



## The Western Tanager

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 36 · NUMBER 2 · OCTOBER 1969

### COLOMBIA—A PARADISE LOST...Arnold Small

When the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda discovered Colombia in 1499, he found a tropical paradise inhabited by gentle Chibcha Indians who farmed and made pottery, a land clothed in luxuriant forests and teeming with unique mammals and brightly colored birds, and a climate which ranged from steaming tropical heat to freezing arctic cold. Since that unfortunate event, this paradise has slowly been lost, and, except for the climate, little remains of what de Ojeda saw.

Colombia is the northmost Republic in South America and the only one with sea-coasts on both the Caribbean and Pacific. Its area is approximately the combined size of Texas and California and the greatest distance across the country is 1,170 miles. Today its population numbers some 20 million, of whom about 40% are mestizos, persons of mixed white and Indian descent.

About 30% are whites, mostly of Spanish descent; 15% mulattoes; 7% Indians; and 5% Negroes. It has the highest birthrate of any South American country, and its population is climbing faster than any other Latin American country. It is not uncommon to find impoverished families with more than 15 children. The inevitable result of this greatest of all population explosions will be the complete despoilation of what little remains of this wild paradise.

The exploitation started in April, 1536, when Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada set out from Santa Marta on the northern tip of the country. With him were 800 men, and they pushed inland to explore the territory east of the great Magdalena River which flowed north to the Caribbean. Heavy cotton quilting instead of armor protected the soldiers and horses from the poisoned arrows of the Indians. Jungle dampness rusted swords and ruined the powder of the muskets so the

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## COLOMBIA- A PARADISE LOST (continued)

soldiers improvised clubs and javelins. Together with a reinforcement of 200 men, the expedition dragged itself through stifling plains, unbroken tropical forests, and rugged mountain country. More than two years later, with only 163 men remaining, Quesada reached the eastern tablelands, home of the friendly, civilized Chibcha Indians, who welcomed the strangers who quickly enslaved them. Quesada recognized the potentials of the site and in August, 1538, founded Santa Fe de Bogota. At the same time he took possession of the land for the Spanish crown, King Charles V, and named it the New Kingdom of Granada, in honor of his homeland. Spanish rule and despoilation continued until 1819 when the Venezuelan patriot Simon Bolivar led the forces that finally overthrew the Spanish government in South America.

Termination of Spanish rule did not halt the ravages upon the land. Today more than 60% of the native forest is gone. Some 500 of the native species and subspecies of land-birds are extinct. The soaring population demands that more and more of the native forests be cut, burned, and turned to food production. The current agrarian reform program is being more rigorously enforced and many of the larger landowners, who have held vast areas of uncut forest in intelligent stewardship, are being forced to cut the forests under threat of government confiscation. Once these vast forests are confiscated by the government, they are distributed to the peons in roughly five acre tracts.



Much of the mountain air of Colombia is choked with smoke of the burning forests. If the felled trees are not burned, they are not harvested for lumber (since the cost of haulage from the steep mountainsides is prohibitive) but are allowed to decay on the ground. Once the forest has been cut and burned, it is planted to corn, beans, sugar cane, bananas, plantain, or manioc. The soil, once protected from the sun and the drying air by the umbrella of vegetation, changes chemically and physically, and the torrential rains quickly erode it away in a few years. Manmade deserts dot the land and the hungry peons push farther into the mountain forests, killing all forms of animal life for essential protein. The Cauca and Magdalena Rivers which drain the Colombian Andes and flow north to the Caribbean once had excellent fish faunas. Today they carry silt and sewage to the sea.

Despite the gloomy history of the land, Colombia today is inhabited by more species of birds (almost 1600) than any other country in the world...regardless of size! These represent 56% of all the species of birds found in South America, and 80% of the species of birds found in Central America from Nicaragua south. This unparalleled diversity of birdlife may partially be explained by Colombia's complex topography.

The physiography and climate coupled with the presence of two ocean masses adjacent to the country has resulted in a rich variety of habitats. The northernmost peninsula-the Guajira, supports a xerophytic vegetation of cactus and scrub plants which is akin to desert. The northeast corner of the country, the low rolling plains west of the Orinoco River, are the llanos which support myriads of herons, storks, water-fowl and birds of prey. The vast southern and southeastern portion of the country constitutes the Amazon lowlands which are drained by several tributaries of the Amazon itself. Here, populations are largely scattered Indian tribes which inhabit the river margins bordering the vast equatorial rain forests as yet largely untouched by axe or fire. East of the Eastern Cordillera then, the country is sparsely populated, hot, and virtually roadless. In area, it comprises more than half the country, and many of the birds which occur here are not to be found east of the Andes.

It is in the eastern portion of the country with its three Andean Cordilleras and its altiplanos and associated hospitable climate that the majority of Colombians live. Here the hand of man fell most heavily on the land. These three Andean Cordilleras diverge from the single Andean range near the Ecuador border and fan out in a northwesterly direction. The Central Cordillera is separated on the west from the Cordillera Occidental by the valley of the Cauca River, and on the east from the Cordillera Oriental by the Magdalena River. The Pacific lowlands stretch from the Panamanian to the Ecuadorian borders and their jungle forests have heavy rains throughout the year. Colombia's swampy Pacific coast is the雨iest place in all the Americas. Each year, a small area along the Atrato River receives over 350 inches of rain!

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a range separate and older than the Andes, rises in northeastern Colombia. Here, snow-covered Cristobal Colon, the country's highest peak, towers 18,947 feet above the sea. Deep valleys, gorges, and basins lie between the rugged mountain ranges of the country and act as effective barriers to the dispersal of organisms. Most of the traffic is north-south oriented along the two great river valleys and bird populations of the three Andean Cordilleras may intermingle only at their southern terminus. Due to the long

isolation since the Andean diastrophism more than 100 million years ago, and the even longer isolation of the Santa Marta range, bird speciation has been rapid and diverse in Colombia. Another hypothesis regarding the diversity of South American fauna suggests that the various forests of the Amazon didn't always exist. A study of climatic conditions during the Pleistocene (less than one million years ago) reveals that extended dry periods existed during which a number of small forests were isolated from one another by open, non-forested plains and savannahs. Speciation of bird populations could have occurred in these "refuge" areas. During humid periods, when the open areas became forested, these birds extended their ranges. The situation was repeated several times, resulting in a relatively rapid differentiation of various species.

The valleys, basin and altiplanos were originally vegetated with xerophytic scrub, savannah, marshes, grasslands, or even forest, depending upon local conditions. The Andes themselves, below the paramo zone were largely forested with semi-deciduous forest, cloud forest, or tropical rain forest. The tropical zone, which extends from sea level to 4500-5500 feet is hot and occupies three-fifths of the country. It is a region which presents many contrasts, from the dense rain forest of the Pacific coast, to the bare desert plains of the Guajira Peninsula. The subtropical zone, extending from 4500-5500 feet to 7500-8500 feet in the mountains is a region which is characterized by luxuriant rain and cloud forest.

Here, the trees are covered with such epiphytes as lianas, orchids, ferns, mosses and bromeliads. This zone is rich in endemic bird forms, especially in the long-isolated Santa Marta Mountains which have an exceptionally large number of endemics. The temperate zone, extending from 7500-8500 feet up to 11,500 feet, is a variable region of semiarid, bushy, or sparsely-wooded

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The name Arnold Small is practically synonymous with birding in Southern California. A former president of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, Arnold has birded in almost every nook and cranny of the world, and boasts a life list of over 3,000 birds! His first book, *BIRDS OF THE WEST*, written in collaboration with Herb Clarke, will be published this winter by the Barnes Press. Arnold lives in Los Angeles with his wife Mimi and their two children. In his non-birding hours, he teaches zoology at Harbor Junior College.

country; parts of it are humid and mist-covered supporting forest composed of small trees, overgrown with moss and other epiphytes. Near the lower elevations of this zone are found tree ferns and wax palms. Tree line is found near the upper limits of this zone as the paramo zone commences at 9500-11,500 feet and continues to snow line.

The paramo is some ways parallels our Arctic-Alpine life zone in North America, and in other ways resembles the high moorlands of the mountains of central Africa. The latter comparison is especially vivid when one sees the giant *espeleotias* which are so reminiscent of the giant lobelias and groundsel of the mountains of equatorial Africa. The paramo is bleak and rocky at its upper limits, but covered with scrubby growth, composites and coarse grasses at its lower limits. Here and there, especially in the "wet" paramo, are small ponds and sphagnum bogs. This region has few bird species, but those found here can be found nowhere else. It is the home of the Andean Teal, Andean Cinclodes, Andean Snipe, Andean Spinetail, Torrent Duck, and in places, the Andean Condor. Above the paramo may be glaciers and snow fields above 15,500 feet and only the occasional Giant Swift or Andean Condor may be seen soaring over these lifeless crags.

One of the few Colombian voices that has been raised in opposition to the continuing depletion of the Colombian forests and its wildlife is that of Dr. Carlos Lehmann of Cali. Not only is he a recognized ornithologist and authority on Colombian birds, he is the strongest and virtually the only voice for Colombian conservation. His family history is distinguished. One of his ancestors was four times president of the republic. Others have been ambassadors, jurists and ministers of state. His German grandfather was a pioneer Colombian naturalist who traveled the length and breadth of the country on mule-back, collecting plants and animals and making scientific observations.

Many of the type specimens of Colombian flora and fauna were obtained by Dr. Lehmann's grandfather. His collections were so extensive they are still being cataloged today. Carlos followed his grandfather's inspirations, and as a youth traveled the mountains, valleys and rivers of his country in search of birds... long before roads were cut and forests were cleared.

His talents and accomplishments are remarkable. He founded the first natural history museum in Colombia--in Bogota. In the ensuing years he founded a second in Popayan, and a third, of which he is currently director, in Cali. Since taxi-

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# AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

WILDLIFE FILM SERIES AGAIN  
SET BY VALLEY AUDUBON

Another brilliant series of Audubon Wildlife Film presentations is assured with the announcement that the fifth season of programs sponsored by the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will feature:

**GONE WITH THE WILDERNESS-**  
A NATURALIST AFIELD with Karl H. Malaslawski, Friday, October 24.

**CANADA'S MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS**  
with Edgar R. Jones, Monday, Dec. 15.

**OUR UNIQUE WATER WILDERNESS-**  
THE EVERGLADES with William A. Anderson, Wednesday, January 14.

**TIDEWATER TRAILS** with Charles T. Hotchkiss, Thursday February 12.

**THE BAHAMAS - TOP TO BOTTOM**  
with Harry Pederson, Thursday March 14.

All Audubon Wildlife Film programs will again be presented at the Fulton Junior High School auditorium, corner of Saticoy Street and Kester Avenue in Van Nuys at 7:45 p.m.

Proceeds from the Wildlife Film Series each year are used to finance summer nature camp scholarships for young people.

Series tickets for the five programs are available at \$5.00 for adults and \$2.00 for students. Family season tickets are \$10.00. Single admission prices are \$1.50 for adults and 50¢ for students.

A guest ticket, good for any one of the five programs, will be given with each adult season ticket, and two guest tickets free with each family season ticket.

Tickets can be ordered now from San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Box 2504, Van Nuys, California 91404. Telephone (213) 766-8845. Make checks or money orders payable to San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. A stamped, self-addressed envelope for mailing tickets to you will be appreciated.

Seating at the Fulton Junior High School auditorium is limited to about 800. There is ample parking available without charge.

## COLOMBIA--A PARADISE LOST (continued)

dery of museum caliber was unknown in Colombia, he journeyed to the United States for training. Most of the early exhibits were prepared by him, and later he was forced to train taxidermists himself. He is an accomplished musician, linguist, artist, photographer and private pilot. These latter skills served him well when he was preparing a conservation-education film on the Andean Condor in Colombia.

The Andean Condor, like its California cousin, is in trouble. Although the population and range of the South American bird is greater, its numbers are declining (especially in Peru) at an accelerating pace. The Peruvian birds are being shot and poisoned because of the small numbers of cormorant squabs eaten by them. Peruvians assert that their valuable guano industry is being threatened by the Andean Condor, while not admitting that Peruvian overfishing of the Humboldt Current anchovy fishery and the recent El Niño (abnormal warming of the coastal waters) is actually causing the decline in Guanay Cormorants, pelicans and boobies which are the major sources of the excreta on the guano islands. In Colombia, the Andean Condor has met resistance from the sheep and cattle ranchers because of its habit of occasionally killing a calf or a lamb.

One of Dr. Lehmann's current projects is the establishment of an Andean Condor refuge in the incredible Cañon de la Rio Pasto near the city of Pasto in western Colombia near the junction of the three Andean Cordilleras. Perhaps twelve condors inhabit this canyon near the borders of Rancho Salsipuedes owned by Don Gerardo Luna of Pasto. After years of fighting condors, Don Gerardo has acceded to the counsel of Carlos Lehmann and is prepared to deed his land which borders the rim of this Colombian Grand Canyon to Carlos and his conservation group for the purpose of setting aside a complete condor sanctuary in Colombia. Some \$10,000 (American) is needed to erect a cattle-proof fence along the rim (so the condors will not sweep incautious cattle into the gorge, as is their habit), to refurbish the ranch house (also donated by Don Gerardo) and provide it with a good water supply so that it may become a guest house or pension for Colombian and foreign condor-watchers, and to improve and maintain the eight kilometers of road from Pasto.

To educate and to publicize the nature, grandeur and plight of the Andean Condor is Carlos' most important and moving project. If he achieves this, his paradise will not be completely lost.

# AUDUBON CALENDAR

HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY AND NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE  
PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046 876-0202

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



1969 OCTOBER 1969						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 10/3	2 10/4	3 10/5	4 10/6	5 10/7	6 10/8	7 10/9
8 10/10	9 10/11	10 10/12	11 10/13	12 10/14	13 10/15	14 10/16
15 10/17	16 10/18	17 10/19	18 10/20	19 10/21	20 10/22	21 10/23
22 10/24	23 10/25	24 10/26	25 10/27	26 10/28	27 10/29	28 10/30
29 10/31						

October 4 SATURDAY. FIELD TRIP. Joint trip with Golden State Audubon Society to study pelagic birds on Monterey Bay. Boat leaves Fisherman's Wharf 9 a.m. and returns about 3 p.m. Cost of trip is \$7.00. Reservations made through Mr. Robert Da Costa, 2090 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco 94109. Birds seen on June trip included 8 BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS, thousands of SOOTY SHEARWATERS, ASHY PETREL, SABINE'S GULL, COMMON MURRE, PIGEON GUILLEMOT, MARBLED MURRELET, CASSIN'S AUKLET, and RHINOCEROUS AUKLET.

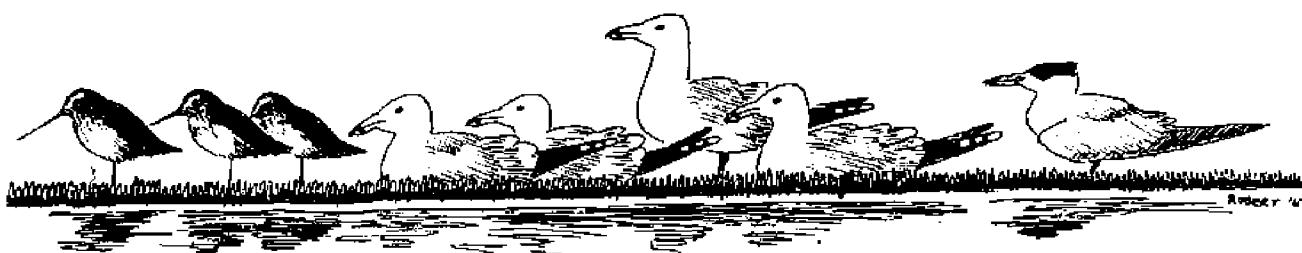
October 11 SATURDAY. FIELD TRIP. Cabrillo Beach and vicinity. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Cabrillo Beach Museum, 3720 Stephen M. White Drive, San Pedro. Take the Harbor Freeway to San Pedro; go south on Pacific Avenue to 36th St; turn left and follow signs to museum. Leader: SHIRLEY WELLS 831-4281

October 14 TUESDAY. EVENING MEETING. 8:00 p.m. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Mr. Guy McCaskie of San Diego will present an exceptional program on the finer points and techniques of field identification of birds--especially of the trickier plumages. Guy McCaskie is recognized as one of the most outstanding, skilled, and knowledgeable field birders in the United States and has for several years led the San Diego area in its unprecedented successes in the annual Christmas census. It is legendary now that the upsurge in recent years of the rarae aves in California (particularly in the Tijuana River area) has been due to Guy McCaskie's skill alone. Program chairman ARNOLD SMALL

October 26 SUNDAY. FIELD TRIP. Newport back bay. Meet 8:00 a.m. at Golden West Ponds near Huntington Beach. This is on Golden West Street at Talbert Avenue, 3 miles south of the San Diego Freeway, or 3 miles north of Pacific Coast Highway. Excellent for migrating and early wintering waterbirds.  
Leaders: DICK AND MARGE WILSON 866-0088

November 8 SATURDAY. FIELD TRIP. Santa Barbara area. Meet at the Bird Refuge 8:30 a.m. As you enter Santa Barbara turn off Highway 101 at Cabrillo Blvd. This is a left-hand off-ramp. Turn left at Cabrillo Blvd. under the bridge and the bird refuge and parking lot are to your right.  
Leader: OTTO WIDMANN 221-8973

October 2 THURSDAY. Executive Board Meeting. 8 p.m.



**BAN DDT****DDT—the WRONG insecticide****WHAT'S WRONG WITH DDT?**

it remains toxic in the environment for at least 10 years and spreads by wind and water around the globe

it is harmful to wildlife, killing some animals outright and inhibiting reproduction in others

it affects our food supply; our fisheries are particularly vulnerable

while the amount of DDT now in our bodies is small and has not yet proved harmful, scientists fear possible long range effects

**WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?**

numerous other insecticides that do the job and become harmless to the environment within a few weeks

non-chemical measures such as water level control to eliminate breeding areas, local destruction of diseased trees, introduction of natural insect eaters

**THEN WHY IS DDT STILL USED?**

it's inexpensive—large volume production, a result of its World War II fame, keeps its cost low

conclusive proof of its danger is recent—only now, after 10 years of research have scientists amassed irrefutable evidence

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

use only such sprays as pyrethrum, rotenone, nicotine sulfate, methoxychlor, Sevin, malathion, diazinon, dibrom, guthion, Dursban, naled or Abate, and these with extreme caution—check the ingredients on the label

never use DDT, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, or heptachlor; only qualified professionals should use chlordane, BHC, endosulfan or toxaphene for special limited uses

urge your neighbors, local tree sprayers and government officials to be guided by the above lists

make a tax-deductible gift to the National Audubon Society's Rachel Carson Memorial Fund, founded to finance our work in this area.

Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Alexander, Beverly Hills

Mr. Gary D. Bartel, Long Beach

Miss Phyllis A. Bluhm, Sunland

Mr. John S. Bogel, Los Angeles

Miss Evelyn L. Bower, Los Angeles

Mr. Gerald L. Boyd, Los Angeles

Catherine Brooks, Los Angeles

Mrs. J. V. Claes, Rolling Hills

Mr. Jack Kent Cook, Los Angeles

Clare M. Creighton, Hermosa Beach

Mr. Allen Crutcher, Fullerton

Dick and Janet Curtis, Long Beach

Nancy Curtis, Santa Monica

Howard M. Dixon, El Segundo

Dr. Philip E. Frandson, Los Angeles

Dr. Martin Grotiahn, Beverly Hills

Mr. Ronald F. Hellenthal, Torrance

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hockett, Los Angeles

Mr. Duke Howard, Los Angeles

Kory Robert Kemp, La Crescenta

Dr. Lillian W. Lindegren, Bellflower

Mrs. H. E. Long, Long Beach

Mr. John Menke, Encino

Mrs. Dolores O. Oswald, South Pasadena

Ron and Phyllis Patterson, Los Angeles

Mrs. Vern Robinson, Pacific Palisades

Mrs. David J. Scruggs, Inglewood

Mrs. Jay Sheppard, Long Beach

C. E. Smith, Los Angeles

Dr. and Mrs. G. W. Trager, Los Angeles

R. S. Undura, Los Angeles

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Zolla Jr., Beverly Hills

# CONSERVATION CORNER...Joann Leonard

The California Department of Fish and Game, in conjunction with the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at U.C., Berkeley, is undertaking an ecological study on the WHITE-TAILED KITE.

Howard Leach, special wildlife coordinator from the Fish and Game department said celluloid bands, approximately 5/8" high in varying colors of black, green, red, blue, white, orange and violet will be placed on the birds' legs in two-color combinations.

Since these colors can be seen by birders when the bird happens to be close by, the department would appreciate reports of any sightings of these birds. The report should be sent to:

Department of Fish and Game  
Special Wildlife Investigations  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

Give your name, address, where and when and time of day the kite was seen, and the color combinations. The best way to report the combinations is to give the top color first if you are able to observe this, and whether the bands are on the left or right legs. After the department gets this information, you will be notified when and where the bird was banded.

Purpose of the study is to determine the food habits, seasonal movements, habit requirements, and the relationship of the WHITE-TAILED KITE to other forms of wildlife and to man in these days of rapidly changing conditions.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO!

What can you do about our increasing conservation problems? One of the things everyone can do is to write letters. To make your letter writing more effective... and more fun, the Conservation Committee is initiating a continuing service series of letter writing evenings.

Our first session will be held Tuesday, October 28, from 8:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. at Audubon House.

Bring stationery, carbon paper, stamps, your favorite writing instrument, and that long list of things you've been planning to write to someone about. If you have printed background information on some problems you feel are most urgent, please bring that along too.

If you've never written a letter to a legislator or public official before, you're particularly welcome. We hope to be able to show you how easy it is to write that brief effective letter. Expert and marathon letter writers are urged to attend. We need your advice and your stimulating ideas. We hope to get off to a fine start with a good group of people.

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE TULE ELK!

On September 10, the Los Angeles City Council, acting on a report from the council's Water and Power committee, unanimously voted for some additional protection for the Tule Elk.

The council requested that the Department of Water and Power immediately erect no hunting signs in the area designated as the Tule Elk Wildlife Refuge. They have also asked the state Department of Fish and Game to honor these signs, and that all future annual shoots be halted.

It is now up to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to implement the council's request. We urge them to do so.

## NOTICE!!

Audubon House will now be open on Saturdays. Hours will be from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

## LET'S SPREAD THE WORD

We image that everyone is using the BAN DDT bumper stickers that came with the July Audubon magazine. However, in these days of two and three-car families, one bumper sticker per family doesn't go too far!

Fortunately, we have been able to obtain an initial supply of the large size BAN DDT bumper stickers. These are now available at Audubon House. We feel it is so important to get the idea across to the public that DDT can and must be banned that we ask every member to effectively display as many stickers as possible. There is no charge for the stickers we have at present; to be able to continue to make them available to our members, however, your generous contribution is needed.

The Western  
Tanager



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

Please address all communications  
to the editor:

JAMES F. CLEMENTS  
40 North San Rafael Avenue  
Pasadena, California 91105

# AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

...OTTO WIDMANN

## September 13 - MALIBU-TAPIA PARK FIELD TRIP.

Much to our relief the fog, which had plagued us all the way from town, was high, making good but cool birding weather. Field trip leader Les Wood met us at the bridge and directed us to where the birds were. Some 50 of us lined the west bank of the lagoon, looking over the terns (Forster's, Elegant and Common), the gulls (Heerman, Bonaparte, Ring-billed, Western and some Black-legged Kittiwakes).

There were some Northern Phalaropes, Black-bellied, Snowy and Semi-palmated Plovers with some Kildeer sandwiched in between. Black Turnstones and Willets were moving about. Ducks were Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy and Pintails, but only about ten individuals. Over in the marshes we saw a bird that could have been a female Pine Grosbeak but from the way it bobbed its tail we had to settle for a Blue Grosbeak. Yellowthroats and blackbirds were here also. Do seven hybrid Mallards count?

At Tapia Park the kingfisher flew back and forth, and here we added the Spotted Sandpiper. Acorn, Nuttall's and Flickers were in the live oaks. Also a Bewick's Wren. Here Duke Howard identified the Philadelphia Vireo. This is a first observation of this species for our field trips. Both Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers were counted. In all 69 species were recorded for the day. The wind blew at Tapia Park but it was pleasant. We saw our first White-crowned Sparrow of the season.

There were several new faces on this field trip: Anne and Sheree Kahle, Noel Davis, Stephanie Nordlinger, Everett and Andrea Freeman, Beverly Korenwasser, and from Philadelphia, Dick Wiltshire joined us for two days of birding in California. Also from the east Duke Howard has joined our group. Welcome and we hope to see more of you.



## September 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING

President Herb Clarke began the new season by asking our world-trotting members to say a few words about their travels: Arnold Small spoke about Colombia; Fran Kohn saw New Guinea for the first time; Dr. Maisel visited Uganda and Kenya; Jim Huffman explored Venezuela; Jim Clements birded the alpine zones of Europe and Spain. Those of us who stayed home mentioned places like Colorado, Wyoming, etc.

The rare bird alert group reported seeing Blue-footed Boobies and Brown Boobies and a Black Rail. The other rarities appear in Shumway Suffel's column. Mrs. Betty Jenner was given a resounding ovation for her fine work on the Tanager for the past three years. New Tanager editor Jim Clements will start a Letters to the Editor Column--so if you have anything to say, here's your chance. All this was going on while more than half the group trooped in late. True to his boast, President Herb Clarke is going to start the meetings on time!

Jim Clements introduced Dr. Jerry Maisel to the standing-room only crowd, and we immediately plunged into hundreds of color slides depicting all phases of Africal wildlife. The color was beautiful in spite of Dr. Maisel's complaints of inconsistencies. He had many slides of the larger birds of Africa--hundreds on the animals and others showing Lakes Victoria, Albert and Edward. The hippopotamus, rhino and elephant were particularly fine sequences.

Dr. Maisel took many slides which in effect telescoped us into many interesting actions--the crocodile, antelope and flamingo. He had several fine pictures of the rare Bat Hawk--a bird that has eluded the ubiquitous Arnold Small. The tourist facilities were nicely shown and to top off this wonderful adventure in Africa, Dr. Maisel climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, forgetting entirely to take a picture of himself at the verytop; but his guide is neatly shown. Hmm. Refreshments were served at Audubon House after the meeting.

## SO SORRY!

The following corrections should be made in the 1969-70 yearbook:

Mr. Arnold Small telephone should be 837-9687  
Mrs. Arnold Small telephone should be 837-9687  
Mr. James W. Huffman " " " 545-1224  
Mrs. J. Gordon Wells, zip code should be 90732

Guy McCaskie observed nesting of some dozen pairs of GULL-BILLED TERNS at the Salton Sea, by making the tortuous hike out the New River dike. Possibly an indication of a winter invasion was the finding of RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES at Palos Verdes by Jean Muller in early September. There were other scattered reports along the coast. Betty Jenner had an invasion of ROBINS at her downtown Los Angeles home in early September, and they seemed more common than usual in Pasadena, possibly another sign of things to come.

Probably the most sought after, and talked about bird of the summer was the FIVE-STRIPED SPARROW near Patagonia in southeastern Arizona. It was found by nearly everyone who looked for it in June but was not seen after the rains started in July. It remained for Jim Tucker, a Floridian now living in Texas, to refind, not one, but two sparrows, and to prove nesting for the first time in U. S. records. They were feeding young birds in mid-August.

At press time comes yet another bombshell. Two Audubon teenagers came up with the second Southern California record for the SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER. The bird was first spotted on September 13 by Jon Atwood and Richard Webster, and by the following Monday (three days) half the Los Angeles Audubon Society on the rare bird alert had journeyed to Goleta Slough to see the bird. The bird...the first reported here since 1921, was in beautiful breeding plumage. The coup of the day must go to Tanager editor Jim Clements. Hearing of the rare sandpiper, he waited until the fog cleared, flew his Cessna 182 from Santa Monica to Goleta, set up his spotting scope at the end of the runway and got the bird filling the scope in less than 30 minutes after arriving. Total time from Santa Monica to Goleta and back...with life bird number 595 for our intrepid editor...just over two hours!

The pelagic trip from San Diego on August 16 provided the best study to date of LEAST PETRELS, which were seen in good numbers and at close range. A particularly interesting small group of petrels, BLACK, LEACH, and LEAST, all circling together provided an unexcelled size comparison. The greatest disappointment was in inability of finding TROPIC BIRDS in Pyramid Cove at San Clemente Island, where nine sightings on a similar trip in 1968 were made. Encouraging reports from the September 6 pelagic trip out of Monterey bode well for the combined Golden State-L.A.A.S. trip October 4. The

expected pelagic species were seen in large numbers, along with a few rarities; the first LEAST PETREL north of San Diego; a FORK-TAILED PETREL, increasingly rare in California; several MARBLED MURRELETS under a pier; and with them, a THICK-BILLED MURRE, the first record since 1966 and the fifth for California.

By early October the feel of fall is in the air, and with it come our commonest and most predictable winter residents, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS and AUDUBON WARBLERS. You can set your calendar by the White Crowns. They arrive en masse on October 1, and leave on May 1. Of course there are early arrivals (Shirley Wells saw an immature on September 6) and a few linger into May, but I have never seen a White Crown here in the summer. Later in the month we can expect flocks of WAXWINGS, ROBINS, and JUNCOS to enliven the winter days.

Enjoy all these to the fullest, but get out in the field and live a little...find a TROPICAL KINGBIRD along the coast, a rare warbler in the fennel or pines at Pt. Fermin, or an Asiatic shorebird in a flooded field or coastal lagoon. You'll be surprised how this inflates your ego out of all proportion to the importance of the find.



#### N O T E

The Suffels will be in East Africa for part of September and October. Jay Sheppard has kindly agreed to write the November Southern Calif. Birds. Please send your observations to him before October 10 at 816 Walnut Street, Apt. 5, Long Beach, Calif. 90813. Phone 591-1530 eves.

#### RARE BIRD ALERT

During Shum Suffel's absence, Olga Clarke has agreed to be coordinator for the rare bird alert. For any unusual or rare observations, call Olga at CH 9-5537. Shum will be back at the helm after October 16.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS...G. Shumway Suffel

"Migrants and Vagrants" was the title of a Tanager article some years ago and it probably described the confused situation in October as well as anything. Birds are on the move now--summer residents going or gone; winter residents arriving or already here; migrants passing through; and those fascinating vagrants, confused today and lost tomorrow.

By early September the first trickle of vagrants was coming through. A fine adult BROWN THRASHER at Brush Canyon in the Hollywood Hills was found by Kim Garrett and remained at least through the Labor Day weekend. AMERICAN REDSTARTS, commonest of the Eastern strays, were found at the flowing springs near Westguard Pass in Inyo County (Mike San Miguel); in Tuna Canyon, Malibu (David Gaines and Larry Sansone); and at Averill Park in San Pedro (Shirley Wells). INDIGO BUNTINGS strayed into the northeastern part of our area with one netted by Mike San Miguel near Lone Pine in Owen's Valley on August 30, and another seen at Deep Springs, Inyo County, by Guy McCaskie and his party the next day.

David Beyers and Jon Dunn birded at Morongo Valley, chiefly known for spring migrants, and on September 8 were rewarded by finding a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH.

Another fascinating group of birds are the post-breeding wanderers from Mexico. Most conspicuous of these are: HEERMAN'S GULL, regular coastally and abundant; ELEGANT TERN, irregular in fall but numerous this year; and WOOD IBIS, formerly occurring in the San Diego coastal lagoons but now confined to the south end of the Salton Sea where there were several hundred in August. With these Ibis were two immature ROSEATE SPOONBILLS, a 100% increase over the single bird found there by Guy McCaskie in July. Two REDDISH EGRETS were at the north end of the Salton Sea in early September and another immature was found in the Pt. Mugu lagoon on August 18. It was seen again by Dick and Marge Wilson on the 29th, but in between times and subsequently it could not be found. Harold and Dotty Baxter's trip to Pt. Mugu looking for the egret was not a total loss as they found a LOUISIANA HERON there. This is possibly the same bird seen a week earlier at Bolsa Chica by their friend from South Dakota, B. J. Rose. Fred Hoerich of Cotton reports a female MAGNIFICENT FRIGATE BIRD (dark head and light breast) flying south offshore at Huntington Beach on August 10.

Two sightings of FRIGATE BIRDS were made near Santa Barbara on the 23rd of August. All of the latter birds are irregular and rare in our region.

An unprecedented invasion of BOOBIES at the north end of the Salton Sea stole the spotlight in early September. A single BLUE-FOOT was found on Sunday evening, August 31, by Cliff Lyons and Guy McC. Its presence was broadcast on the "Rare Bird Alert" and on Friday David Beyers excitedly reported five BLUE-FOOTS and one BROWN BOOBY, the largest number ever reported. Saturday night's phone call from Larry Sansone doubled that number to 12. Sunday night a call from Mike San Miguel and Jon Atwood brought the total to an incredible 15 BLUE-FOOTED and 3 BROWN BOOBIES. On Monday, Richard Webster, Jon Atwood and I counted 21 BLUE-FOOTED (both adults and immatures) and 3 BROWNS (including one adult). It seems probable that this invasion represents more than previously assumed irregular post-breeding wandering, as there were violent storms in the Gulf of California during that week, and these birds were very probably storm driven. If this is the case, it seems odd that other Gulf residents (Frigate birds, etc.,) were not found. However, the final total may not yet have been made.



Shorebirds, except phalaropes, were extremely abundant at Upper Newport Bay, probably because the breaching of the dike across the bay in last winter's storm has created a large area of tidal mud flats which was formerly covered with shallow water. As a consequence, there is more habitat for shorebirds, but not as much for ducks, which may account for a concentration of about 10,000 PINTAIL on the 100 or so acres of water near the San Joaquin Gun Club in late August. Although no PECTORAL OR BAIRD'S SANDPIPERs have been reported at Newport, they were seen at Doheny Beach (Alice Fries) and in the Tijuana River Valley. Jon Atwood, egret hunting at Pt. Mugu, found an OSPREY on the 23rd, Trudi Siptroth had one at Upper Newport on the 30th, and Kim Garrett saw another at Lake Hollywood on the 8th. While shorebirding just around the corner from the Newport Inn on the 2nd, Olga Clarke had one of her most pleasant surprises...a BLACK RAIL flushed at her feet, flew a few yards, dropped back into the reeds and disappeared, but not before her sharp eyes saw the distinctive reddish patch on its upper back.

(Please turn to page 9)