

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 36 JUNE, 1970 NUMBER 10

How do you get to Ohio?

Given a month to move from Southern California to Southwestern Ohio, what is one of the first orders of business? For us it was obvious—plan a major birding trip. We launched from Santa Monica on July 16 as the astronauts left Florida. Apollo may have been better planned, but proportionately not much more laden than our little Comet with camping gear and car-top carrier.

Interestingly, a mathematician on vacation may avoid the shortest distance between two points. Our route took us across Southern Nevada around Lake Mead to Northern Arizona (Grand Canyon), Southern Arizona (Madera Canyon, Ramsey Canyon, Chiricahua Mountains), east into New Mexico, north and up into Colorado (Rocky Mountain National Park), north through Eastern Wyoming into South Dakota (Black Hills, Badlands), and across Minnesota and Wisconsin, around Chicago and across Indiana into Ohio. Simple!

Everything in Arizona is uphill (at least if you're driving east). So, if you plan to drive an underpowered, overburdened car in daylight in mid-July, be sure you have a tight new radiator cap, antifreeze (it works!), good hoses and a functioning thermostat in the engine. We don't really have to go into the details of how we learned this, do we? Anyway, the first victory of the trip was a bird who had eluded us in California, the Piñon Jay. Since the Grand Canyon cuts a huge piñon juniper plain, the habitat is ideal for these steely-blue crow-like jays. We spent four days on the South Rim of that great slice in the ground, witnessed the kind of storm that moves men to write symphonies and leaves the wet sage intoxicatingly pungent. We camped with the Grey-headed Junco. We thrilled at the flight of the Goshawk. And next time we'll be more than tourists: we'll go down into the canyon, into the other life zones, drink in more of the splendor. There was a beautiful ride out through Navajo land and then south.

In Phoenix we dug deep into the suitcases to haul up the civilized clothes and venture to Scottsdale to Etienne's, a superb French restaurant which had been recommended just a few weeks before in the *Los Angeles Times*. Colorado River trout, chicken Marengo, and a great white wine were worth a little detour. Then on to Tucson where that serious birding

A Soggy Saga By Pat and Paul Hessler

began (with a day off in an air-conditioned motel to watch the moon walk).

We added fifty bird species from Southeastern Arizona to our then-list of about 300, much thanks to Jim Lane's fine little book *A Birdwatcher's Guide to Southeastern Arizona* purchased from L. A. Audubon Sales Depart-

We added fifty bird species from Southeastern Arizona to our then-list of about 300, much thanks to Jim Lane's fine little book

A Birdwatcher's Guide purchased from L. A. Audubon Sales Department, and the good fortune of meeting up with some LAAS birders, including Dave Beyers, Jon Dunn, Betty and Laura Jenner, and Mr. and Mrs. G. Shumway Suffel! Around Tucson and the Sonoran Desert Museum we were still on our own with the Lane *Guide* and saw the Boat-tailed Grackle, White-winged Dove, Ground Dove, Inca Dove, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, and Scott's Oriole (whom we'd only seen in Joshua Tree before). The museum does a terrific job of exemplifying and explaining the ecology of the Sonoran life zone. On the road nearby in the evening we met Lesser Nighthawks, huge toads, and a rattling rattle whose sound was like an electric shock to our nerves. What a great warning system!

The next stop in S. E. Arizona was Madera Canyon where we set up the tent on a leveled spot in a hillside campsite. Remember the storms in the Grand Canyon? Well, there are daily thunder showers (that's an understatement) in the Southwest in July. Any wash or dip may become the sudden site of a flash flood; and, we learned, any hillside may become a wash! Our 2 1/2-year-old, Patty, is a good little traveler, camper, and hiker--given a few courtesies like a chance to run around, some juice and raisins, and a nap. So the feminine contingent decided to nap in the peak heat of the early afternoon while the father reconnoitered. While the latter sought

A Soggy Story *Continued...*

refuge from the downpour under the pines, Pat and Patty were swamped. Flipping the bedding to the only corner of the tent left high and dry, Pat hustled Patty to the camper of an old man sitting out the storm in the parking lot. Later the Suffels told us of rains in Colorado where the campers punched holes in the back of the tent to let the water run out. Not daring this, Pat used Paul's t-shirts (please, no Freudian insights) as mops, and bailed and wrung until the torrent slowed and things were almost under control. Would you believe (by now, of course you would!) that the purse with car keys was locked inside the car? With the rain slowing and the tent battened down, Pat turned her attention to fishing for the door handle with a rope through the slightly open window--not an everyday occupation, mind you. So, when Paul got back to camp (pretty drenched himself), he found the ladies safe, soggy, and not quite sane, inside the car. We took a lovely cabin for the rest of our stay in Madera Canyon.



An exciting variety of hummingbirds come to the feeders all around the lodge--Blue-throated, Allen's, Rufous, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned; the Bronzed (Red-eyed) Cowbird males were busy displaying like inflated helicopters; Mexican Jays and Bridled Titmice were common in the woods. Up the canyon we saw Painted Redstart and Brown-throated Wren (and did not see the Coppery-tailed Tropic); down the canyon there were nesting Beardless Flycatchers (Proctor Ranch), Wied's Crested Flycatcher, Thick-billed Kingbird, and Arizona Woodpecker.

Jim Lane tells of the expanse of Upper Sonoran desert between Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains and Continental (marked by gas station, store, and schoolhouse) on the flats: "This is one of the best birding spots in Arizona. Anywhere you stop you can find something extraordinary." It's a large area, and the few times we surveyed it alone or with others we did our spotting from the road, then stopped to walk in. A better ecological background as to which birds like which predominance of plants (our fault, not Mr. Lane's) would have saved us some time. But separating out Cassin's (in the cholla cactus along with cactus-wren nests), Botteri's (in the ocotillo), and Rufous-winged Sparrows from among the abundant Black-throated (Desert) Sparrows was a challenge with rich reward. There was more coincidence involved in scaring up the Scaled Quail. Then in the roadside grass beside a wash, Shum Suffel and we almost stepped on a Harlequin Quail; we were within five feet when he exploded away. The Pyrrhuloxia is common and easily recognized; not so the Black Hawk (everyone's jinx bird--very hard to find) and the Zone-tailed Hawk for whom you scan all those myriad Turkey Vultures. But chances for the hawks seem stronger nearer cliffs and mountains more suitable for roosts. In the open desert we did better looking down than up--at least there were plenty of Curve-billed Thrashers.

Before the summer rains, watering holes must be excellent places for sighting birds. Even in mid-July we found rich variety near water. Toward Nogales at the pond behind the drive-in theater we found the Mexican Grey Hawk, heard a green heron for the first time, and saw elegant Black-bellied Tree Ducks. On the Sonoita road Blue Grosbeaks were common and at the Guevavi Ranch pond we saw Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Tropical Kingbird, Lucy's Warblers, a Sora, but no Olivaceous Cormorants that day. At the Patagonia rest area were the famous nesting Rose-throated Becards, a Varied Bunting, a Thick-billed Kingbird, a Zone-tailed Hawk. Not that LAAS people didn't comb for him, the Five-striped Sparrow--later found nesting here--eluded us all.

Continued in next issue

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Both Paul and Pat are New Yorkers (Long Island). Though Paul camped with his parents and Pat's grandparents were woodsmen, their interest in natural history was first awakened when they left the East for the first time, camping from Madison, Wisconsin, where he took his doctorate, to Los Angeles, where Paul worked as a mathematician at UCLA for 5 years when the couple wasn't birding. Now at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, the Hesslers participate in the Clark County and Dayton Audubon Societies.

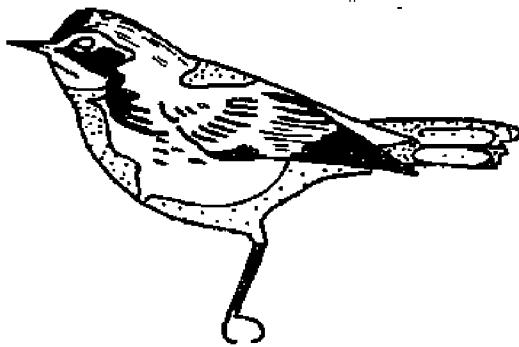
THE MYSTERY OF SUTTON'S WARBLER

BY CARL W. CARLSON.

Since this series began, there have been repeated inquiries about just exactly where the Sutton's warbler was first seen, and where to go to try for that elusive bird. This article is in answer to those queries, and thus begins with a review of the history of Sutton's warbler. The advice of Professor Maurice Brooks was obtained and the designation of the area of the initial sighting herein may therefore be regarded as definitive. I am sure our readers will join me in thanking Professor Brooks for his assistance.

The shape of West Virginia largely reflects the impact of history upon geography, and this is especially true of the oddly-shaped eastern-most extension discussed in this article. Here the Great Valley crosses the Potomac valley, which made the area one of utmost military importance during the French and Indian Wars and the Civil War.

Ornithologically, this area is famous as the home of the Sutton's warbler. Briefly, Karl Haller and J. Lloyd Poland collected the first, a male, south of Martinsburg on 30 May, 1939, and then, incredibly, collected a female on 1 June "four miles north of Shepherdstown.



On 21 May 1942 Maurice Brooks and Bayard Christy made the third sighting in about the same place as the first sighting. The fourth sighting was made on 21 June 1944 by Hicks and Breding 18 miles west of Martinsburg. Eight members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society had the fifth sighting near Opequon Creek in the vicinity of Martinsburg.

According to Professor Brooks, "At least two more sightings" have been reported along the Potomac near Dam No. 4, but apparently these reports have not been published.

Sightings have been reported from other states but no specimens secured to date. At intervals, sightings along the C. and O. Canal near Washington are reported, but with rare exceptions these are unsupported by witnesses and also indicate that not all the field marks were checked.

This article is reprinted in abridged form by kind permission of the Author and the Editor of the "Atlantic Naturalist." Further details and maps are to be found in Volume 23, Number 1, Spring 1968, of that publication.

At present the consensus is that the bird is a hybrid of the parula and yellow-throated (not, be it noted, the yellowthroat) warblers. This would explain all the field marks and the parula-type song. Plate 49 of Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds* and Plate 25 of Pough's *Audubon Bird Guide: Eastern Land Birds* show the plumage.

An argument against the hybrid theory was the total lack of sightings of the yellow-throated warbler west of the Blue Ridge in the Potomac valley. To quote Professor Brooks once more, however:

"Recently, thanks to the energies of the Brooks Bird Club, these birds have been discovered nearby!"

Incidentally, this is from *The Appalachians* which has a delightful, informative chapter on "The Wood Warblers".

Haller and Poland discovered their first bird when they heard a "double parula song given twice in rapid succession without a break. The bird seen by Brooks and Christy was silent. That of Hicks and Breding "sang almost continuously, sometimes the double parula song as described by Haller... (and)... at others, the normal parula song with a 'freak' ending—stopping, suddenly with a soft insect-like note which suggested that the bird had been 'submerged' or had suffered muscular collapse."

The literature of the Sutton's warbler emphasizes the parula-type song. However, the Lawrence's and Brewster's hybrids of the blue-winged x golden-winged cross can and do sing the song of either parent-species, but in our experience, no such hybrid ever sings either song correctly. There is always something noticeably odd or wrong about the performance, and we used this successfully in past years to locate hybrids among the many normal nesting blue-wings in the well-known Hybrid Patch on Catoctin Mountain (now apparently empty since there were no sightings reported in either 1966 or 1967). With this in mind, it is suggested that birders investigate any parula song, and particularly any yellow-throated song, which seems 'not right.'

The first bird was found in "scrub pine and deciduous woods." Brooks and Christy found theirs "in a grove of Virginia pine surrounded by a mature forest of hardwoods. It was on high ground." The second bird was in a "wooded river bottom." Hicks and Breding found theirs "along a stream" in a "new type of habitat" containing "considerable hemlock with a few scattered southern pines." *Continued on page four*

MYSTERY Continued

The first four sightings occurred on 30 May, 1 June, 21 May and 21 June. These dates are after the migration period and within the warbler nesting period in the area. Hicks mentions that they had the impression that their bird was unmated, but says also that "Its territory was about 800 by 300 feet" and that it "sang almost continuously"; apparently the bird was maintaining a territory even if unmated.

Well, then, if one wants to try deliberately for the Sutton's, it appears that he should enlist one or more companions to explore this area after 15 May. Priority should (perhaps?) be given to slopes and ridges near flowing water; no one type of vegetation seems definitive. Each singing male parula—and particularly every yellow-throated warbler, singing or silent—should be checked thoroughly, especially if its song seems at all 'modified'. If a singing male is found, its territory should be carefully determined and preferably mapped so that additional witnesses can be brought at an early date: the 7.5 minute USGS quad maps will be needed for this. Good hunting!...

REACTION TO COLLECTED REDSHANK

A Spotted Redshank was seen in Connecticut. It was shot and therefore it can now be added to the official State List. And I hope every birder in Connecticut is ashamed and disgusted that a bird was shot in order to add it to the all-important List.

In Britain, if a new bird to a County List had been shot, the collector would have been fined 25 pounds and his gun would have been confiscated....

I wrote to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Great Britain and I asked specifically if a new bird for a County or for Britain must be substantiated by a specimen. The reply was unequivocal. After describing the mechanism for processing sight records through the County Recorder, The British Birds Rarities Committee and the British Ornithologist's Union, the Technical Officer of the R.S.P.B., Richard Porter, continued with this sentence, which ought to be displayed prominently in every museum in North America:

"If a rare bird turns up in a county and the editor of a County Bird Report is not happy about the exact identification, then no authority whatsoever can be given to the person to shoot the bird so that the identity can be established beyond doubt."

J. B. Tatum, Editor, Annual Bird Report, Southeastern Vancouver Island.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
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EDITOR

Gilbert W. King

Announcements

ELECTIONS

AT THE EVENING MEETING AT PLUMMER PARK, MAY 12, 1970, THE FOLLOWING WERE ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR STARTING JULY 1, 1970.

PRESIDENT	HERBERT CLARKE
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	LESLIE WOOD
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	FRANCES KOHN
TREASURER	DR. MOULTON K. JOHNSON
REGISTRAR	VIRGINIA JOHNSON
RECORDING SECRETARY	OLGA CLARKE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY	ABIGAIL KING

HELPERS NEEDED

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR TANGER MORE PROMPTLY? THEN HELP US GET IT IN TO THE MAIL EARLIER.

THE MAILING STAFF DESPERATELY NEEDS HELPERS TO FOLD AND STUFF TANGERS. IF YOU CAN POSSIBLY SPARE A FEW HOURS ONE DAY A MONTH, OR EVEN EVERY OTHER MONTH, PLEASE CALL AUDUBON HOUSE, 876-0202.

Audubon House * Sales Department

We have a limited number of copies of WATER AND MARSH BIRDS OF THE WORLD and SONG BIRDS OF THE WORLD, illustrated by Singer and Zim. Paperback selections from BIRDS OF THE WORLD, they are beautifully illustrated on excellent paper. Together they contain illustrations of more than 500 species, many of which are pictured in no other bird guide. Those of you who travel in other countries will find them an excellent source for cross reference, and at the low price of \$2.45 and \$2.95 you might even want to cut pictures out and place them in the guides you are taking along.

A GUIDE TO FINDING BIRDS IN THE ST. LOUIS AREA is similar to Jim Lane's books; it describes trips within a 50-mile radius of St. Louis, and also contains a check-list. It has been very favorably reviewed.

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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 AUDUBON BIRD REPORTS 874-1318
700 Halliday Avenue Dick Robinson is now responsible for the up-
Los Angeles, California 90049 to-date recordings on bird sightings. If anyone
has a sighting that they believe should be listed, please call him at 749-1886 or call Audubon House, 876-0202, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. any day except Sunday.

June						
SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.	FRI.	SAT.
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June 4 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8:00 p.m.

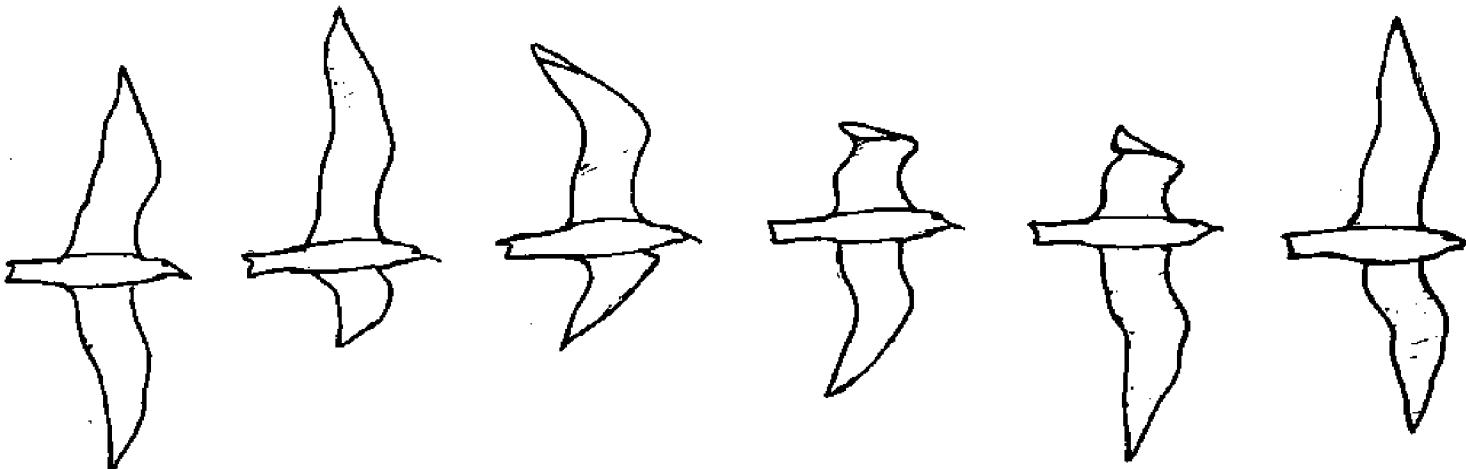
June 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Herbert Clarke, President L. A. A. S., will give an illustrated talk on "Wild California" — birds and other wild life.

June 13 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Buckhorn Flats, 8:00 a.m., for resident mountain birds. Route 2, Angeles Crest Highway. Leader: Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.

June 27-28 SATURDAY - SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Greenhorn Mountain, southern end of the Sierra Nevada, for resident mountain birds. Party meets at Rancho Bakersfield Motel, Bakersfield, 8:00 a.m. Turn off Freeway Route 5 at 24th Street, southeast to H. Camping at Tiger Flat.* Leader: Frances Kohn, 665-0171. * or Panorama if weather good.

July 11 SATURDAY - ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER, in Griffith Park, Fern Dell.

July 26 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Mt. Pinos, to see Condors. Meet in parking lot at end of paved road up Mt. Pinos. To reach Mt. Pinos turn off Freeway Route 5 in the Tejon Pass, at sign to Frazier Mountain, and follow signs to Mt. Pinos. Leader: Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.



Continued...

EVENING MEETING - TUESDAY, May 12

President Herbert Clarke asked for a report by the Acting Conservation Chairman, Kathryn Brooks, and by various participants in recent LAAS and private field trips. Arnold Small introduced the speaker of the evening, Jay Sheppard, now a graduate student at Long Beach State College, who presented material of his Ph. D. thesis, on the breeding biology of Le Conte's Thrashers. This is largely based on observations at Maricopa, which has been a regular stop of the LAAS field trip in November. The density of Le Conte's

Thrashers there is 10 per square mile, whereas normally it is less than 1 per square mile. In spite of the rugged environment of ground temperatures between -5 and 175°F and negligible rainfall, the presence of predators which reduce the first year population by 90% the thrashers seem to be keeping up their population.

Mr. Sheppard described the events of the year's breeding cycle and many other facets of the thrasher's life from first-hand experience, illustrated by slides and tape recordings, and gave us an intimate view of the life of the birds.

audubon activities

Field Trip to Chantry Flat and Santa Anita Canyon - April 11

Although it was cloudy in town, it was warm and clear when 40 of us gathered at Chantry Flat for the trip. An hour spent around the picnic ground yielded 6 species of warblers and a fair number of other spring arrivals and migrants. As we started down to the canyon, one or two Vaux's Swifts were seen flying with a large flock of White-Throated Swifts. The bottom of the canyon had more birds than last year, but has still not returned to its former numbers. On the trail above the falls, about half of the group were able to see a Dipper before it flew off upstream. The upper trail has been "improved" and extended upstream. Unfortunately a number of trees have been felled into the stream and there is apparently blasting going on during weekdays, so we have our fingers crossed that the Dippers will still be there next year and not have moved to some quieter area. Forty-two species were seen altogether — Hal Baxter.

FIELD TRIP - Morongo Valley, Saturday, Sunday, April 25-26.

Although over 50 L. A. A. S. members met at Covington Park and merged with several other groups, very few birds were found — 70 species in Morongo Valley and 5 more at 29 Palms. The best bird was the eastern Brown Thrasher. Seven species of warblers were noted, including a singing Lucy's. Several tanagers and orioles were seen, 3 species of Vireos, with an excellent look at Bell's. For many, the Barn Owl in a box in a barn (!) was a sight not seen every day. The Blue Grosbeak seen the day before was absent as was the Wied's Crested Flycatcher and White-winged Dove. — George Venatta.

FIELD TRIP - The Farallons, Sunday, April 26.

This field trip organized by Val da Costa of the Golden Gate Audubon Society was quite successful. Hundreds of Cassin's Auklets were seen at sea. They nest in burrows on the islands, but would not survive attack from Western Gulls if they went on land during the day. On the other hand, hundreds of the larger Common Murre were seen standing around their nests, much like penguins. The treat of the day were eight Tufted Puffins, some of which flew low over the boats. The skippers of both boats (Blue Horizon and Paul G) are to be thanked for their skillful navigation in holding the boats a short distance off the rocks in a heavy swell, to allow us a very close look at the puffins. Rhinoceros Auklets and Black-footed Albatross were also seen.

SCHOLARSHIP TO THE AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST

The Los Angeles Audubon Society provides for four half scholarships, to defray the expense of attendance at the National Society's "Audubon Camp of the West." The funds come from L.A.A.S share of membership dues, and from gifts. At the present time the recipients are chosen at request of the President of L.A.A.S. by the Western Representative of the National Audubon Society.

This year so far two awards have been made: C. D. Thompson, Area Manager, McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, Burney, California; and David J. Dunaway, Bishop, California.

FIELD TRIP, Morongo Valley, Saturday-Sunday, May 2, 3.

Thirty-five people participated. Much of the time was spent in finding unusual birds, two Veeries in particular, a first for California if verified. The Brown Thrasher was not seen, but good views were obtained of Lucy's Warbler and Bell's Vireo. A Virginia's Warbler was also seen, which is a record, since these have never been reported at the Park previously. The group visited the local bird banders in the Nature Conservancy Area (Jay Shepard, Charlie Collins, and Mike Miguel) who explained how they attract, catch, and band birds. After a hard day most repaired to the campground at Indian Cove, where good views of Scott's Oriole were obtained. On Sunday no one could find the Veeries, and most went on to Whitewater. — Jim Huffman, leader.



FIELD TRIP, Big Sycamore Canyon, May 9

For this second annual field trip to Big Sycamore about 40 of us showed up on a gray, overcast, though not especially cold morning. We birded leisurely through the picnic areas and were rewarded with a Downy Woodpecker bringing a mouthful of bugs into a hole-nest only five feet off the ground. Rather amazing to raise a family successfully almost arms-length from a busy picnic table.

Warblers were scarce but five hummingbirds were seen (including a striking Costa's which was a life bird for several people) and dozens of orioles. Some trees seemed to be loaded with gurgling, chattering, squabbling yellow, black and orange birds. Both Hooded and Bullock's, of course.

As we moved a mile or two up the service road the sun came out and we had a warm, smogless day to enjoy the green trees and meadows of this lovely canyon. The stream, unlike last year, was completely dry—which kept our species count down to only 43. We did see a Pee-wee on her neatly-concealed nest, a Violet-green Swallow at the hole-nest in a sycamore, and some White-throated Swifts disappearing into spaces in the rock-face of the canyon wall high above us. In the chaparral were Lazuli Buntings and Ash-throated Flycatchers. — Sandy Wohlgemuth

Continued on page five

One of our members, Mr. Reginald Julian, writes:

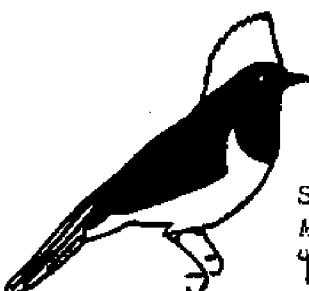
Bonnie Kennedy's excellent review of "Bird Guide of Thailand" by Dr. Boonsong Lekagul gave me the idea to write to my son, in Thailand, asking him to try to locate the author and get us an autographed copy of his book. A short time later my son wrote that he had had lunch with a Col. Smith, his former ROTC instructor at UCLA in 1954 and now on a special mission to the Thai Government in Bangkok, and who had come up to my son's Air Base for some reason resulting in their chance meeting and the lunch, during which it came out that Dr. Boonsong had been a guest in the Colonel's temporary home in Bangkok just three days before.

As it happened, the Colonel's assistance was not needed as soon afterwards my son procured the book at a Bangkok bookstore, telephoned Dr. Boonsong from there and was invited to go right over to his office. I'll quote from my son's letter on this visit—

"When I arrived the doctor (he is an M.D.) had a guest, the head ranger of a National Park about 75 miles N.E. of Bangkok. I have flown over that area at low level and seen how pretty it is there with forest, streams and waterfalls. There is an Air Force radar site nearby on a 4,000-ft mountain. He signed the books (my son's Base

To Major Richard O. Julian,
USAF, Udorn Royal Thai AFB,
Thailand,
and to his father Reginald
Julian of the Los Angeles
Audubon Society
With best wishes from
the author.

Boonsong Lekagul
12 March 1970



Sultan tit
Melanochlora sultanea
12 MARCH 1970

Commander, a Col. Stephens, had asked him to get one for him, too, as his Headquarters Office is decorated with pictures of Thai birds) and then we chatted for a half hour. It seems in Thailand, too, wildlife areas are shrinking as land is cleared for commercial use, particularly mud flats which are being drained for sugar cane."

CONSERVATION

Continued...

CRY CALIFORNIA published by California Tomorrow. To quote again from Friends of the Earth, "Stabilize population growth in Southern California and develop water reclamation to serve the needs of the present day population. Immediately outlaw the further use of long lived chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides in agriculture and impound drain waters in evaporation ponds rather than discharging them into the bay or ocean. Diversify agriculture by putting more people back onto the land on small farms, thus reducing the need for irrigation, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and massive single crops.

What can you do? Defeat Proposition 7 on the State June Ballot. Unless the state can find more money, further construction contracts cannot be awarded. The defeat of Proposition 7 will stop the Department of Water Resources from unloading unsold water bonds at inflated rates. Write your Congressman. Urge defeat of the Peripheral Canal.

SAVE THE CALIFORNIA COASTLINE

Support legislation that will offer environmentally sound control in place of present uncoordinated coastal development. Write your legislators in support of:

AB 730: Sieroty (D-Beverly Hills)
AB 640: Milias (R-Gilroy)
SB 1354: Beilenson (D-Los Angeles)
SB 371: Nejedly (R-Walnut Creek)

These bills would establish a California Coastal Conservation and Development Commission (CCCDC), that would provide interim control over development that could cause irreversible damage of the coast. Lists of legislators are available from Friends Committee on Legislation, 984 N. Fair Oaks, Pasadena, Ca



OPEN SPACE PROBLEMS OF THE URBAN WILDERNESS

Prepared by the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club Conservation-Education Sub-Committee reports . . .

"Concept Los Angeles" proposes "to accommodate a future population of 5,000,000 persons within the City of Los Angeles". The City population is now estimated at 2,878,328. In planning for this mind-numbing increase of 73% in a little over thirty years, does the City Planning Department plan to increase park and open space acres by 73%? This would at least maintain our present inadequate ratio of park acres to people. No, what is conceived are narrow monotonous swaths of grass, hemmed in by monotonous swaths of high rise. For this and dozens of reasons, "Concept Los Angeles" should be rejected.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE SEA OTTER

On April 21, 1970, Senator Donald L. Grunsky (R-Central Coast Counties) issued a press release announcing that his bill, SB 442, the sea otter management bill, had been sent to interim study. This is the bill that would have permitted the "taking" of sea otters that strayed beyond the boundaries of the California Sea Otter Refuge. According to the California Fish and Game Code, the word "taking" can mean anything from killing to removal to other areas. Understandably, the wording of this bill was amended to provide that the bill not be construed to authorize killing. However, moving sea otters is not a simple matter, as they are extremely susceptible to shock and pneumonia. The enormous pressure against this bill, which was sponsored by Senator Grunsky in behalf of the abalone fishermen, resulted in a hearing before the Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee. Following the hearing, Senator Grunsky stated, "After studying all the available information and the testimony at the recent hearing, I am not satisfied that a safe method has yet been developed to move the otters. Therefore, I am asking the Committee to refer the bill for further study."

We hope that Senator Grunsky will recall the tenor of his remarks at the next session of the legislature. The pressure from the abalone fishermen for reduction of sea otter herds in commercial abalone areas will doubtless continue, and increase. The concept of translocating a nucleus herds of sea otter to other suitable areas merits serious study, however, so does the concept of "farming" abalone. This concept has been rejected by most abalone fishermen. The California Sea Otter must not be endangered by the demands of a small gourmet food industry.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting of the Conservation Committee will be June 23, 1970. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. at Audubon House. All members and friends invited.

UPPER NEWPORT BAY TO BE SAVED???

Assemblyman George Milius (R-Gilroy) has introduced into the state legislature a resolution calling for a halt to several major state projects which would have large impacts on the environment. One of the projects named is the Upper Newport Bay land exchange. Milius is the Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Quality. He is asking for a halt to such projects until the environmental impact can be determined. Assemblyman Milius can be reached at Assembly Post Office, State Capital, Sacramento, Ca 95814. Write your own assemblyman too.

CONSERVATION

KATHRYN BROOKS

CORNER

THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN

For those of us who value the importance of water quality, ecology, our total environment, and who also support the idea of a "Lesser Los Angeles", we therefore must question the proposed California Water Plan. It may well be disastrous to complete construction of the California Water Project, a state-long system of reservoirs, dams, canals, aqueducts, pipelines and pumping stations, that would carry the fresh water from Northern California to Southern California. Two essential elements of the project have not yet been built--the Peripheral Canal and a section of pipeline necessary to make water deliveries to the Los Angeles area. Further plans, in order to promote development in Southern California and the Southwest, include capturing rivers in California, Oregon, Washington, Canada, and finally Alaska.

The rationalization for the project is based on the idea that surplus water that flows to the ocean through the San Francisco Bay Delta is wasted and could better be used for industrial development, agriculture, and municipal uses. The participants in this plan are the Army Corps of Engineers, Governors Reagan and Brown, the State Department of Water Resources, The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Bank of America and the Kern County Land Development Company.

To quote from a series produced by Friends of the Earth, under the direction of David Brower, the possible damages include the following. "Providing water for a projected increased population will spur population growth and the attendant drain on resources. Taking all of the fresh water out of Northern California will destroy the last free-flowing wild rivers and turn the San Francisco Bay Delta into a brackish cesspool. Establishing a system of water delivery to arid regions will create greater and greater water demands and eventually degrade environmental quality the length of the west coast. The California Water Plan was conceived 30 years ago as an engineering solution to what is essentially a social and ecological problem. The water provided by the plan is not needed now but is to serve a projected population of 50 years from now. Southern California cannot support a two-fold increase in population because even now it is running out of its most basic resource: air."

That there are alternatives to the present plan is quite evident, as discussed by Dr. David W. Seckler, Water Resource Committee Panelist, in a position paper published by the Planning and Conservation League, and by Frank M. Stead in the Winter 1969/70 issue of *Continued on page seven*

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

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week later. The most puzzling bird of the month was the BROWN THRASHER (only report in 1970) flushed out of a mesquite clump at Morongo by Kay Yagii on the 25th. A Brown Thrasher was found at this same place on April 27th last year and stayed until at least the end of May. Is this the same bird, and if so, did it stay there all year or did it leave and return to the same spot at the same time a year later?

Errata: Last month's report of a very early OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was in error. They are late migrants and none were reported as of May 1st.

June is one of the best times for vagrants. Vagrants, by definition, are lost birds and lost birds are late birds; so keep your eyes open for that rare Eastern warbler, sandpiper or gull which may have strayed to our coast. There is still a chance for small passerines at the desert oases and in the coastal canyons with trees and water. The north end of the Salton Sea is the best place for vagrant sandpipers; SEMIPLUMBED SANDPIPERs are probably regular there in very small numbers but are very difficult to identify, and California's only WHITE-

RUMPED SANDPIPER was taken there early last June. This is the best time for the lower Colorado River near Yuma. With reasonable luck you should find: YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS (they return in early June); GREAT-TAILED GRACKLES (at the little park near Imperial Dam); BRONZED COWBIRDS (near cattle pens or stables); LEAST BITTERNS (at West Pond); and BLACK RAILS (use a tape recorder at the little swamp north of Imperial Irrigation District headquarters or at West Pond). Our local mountains should be attractive in June - Charlton, Chilao, and Buckhorn in the San Gabriels; Big Bear and Baldwin Lakes for high mountain species; and Round Valley and Arrastrre Creek for the elusive GRAY VIREO and GRAY FLYCATCHER. From the above one can easily see that June is a good month to make the acquaintance of some unusual California birds.

**This is the new name proposed by "California Birds" for the Boat-tailed Grackle of the West.*

BIRDS ON THE EAST COAST

Massachusetts is perhaps the most actively birded area in the United States. It is said that no rare bird could now enter Massachusetts without being reported. Readers of "The Western Tanager" will be interested in the western birds, unusual visitors to the East Coast, and have their appetites whetted by reports of rarities from the Arctic and North Atlantic. If you go to Massachusetts, call the "Voice of Audubon," 617 259-8805 (Boston area), 617 566-3590 (Longmeadow and western area) for the latest information on unusual birds.

Excerpts from "MASSACHUSETTS BIRDS -- A SUMMARY OF THE 1969 CHECK LISTS" reported by Gerald Soucy in the Massachusetts Audubon Newsletter, Volume 9, Number 8.

Exotics from the annual bag of surprises featured a trumpeter swan in the Beverly-Wenham area, a Mississippi kite at Norwell, black-necked stilt at Ipswich and Plum Island, Lewis's woodpecker at a suet feeder in West Newbury, a gray flycatcher which was banded in Littleton, Townsend's solitaire in Manchester, Audubon's warbler in West Newbury, a hermit warbler at the Ashley Ponds, an European siskin in New Bedford and Le Conte's sparrow at Truro. The Mississippi kite, gray flycatcher and European siskin were first records for Massachusetts. Other notables from the long list of write-ins included Manx shearwater, fulmar, Swainson's hawk, gyrfalcon, purple gallinule, American oystercatcher, Sabine's gull, Sandwich tern,

puffin, scissor-tailed flycatcher, Say's phoebe, gray jay, raven, varied thrush, Lawrence's warbler, western meadowlark, painted bunting, black-headed grosbeak, hoary redpoll, greater redpoll, lark bunting, clay-colored sparrow and Harris's sparrow....

Those species missed most frequently were the yellow-crowned night heron, king and clapper rails, buff-breasted sandpiper, long-tailed jaeger, Forster's tern, barn owl, western kingbird, short-billed marsh wren, Brewster's warbler, hooded warbler and Henslow's sparrow. Many blanks also appeared beside the three shearwaters, Wilson's petrel, least bittern, bald eagle, Baird's sandpiper, red phalarope, pomarine and parasitic jaegers, the alcids, pileated woodpecker, Carolina wren, northern and loggerhead shrikes and Lincoln's sparrow. It was almost embarrassing to note how often long-billed marsh wren, gray-cheeked thrush and dickcissel were lacking and from the "over 250" category, observers missed separately: red-necked grebe, mute swan, shoveler, piping plover, golden plover, upland plover, knot, Arctic tern, roseate tern, screech owl, nighthawk, cliff swallow, solitary vireo, Cape May warbler, northern waterthrush and vesper sparrow. One list of 276 species lacked rough-winged swallow, gray-cheeked thrush and parula warbler--now that's not easy!

Some of our readers will remember a former member of L.A.A.S. David T. Brown who led the field in Massachusetts, as top compiler with 314 for his 1969 annual list for Massachusetts.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

We've had our fun in April and May with those ever fascinating migrants, now it's time for the more serious side of birding. What is this more serious side? First of all we can improve our technique, particularly "birding by ear". Anyone who was fortunate enough to learn birding from that serious and competent non-lister, Eleanor Pugh, knows how important this can be. She can walk through a favorite area and without turning her head aside or lifting her binoculars give an accurate description of the current avian situation, - "That Song Sparrow is back on territory again," or "The Traill's Flycatchers are moving through now". Familiarity with the calls and songs of common birds saves a lot of time, and the frustration of a long, neck straining search for a high up, leaf shrouded warbler, only to find another Audubon, or of following that sharp, harsh "chip" into the bushes and finally to dig out, not a rare warbler but a Song Sparrow. A well trained ear can spare you all this, and if you know the common bird calls then an unfamiliar note will stand out like a neon sign saying "Find me".

A logical step after learning "birding by ear" is to run a route on the "Breeding Bird Survey". This survey is organized by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service but depends almost exclusively on amateur birders to accumulate data from hundreds of predetermined routes throughout the U.S. In running a 25 mile route, a team (observer and recorder) stop every half mile for three minutes, records all birds seen or heard within a radius of one quarter mile, move on one half mile, repeat the operation until fifty stops have been made, and all this in the four hour period after dawn, when the birds are singing most actively. One can easily realize the importance of birding by ear in this hectic race against time. Those who have seen the maps of nesting areas, species by species, compiled from the '67 & '68 censuses recognize that this is the first time that accurate field information has been available for this purpose. Most routes for 1970 have already been assigned and many of them will have been run by the time this is read, but it is not too early to get your name in for 1971 or possibly for this year if some of the mountain and coastal routes are scheduled for June. Call Shirley Wells at 831-4281 for further information.

April came in like a lamb - warm, quiet and relatively birdless, and went out like a lion - cold, windy, and very, very birdy. The southern deserts had the highest winds in recent years, which tended to dam up the migrants in protected places, such as Whitewater, Palm Canyon and Morongo Valley. To compound the bird's problems, the cold storms brought snow to the mountains and frost and a light snow even down to Morongo Valley on the 21st. This had serious consequences for the early nesters. The Vermilion Flycatchers lost their brood of four newly hatched nestlings to the cold, and a downy Great Horned Owl was found dead under it's Morongo Valley nest. The latter casualty may not have been from the cold, however.

Despite the slow start reported last month the migration of small passersines was well under way by mid April. Wilson's and Nashville Warblers seemed to peak out on the deserts about the 18th and about the 23rd along the coast. At the same time MacGillivray's, Black-throated Gray and Yellow Warblers were present on the desert in small numbers but were rare coastally. As expected, wintering Audubon Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets decreased as the migratory urge moved them north. Black-headed Grosbeaks arrived about the tenth and within a week were common everywhere. Costa's and Black-chinned Hummingbirds were well established by month's end, and Calliope Hummers were coming through slowly, after the first report at Cottonwood Springs on April 8th (Jon Atwood). Jon also confirms that the ELF OWLS are still at Cottonwood Springs. In fact he banded one on April 6th, and thinks there are two pairs there. Jon Dunn found the Encino area productive with three early reports - VAUX'S SWIFTS, BANK SWALLOWS and a HERMIT WARBLER all on April 13th. The first BLUE GROSBEAK of the year was found at Palos Verdes on the 23rd by Rusty Scalf.

With these expected migrants a few rarities were found. Shirley Wells banded the only GRAY-HEADED JUNCO of the winter at San Pedro on the 23rd. Russ and Marion Wilson found a TENNESSEE WARBLER at Morongo Valley in mid April and Russ saw it again on the 25th. Olga Clarke reports a LUCY'S WARBLER at Twenty-nine Palms on the 12th and they were seen there at Morongo Valley a

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