

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 37 1970-71 NUMBER 7 MARCH



"Grandfather - Otto Widmann"

This is the second article on an early and famous ornithologist in America, written by his grandson, Otto Widmann, an active member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. Part I appeared in the October and November issues of Volume 1969-70, Numbers 2 and 3, of *The Western Tanager*.

Why should two lists on bird migrations along the Mississippi Valley cause the American Ornithological Union board to elect Otto Widmann as a Fellow in their society? W. W. Cooke, in his report to the U. S. Biological Survey in 1888, the first fruits of the newly organized American Ornithological Union, writes that Otto Widmann was "the most careful, competent and painstaking observer in the district. Those birds observed in St. Louis will be given in full, not only to serve as a basis, but also to serve as a model for observers in future years." Later he says, "and Otto Widmann sent the most complete record of fall migrations that has ever been made in the United States. When the work (*Report on Bird Migrations in the Mississippi Valley 1884-1885, Bull. #27365, 1888*) was begun and its future seemed clouded in doubt, his voluminous and valuable notes turned the scale; when delays and discouragements came, his advice and encouragement awoke renewed vigor and interest." Here we have two qualities at the roots of Otto Widmann success: "voluminous and valuable notes" and "advice and encouragement." The words describing his works and actions "careful," "competent," "painstaking" should "serve as a model for observers in future years" seem overpraiseworthy. To see what Mr. Cooke was writing about I looked up these lists of migrating birds. To begin with the birds were listed in Latin in his own checklist order. The weather was briefly but accurately noted. The temperature readings gave the high and lows. The dates of arrival for each species are given for stragglers, flocks, and the main body of the migration. The number of observers and their points of observation noted. These lists were reprinted in four publications and later appeared in Bendire's, Nehrling's, Chapman's, and Bailey's books.

To peruse the "voluminous and valuable notes," I went to the various publications and read his articles. I found 47 in Nuttall's, Ridgway's, and Wilson's Bulletins, *The Forest & Stream*, *The Auk & Audubon Magazines*, *Bird Lore*, *St. Louis Academy of Science reports*, *The Osprey*, *The Ornithologist & Oologist*, *American Field, Science Magazine*, *Reports of the State Horticultural Society of Missouri*, *The St. Louis*

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An Urgent Appeal from the President

Recently at evening meetings and through the pages of the "Western Tanager," I have appealed for members to assist in our activities as well as for money to help pay the cost of those activities. It looks as though I have been unable to convey to you the seriousness of the problem. As a result, we are having to reduce the operations at Audubon House. This is only the beginning, unless we get more cooperation along with financial support, further cuts in many areas are going to be mandatory.

Our facilities at Audubon House are in constant use by our members and many visitors. This popularity combined with our fine Sales Department places heavy demands on the few people available to do the necessary work. Because we do not have enough volunteers, we have to rely on a small part-time, paid staff to help man Audubon House. But this unique facility is the very place we are having to cut back by reducing paid personnel and hours being open. Our profits from sales do help somewhat, but here we face the problem of requiring more people to handle the increasing volume.

More volunteers are needed. No special skills are necessary but dependability and ability to get along with people are essential. Light typing and assistance in the Sales Department are areas of particular need. If you can fairly regularly devote a few interesting hours a week to Audubon House, please contact Mrs. Abigail King at the House (phone 876-0202) or her home (phone 476-5121).

This is the time of year that the nominating committee is seeking candidates for various offices and committee assignments for the year 1971-72. It is always a difficult job to find people who are willing to take these positions. Surely, in an organization of over 1700 members there must be more than the 20 or so people now doing the work, who are capable and who could devote a small amount of time to be of service. All of our activities are for the benefit of the membership, but too many of our people are happy to enjoy the fruits of the labor of others without even considering

Continued overleaf

An Urgent Appeal from the President

helping to make all this possible. Many of the small coterie of dedicated people who have made the Society the success it is, would welcome a little relief. We must have more members lend a helping hand.

Appeals for money are always unwelcome. Everyone of us is deluged constantly for donations for many worthwhile causes. Some feel that because we pay our annual dues to National Audubon, everything the Los Angeles Chapter does should be considered a service as purchased by those dues. We get only a small part of the funds sent to New York. National Audubon, of course, has a great need for all the money it gets and we appreciate their sharing even a small part with us. Everything we do costs money. This is a fact of life. Even though we do a good job holding down expenses, items such as printing and distributing The Western Tanager, necessary business activities, conservation efforts, miscellaneous costs of Audubon House, evening programs, etc., take every cent we receive.

I have tried to explain to you some of the difficulties your Society is facing. It is up to you, the membership, to decide by your actions what direction the Los Angeles Audubon Society will take. Will it be further reduction in activities, or continuing expansion into an enjoyable, dynamic organization of which we can all be proud?

Enclosed is a self-addressed envelope for donations. All gifts are tax deductible. Please be generous when you make out your checks payable to the Los Angeles Audubon Society. If you can't send money, volunteer to help!

HERBERT CLARKE, PRESIDENT

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

CONCLUDED

record) and missed twelve "possibles" because of the "breaks of the game" and a high wind. Will they be next to break the 200 species milestone? We think so.

Certainly the best weekend for the most birders was January 23 and 24 for the L. A. A. S. field trip to the Salton Sea. Aside from the large turnout and the spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese in the brilliant sunshine, there was the fascination of ferreting out those very few ROSS' GEESE by size alone, or those four or five BLUE GEESE by their distinctive coloring. But the rare birds set this trip apart: the SAW-WHET OWL, so easily seen at the Salton Sea State Park, that Jan Tarble put us on to; the NORTHERN SHRIKE (first Southern California record) found by the Cardiff's earlier in the morning; and, for a lucky few, the ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK or the RED-STAR TS near the New River dike.

BINOCULARS PART III FOR BIRDING

In addition to the parameters of magnification and diameter of objective already discussed, there is another major topic of prime importance which dictates the choice of a particular model of binoculars. This is *image quality*, or technically, *magnitude of aberrations*. This is, after all, where you either pay for quality or shop for the best buy for your money. The aberrations which can be quite easily checked out by a prospective buyer are:

Color. Examine the color fringing at the edge of a white object with a well-delineated, sharp dark border in daylight. At night, look at an incandescent light against a dark background. Also see how much difference in focus is required to see clearly neon signs ranging from red through orange, green and blue. For a critical test, note the amount of color fringing increase towards the edge of the field of view.

Sharpness (acuity). Here the best test is to note the degree to which the images of stars can be focussed down to sharp points. Also apply this test to the variation in quality from the center to the edge of the field of view. Usually, one encounters bad astigmatism (image elongation) towards the edges of the field of view. When a star test is not practical, focus on sharp, fine print and determine the maximum distance that it can be read through the (proped up) binoculars. Then compare with another model.

Distortion. This is best evaluated by looking at rectangularly shaped objects, such as the windows in a high-rise building, and at the effect on normal perspective of parallel edges viewed obliquely, such as looking up at the outline of a tall building through the binoculars. A square may look like either a barrel or a pin-cushion.

At the same time test the curvature of field. In poor quality binoculars, a flat surface will appear either convex or concave to the viewer. Ideally, it should look perfectly flat out to the edges of the field.

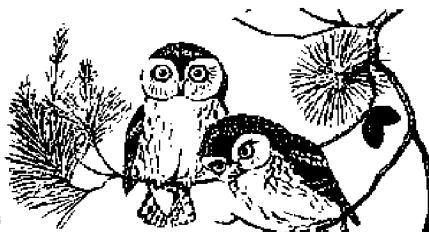
While looking at star images, one can test one's ability to hold the binoculars still, as indicated by the size of the (Lissajous) figures traced out as a consequence of the persistence of vision. An interesting thing to do (not for birders, but for optical physicists) is to render visible the time variation of brightness and color scintillation by intentionally wiggling the binoculars when looking at a bright star, low in the sky. *To be continued*

Yes, patience is called for in March, and it isn't going to be easy after a winter like this and with spring migration just around the corner. The flowers and the weather on the deserts should be at their best this month. Death Valley or the Salton Sea, even the desert oases such as Morongo Valley or Borrego Springs will be lovely in March. The coastal lagoons and marshes will be alive with shorebirds and ducks, and the first migrants and summer visitors will be arriving in the lowlands, so there will be ample rewards for those who are out in the field.



Screech Owl

OWLING BY TAPE



Saw-Whet Owl

The original impetus to try calling owls was furnished by stories of a Germantown weekend that featured a talented naturalist from the Cincinnati area that called owls with his own natural ability. We were scheduled for a "Night Owl" overnight at Aullwood and I made a tape and used it successfully although there was no one with me to spot the owl when it did arrive.

My equipment consists of a Sony TC 110 battery-operated tape recorder. I made my owl call tape by repeating over and over the calls as they are recorded on the record that accompanies the National Geographic "Water, Prey and Game Birds of North America." This record was played on our stereo and with a patch-cord recorded direct on the tape cassette in mono.

My tape is really nothing to brag about with some of the comments from the record included on the tape. It would be desirable to exclude the talking if possible. It is also desirable to have several minutes of each call on the tape to avoid the problem of having to reverse the recorder or rewind the tape and start at the beginning of the particular call again.

You can also use the calls from Peterson's record but I believe they are not quite as long as on the National Geographic album and you'll have to repeat more often to get the proper length of calls on the tape.

We've had our best luck with the Screech Owl recording. It has brought owls into our front yard here in the Dayton suburbs where there are several wooded areas within 1/4 mile. We've seen both the red phase and gray phase of the Screech Owl. The response of the Screech Owl is a very low murmur or yodel. It would be very difficult to handle the recorder and spotlights by yourself and fortunately the groups I've been with are sharp eyed and have spotted the owls who are practically impossible to hear as they fly into the area of the recorder.

We had a Barred Owl at Spring Valley that answered the Screech-Owl call. Jim Hill explained that the Barred Owl will prey on the Screech Owl so it may have been looking for something to eat. The Barred Owl at Germantown was responding to the classic "Who cooks for you all" call and I'm really sorry we couldn't coax him out of the big trees so he could be seen.

I believe the continued playing of the call after the owl has been spotted at reduced volume has a tendency to hold the bird in the area somewhat longer than if the recorder is stopped when the owl is sighted. I believe it also makes the recorded call more effective if the playback volume is changed once in awhile.

Several high-powered flashlights or lanterns are recommended as they seem to "freeze" the owl when spot lighted. The five-cell flashlights or 9-volt lanterns are used in our group.

We try to find an area that is open with several large trees in silhouette against the early evening or dusk sky. It is easier to see movement in this situation as the birds come into the trees.

The owls that we've called in do not appear to be bothered by the size of the crowd observing. We've even called an owl in as we sat around an open campfire and the owl didn't seem to mind the crowd or the fire.

We also used the tape recorder in Michigan this spring to assist us in locating and observing the Kirtland's Warbler. It was successful beyond our wildest imagination. We had one Kirtland's Warbler within six feet of us and I think we could have got it in the car with us if we had tried. The same technique was used in taping the call off the Peterson record and playing it over and over again.

Lee Hall, Dayton, Ohio—Communicated by Gene and Liz Rose, Members of L. A. A. S. now living in Ohio.



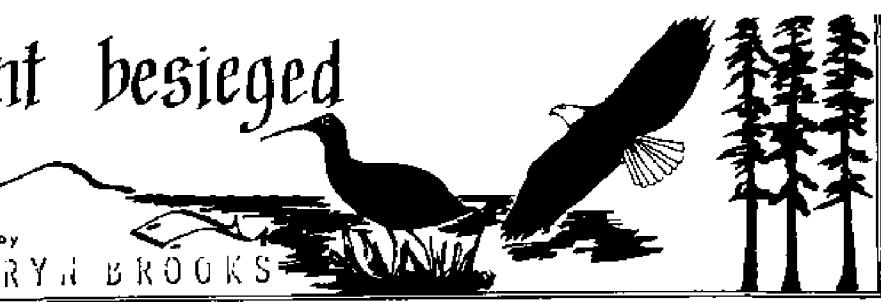


environment besieged



by

KATHRYN BROOKS



THE COALITION AGAINST THE SST urges citizens to write to their U.S. Senators and Representative urging them to vote against further funding of the SST. The CITIZENS LEAGUE AGAINST THE SONIC BOOM put forth the following statement. The SST's would:

"Inflict jolting sonic booms on a large fraction of the earth, night and day; convert 60% of the North Atlantic into a sonic boom dumping ground; startle as many as 20,000,000 people per transcontinental flight. (Note: there is still no law or regulation against the SST supersonic flight over our cities, wildlife areas, etc.)

Create intolerable noise at airports and in nearby suburbs; sideline noise would be like that from fifty 747s taking off simultaneously.

Expose passengers to increased dangers from lightning, flash-fire, cosmic rays, ozone, and death-within-30-seconds from sudden loss of cabin pressure.

Increase the moisture content of the upper atmosphere (above 65,000 ft. where thunderstorms do not reach) thus producing changes in global temperature.

Require multi-billion-dollar subsidy by the taxpayers.

Become a gigantic financial failure--because it would be far outclassed by the 747 Jumbo Jet. (The 747 has 50% greater capacity, 50% greater range, uses only 40% as much fuel per passenger, produces no threat of weather change, is much roomier and safer, costs 50% less, has much lower fares, requires no subsidy by the taxpayer, and has NO SONIC BOOM.) Fifteen top economists have said that the SST program would probably be a failure. (Congressional Record Sept. 15)

Consume a large fraction of world's oil supply. If a Boeing SST made four trips across the Atlantic each day, it would burn of the order of 600 tons of kerosene a day. A fleet of 500 Boeing SSTs and 300 Concorde would burn about 350,000 tons of kerosene a day--and about 120,000,000 tons a year. Such a quantity would be derived from about one billion tons of crude oil, comparable to the present-day total output of crude oil in America and Europe. (See Phila. Eve. Bulletin 11/30/70 for a more detailed analysis.) Thus the SST would enormously speed up the process of exhausting the world's oil reserves."

MORRO BAY ROOKERY THREATENED

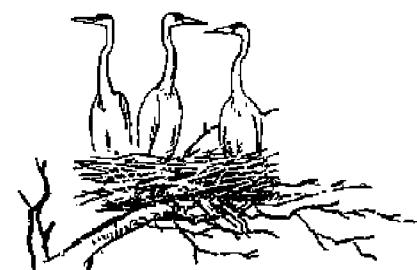
From Wayne Bickford, President, Morro Coast Audubon Society comes the following plea.

They are "asking your support in urging the California State Department of Parks and Recreation to acquire the "Fairbank property" as a Nature Preserve. For eighteen years this area of approximately five acres bordered by tall eucalyptus has been used as a rookery by more than a hundred of the impressive Great Blue Herons and Black Crowned Night Herons. Tourists, nature lovers and school children have enjoyed watching their activities. Now the rookery is threatened by a proposal to develop the property commercially.

The Department of Parks and Recreation has previously made two unsuccessful attempts to purchase the site as it is a logical and desirable addition to the existing facility: Golf Course, Camp Grounds and Museum of Natural History. Its shoreline is a natural extension of the Museum since the herons and their nests can be seen from the observation deck. It is one of the few remain places in that area where one may enjoy the shore of the bay. We need to preserve it in its present state."

The State Department of Parks and Recreation and the State Government need to know you support the acquisition of the rookery.

- (1) Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director
Department of Parks & Recreation
Sacramento, California 95814
- (2) Governor Ronald Reagan
Capitol Building
Sacramento, California 95814
- (3) William M. Ketchum
Assemblyman, 29th District
1155 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, Ca 93401



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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**



**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**

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

Mar. 9 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Program: Mr. James Hammond, wildlife photographer and lecturer, will present a 16 mm. color film on "The Birds at Malheur."

Mar. 13 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Tujunga Wash. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on the north side of Foothill Blvd. just west of the bridge over the wash and about 2 miles west of Sunland. Take the Golden State Freeway to Osborne St. and go east on Osborne to Foothill. Among the birds we expect to see are such desert species as Cactus Wren and Costa's Hummingbird. Leader: Freeman Tatum (for information call Bob Blackstone, 277-0521)

Mar. 28 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Stehly Ranch, 7351 Carbon Canyon Rd., Brea. Meet at the ranch gate at 9:00 a.m. Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the Riverside Freeway to Harbor Blvd., Fullerton. Go north on Harbor Blvd. to connection with Brea Blvd. and go north-east on Brea to Imperial Highway. Take Imperial east to Valencia Ave. and go north on Valencia which becomes Carbon Canyon Rd. at Brea city limits. Follow Carbon Canyon Rd. to 1/2 mile beyond La Vida Hot Springs. Ranch gate is marked by two lion heads. Trip will last till about 1 p.m. For information call Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.

Apr. 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.

Apr. 10 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Chantry Flat and Santa Anita Canyon. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd. Go north on Rosemead to Foothill Blvd., then east on Foothill to Santa Anita Ave., then north to the end of Santa Anita Canyon Rd. Be prepared for a hike down to the canyon stream and to the falls to see resident Dippers and early spring migrants. Leader: Harold Baxter, 355-6300.

Apr. 13 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - Plummer Park, 8:00 p.m. Program: Mr. Ron LeValley of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Bolinas, California, will present an illustrated lecture on the work of this unique station.

PLEASE, NO PETS, and no collecting of any kind. The L.A.A.S. regretfully has to decline any obligation to arrange transportation to field trips.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

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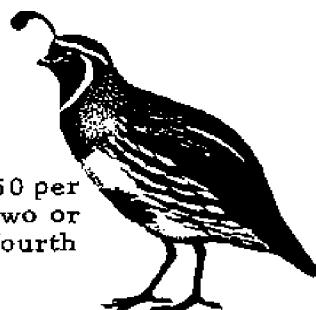
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audubon activities

FIELD TRIP - Salton Sea, Jan. 23-24. One of the most exciting field trips I ever had the pleasure of leading was the one to the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County. The group, an unofficial 92 members and guests in about 50 cars, began birding on the Wister State Waterfowl Refuge just north of Niland. Pete Sproul, refuge manager, rendered invaluable assistance to us by having his assistant, Frank Pension, give us a tour of the refuge. Among the several thousand SNOW GEESE feeding in a field, we all had excellent views of WHITE-FRONTED and CANAD GEESE and one adult BLUE GOOSE.

Among the areas birded were Red Hill, Observation Point on the Federal Waterfowl Refuge, the mouth of the New River, Finney Lake (where we camped Saturday night) and Ramer Lake. Also, numerous stops were made en route.

The most exciting find was made by Gene Cardiff and the San Bernardino Audubon Society of an adult NORTHERN SHRIKE. After chasing the bird over a mile, everyone was able to study it in close comparison to a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.

Other birds seen included several hundred CATTLE EGRET, an adult ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, a PRAIRIE FALCON, SHORT-EARED OWL, an AMERICAN REDSTART (at the New River) and a SAW-WHET OWL (near Mecca - a fourth record for the Salton Sea). A total of 111 species was counted.

Larry Sansone, Leader

THE AUDUBON BIRD REPORT is a service to members and visitors. By calling (213 is zone number for calling from out-of-town) you are automatically switched to a tape recording, on which there is an account of the current situation regarding rare or unusual birds seen in our area. From this you can plan a birding trip.

The recording is up-dated frequently. This service is provided through the Headquarters Committee. Volunteers would be greatly appreciated in assembling reports and making the taped reports (only women with clear voices need apply for this!) more frequently.

The Committee also requests more active cooperation from members in sending in reports of interest: Jean Brandt, 788-5188, after 5:00 p. m. (this is a San Fernando Valley exchange); 876-0202 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m., except Mondays (this is central exchange); 476-5121 from West Side telephones; 372-5536 coastal area; 249-5537 East Side.

AUSTRALIAN BIRDING TOUR

ANNOUNCING A THREE-WEEK ESCORTED BIRDING TOUR OF AUSTRALIA DEPARTING NOVEMBER 6, 1971, SPONSORED BY THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY.

PURPOSE OF TRIP TO SEE AND IDENTIFY MAXIMUM NUMBER OF BIRD SPECIES.

* * -

SEE AUSTRALIAN PARROTS, HONEYEATERS, BOWER BIRDS, LYREBIRDS, BIRDS OF PARADISE, WINTERING ASIATIC SHORE BIRDS, PENGUINS, EMUS, CASSOWARIES, KANGAROOS, DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS, KOALA BEARS, FLYING FOXES.

VISIT THE LARGE CITIES, THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND OTHER NATURE AREAS.

* * *

TOP AUSTRALIAN BIRDERS TO ASSIST IN FINDING AND IDENTIFYING BIRDS.

* * *

STOP-OVER PRIVILEGES IN OTHER SOUTH PACIFIC AREAS FOLLOWING TOUR.

Reservations taken NOW!

FOR RESERVATIONS OR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL THE TOUR LEADERS: JIM HUFFMAN, 545-1224
OLGA CLARKE, 249-5537

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Bird Reports 874-1318

874-1318



Continued...

from page four

??? VICTORY AT POINT MUGU ???

According to the Los Angeles Times, the State Park and Recreation Commission has formally adopted a scaled down development plan for the Point Mugu area. They also claim that the new plan eliminates practically all of the intensive commercial projects proposed earlier by the state--motorcycle and dune buggy arena, high rise hotel, shopping area, rifle range, golf course, and model airplane flying space. It will have campsites, beaches, picnic areas, hiking paths and hostel cabins to serve the four million visitors expected yearly. Although many of us wish the area simply left alone, it appeared to be a considerable victory for conservationists. NOT SO, according to Joann Leonard, and those in the Sierra Club who attended the hearing in Oroville, California on February 11, 1971. The story that unfolds is quite interesting!

Supposedly, the reclassification of Point Mugu from a state recreation area to a state park has saved it from excessive commercial development. But the commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Sokolov, rescinded on Commissioner Bonnicksen's resolution that was passed at a previous meeting, which was a comprehensive policy stating that state parks are "to restore, protect, and maintain native environmental complexes, where practicable, and to the extent compatible with the primary purpose for which the state park was established, at levels determined by the commission (not the director)," that state parks are not the place for playgrounds, golf courses, swimming pools, and ski facilities which are better located in state recreation areas, and that trail bikes, dune buggies and four-wheel-drive vehicles should be limited to designated "state park roads". The policy calls for "no major modification of lands, forests, or waters." As Bonnicksen's policy was rescinded (Sokolov claiming that it had been previously passed in haste), a substitute motion by Sokolov which permits off-road vehicle-use, was not acted upon, thereby leaving no definition of a state park. So what does this mean for Point Mugu? It has been reclassified! So what? Without the Bonnicksen criteria, the reclassification provides no future protection.

Joann commented that the most terrifying aspect of the hearing was that the commissioners voted to let their staff handle the mail rather than themselves, thereby never seeing the letters.

MARCH 8 is the deadline for closing the HEARING RECORDS on the PROPOSED ALASKAN PIPELINE. See February Tanager for more information. Written statements go to: Director, Bureau of Land Management U.S. Department of the Interior Washington D. C. 20240 (Attention 320) Request that statement be part of hearing record

President Nixon is under heavy pressure to reverse his decision to kill cross Florida Barge Canal. A flood of congratulatory and supporting messages to the President needed now.

Apparently, the commissioners don't want to hear from the public. Outrageous! The whole reason for the commission system is that lay people serve without pay to represent the public. When Bonnicksen presented 1100 cards and letters (those were ones addressed to him only), only six letters favored development with the rest against. Motts reply was that letters are cheap! Only our conservationist allies, Ian McMillan and Thomas Bonnicksen, voted against the motion that they no longer look at the mail. Letters protesting this outrage (but keep them cool) should go to Governor Reagan and Norman Livermore, Director of Resources, Sacramento, 95814.

Meanwhile, with the commissioners playing games at public expense and abuse, Senator Anthony Beilenson has introduced three bills (SB 270, 1, 2) which provide for the essential protection of Point Mugu for which we have been battling and which reorganize the state park system to give greater emphasis to preservation of the environment.

EPA ORDERED TO RECONSIDER DDT BAN

The new Environmental Protection Agency was ordered by the U.S. Court of Appeals to reconsider urgently, the Secretary of Agriculture's decision not to ban DDT. The court suggested that Secretary Hardin "failed to assign sufficient importance to the risk of harm to human lives" on Jan. 8, according to the Los Angeles Times. Chief Judge Bazelon wrote the opinion. Plaintiffs in the DDT suit were the National Audubon Society, Environmental Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, West Michigan Environmental Action Council. This is a major victory for environmentalists challenging administrative actions through the courts.

Almost 10,000 signatures to ban DDT, collected at Audubon House, will be submitted to William D. Ruckelshaus, Director of EPA, the agency that has now taken over the responsibility in these areas from the Department of Agriculture.

!announcements!

WEDNESDAY FIELD TRIPS WILL START MARCH 17th AND CONTINUE FOR EIGHT WEEKS. ESPECIALLY PLANNED FOR NEWER BIRDERS BUT EVERYONE WELCOME. FOR INFORMATION CALL JOAN MILLS 275-4821, JEAN BRANDT 788-5188 OR ABIGAIL KING 476-5121

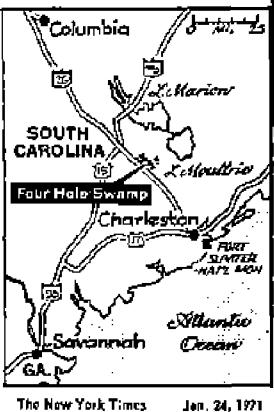
The Executive Secretary will have presented a slate of officers of the Los Angeles Audubon Society for the coming year at the April Evening Meeting. Nominations are accepted from the floor, in the form of a petition with 15 signatures of members, and elections are held at the May Evening Meeting.

Nature Groups Unite to Save a Swamp / * Sales

By JOHN C. DEVLIN

Two of the nation's leading conservation organizations, the National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy, have joined hand to raise \$1,450,000 to purchase and preserve "one of the finest remaining black water swamps on the East Coast."

The swamp, home of numerous somewhat exotic species of wildlife, is called the Four Hole Swamp and is about 35 miles northwest of Charleston, S.C., and about 70 miles southeast of Columbia, S.C. Timber interests are reported to want it.



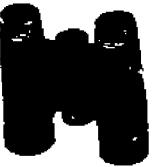
PLANNING A TRIP TO ARIZONA? We recommend BIRDS OF ARIZONA by Phillips and BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA by Jim Lane is a must.

The revised edition of Jim Lane's BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA will be in soon. Get your order in early as these go very quickly.

We are glad to be able to announce that we now have BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA by Robbins et al. in stock (hard cover) although we expect the paper backs

By JOHN C. DEVLIN

A big, beautifully adorned member of the parrot family, native to South America, may be establishing residence in the metropolitan area.



During a period of a year, the bird, known as a monk parakeet, has been reported sighted from New Brunswick, N.J., to Valley Stream, L.I., and one has apparently built a nest in a broken floodlight near the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In color and size, the bird resembles a parrot, but it is called a parakeet because it has a long, tapered tail rather than the blunt tail characteristic of parrots.

John Bull, field associate of the Department of Ornithology of the American Museum of Natural History, described the monk parakeet as being about the size of a mourning dove, with a "sleek" basically green body, gray face, neck and throat, and the typical bill of a parrot. The origin of the designation "monk" is unknown.

Squawk Similar to Parrot's

The green body of the bird is marked by a long yellow stripe down the back, and the monk parakeet makes a squawking sound, like the parrot's, which can be heard for 150 to 300 feet.

Sightings have been reported at Great Kills, S. L., and Jacob Riis Park, the Rockaways, Queens, and confirmed by such cautious groups as the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, the National Audubon Society, the Brooklyn Bird Club and the American Museum of Natural History.

Book Review

What to Do Before It's Too Late

By THOMAS LASK

WILDLIFE CRISIS By Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and James Fisher. 256 pages. Cowles. \$14.95.

In the foreword to this survey of conservationist movements around the globe, Peter Scott, a painter, explorer and a man with a hand in many conservationist projects, uses what is to me an original and insightful phrase. He calls Earth "our spaceship." All our life-support systems are right here, but unlike man-made spaceships, they are not monitored elsewhere, watched over and guarded while we are asleep. If mankind insists on sleeping while air, water, greenery and animal life are polluted, destroyed or caused to disappear, no one is going to ring any bells or flash warning signals. This book does shoot off warning flares and even tells what should be done about the troubles it has found.

GALAPAGOS, ISLANDS OF BIRDS, Bryan Nelson, Wilson Morrow & Co., New York. 1968. Illus. pp. 338. \$7.50. Reviewed in "Atlantic Naturalist," Vol. 24, No. 4, Winter 1969, by F. R. Fosberg, specialist on tropical ecology at the Smithsonian Institution.



The FIELD LIST OF BIRDS OF MARYLAND by Chandler S. Robbins and Willet T. Van Velzen published in March 1968, besides having an annotated list, with times of appearance, has a map and accounts of "Choice Birding Areas," which should be valuable to the traveller.

AUDUBON SOCIETY POSES A 'MYSTERY'

Offers Reward for Nesting Place of a Murrelet

By JOHN C. DEVLIN

The National Audubon Society has come up with what it calls "a baffling puzzle that bird watchers might call 'The Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet.'"

It is offering a \$100 prize to the first person to supply the correct answer to the following: "The marbled murrelet is the one bird of the North American continent north of Mexico whose nest ornithologists have never been able to find. Where is it?"

GRANDFATHER - Otto Widmann

Continued from page one

Naturalist Club, The Missouri Botanical Society, and several minor notices and observations in the Bird Lore. One article was illustrated by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, while Frank M. Chapman supplied photographs for another. A typical note of interest is the following. After spending long hours on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi, he decided he wanted to know how his backyard Martins were fed; so he was up before dawn and left the nests after nightfall and he discovered that nine pairs of Martins made 3724 trips to their nests during the course of one day. He also tried to see what kind of food was used. Inconsequential you may say, but he satisfied himself as to the number of trips that were made.

When he would go into the field, his lists of birds as well as that of plants accompanied him. He would sit down where he discovered for the first time in Missouri Baird's and LeConte's Sparrows, Kirtland's and Bachman's Warblers, the Brown Creeper, Swainson's and Myrtle Warblers and he would describe what he saw. He listed the trees, shrubs and grasses; he noted the wetness or dryness of the place; the flooding conditions; the ripeness of the fruit, berries or seeds; the effects of wind and snow on the flora in general. Some amazing descriptions resulted. About a winter roost he has this to say:

"It is a blessed region where we can listen to the sweet notes of all these songsters in deepest winter, in rain, in sleet and snow; and the dreaded season has lost its terrors of loneliness and desolation, where such true friends of song and happy companionship have made their winter home."

The personality of the observer emerges as well as the region described. When he discovered the first nesting of Bachman's Warbler on the Peninsula of Missouri, a region in the southeast corner of the state, where the St. Francis River meets the Mississippi, he noted especially their food source: wild rice (*Zizania miliacea*), smart-weed (*Polygonum densiflorum*), and lotus (*Nelumbium*). He spent days observing the pair, waiting for the eggs, before he took the nest and sent it to Robert Ridgway at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. He also observes: "Ticks form a society for the protection of birds. They are more powerful than the best state laws." So for the first time in our national publications a complete ecology of an area was being given, even down to the ticks themselves. But even more was given for he has this to say about the thrasher (*Darporhynchus rufus*), Auk Vol. XIII #3:

"...the great composer (will) tune his latest thoughts at half-voice in the bushes; his Easter Contata is not ready yet, but long before Spring has come to Northern climbs the Peninsula Thrasher will mount his favorite perch and proclaim in his exquisite melodious way that within him-

self the hope for an early resurrection of love's sweet season is growing with each day."

It sounds as if this were directly out of Schiller, Goethe, or Heine.

But Otto Widmann had other things on his mind. He tried to awaken his reader, using the best possible approach and language he could muster; but he found his efforts were to no avail. The forests were being cut down, the fields plowed, the grasses burnt. Where the primeval grandeur stood, now stood scrawny corn and sicker wheat. Where the marshes were, the railroads were being cut through and the water drained. Seventy-five percent of the woodland birds had disappeared during his life time. He says:

"There may come a time when forestry steps in and takes care of the remaining woodland, and men may even begin to plant new forests as they do in other countries; but such artificial groves compare with the primeval forest as does a cornfield with a marsh or prairie. There will be no great variety of trees, no twiners and vines of any kind, etc. There will be a desolation and stillness throughout these woods that even the few birds present will hardly have the courage to break."

Sounds as if it is directly out of Rachael Caron's "Silent Spring." "There are no substitutes for sedges, reeds and flags and the manifold vegetation associated with them." His answer was the encouragement of parks, cemetaries, and gun clubs; sounds incredible, but his reasoning was that the clubs protected all birds from poachers and the limited hunting did not decimate all the birds. He also recommended (1906) that Federal laws be established for all migrating birds. He was one of the first to call for federalization.

To be concluded in next issue

Should Bird Protection Laws and their Enforcement be in the Hands of the National Government?

by Otto Widmann.

There are several reasons why the protection of birds should be in the hands of the National Government.

In the first place the law which protects bird life from wanton destruction should be uniform throughout the country, and no state or territory should be without it. As the formulation of the law is a task which requires some knowledge of birds and their habits, and since this knowledge cannot be expected to be possessed by state legislators, the formulating of the law should not be entrusted to state legislatures; liable to commit grave errors. For instance by ~~the substituting~~ the word *Chittenhawk*, instead of *Duck Hawk* or *Peregrine Falcon* the Missouri legislature has sealed the doom of our best ^{nest} destroyers, the Marsh and Rough-legged Hawks and the different Buteos, all of which are universally known by the name of *Chittenhawk*.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

March is a month for patience—Winter is "old hat" by now, but many winter birds are still with us. Spring is exciting and migration is widely anticipated but only the earliest migrants—hummers, swallows, etc.—have arrived, and many migrants are not expected until May. So, we must bide our time.

In the meanwhile, it's our last chance to study the winter birds. Many establish winter territories, just as nesting birds do, and are extremely local. As examples, the COMMON TEAL near Lake Sherwood; the OLDSQUAWS near the Venice or Santa Monica Piers and at Shelter Island in San Diego; the ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and the NORTHERN WATER THRUSH at the south end of the Salton Sea; the VERMILLION FLYCATCHER in Legg Lake Park; the MAC-GILLIVRAY'S WARBLER near Duarte for its second winter; the VIRGINIA'S WARBLER at the Gilbert King's, West Los Angeles; and the LARK BUNTING in Balboa Park, San Diego, all remained at least through January and may well stay into March.

Several observers have commented on the scarcity of Loons, Cormorants and Kittiwakes along our coast this winter. In the case of the Kittiwakes we've been spoiled by two winters of unusual abundance and "scarcity" is normal in our area, but the scarcity of Loons and Cormorants is unusual and possibly alarming, if it indicates a general decline in population. There were other reports of interest along the coast however. The immature FRANKLIN'S GULL was last seen at Malibu on December 30th (Dennis Heineman) but one was seen at King Harbor, Redondo Beach, on January 16th (Jon Dunn and Kim Garrett), and one was found on a golf course near Santa Barbara on the 30th (Richard Webster). From these scattered observations, and the fact that two of them were seen the same day (Nov. 4, 1970), it would appear that at least two individuals wintered in our area. This is particularly noteworthy since I know of no other mid-winter records for this distinctive small gull which normally winters off the west coast of South America.

A Black-legged Kittiwake was with the Franklin's Gull at Malibu, and three or more were at King Harbor in January. These are the best spots in our area to find Kittiwakes. Herb and Olga Clarke and Arnold Small found an immature GLAUCOUS GULL near Morro Rock and a PEREGRINE FALCON north of Santa Barbara on January 17th. This bodes well for the L. A. A. S. field trip to Morro Bay in late February. Elsewhere, one or more LOUISIANA HERONS were reported in December and January in the Seal Beach marshes (Jay Sheppard, Peter Christensen, et al.); an OSPREY was seen near Peter's Canyon

Shumway Suffel

Reservoir, Orange County, on January 2nd (Bruce Broodbooks), and one was at Upper Newport Bay on the 21st (Bob and Elizabeth Copper). These sightings may be of the same individual as these locations are only about ten miles apart. Ed Navajosky, who haunts the Malibu coast, had the unusual experience of seeing five RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS at one time near Paradise Cove on February 1st. He also found a SNOW GOOSE and a CANADA GOOSE at Malibu Lagoon on January 17th. Geese are rare along our coast in modern times, but formerly wintered by the thousands in the grain fields near Inglewood and Santa Ana.

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEES, PURPLE FINCHES, and FOX SPARROWS continued common in the lowlands through January. There is some evidence that PINE SISKINS—30 at U. C. L. A. (Dennis Heineman) and 15 near Santa Barbara (Richard Webster)—and RED CROSSBILLS—25 near Santa Barbara (Richard Webster) and a brick red adult male at Lake Hollywood—are here in greater than usual numbers. A GRAY-HEADED JUNCO was seen on the Salton Sea (south end) count, and another was found in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Hollywood Hills, by Kim Garrett and Jon Dunn on January 16th. It was seen again on February 3rd but is difficult to locate. There were single SLATE-COLORED JUNCOS at Forest Lawn and at Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena, which is not unusual as this junco is not as rare as the "Gray-headed." The latest report of an EASTERN PHOEBE comes from Jerry Tolman who found one near Ramer Lake, Imperial County, on January 2nd. This is probably the same bird reported there in November, although it was not seen there on the intervening Christmas Count.

The Santa Barbara Christmas Count topped all others in California for the first time with 194 species. It will probably be third in the nation after Cocoa, Florida, and Freeport, Texas, tied at 205. Aside from the "bread and butter" birds which are so necessary to make up a large total, they had: a BROWN THRASHER (only report this winter), a BOHEMIAN WAXWING (unreported elsewhere in Southern California), all three JUNCOS, two WARBLING VIREOS (fourth winter

..... page two:
Note: The Suffels plan to be gone in early April, and Jay Sheppard has kindly agreed to write the article for the May Tanager. Please send your observations for March to Jay Sheppard, 4002 Howard Avenue, Apt. 9, Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720, or phone him in the evening at 598-3955.