

# The Western Tanager

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## GRANDFATHER - Otto Widmann



**As a youth** in Karlsruhe, Germany, Otto Widmann (born June 15, 1841) was acquainted with the local birds; his autobiography has Schwanzmeise (Long-tailed Tit), Baum Pieper (Tree Pipits), Schwalben (Purple Martins), Ammern (Buntings), Finken (Finches), Spechte (Woodpeckers) scattered throughout the first pages. In searching for eggs with his brother, Rudolf, he came unexpectedly upon the nest of the Tree Pipit. "It was a treasure, for it was the first ever found (by them)," he writes. In the same forest, the Hardtwald, he found Cuckoo's eggs in other bird's nest, especially the wren, "a globular affair built—a few feet from the ground—a small ovenlike nest." When his Father saw how interested the boys were in egg collecting and birds, he bought them a bird book, *Die Naturgeschichte der Voegels Deutschland* by C. G. Friedrich, often called *The Little Naumann*, a book of nearly a thousand pages and over 200 colored illustrations of birds. He also subscribed to the quarterly magazine *Naumannia*, then the organ of the leading ornithologists of Germany. He obtained permission for the boys to visit the Hofbibliothek, the private library of the Grandduke of Baden-Wurtenburg. Its chief attraction was the great work of Germany's eminent ornithologist, Prof. Dr. Joh. Friedrich Naumann, published between 1820 and 1844 in 12 volumes with copper-engraved colored illustrations of all birds found in Germany. Otto was even allowed to take volumes of this valuable work home with him. This privilege was granted because his father was the Geheimer Finanzrath (Privy Councillor of Finance) for the Grandduke and they lived near the Schloss where the library was. Connected with the castle was the deer park and the Pheasantry, but permission had to be granted for entry. But there was always the Hardtwald (forest), with its managed planting of trees on one side of Karlsruhe and the Rhine River was to the west. In Mannheim, just 35 miles down the river, where my Grandmother was born, there were the low-lying pine forests in sandy wastelands. Now into and around these forests the father, Christoph, would take the boys on Spatziergangs or Naturbummels (walking

tours) in summer where they would be swallowed in the forests for as much as three weeks at a time. On one trip they walked into Switzerland, where they took the train home from Basel, down through Freiburg.

Adjoining the Hofbibliothek was the Naturalien Kabinet, a small but good Natural Museum, with all kinds of instructive objects, rich in minerals and fossils. The birdlife was well represented, but the "stuffed" birds did not appeal to my Grandfather as well as the living ones. In their yard they had the Black Redstarts, der Fliegenschnaepper (Spotted Flycatcher), and the Schwarzdrossel (Blackbird in England) visit them, while a Singdrossel (Song Thrush) could be heard in the distance. Once a flock of Kibitzen (Lapwings) circled and landed in their yard. This so impressed him that he wrote a thesis for his classwork, entitled: "An den Iden des Maerzes" (on the Ides of March). It was read by the teacher to all the pupils of the school.

Otto Widmann attended the Lyceum at Karlsruhe where he graduated in April 1857. Here he received his foundation in Latin, which he used the rest of his life, not only in pharmacy but in ornithology. He writes he "had neither time nor desire to cultivate birds," but in reading between the lines there were the Naturbummels and the innate desire for the Natural Sciences. Chemistry and Botany occupied much of his time when he was an apprentice in Switzerland at Neuchatel and Les Brenish on the Jura. As a student in the Polytechnicum in Karlsruhe, where he was preparing for the state examination in Pharmacy, there was little time for extraneous work. He passed those examinations on July 22, 1864, then left immediately for London and Paris where he worked for one year. Here he received his education in English and further studies in French. His "Europischereise," wander years, were strange ones, because he would pick out a city he would like to visit, go there, get a job immediately, and after a few months he was on the go again. He worked in Schwetzingen and Freiburg in Baden, in Neuchatel, Switzerland, Paris and London, Karlsruhe and Dresden. On the way to and from

*Continued overleaf*

these jobs he visited Hamburg, Cologne, Brussels, Antwerp. At every city he never failed to see their museums of Natural History. Then from Dresden he went directly to Hamburg where he embarked for the United States. He found work in Hoboken, N.J., in the summer of 1866.

His first American bird was an American Redstart—"a small bird of rare beauty. I stood in wonderment at this strange apparition." A school chum had come over unexpectedly from New York City and the two went for a walk along the Palisades toward Ft. Lee. Next Otto Widmann was in Savannah, Ga., and here he remembers seeing his first Cardinal—"an event ever to be remembered." On December 15, 1866, he saw Tree Swallows in a crowded street in New Orleans, La. He wrote of this amazing sight to his father, because it was Christmas Day. Then on his trip up the Mississippi to St. Louis he saw Purple Martins at Vicksburg on March 23rd; but what impressed him most were the thousands of ducks, geese, hawks, plovers, gulls, grebes, crows, and curlews along the Mississippi. The bird life must have been fabulous, for he came back again and again later in life to make surveys of the migrations on this mighty river.

Once in St. Louis work consumed his time. The establishment of the drugstore took 16 hours of each day, 7 days a week, with one half-day off every other Sunday. The landmarks in birding came slowly at first, but they were memorable, for he carried these first sightings to his grave. Six years after his arrival in the United States he saw his first Baltimore Oriole (1873). After 5 years of this unbelievable toil, Otto Widmann went back to Germany (November 1871) and courted his bride. He married Auguste Bender in March 1872 and they honeymooned throughout Germany until late 1872, but returned to the United States where the first of nine children was born the following spring. Grandmother was his constant companion for the next 49 years and went on many of his birding trips with him. She became as adept as he with the bird songs and often would identify the bird long before Grandfather could get his glasses upon it. She was the one who at Christmas 1874 gave him Theodore Jasper's *Birds of North America* later released in a bound version called *Ornithology or the Science of Birds* from the text by Dr. Brehm (212 illustrations), Columbus, Ohio: Struder & Co. 1878. For the first time this popular work brought colored pictures of all the birds of North America. It took 4 years for all the numbers to appear in 40 parts. Each part contained 3 colored plates, one plain flat-tinted plate and 8 pages of text. This work went into five editions soon after it appeared as a book in 1878. Grandfather writes, "I may call the acquisition of this work the starting point of my career as a bird student and therefore as a bird lover." He continues, "From now on I tried to get away from home and business as often as I could for short walks of an hour or two. My favorite place was a piece of timber less than a mile away from

How would you like to identify a Dipper with this--  
from Naumann

## Der Wasser-Schwäger.

### Cinclus aquaticus. Bechst.

Taf. 91. { Fig. 1. Männchen.  
— 2. Weibchen.  
— 3. Junger Vogel.

Gemeiner Wasserschwäger, braunbäuchiger Wasserschwäger, Wasserstaar, Wasserdroffel, Wasseramsel, Wassermerle, Wassersänger, Bachamsel, Bachspreche, Stromamsel und Seeamsel.

*Cinclus aquaticus*. Bechstein, ornith. Tafelgeb. I. S. 206. — Tessen Naturg. Deutschl. III. S. 808. — Wolf und Meyer, Tafelgeb. I. S. 207. — Nilsson orn. succ. I. p. 261. n. 120. — *Sturnus Cinclus*. Linn. faun. succ. p. 78. n. 214. — Gmel. Linn. syst. I. 2. p. 803. n. 5. — Retz. faun. succ. p. 225. n. 20. — *Turdus Cinclus*. Lath. ind. orn. I. p. 343. n. 57. — *Le Merle d'eau*. Buff. Ois. VIII. p. 134. t. 11. — Edit. de Deuxp XV. p. 167. t. 2. f. 4. — Id. pl. enl. 940. — Gérard, tab. élém. II. p. 260. — *Cinco plongeur*. Temm. Man. nouv. Edit p. 177. — *Water-Ouzel*. Lath. syn. II. 1. p. 48. n. 50. — Heberf. v. Bechstein, III. S. 45. n. 50. — Bewick britt. Birds. II. p. 16. — *Waterspreew. Sepp*. Nederl. Vog. I. t. p. 25. — Meißner und Schön, Bdg. v. Schwef. S. 98. n. 103. — Meyer, Bdg. Liv- und Uthlands. S. 106. — Koch, Waier. Zool. I. S. 194. n. 114. — Naumanns Bdg. alte Ausg. III. S. 471. Taf. 72. Fig. 114. und Nachtr. 3. S. 71.

home on the southside of Broadway near Carondelet, belonging to Mr. Duneuil and called by me Eichelberger, not on account of the oaks on the place but because I saw the name Eichelberger on a street sign. I learned how many different kinds of birds can be met with on a small piece of ground."

He would walk out Gravois Road to the River Des Peres. There were no streetcars at that time. "There was a piece of timber, by me called Giant Wood (Riesewald), because of its large number of giant trees. Here I found a real paradise. It was a long walk of 8-10 miles, but I knew no fatigue, because I had the best times of my life in this giant wood. It was undefiled Nature, and what Grand Nature! Enormous trees of different species: Elms, Linden, Birch, Ash, Walnut, Oak, Hickory, Hackberry, Sycamore, Cottonwood, Willow, Maples, Chestnut—and lesser trees as Redbud, Sassafra, and immense climbers and vines of many kinds, with a thicket of shrubs and weeds to cover the ground." Here by a marvelous stroke of luck he had

*Continued on page nine*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. and Mrs. Don Hardt reintroduced me to birding by taking me on a Field Trip to Imperial Valley just about ten years ago. The 100 plus species we saw that weekend nearly overwhelmed me. I say "reintroduced" because my Father spent his entire adult life trying to interest me in birds. He was a member of the Audubon Society for 51 years. But, unfortunately none of it rubbed off onto me. In 1964 I wrote my first article for "The Western Tanager" about the birds in my backyard. This led to the "Audubon Activities" which I covered for about five years, then Field Trip Chairman and other jobs in the Society. Now after all these years, thanks to the Editor who asked for the biography of the Otto Widmann referred to in Bent and other publications, I have rediscovered my grandfather by reading his publications.

# BETTY JENNER continued

## WHITE MOUNTAINS



At the east side of our campground we could look out over endless mountain ranges, eastward into Nevada; and southeast, down into Deep Springs Valley, where the lake, with plenty of water in it, beckoned us to come and explore.

Our first day's ride was upward, however. The road ascends rapidly. There is a westward-looking promontory called Sierra View Lookout; you look directly across at the snowy Sierra peaks, and down into Owens Valley—the most spectacular view imaginable. At this stop we saw a Red-tailed Hawk and a Golden Eagle.

Beyond this point, the road skirts the mountainside and climbs to an area of limber pines, then to Schulman Grove itself. From here on the area is highly restricted; there must be no camping, or collecting of wood or cones. Intensive and significant study is carried on concerning the growth rings of these amazing trees, so nothing must disturb this habitat. A short interpretive trail takes you past ancient gnarled bristlecones, including Pine Alpha, a 4,300-year-old tree. And just as exciting—there are seedlings, and graceful young 30-year-old bristlecones to which you are tempted to say:

"If my species will use its boasted intelligence, and not destroy you, then you, too, may live to be 5,000, or perhaps 7,000 years old." Another trail takes you on a narrow, edge-of-the mountain path to the Methuselah Grove area. This is a loop trail; at the east end of it are many typical mountain-chaparral birds. Don't plan on less than three hours for the trail; better still, take water and a lunch, and spend the day. You are at 9,000' - 10,000' altitude, so don't hurry.

Beyond the Schulman Grove, the road is poorer, but well worth travelling at least part of the twelve miles that go to the Patriarch Grove. The scenery is more Alpine; Mountain Bluebirds, Clark's Nutcrackers, Robins, are some of the birds; lupine and Indian paintbrush are some of the flowers found in August. On one green Alpine slope we saw at least fourteen Ravens in convention, and a little red fox circling around to investigate them. There are several spectacular lookout points where the Sierra may be seen. For the last few miles before the Patriarch Grove is reached, the road becomes poor in places, narrow, with rocks and ruts, that is. However, many family cars were making it as well as our VW camper. It takes some patience and a willingness to give the other fellow the courtesy of stopping at a wide place.

The Grove itself is worth the effort. The gray-white flat shale of the ground is a mosaic carpeted with tiny ground-hugging alpine flowers. The pines themselves are each worth a portrait. You are indeed unimaginative if you don't feel humble and small before these trees which are older than any other living thing.

All of these places are accessible only a few weeks in summer and early fall. For pure enjoyment, go to Grand View Campground during the time of the full moon. Sit around a small campfire with bits of pinon and juniper burning brightly; watch the brilliant moon rise from the mountains to the east... it's a truly relaxing experience. The nights are chilly, but the days may be quite hot. What finer perfume than sun-warmed sage?

To reach Deep Springs Valley, we drove back downhill to #168 and turned east. The road is splendid, and the clean air is exhilarating. Deep Springs Valley is a barren desert bowl surrounded by mountains. At the oasis is a tiny but excellent college.

The people there will give permission to look for birds in the great elms. Unusual vagrants are frequently found at this oasis. The resident Chukars were the most interesting species to us.

A five-mile drive takes you to Deep Springs Lake; many water and shorebirds use it, especially in migration. Horned Lark, Say's Phoebe, Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds—these are a few of our California birds that find Deep Springs Valley a good place to live.

For remoteness and peacefulness, I can highly recommend it—except for such devastating floods as in the 1969 season. ★

Bristlecone Pine  
*Pinus aristata*





# 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  
700 Halliday Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90049  
476-5121

**Audubon  
Bird Reports  
874-1318**

- Sept. 26-27 SATURDAY - SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Ti juana River area (south of San Diego). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Oscar's Restaurant on Palm Avenue in Imperial Beach. Go south from San Diego on U.S. 101 to the Imperial Beach turnoff, which is Palm Avenue, then proceed 3/4 mile to Oscar's on the right. This area is famous for exotic migrants and vagrants. For information call Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.
- Oct. 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.
- Oct. 3 SATURDAY - The Golden Gate Audubon Society is again sponsoring a boat trip for hardy seafarers to study migrating sea birds off Monterey. Three boats will leave Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey, at 9:00 a.m. and return at 3:00 p.m. Fare - \$7 per person. Make check payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society and mail with a STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED envelope (names and addresses of guests must be included) to Mrs. Valeria G. DaCosta, 2090 Pacific Ave., San Francisco, CA 94109. Details will be sent with acknowledgment. Reservations close September 20 or earlier if boats are filled. Leaders to be announced. Valeria G. DaCosta, Boat Trips Chairman.
- Oct. 10 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Cabrillo Beach and vicinity. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Cabrillo Beach Museum, 3720 Stephen M. White Dr., San Pedro. Go south on the Harbor Freeway to San Pedro, then south on Pacific Avenue to 36th Street. Turn left on 36th and follow signs to museum. Leader: Shirley Wells, 831-4281.
- Oct. 13 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Frank Todd, Curator of Birds at Los Angeles Zoo, will give us an interesting lecture on "The California Brown Pelican - Vanishing American," illustrated with color slides.
- Oct. 25 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Newport Back Bay. Meet at 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 water birds. Leaders: Betty and Laura Jenner, 748-7510.
- Oct. 28 WEDNESDAY - CONSERVATION MEETING, Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Mrs. Kathy Brooks, Chairman
- Nov. 5 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.
- Nov. 10 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m.
- Nov. 14 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Solano Beach, Oceanside, etc. Leader: Arnold Small.

## LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

**The Western Tanager**

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EDITOR - Gilbert W. King

# audubon activities

## conservation meetings *every fourth Wednesday*

Pelagic Trip, San Diego - September 12

### Mt. Pinos Field Trip - August 23

Thirty members and guests of our society plus an equal number from such groups as the Monterey Peninsula and Santa Barbara Audubon Societies and Angelus Nature Club were united at the summit of Mt. Pinos to observe Condors. By 10:00 a.m. two adults and one immature California Condor were seen near the north ridge of the mountain. At least four other sightings were made later that day. Other species included two Golden Eagles, good views of a nearby Cooper's Hawk, an abundance of Clark's Nutcrackers, a few White-throated Swifts high overhead and Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds. Lower down the mountain were found Townsend's Solitaires, Green-tailed Towhees and Mountain Quail. Larry Sansone, Leader.

### Evening Meeting, September 8

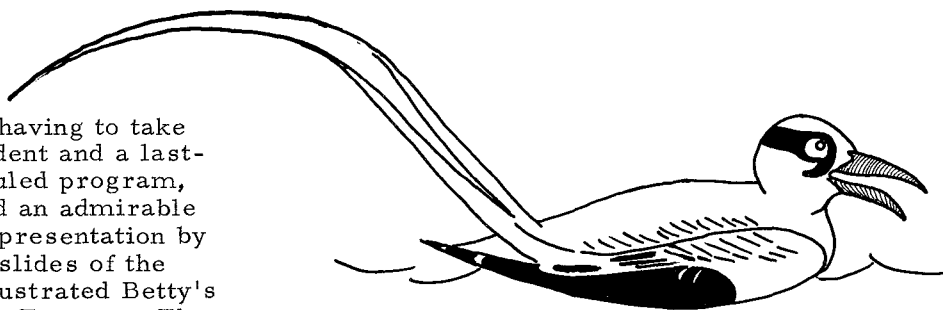
With the double handicap of having to take over in the absence of our president and a last-minute cancellation of the scheduled program, our Vice President Les Wood did an admirable job. The program began with a presentation by Betty and Laura Jenner of their slides of the White Mountains which nicely illustrated Betty's article in the September Western Tanager. The Jenners next showed scenes of Mazatlan, San Blas and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, where they did extensive tropical birding this summer. Bob Sandmeyer followed with a brief summary of his family's unique vacation in Alaska. They left their car in Prince Rupert and took the ferry up the Inland Passage, staying at ports along the way "as the spirit moved them." Without a car they were free to stay or go on with the ship and relax in the superb landscape that Bob recorded so beautifully on film. Les Wood rounded out the evening with some delightful pictures of the birds and mammals, as well as beautiful plants, of his and Ruth's favorite southern California desert and seacoast areas.

### Malibu Lagoon Field Trip - September 12

Sixteen observers showed up on a cold, overcast morning which was not too productive except for two visitors from Florida Audubon who picked up 12 life birds. The group was pleased to observe a raft of 18-20 Brown Pelicans offshore too distant to distinguish adults from immatures. The afternoon was spent at Tapia Park where Western Tanagers, Grosbeaks and other chaparral birds and migrants brought the list up to 53 for the day. Leader, Les Wood.

The California Field Ornithologists sponsored a pelagic trip to the 60-mile ridge, 60 miles out of San Diego, return by Pyramid Cove, San Clemente Island. Overcast skies contributed to excellent seeing, and although there was some chop on the way out, many Pink-footed and some Sooty Shearwaters were seen. Five Manx Shearwaters were seen just outside Mission Bay. Both white- and dark-rumped Leach's Petrels were seen in large numbers, as well as Black Petrels. A few Least Petrels were seen bracketted by Black and Leach's, which was very instructive in judging size and observing difference in flight. The only alcid was one Xantus' Murrelet seen twice (50 miles out). One Black-footed Albatross was also seen at 60 miles.

The great sighting was the Red-billed Tropicbird - two were found by Joe Jehl, sitting



on the water, and both took off and circled around the boat. All of us were very pleased with the skipper of the Seaforth who catered to the peculiarities of birders, and turned the helm for maximum viewing of all interesting species. G.W. King

### Pelagic Trip, Los Angeles - September 12

Twenty-nine birders were aboard the Vantuna for the Los Angeles Audubon Society's trip on 12 September. The weather was cloudy most of the day, but mild, and the seas were light. Fair numbers of Pink-footed Shearwaters, Sooty Shearwaters, Northern Phalaropes and Black Petrels were seen, and a few each of Manx Shearwaters, Red Phalaropes, Parasitic Jaegers and Ashy Petrels, also one or two Least Petrels. A Red-billed Tropicbird flew right over the ship but was in sight such a short time that many of the group did not get to see it. The sensation of the trip, however, was a small land bird! This bird overtook the ship in the Catalina Channel and landed several times on the fantail; it was identified as a Northern Waterthrush. This identification was confirmed when it was eventually captured, to be brought ashore for banding. Blackstone



# environment besieged

by Kathryn Brooks

## L.A. AUDUBON FILES 6,000 SIGNATURES TO BAN DDT

The Los Angeles Audubon Society, thanks to help from many organizations and concerned individuals, filed 6,000 signatures to BAN DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons with the Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford M. Hardin, on September 1, 1970.

On August 29, 1970, it was announced in the Los Angeles Times that "the Agriculture Department cancelled registered use of DDT for many classes of livestock, lumber, buildings, forest trees and more than 50 fruit and vegetable crops." However, cancellation without suspension means very little; the manufacturer need only to appeal the cancellation, and can thus continue the use of DDT until the courts resolve the problem perhaps years later. With this negligence of responsibility in the Department of Agriculture, not only in the cancellation rather than the suspension of registration of DDT for these specified uses, but also in its allowing other chlorinated hydrocarbons to be used, as well as allowing any use of DDT, then we must hope for corporate responsibility in eliminating production and selling of these pesticides. In view of past performance, there is not much hope in this respect. (Credit should be given to Olin Manufacturing Corporation; they discontinued production of DDT on June 30, 1970.) It appears that our only hope is in growing public pressure with legal assistance.

The Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, and Friends of the Earth have done much to wage the battle in the courtroom. Please help them by lending your support with financial assistance, letter writing, circulating petitions, etc. We need you.

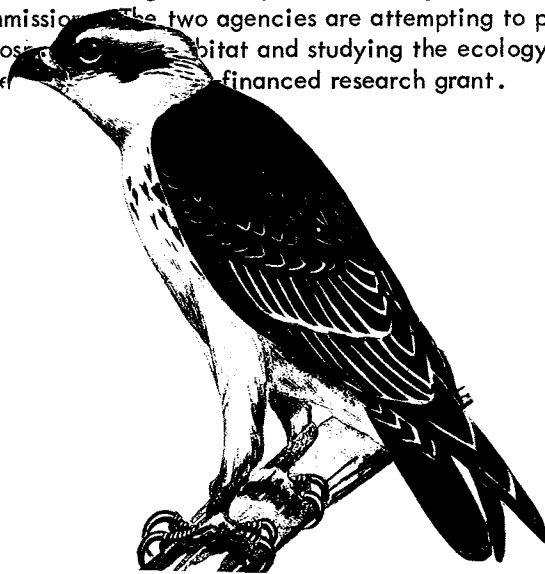
**PUBLIC STATEMENTS NEEDED NOW TO SAVE UPPER NEWPORT BAY.** Write to: The County Counsel, County of Orange, County Administration Building, P.O. Box 1379, Santa Ana, Ca 92702. Request the form and map entitled "DECLARATION RE: USE OF UPPER NEWPORT BAY AND ACCESS."

**GRIFFITH PARK MASTER PLAN STRESSES MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT TO DETRIMENT OF PARK.** For information concerning the protection of the Park's natural beauty, contact: Friends of Griffith Park, 1630 No. Edgemont St., Los Angeles, Ca 90027

**Sierra Madre Ecology Committee Recycling Center,** Alverno Heights Academy, 200 N. Michillinda Ave., Sierra Madre, Ca (213, 356-1135, Fred Wesley) Moving to new location Sept. 4 and 5.

## FIRST AMERICAN OSPREY SANCTUARY DEDICATED

The 10,600-acre Crane Prairie Osprey Management Area in the Deschutes National Forest of Central Oregon was established cooperatively by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon State Game Commission. The two agencies are attempting to protect the osprey habitat and studying the ecology of the osprey. A \$100,000 federal-financed research grant.



## PROTECTING ENDANGERED SPECIES--Battle Continues

The New York State Supreme Court has ruled unconstitutional a new law, the Mason Act, that forbids the sale of certain animal skins in the state, primarily those of crocodiles and spotted cats, on the grounds that the law protects some species not truly endangered. The challenge came from a Syracuse, N.Y. shoe manufacturer. National Audubon plans to intervene in an appeal of the ruling.

Hurray for the fur workers' unions, however; they announced that their members would not cut or sew the skins of leopards, cheetas, jaguars or ocelots.

## Organizations Collecting Tin Cans (all types acceptable)

Los Angeles By-Products, 1810 E. 25th St., L.A. (233-4175)

## Organizations Collecting Aluminum (all-aluminum cans, TV Dinner Trays, pie pans, aluminum foil, pots & pans)

Camp Fire Girls (phone 382-8321), 304 S. Kingsley Dr., L.A. and 11646 W. Pico Blvd., L.A. and 4632 W. Century Blvd., Inglewood and 6851 Lennox Ave., Van Nuys; Boy Scouts of America (call for nearest troop 385-3461); Girl Scouts of America (388-9471); Reynolds Aluminum has set up the following depots, (for additional information, phone 685-6216), Corsaro Distr. Co., 2740 California Ave., Torrance, Ca (320-6413); Golden Distr. Corp., 742 So. Alameda, L.A., (624-6564); H & L Distri-

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# —RECYCLING— by Sandy & Marge Wohlgemuth

You start in your own home and at the grocery store, scheming how to switch from plastic and "tin" cans to glass and aluminum. You make it a point to buy soft drinks in returnable bottles rather than throwaways (though this cuts down on your take at the glass reclamation center, you're showing your dedication by saving our resources). When your friends and neighbors ask you how come your garage is filling up with junk—you tell them. Pretty soon little kids are coming from all over with paper sacks and boxes full of beer cans and pickle jars. Then the trick is to get them to put the stuff in their garage. On TRASH DAY, you rendezvous and caravan to the reclamation center, have a picnic in the park afterwards with all your friendly neighbors, then glom on to the loot for the Conservation Fund. Seriously, it's very gratifying to find people who ordinarily have little interest in conservation suddenly becoming involved. They collect stuff, they make excellent suggestions. They're enthusiastic because this is something they can do themselves that actually makes a difference—with a minimum of effort. They may not know much about the Sierra Club or Audubon, but when the \$4.11 we received for the 822 bottles goes to the Condor Fund or the Save Mineral King — that's impressive.

There are other sources of satisfaction here. One of our favorite canyons in the San Fernando Valley, a lovely spot with splendid chaparral, excellent warblers in season, a winding stream and few people—alas—was a cluttered mess. A couple of months ago we would go birding there every day or so and then gather the trash before we left for home. After four or five visits we could walk a mile of it and say, "By George, that looks great—and we did it!" We had a great time in June on the Greenhorn Mt. field trip. Clear, cold air after hot, smoggy Los Angeles, good birds, nice people, fine camping. But the most memorable event was the fact that we collected 250 aluminum cans around the camp and all the way down the mountain!

At first this all seems slightly ridiculous and a dreadful chore. When you stop at a turn-out on the road and rummage through the rubble, there's a certain amount of self-consciousness and a reluctance to meet the eye of an onlooker. After a bit (like whipping out the binoculars in front of strangers) you find you don't care and ignore the occasional stare. Then it becomes a challenge (like birding) to tell the good cans from the worthless in a split second or searching the area around the paper six-pack carton for its erstwhile contents. Finally it becomes a crazy kind of game and even fun.

A minor but important point arises. If you're really cleaning up the environment, what about the "worthless" stuff? Why, just pick out the reclaimable goodies and leave the other eyesores? Because your energies go only so far. At Greenhorn and our canyon, we picked up everything, but that was a labor of love and conscience. Now, if we could get the steel, paper, and plastics moguls to start recycling . . .

The bottle angle can be amusing and instructive. You can make an interesting study of the drinking habits of a neighborhood by comparing the proportion of wine bottles to whiskey bottles. Or wondering what kind of people are drinking expensive scotch and heaving the empties into a vacant lot. On a good day, you could get drunk from the dregs in all the gin-vodka-bourbon bottles you find. And think of the hangover! A very down-to-earth view of the affluence of our society is the great number of 3 and 5-cent returnable bottles that turn up everywhere. A bonanza that swells the Conservation Fund and much more direct than the reclamation route.

So in 2 1/2 months we've generated over \$20 in this Reclamation Enclave. As more people get the spirit, the stuff comes in at an increasing rate and we're beginning to have fantasies about building our own backyard plant and melting down the metal and glass ourselves. Best of all, the streets and open areas are beginning to look better. Our kids on their bicycles have to forage farther from home to find the litter. And that's the whole idea. ★

## Organizations Collecting Glass Jars & Bottles

Containers should be rinsed, free of metal, & colors sorted three ways, clear, green, and all others, and may be broken.

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MORE on page seven

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS *Continued from back page*

Migrant shorebirds were early and abundant, as expected, with a few first reports being: three PECTORAL SANDPIPERS above the bridge at Malibu on the 13th (Ernest Abeles), a SOLITARY SANDPIPER along the Los Angeles River near Encino on the 20th (Jon Dunn), and a GOLDEN PLOVER at Bolsa Chica on the 29th (Kay Yagii). Phalaropes were abundant throughout August with thousands of Northern and hundreds of Wilson's present along the coast. Warren Blazer brings us our only report of ROSEATE SPOONBILLS as four large waders flushed ahead of him in the Wister unit at the south end of the Salton Sea on Aug. 30th. Two birds were pink and two were white. Naturally he followed the pink ones with his binoculars but was unable to discern the spoon-shaped bill. Since no other pink birds, except for one pinkish-orange flamingo, are likely at the Sea, the probabilities are they were Spoonbills.

The pelagic trip from San Diego to the Sixty mile bank and San Clemente Island on Sept. 12th was very low on quantity of birds but high on quality. Not more than a hundred Pink-footed Shearwaters and ten Sootys, mostly singles, were seen but the "specialties" (hoped for but not expected were very cooperative). One boat had several LEAST PETRELS, two adult RED-BILLED TROPICBIRDS and all THREE SPECIES OF JAEGERs (including the rare Long-tailed), with Pomarines most common. The second boat had only one TROPICBIRD, only POMARINE JAEGERs and only two alcids but those two were CRAVERI'S



MURRELETS (identified by the dusky wing linings shown as they lifted their wings for take off and as they turned away from the boat). This rare little Mexican alcid was reported only once in the fifty years prior to 1966 but now apparently wanders north in very small numbers nearly every fall. Late in the afternoon the second boat "hit the jackpot" with a raft of about 600 petrels, slightly more than half of which were LEAST PETRELS. The balance were BLACK PETRELS a few of which had been following the boat most of the day. In this milling mass of petrels one bird was singled out - medium sized with a striking white rump patch and a very unusual stiff-winged flight, (flutter and glide) low over the water. As yet it is unidentified but it is probably a new record for the west coast of the U. S. A. Anyone familiar with the flight characteristics of tropical Pacific petrels could be most helpful. Please call me\*

\* 797-2965.

Probably the most widely seen "rare bird" was the immature LITTLE BLUE HERON found at the upper end of Buena Vista Lagoon in Oceanside. This pure white heron was distinguished from the numerous Snowy Egrets by its upright posture, greenish legs, gray lores and bill, and in flight, by the dark tips of the outer primaries.

Again this month we have a problem bird - a CARACARA found on the beach front at the Ventura Marina by Ernest Abeles on the 25th. Is it a wild bird or an escapee? The Caracara at Oceano a few years ago was seen by many Californians as it fed on the Coots in a nearby park. It proved to be the pet of a local resident who released it each morning to forage for itself. Coincidentally the Monterey bird in 1916, the Oceano bird and this one were all found along the coast, which is not their preferred habitat. Does this indicate that they were taken there, or that they flew as far west as they could and stopped there?

Early October should provide the best birding of the year, particularly for small passerines. Every unidentified bird should be studied and if it is unusual verified by another birder. We often receive reports of very rare birds, often one difficult to identify which cannot be credited unless verified by a photograph or, at the very least, by good descriptions from two qualified observers. About fifteen species of flycatchers, thirty species of warblers and forty-five species of seed-eaters, from grosbeaks to longspurs, will be seen in our area this month. No one can see them all, but you won't see any of them unless you're out

OTTO WIDMANN *Continued from page two.*

found an American primeval forest, untouched: what a contrast to the cultured and tamed forests he had left behind in Germany, where all underbrush had long since disappeared. One morning on the 5th of May, without moving from a single spot, he counted 80 species of birds. "At that time I used to carry a campstool, a drudgery in appearance, but a blessing when tired. (A campstool is a keeper of patience)." But he had difficulty in identifying birds in the field, so at the next Christmas (1875) a cane-gun appeared, which allowed the insertion of a small shell containing a number of fine shot. He also had a Lefauchens, a double-barreled shotgun, he had bought on his honeymoon, but "I hated to be seen with such an instrument of murder and it was too heavy to carry it on my long walks. Ten times more valuable to me than any gun was my field glass (A LeMaitre he got in Paris) and I never went out without it. Even to one who possesses the best eyesight a field glass is a revelation; it brings out the real beauty of an object, the same as a magnifying glass or microscope does in its way."

*To be continued in another issue*

# Shumway Suffel

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

### Early October

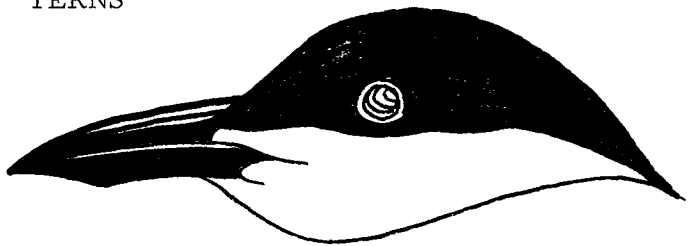
more than any other time, is the turning point of the bird's year. Migration is at its peak now and this tends to obscure the fact that our summer residents, the swallows, orioles, and grosbeaks among others, are going or mostly gone already. Since presence is more noticeable than absence, we will certainly notice the arrival of our winter visitors - the first White-crowned Sparrows, Audubon's Warblers and possibly Cedar Waxwings are here already with their numbers increasing almost daily. Yes, birds are on the move and for most birders this is the most exciting time of the year to be afield.

A word of caution should be interjected here - many of the small birds, in the fall are in dull immature or winter plumage, which can be quite different from the colorful breeding plumage of adults in spring. If you find a difficult bird to identify, or a rare bird, write a description before you look at a field guide. For uniformity, start your description with the head and upper-parts, then the underparts from front to back, and lastly notes on the softparts - bill, eyes, and legs. If you do not do this in the field, you may find your description influenced by what you have read instead of what you actually saw.

The first migrants seemed unusually early in the lowlands and deserts this year. Hummers, kingbirds, swallows and the first Western Tanagers were seen in mid-July. By early August Jon Dunn was censusing the Sepulveda Recreation Area and finding increasing numbers of Ash-throated Flycatchers (30+), Orange-crowned, Yellow, and Nashville Warblers, and Lazuli Buntings (30+) before mid-month. With these Lazulis was a "moulting male" INDIGO BUNTING, mostly dark blue but mottled with brown and of course, without wingbars. By month's end all the western warblers except Hermit's, which are uncommon in fall, had been seen in the lowlands. With the western warblers a large variety of "eastern" strays were present. REDSTARTS were widely seen and nearly all were in immature or female plumage - one at Pt. Fermin Park on Aug. 24th (Shirley Wells), one at Hollywood Reservoir on Sept. 2nd (Kim Garrett), and four at Deep

Springs. Guy McCaskie found two PRAIRIE WARBLERS at the Otay Mesa Reservoir below San Diego in mid-August, which is extremely early for this rare vagrant. Tuna Canyon, in Malibu, provided another rarity when Bruce Broadbooks found a female BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER there on the very early date of Aug. 29th. By early September stray warblers were turning up in unusual numbers. A PROTHONOTARY WARBLER at Deep Springs on the fifth (Kim Garrett, Jon Dunn and Mike San Miguel) was a very rare bird. A VIRGINIA'S WARBLER near Jon Dunn's Encino home on the seventh was the first one reported. The always productive area below San Diego had a BLACK-&-WHITE WARBLER, two TENNESSEE WARBLERS, and a RED-EYED VIREO (Guy McCaskie et al), on or before Sept. 10th.

The Salton Sea again provided top birding for a few heat-resistant enthusiasts. A WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER was reported by Lois Baylen with a flock of "peeps" at Red Hill on the 16th. Lois is familiar with this bird from years of Gulf coast birding. She picked it out in the feeding flock by its size, plumage, and feeding activity, and confirmed it by the white rump when it flushed. The first California record was at north end of the Sea in June of 1969. One or more BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIES were seen at the north end of the Sea about the 15th, and a BROWN BOOBY was roosting in a tree at the south end on the 22nd. Unfortunately, none of these birds could be found a few days later. The WOOD IBIS, LAUGHING GULLS and GULL-BILLED TERNS



had to serve as consolation for birders disappointed by the rarer birds. A single FRANKLIN'S GULL was found by Guy McCaskie on the 22nd and others are possible in the fall, both at the Sea and along the coast.

*Continued on previous page*

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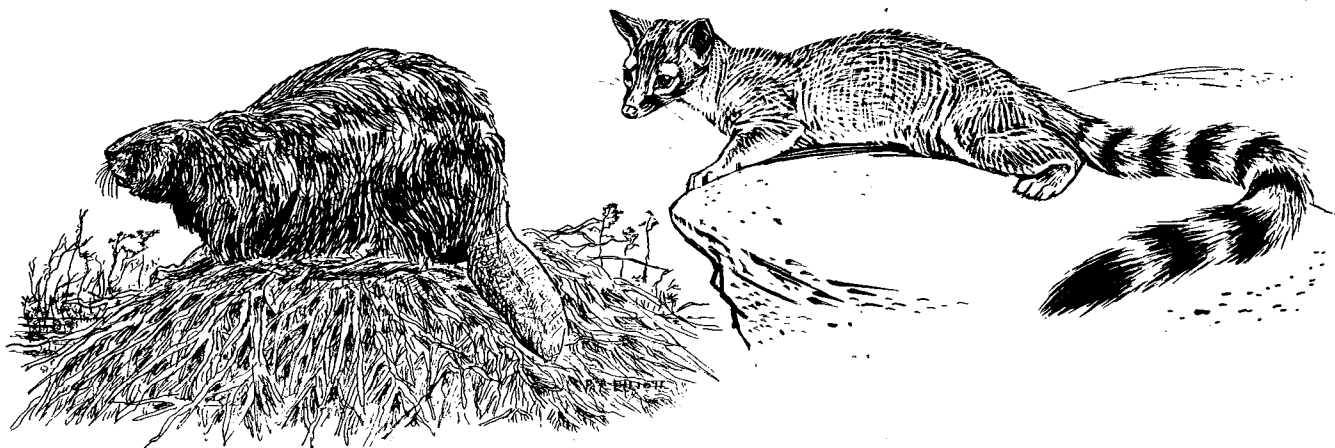
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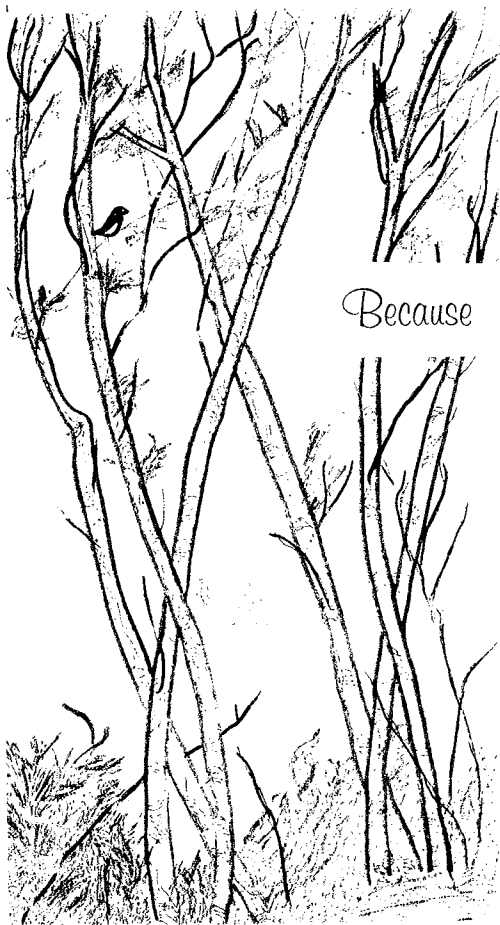
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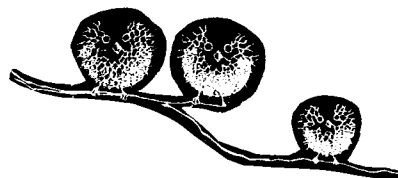
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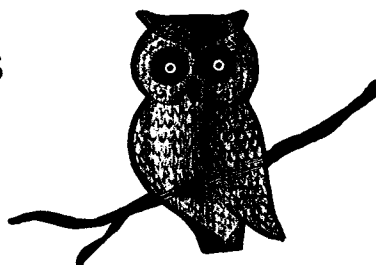
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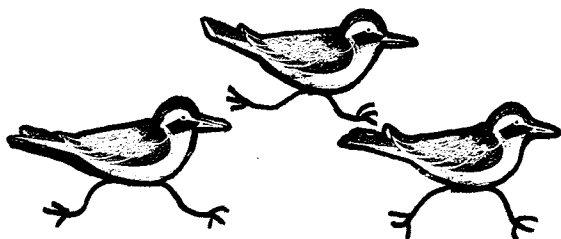


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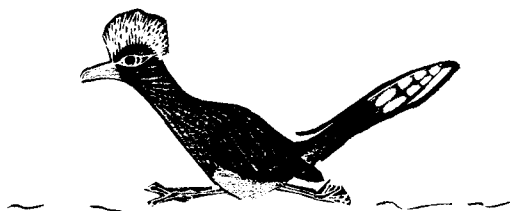


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