 9, about 150 people came to Harbor Park to see for themselves its present status, and to learn of proposed "development". Shirley Wells of L.A. Audubon was co-leader in charge of pointing out birds and the necessity of preserving suitable habitat for the wild creatures of the park. Considerable silting has taken place as a result of the recent floods. The southern half of the park has been completely taken over by two-wheel motorists of all kinds; the noise was deafening as we followed the path which led us around that area of the park. Many L.A. Audubon members attended in order to help in bird identification; however, there weren't many birds. NBC-TV, and the Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram gave fine coverage to the event.

March 11 - TUESDAY EVENING MEETING -

As the subjects discussed in the business part of the meeting are mentioned elsewhere in "Tanager", we will commence with the happy part of the evening - the colorful slides that Herb Clarke brought back from the trip that he & Olga took to Venezuela. From tropical shores to the xerophytic vegetation of the paramos of the high Andes, we were shown flowers, trees, birds, and other wildlife in such profusion that we all determined to go there as soon as possible. We thank the Clarkes for sharing their trip with all of us.



Los Angeles Audubon Society



calendar

Miss Laura Jenner, *President*
639 W. 32nd. Street
Los Angeles 90007
748-7510

Mrs. Abigail King, *Executive Secretary*
700 Halliday Avenue
Los Angeles 90049
476-5121

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- Apr. 3 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p.m., Audubon House
- Apr. 8 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p.m., Great Hall, Plummer Park.
"SLIPS - SLIDES - AND SLICKS . . . SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S GEOLOGICAL JUNKPILE." David L. Weide, curator of the U.C.L.A. Geology Museum, will briefly outline some of the problems of earthquake faults, their history and predictability; mudslides and what you can and can't do about them; and the geologic history of the Santa Barbara oil slick. Audubon House open before and after program.
- Apr. 12 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Chantry Flats & Santa Anita Canyon, 8:00 a.m.
Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead, north to Foothill Blvd., east to Santa Anita Avenue, then north to the end of Santa Anita Canyon Road. Prepare for a hike down to the canyon stream and falls.
Leader: Harold Baxter - 355-6300
- Apr. 19 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley. Meet between 7:00 & 8:00 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. This is about 10 miles north of U.S. 60-70 on the Twenty-nine Palms Highway. Excellent for migrating birds. This trip is scheduled for one day, but many people stay over and camp at places like Indian Cove in the Joshua Tree National Monument or some may want to go on to the Salton Sea.
Leader: Jim Huffman - 545-1224
- Apr. 26 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley. Meet between 7:00 & 8:00 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley. See April 19 instruction for route. This trip is a repeat of the April 19 trip for every weekend is something new because of the excellent migrations through Morongo Valley.
Leader: Shum Suffel - 797-2965 (evenings)
- May 10 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP
ALWAYS BRING lunch and binoculars on field trips
PLEASE, no pets, and no collecting of any kind

EVERYONE WELCOME AL ALL ACTIVITIES

Camp Denali, McKinley Park, Alaska, - Take your choice of strenuous outdoor activities, or rest & relaxation, or a workshop stressing the field aspects of biology; all this where you can watch grizzlies, Dall sheep, caribou, timber wolf, moose, ptarmigan, and the fascinating and fragile tundra. Write: Camp Denali, Box D, College, Alaska 99701.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE WE HOPE TO HAVE DETAILS ABOUT THE JOINT ACQUISITION BY NATURE CONSERVANCY AND THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM OF LAND IN BIG MORONGO CANYON. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY WILL STIPULATE THAT WILDLIFE HABITAT BE PRESERVED.



EFFECTS OF SEVERE WINTER ON BIRDS OF OREGON.

(Note: while our California floods have been disastrous for humans, the effect on bird life is probably minimal. However, the snow and ice storms of the past winter in Oregon have caused critical problems for birds and other wildlife. The following account is from the "Audubon Warbler", bulletin of the Oregon Audubon Society.)

Since the Christmas Counts, several severe winter storms have passed through the state. Just how bad it was for wildlife has been rather hard to record because of the activities of the predators during the stormy periods. Undoubtedly many deer and elk have been or will be lost because of heavy, deep snow hampering their movements to proper food and shelter. Most of the smaller animals seemed to fare well except for the exotic Nutria which apparently is not well suited for extensive periods of cold and snow. Of course, many of our native animals hibernate during the winter months and were not affected. It was interesting to note that many rabbits were seen hopping over the snow in good numbers throughout the period and that the mouse population, already high before the snows, continued to increase and provided a great amount of food for the hawks and predator animals, especially after the snow left the ground leaving their burrows and trails exposed. What about the birds? Just how bad was it on them? Well, it looked a lot worse than it really was, although the whole picture will not be known until this spring when our birds return to begin nesting. After many years of rather mild winters our local birds have been spared the thinning process that severe winters bring to most parts of the country and a great buildup of many species has been noted. The weak, old, sick or injured birds took the brunt of the mortalities as they could not move on to better conditions nor compete for the remaining food supply.

As birds are very adaptable to weather, the cold and snow did not overly inconvenience them to any great extent and because of a very good carryover of seeds and berries most species did not have trouble finding food. The greatest killer of birds during the winter months are very cold, strong winds and periods of freezing rain or sleet. As these conditions prevailed during the first week of January along the northern edge of the state, undoubtedly many birds perished during this period. However, subsequent reports from the field indicated very few birds found dead. Perhaps the predatory animals cleaned them up fast. Virginia Holmgren, living on the west slope of Rocky Butte in northeast Portland, had been feeding a pair of Anna's Hummingbirds all fall and winter. When the temperature began to plummet on Dec. 30 to a low of 5 and below, the sugar water in her hummingbird feeders began to thicken. To off-

set this and provide adequate food for the hummers she placed a portable heating unit near the feeders to keep them from freezing. Throughout the rest of the day one of the Anna's Hummers remained on a branch in close proximity to the heater, presumably to keep warm. It disappeared that night and has not been seen since. Another interesting note on wild birds seeking out heat was reported from Linfield College in McMinnville. "During a period of very cold weather, with a heavy snow cover over almost all areas, many birds of several species swarmed onto the campus and remained in the clear and heated breezeways between the buildings. They lost almost all fear of man and remained there even though large numbers of students used these areas all day. These flocks of birds contained many sparrows, finches, Horned Larks, and Pipits."

On January 25, a heavy snowfall west of the Cascades practically buried the southern Willamette Valley and brought more snow to the rest of the state. This storm caught many birds trapped in the Valley from the previous storms and forced many to move farther south. It was a trying time for wildlife but fortunately it did not last long in the lower elevations. The biggest problem to the birds was the concentrations around the plowed and sanded roads and highways. The birds were attracted to these areas to acquire the sand for grit, and to feed on the clear patches. Perhaps the greatest mortality of the winter season occurred in these areas when the birds were struck by moving vehicles. The stretch of 99-West between Albany and Eugene was perhaps the worst area. The thrush family received the most mortality of all the species. Reports of widely scattered individual Robins were reported from almost all areas, lying dead in the woods and fields. A report from Medford on the status of Bluebirds: "A little discouraging is our lack of Western Bluebirds after our Christmas Count of 410 - since January 30 we have had reports of only eight that a local woman found spending nights in her garage. One morning she found four of them dead, the rest disappeared." Varied Thrushes, however, took the major dieoff of all the birds. When the heavy snows began, a mass migration to the lowlands began immediately. During the late January storms great numbers began to swarm to bird feeders especially along the coast. In all western Oregon areas, large numbers were found dead in the woods and roadways. A report from Depoe Bay indicated that the birds were starving and ate anything set out for them. Great amounts of bread, chick seed, wildbird seed and sunflower seeds were used and many stores up and down the coast quickly ran out. Many persons than baked hotcakes, bread, and biscuits to continue to feed the starving birds. No one was bothered by Starlings during this period, although they, too, should have been hungry. In the Willamette Valley the Starlings were the major competitors of the Robins and Varied Thrushes, and usually came out ahead in head-on conflicts.

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CANELO HILLS SANCTUARY

A new area in southern Arizona will become a nature sanctuary, if the plans of Nature Conservancy materialize. It has undertaken the purchase of the 60-acre Knipe homestead in the Canelo Hills south of Sonoita. The cienega on the homestead makes it valuable because of the wide variety of birds it attracts; the deer, antelope, and other species of Arizona wildlife who make their home there; and the rare botanical specimens to be found. The marsh is surrounded by a series of ridges and is a relic of the land long ago. Mammoths grazed across the land some 10,000 years ago. The grass probably was higher then, but the countryside not much different. The people who are helping buy it for posterity hope it will still be much the same 10,000 years from now.

Perhaps efforts will be made to preserve an interesting 2-story adobe house that was probably built in the 1880's or before.

This site and the one at the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary, on which the final payment for 309 acres has been made by Nature Conservancy, are about as far north as birds from the south fly, and are also within the southern range of birds from the north. All year there are species of birds that fly into the areas.

As with the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Sanctuary, money will be raised from contributions by private gifts and foundations. No government money will be asked for the Canelo land.

The Vermilion Flycatcher, March, 1969
Tucson Audubon Society

BEWARE THOSE EMPTY "OIL" DRUMS

The Tennessee Valley Authority has found something new to add to the sources of lethal pollution: some so-called empty "oil" drums used to float docks and boat-houses along a lake shore.

During five days in July more than half a million dead fish piled up on a 13-mile stretch of shoreline along Boone Lake in upper east Tennessee.

TVA's health and safety people had to do considerable detective work to come up with the poison source. Finally they found it: This area of the lake contains hundreds of metal drums once used as floats but now abandoned and drifting in the lake. They may be called "oil" drums but, in this case, two-thirds of them contained residues of a mercury compound used to control slime growth in industrial processes. The drums may have seemed "empty" but just one of those salvaged contained enough poison to kill fish even when diluted with a quarter of a million gallons of water.

OBSERVATIONS OF INTEREST FROM THE NORTHEAST:

December was marked by an invasion of northern finches; Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls being the species seen most frequently. At the other end of the spectrum, southern birds were represented by 71 Mockingbirds recorded in the Cape Cod Christmas Count.

Massachusetts Audubon Newsletter
Feb., 1969

Massachusetts Audubon Society

SPECIAL INTEREST TOUR OF EAST AFRICA

The Los Angeles Geographic Society announces that it plans to sponsor a special interest tour to this famed part of the world.

Highlights:

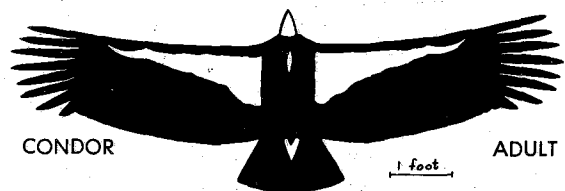
1) Low cost! This is one of the least expensive tours of the area that is being offered and yet is consistently first class in accommodations; etc. Only \$1841.00 round trip from either Los Angeles or San Francisco, and all-inclusive with the exception of about five meals. All tips, guide service, transportation, etc., is included. You can't do any better than this!

2) The tour will emphasize the ecology and conservation of this fascinating area. Its leader, Elna Bakker, is a photographer and consultant-naturalist with a long-time interest in conservation and ecology. She knows Africa well, having travelled there extensively. Elna is a member of L. A. Audubon, and has given us great pleasure with her travel films.

3) The tour will include "jeeping" up into the cloud forests of Mt. Kenya for a look at this interesting community type, a visit to Olduvai Gorge for its interest as the site of important paleontological work in the background of the human race; discussing problems of wildlife conservation with rangers, and visiting a ranger-training school; a visit to the Lake Nakuru Bird Sanctuary to see flamingoes and other wonderful birds; and many game reserves including: Treetops, Masai-Mara, Serengeti Plains, Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara, Amboseli, and Murchison Falls.

4) Photographers welcome! Every effort will be made to insure "good shooting."

5) Tour will begin July 31 and extend for 22 days, via New York and London (which is thrown in free!). Be a part of a group that shares your interest in, and love of wildlife!



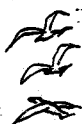
ONCE EACH YEAR THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ASKS ITS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONDOR SANCTUARY FUND. CHECKS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

YOUR PAST GIFTS HAVE PRODUCED RESULTS. WE MUST NOT STOP NOW!

Please make checks payable to:
Los Angeles Audubon Society

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

By G. SHUMWAY SUFFEL



The pace of spring migration should accelerate through April to a climax in early May, and this spring the countryside will be lush with grass, weeds and flowers after our more-than-sufficient winter rains. Add a touch of warm weather to bring out the insects, and a proper reception will be waiting for the hordes of small migrants--flycatchers, warblers, vireos and sparrows-- who will be with us, some for a few days, some for the summer. While the rains are wonderful for the birds, they make birding more difficult. There will be no concentrations at the coastal watering spots, and the little-used roads into the back country will be in poor repair, if passable at all.

With the passing of March it's time to close the books on a productive, yes, even exciting winter season. Robins and waxwings have been here in maximum numbers and their rarer siblings were seen much more often than usual. Varied Thrushes usually occurred singly and in widely scattered areas of the coastal plain, with the only multiple sighting being four at Descanso Gardens in mid-February. Bohemian Waxwings were erratic, as is their nature, sometimes in pure flocks, sometimes a few with Cedar Waxwings, but for the most part away from the coast. The latest reports were with large flocks of Cedar Waxwings-- four or five in Buellton on Feb. 23rd (Guy McCaskie) and one or more in Redlands on the 21st (Rusty Scalf). White-crowned and Chipping Sparrows wintered in normal large numbers, but with them were a few rarer individuals--two Tree Sparrows (new to Southern Calif.), a few White-throated Sparrows, and a very few Harris Sparrows.

(The one at the Arcadia Arboretum should be in fine summer plumage, if it stays into April.) Despite all this, many northern and mountain birds were unreported in the lowlands--Cross-bills, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Steller's Jays were all "no-shows" this year. Vaux's Swifts provided the most abnormal occurrences of the winter. They were found throughout the region from the Salton Sea to the coast, usually in small numbers, although one flock of 100 birds remained near Vista for the entire month of February. Latest reports are of three in San Bernardino on Feb. 22nd (Rusty Scalf) and one at the Arcadia Arboretum on March 5th (Jon Atwood). Since none were seen in Dec. or Jan., we must consider these as very early migrants. Wintering waterfowl were in normal numbers--tens of thousands of Snow Geese and ducks at the Salton Sea, with smaller numbers along the coast, but the number of rarities (some possibly escapees) was far greater than ever before. The super-rarities, of course, were the Red-breasted and Emperor Geese, and the Falcated and Common Teals, but even the expected rarities were found in greater than usual numbers; at least four male European Widgeon and four male Blue-winged Teal were at Upper Newport Bay in December, with single sightings reported elsewhere.

Many interesting reports were received, - all in February unless otherwise noted. Ralph Mancke found a Red-necked Grebe (first local report since 1966) in his "scope" off Malibu on March 9th. When it flew it revealed not only a white speculum but a white leading edge on the inner wing. This is a seldom-seen field mark, as they rarely fly. Later in the week we found two Ruffs in the flooded grasslands near Pt. Mugu. Paul Hessler reported a dark Petrel (Black or Ashy) only 75 feet off the Venice Pier on March 4th, and one wonders if the inshore occurrence of this strictly pelagic bird might not be due to oil on its feathers. Catherine Richmond, who is familiar with the species, reported about fifty Sandhill Cranes flying overhead at El Monte on Feb. 27th. This large number of cranes is particularly surprising because they are not known to winter in our area or south of us any more, except for very small numbers in the Imperial Valley. Kim Garrett heard Poorwills in the Hollywood Hills early in the month and Abigail King found a dead Poorwill on the hill behind her West Los Angeles home on the 17th. It was apparently killed by a predator, but whether it had awakened, or was possibly still dormant, is not known. An almost pure white Glaucous Gull with just a trace of buffy marbling on the top of the wings and tail, found at a dump below San Diego, brings up the question, "Are these white birds really second-winter birds, as has been believed, or are they just worn or faded (or retarded) first-year birds? They do have dark eyes which is characteristic of first-year gulls. Much more study is needed. Another, even whiter Glaucous Gull was found at the south end of the Salton Sea by Gene Cardiff in late February for a first record there, or for that matter, anywhere away from the coast. A Gilded Flicker in the same area on March 1st was also a first record for Imperial Valley. (Mike San Miguel). A Gray Flycatcher found by Jon Atwood near Legg Lake in early February, and one in San Diego, are the only Empidonax to be reported this winter. The only Brown Thrasher reported this year frequented a San Bernardino feeder in February, and was seen there by Dorothy & Harold Baxter on March 8th. A sprinkling of reports told of Townsend's Solitaires throughout the area; Kim Garrett had one at Lake Hollywood on the 21st, Rusty Scalf saw another in Redlands the same day, Shirley Wells discovered one at Cabrillo Beach on March 5th, and Mrs. Buffett saw the one at Death Valley on March 6th.

A note from Warren Blazer confirms the Lewis' Woodpeckers and Harris Sparrows as still being at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley on March 1st. Otto Widmann compiled an impressive list of yard birds while convalescing from the flu in January. Among them were Gnatcatchers, Purple Finches, White-throated Swifts and an immature Red-tailed Hawk. We hope his recovery is as complete as his yard list. Several observers have been jolted out of their complacency by an all-white gull with rusty outer primaries at Marina del Rey, and most of them after noting its small size and the black ring on its yellow bill have decided that it is an albino Ring-billed Gull, - a graceful bit of whiteness against a deep blue sky. Can this be the same gull which has wintered

DOES THE DOG WAG THE TAIL, OR DOES THE TAIL WAG THE DOG?

PLEASE TELL US, SUPERVISOR DORN -----
WE WOULD REALLY LIKE TO KNOW!

Another example of park land take-over has come to our attention.

Tapia Park in Malibu Canyon is one of the gems of the L. A. County Park system. About two years ago, approximately six acres of land, no longer needed by an adjacent County Probation Camp, was assigned over to the L. A. County Parks & Recreation Dep't to be incorporated into Tapia Park, and developed, possibly as an overnight camping area.

We now understand that this land is to be developed as a dog pound!

Once again, desperately needed park land is being used for non-park purposes. We have nothing against "man's best friend" but isn't this carrying the multiple-use concept a bit too far?

While we understand that about three acres will be directly used for structures, etc., connected with the pound, at least five or six acres will be eliminated for any park purposes, and the tranquility of the entire park will be destroyed.

The most interesting fact is that there is county land on the opposite side of Malibu Canyon Road that would not interfere with the uses of Tapia Park, which could be made available for a dog pound if one is needed in the area.

Perhaps Supervisor Dorn thinks people don't care about inappropriate zoning, which is what this really is. How about letting him know?

--- Joann Leonard

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS.....

here for the past few years? Shirley Wells has an incubating Anna's Hummingbird in San Pedro that looks like a male; metallic red on the crown and on the whole gorget area--but it can't be a male because males don't incubate... the books say. It could be an old female which is assuming male characteristics, or maybe it's like some teenagers, you can't tell the boys from the girls. Wouldn't it be simpler not to pry into their private lives, Shirley? While we're on the subject of nests, don't forget to contact Shirley in order to help her get as many observations as possible for Cornell's Nest Record Card program.

There will be birds everywhere in April--waterbirds and shorebirds migrating along the coast, small landbirds in every bush and tree, and hawks, swallows and swifts overhead; but your best bets are the desert oases, canyons along the foothills and on the coast, and the coastal lagoons.

Participants in the "Rare Bird Alert" were able to see a life bird in March if they had never seen a wild Whistling Swan before. Shum Suffel told us where to look: take Hueneme Road for about 1 1/2 miles toward the ocean from the Coast Highway; turn left at Casper Road; follow it to the end, looking across fields to your left, and in the lagoon visible at the dead-end of the road. It was seen on March 16 but may have flown north by now.

NEW RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS ESTABLISHED

Two additional tracts of National Forest land were permanently set aside today for education and scientific study as Research Natural Areas by Edward P. Cliff, Chief of the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Research natural areas, of which there are 79 in the National Forest System in 28 states and Puerto Rico, are essentially virgin forest or other plant communities, which are maintained strictly for scientific observation and research.

One new tract, the Roaring Branch Research Natural Area, contains 300 acres of old-growth shortleaf pine and hardwoods in the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas. It is the first on National Forest land in Arkansas and is also the first natural area to preserve a stand of virgin shortleaf pine.

The other tract, designated the Wolf Creek Research Natural Area, contains 150 acres representative of the western shrub and grasslands in the fringe of the ponderosa pine type in north-central Washington. Located in the Okanogan National Forest, it is the first Research Natural Area to represent the rangeland vegetation type of bitterbrush and beardless blue-branch wheatgrass.

These and other natural tracts serve as baselines for comparative study with other areas subjected to grazing, timber harvesting, and recreational use. In addition, environmental changes that affect natural vegetational development can be compared, such as air pollution, weather modification, and changes in ground water levels.

The tracts in the Forest Service System of Research Natural Areas will eventually represent all important forest and rangeland types. These Forest Service areas are part of a larger Federal system of Research Natural Areas, representing, in addition to vegetation types, examples of fish and animal habitats, land forms, soil types, and mineral deposits. Responsibility for natural areas on Federal lands rests largely with the Departments of Agriculture and Interior.

The Western Tanager



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7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046
EDITOR - Betty Jenner, 639 W. 32nd St.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90007
Phone: 748-7510

Art Editor - Bob Sandmeyer
Compositor - Betty Jenner
Field Notes - G. Shumway Suffel
Typing - Caroline Adams, L. Jenner, B. Jenner,
and Staff
Mailing Supervision - Abigail King & Staff

FREE TO MEMBERS - ALL OTHERS \$2.50 yearly

WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE
555 AUDUBON PLACE, POST OFFICE BOX 4446
(Fulton near Fair Oaks)
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825

916 481 5333

A MESSAGE FROM BILL GOODALL

Since the recent heavy rains, we have been assessing the destruction that occurred at the Audubon Center of California. While in terms of other situations our loss is not nearly as extensive, it is, nevertheless, in view of our large operating deficit, cause for concern. The most serious damage was to trees and shrubs, trails and chain link fence, some 2000 feet of the latter being lost down the river.

We are taking immediate steps to replant, to take advantage of the season, and to restore the trails. The replacement of the fence will be delayed until the Flood Control, Army Engineers and others reach decisions regarding re-channeling the river. However, it is an expense we will have to meet, eventually.

Because of this unforeseen drain on our finances, I am writing to ask if the membership of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, individually or as a Society, would wish to send contributions to help us on these projects. Gifts may be made payable to the Center and/or the National Audubon Society. It goes without saying that each contribution will be of very real assistance.

Most cordially,
William N. Goodall
Acting Director



Welcome! ————— NEW MEMBERS

Mr. John Richard Brock
Natural History Unit, B. B. C.
Bristol, 8, England

Mr. Marc Gottschalk
10563 Holman Ave.
Los Angeles, Ca 90024

Mr. C. B. Holden, Jr.
3509 E. Ocean Blvd., Apt. 7
Long Beach, Ca 90803

Miss Laura E. Ingham
1402 1/2 N. Havenhurst
Los Angeles, Ca 90046

Mr. & Mrs. D. H. Jenner
1145 Little Oak Drive
San Jose, Ca 95129

Mr. Harvey C. Kirk
2603 Laurel Ave.
Manhattan Beach, Ca 90266

Mr. Donald W. Lee
333 Madera
Los Angeles, Ca 90029

Mrs. S. A. Leshin
120 S. Woodburn Drive
Los Angeles, Ca 90049

SANTA BARBARA CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

A group of Santa Barbara citizens, - writers and scientists, and members of the Santa Barbara Audubon Society, have set up a Committee for the Environmental Defense Fund. The EDF is an eastern organization of ecologists and other environmental scientists. Working through its attorney, Victor Yannacone, the EDF has gained national recognition through its courtroom battles against DDT and other pollutions. *

A number of Santa Barbarans feel that Yannacone and EDF can be of significant help in our attempt to defend ourselves against continuing oil pollution. The problem is, of course, larger than Santa Barbara and its damaged coastline. It extends throughout California.

Because we are dealing with a general pollution problem, and seeking to set legal precedents of general application, we hope that committees for the EDF will be set up in other California communities. Our purpose is simple: to challenge and prevent the destruction of California and its natural life before the destruction is complete.

--Kenneth Millar
Margaret Millar



* See Sports Illustrated, Feb. 3, 1969
and Science, Feb. 7, 1969

Mr. Michael San Miguel
610 Greenbank Ave.
Duarte, Ca 91010

Mr. & Mrs. Thayer Scudder
2484 N. Altadena Drive
Altadena, Ca 91001

Mrs. Willard G. Smith
4103 Seaview Lane
Los Angeles, Ca 90065

Mr. Gary N. VanEssen
1351 Brampton Road
Los Angeles, Ca 90041

Mr. James R. Wilson
10710 Turnbow Drive
Sunland, Ca 91040

Miss Carmelita Maffat
226 S. Arden Blvd.
Los Angeles, Ca 90004

Mr. Jeffrey P. Miner
527 1/2 Glenrock Ave.
Los Angeles, Ca 90024

Mr. Ronald G. Osborn
1551 Wildwood Drive
Los Angeles, Ca 90041

Mrs. Adele Reiter
4645 Faculty Ave.
Long Beach, Ca 90808