

Los Angeles Audubon Society

# The Western Tanager

VOLUME 37 1970-71 NUMBER 10 JUNE



## What fate for gymnogyps?

# J RICHARD HILTON

Some fifty or sixty California condors—dying relics of the Pleistocene—are all that remain of North America's largest living land bird. The California condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*, has been traced in ancestry to the extinct teratorns, largest group of flying birds to have evolved. The teratorns failed to survive the Pleistocene when it became increasingly difficult for them to find carcasses of a size or quantity to satisfy their appetites. Teratorns averaged forty and fifty pounds, and it might have been due to the lesser size of the condor that they were able to survive, assuming they did in fact exist during the Pleistocene era. Some say it is only a matter of time before the California condor joins his extinct Pleistocene relatives. They argue the condor was never a very widespread or abundant vulture and that its behavior and life pattern is characteristic of a fragile, ill-adapted bird. Others, more optimistic, say the condor can survive as long as man refrains from disturbing the bird in and around its breeding and foraging grounds.

Although it is doubtful the condor was ever an extremely abundant bird, due to its breeding habits, there is substantial evidence to indicate the California condor at one time inhabited a much greater range than at present, a range which spread throughout the entire southern part of the United States including the more northern California coastal region and Oregon. The California condor's former inland range may have drifted towards the sea with the decline of large Pleistocene mammals—probably about the same time the giant teratorns were becoming extinct. Its

counterpart was, and still is, although also greatly reduced in numbers, the Andean condor, once an inhabitant of the entire South American coast. Along both western seacoasts of the Americas during the early 1800's these carrion birds fed upon whales and fish that had washed up on shore. This is still very much a part of the Andean condor's diet, but the California condor turned inland when horse, sheep and cattle-raising became widespread in the coastal valleys during California's "mission era". Food was more abundant here, and throughout the 1800's condors were readily observed and studied as they foraged over fields and grazing lands.

During the early 1900's grazing and ranch property became subdivided and converted to grain, beans, and orchard fields. The decline of the California condor was heightened due to an increase in shooting and egg collecting. As a result of more observable declines, collecting of the birds and their eggs was officially brought to a halt in the early 1920's. Habitat destruction was not yet a major problem, although development of wilderness land seemed more apparent. The condor's range was still rather widespread, its foraging territory covering much of the entire central and southern part of the state. A major protective area, known as SISQUOC, was established in 1937 in Santa Barbara County. It was the first sanctuary set aside primarily for the protection of nesting, roosting, and resting areas for California condors.

The decline of condors continued and motivated the National Audubon Society to initiate a condor conservation program in

# Condor . . .Continued



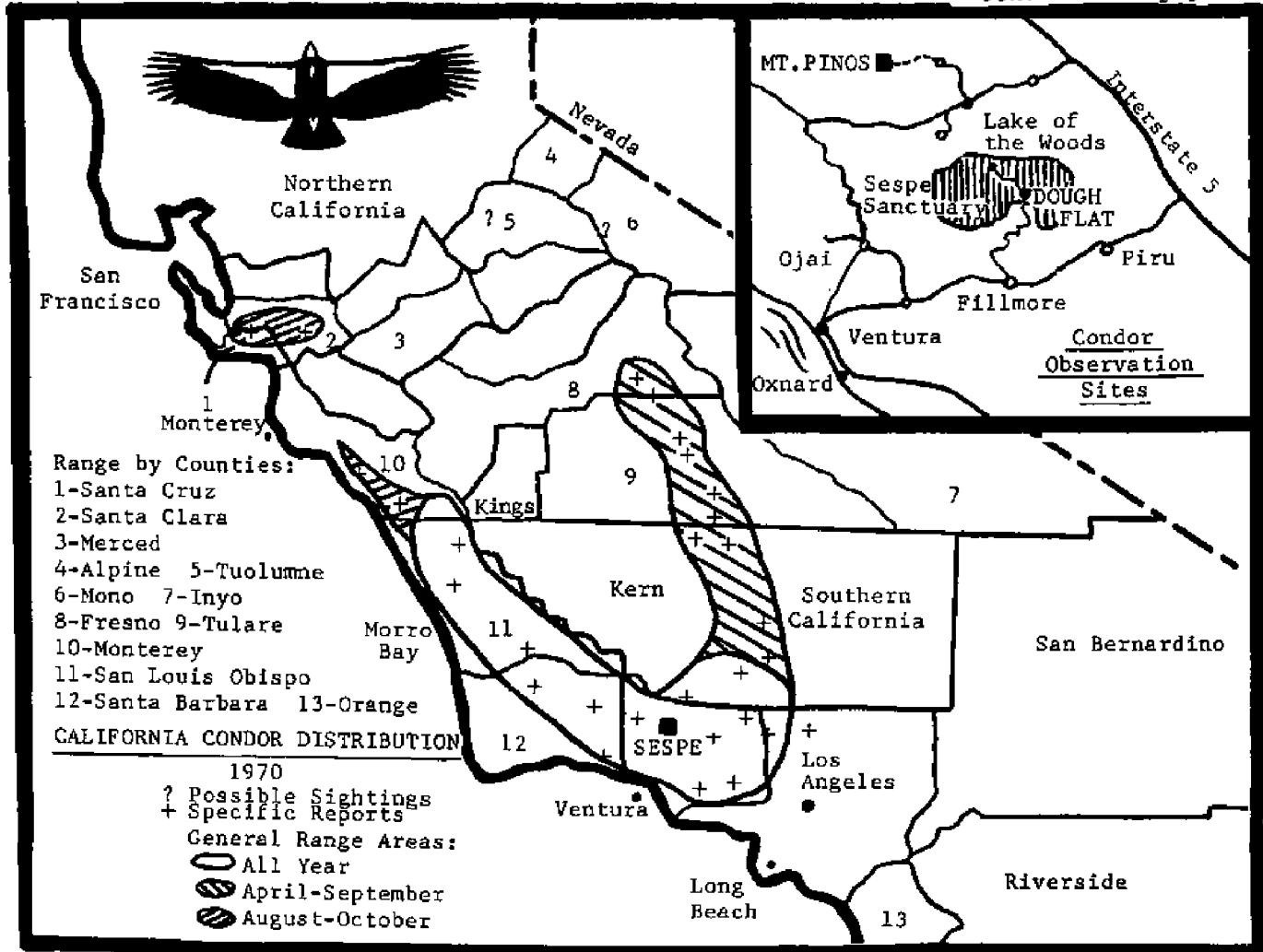
March 1939. Carl Koford headed the study, which he performed within the condor nesting territory of the Los Padres National Forest. In the earlier stages of the study, it focused so much attention on the plight of the condor that during the NATIONAL RESOURCES TREATY of 1942, signed by various members of the Pan American Union, the California condor was listed among those wildlife species whose protection was "declared to be of special urgency and importance". World War II interrupted concrete measures to further protect the condor, and for several years during the War little was known about California condor populations.

In 1946 Carl Koford, back from the service, resumed his studies of the condor and estimated the population in southern California as comprising about sixty birds. His report was not yet complete, though his estimate sparked further action in providing for condor protection when the SESPE WILDLIFE AREA was established by the chief of the Forest Service on November 18, 1947, a far more important sanctuary than the earlier SISQUOC. A Condor Advisory Committee was organized in 1948 yet held its first meeting fifteen years later in 1963. The committee was composed of the U.S.

Forest Service Regional Forester, President of the National Audubon Society and Director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California. The Sespe Refuge was subsequently enlarged upon on November 7, 1951 to comprise a total of some 53,000 acres. The original area of about 35,200 acres, situated within the Los Padres National Forest, was drawn for use as a condor sanctuary on January 16, 1951, by the Secretary of the Interior under public land order 695. The order provided that a portion of the withdrawn land would be available for development and extraction under mineral leasing laws, though leases were subjected to special stipulations imposed by the Secretary of Agriculture with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Interior.

A controversy over condor protection developed in 1950 when the California Fish and Game Commission granted permission to the San Diego Zoo to take two young condors for purposes of propagation. No condor nests could be found outside the Sespe Wildlife Area, and the Forest Service—having jurisdiction inside the Sespe—refused to grant permission to the zoo to collect young birds. In 1952 a new permit was issued to the San Diego Zoo by the Department of Fish

*Continued on page nine*



# *And a little child shall lead us*

By LEWIS GARRETT

Perhaps it was a raucous Scrub Jay which frequented our garden on North Knoll drive in Cahuenga Pass; or a diving Mockingbird protecting its nest; just what it was that attracted our son Kimball when he was six years old to the world of birds we'll never know for sure. But we do know that it changed our life, as well as his.

Until then, like most of our neighbors, a bird was a bird, a flower a flower, and one tree pretty much like the others. But as Kimball's love grew from childish to mature interest, we could hardly help but follow. And slowly, the "nine-tenths of the gallery of nature which had been turned to the wall," to quote Thomas Huxley's famous observation, suddenly turned to reveal not only the birds but the entire world of nature to which we had been blind.

Field guides replaced children's bird books. The family was outfitted with binoculars. Life lists started. None of us could match Kimball, whose list soon passed 300, 400, 500. But our travels now revealed not only the cathedrals of man, the great restaurants and the discoveries of foreign lands, but the flora and fauna of Europe, Canada, the West Indies and all of our own country.

Our library broadened. Formerly stuffed with Californiana, the essays of H. L. Mencken, Sherlockiana and history, we discovered Joseph Wood Krutch, Margaret Miller, the travel books of Mr. Justice Douglass, Edmund Jaeger, John Kiernan and the great and beautiful writings of Edwin Way Teale. A trip through the Gota Canal in Sweden included not only the scenic beauty and fascinating people, but a Great Crested Grebe. We were amazed to find that many of our fellow travelers were birders too, and that their knowledge included expertise on the trees, wildflowers and all of nature, that they were most happy to share with us.

While Kimball's mother and I soon became "listers," we were careful to balance our birding with the other revelations of travel and our watching included the wonders of man (and his depredations) as well as nature.

We know now that without Kimball we would not have had the thrill of our first Bald Eagle on the Everglades, the Streamertail and tamed hummingbirds with the Bird Lady of Anchovy in Jamaica, the Trogon in Madera Canyon, and the fruitless search for a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Goleta, which was more than compensated for by meeting Margaret Millar and her talented husband Ross McDonald, the great writer of detective stories in whose Lew Archer series we keep a list of mentioned birds.

But more than all of the birds on our list, our joy in the study of trees and flowers, and the thrill of discovering a new marvel of nature in a foreign land, is our new awareness and love of our country and all the earth. As Aldo Leopold pointed out, the calls for conservation and editorials on ecology will never succeed without love of the land, "some feeling for, as well as some understanding of, the inclusive community of rocks and soils, plants and animals, of which we are a part." As the late Mr. Krutch stated: "It is not a sentimental, but a grimly literal, fact that unless we share this terrestrial globe with creatures other than ourselves, we shall not be able to live on it for long."

Thanks to that bird which caught young Kimball's attention many years ago, and his revelations to us, we now have that love of our earth. Our fervent hope is that we can pass it along to others, and save our threatened environment.



## BINOCULARS FOR BIRDING

**Depth of focus** is another very important feature of the optics of binoculars to which birders should pay attention. This is the distance between two objects, one behind the plane for which the binoculars happen to be precisely focused, and the other in front, the images of which are acceptably sharp. This means that on raising the glasses to the eye with an approximate focus, birds can be made out if present somewhat nearer or further away. There is nothing more annoying than to raise one's glasses

part 5

at the call of "Hawk!" (on the horizon) to find you have just been looking at a warbler close by, so that everything beyond 20 feet is a complete blur. By the time you have cranked the knob the hawk has long gone.

Some lightweight binoculars need an excessive amount of cranking to go from one end of the range to the other, whereas other makes require very little. This is a very important feature to evaluate for field work, not often realized by birders when they purchase binoculars.

To be continued in another issue



# environment besieged

by  
Kathryn Brooks



## NATIONAL AUDUBON CHALLENGES THE USE-FULNESS OF STREAM CHANNELIZATION PRACTICES AT REPRESENTATIVE REUSS'

**HEARINGS.** "National Audubon's concern with achieving major reform in existing stream channelization policy and philosophy was voiced by Executive Vice President Charles Callison at Rep. Reuss's Conservation and Natural Resources Subcommittee oversight hearings on the problem May 3-4 which are being held to let Congress know of the people's concern. Our Central Midwest Rep. John Franson was there too; he's also been working hard to tell the public that straightening natural streams and rivers into neatly engineered ditches is the wrong way to prevent flood damage and is ecologically harmful as well. Government witnesses will testify in June; we're also pushing for field hearings and additional Washington hearings.

Our theme: "channelization is a little-known and insidious program that is destroying our water quality, our important ecological lowlands and wetlands, fish and wildlife and other life forms. Basically it is a conflicting, confused bureaucratic refusal to recognize a flood plain for what it is." P. L. 566, the present law authorizing channelization projects purports to assure good management of our vital floodplains but in fact does just the opposite.

A few facts: channelization programs are carried out under the Soil Conservation Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation, with the lion's share taken by the SCS. Over one third of the \$19.3 million appropriated to the SCS by Congress for 1971 small watershed construction was for stream channelization alone. Who benefits at the expense of the taxpayer: a small number of farmers. Where: mostly in the midwest and southeastern states. There are a couple of bills now in Congress that would give ecological monitoring to channelization planning; otherwise, there is no real protection against it at this time." (From the Audubon Leader, Volume 12, Number 9, 5-71)



## "PROTECTION FOR SEA MAMMALS.

Legislation has been introduced in the Congress to "protect all ocean mammals from harrassment or slaughter." The sponsors hope other nations would follow suit. S. 1315 by Sen. Fred Harris (H.R. 6554 in the House) would help put an end to the clubbing of seals, shooting of polar bears, and other sport and commercial hunting that has caused wide protest. Killing of all ocean mammals would be prohibited in the United States and its territorial waters, and import of the skins or furs of these species would be banned. There would be exceptions only for scientific purposes and non-profit zoos, and for protection of the tribal rights of the Aleuts, Eskimos and Indians who would be permitted to take such animals (except the polar bear) for their own use, but not for sale. The bill would also designate the Pribilof Islands as a national seal rookery preserve and bird sanctuary." (Audubon Leader, Volume 12, Number 8, 4-71.)



**FREE LEGAL AID** has been offered to environmental groups. Council for Planning and Conservation Member, Attorney Ira Yellin, Chairman of the Environmental Law Committee of the Beverly Hills Bar Association informed Ellen Stern Harris's coalition group that ten volunteers from the Committee are willing and available for consultations at no charge.

# Los Angeles Audubon Society

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

# Calendar



May 23 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Mt. Pinos. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Frazier Park turnoff by restaurant at Shell Station. The Frazier Park turnoff is approximately 2 miles beyond Gorman on Highway 99. This is a good trip for montane species such as Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finch, Calliope Hummers and, possibly, Condors. Call Bob Blackstone for details - 277-0521.

June 3 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m.

June 8 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - "What Bird Is That?" A novel program by Arnold Small which features pictures of North American birds used in an identification game. Come and see how many you know, or don't know.

June 12-13 SATURDAY-SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - Big Bear Lake and vicinity. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the intersection of Division Dr. and Fairway Blvd., between highways 18 and 38 at the east end of Big Bear Lake. Overnight camping available at Hanna Flat Campground (for owling), and early morning trip to Round Valley planned for Sunday to try for the Gray Vireo.  
Leader: Shirley Willis, 831-4281.

June 27 SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP - Buckhorn Flat. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the entrance to campground. Follow Angeles Crest Highway, route 2 (state), from its intersection with Foothill Blvd. in La Canada, about 35 miles to Buckhorn Flat. Good area for resident mountain birds.  
For information call: Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.

July 10 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Mt. Pinos for Condors. There will be no deadline for meeting, as the group will spend most of the day at the summit. Take Interstate 5 north to Frazier Park turnoff about a mile beyond Tejon Summit. Go west through Frazier Park to Lake of the Woods and turn north there to Mt. Pinos. The last 3 miles to the summit are unpaved; this may be driven (with care) or you may leave your car in the parking lot and hike (and bird), to the summit.  
For Information call: Bob Blackstone, 277-0521.

## NOTICE: THE JULY-AUGUST ISSUE OF THE WESTERN TANAGER

Many thanks to you volunteers who have so generously donated your time in furthering the cause! I am most appreciative of your letter writing, booth sitting, collating, mailing, calling, etc.

KATHRYN BROOKS

WILL BE MAILED  
JULY FIFTEENTH.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

## The Western Tanager

Official Publication of the  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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EDITOR  
Assistant Editor  
Field Notes  
Conservation  
Typing  
Mailing Supervision

GILBERT W. KING  
Donald Adams  
Shumway Suffel  
Kathryn Brooks  
Hanna Stadler  
Hans Hjorth

Subscription to The Western Tanager \$3.50 per annum. The Western Tanager is mailed two or three days before the first of the month, fourth class. First-class mailing, \$1.00 extra.

# audubon activities

**FIELD TRIP** - Morongo Valley, April 24-25. More than 50 hardy souls showed up at Covington Park by 8 a.m. Saturday, ignoring the weatherman's threats and braving the big breeze to drive out to the high desert for the day or the weekend. Fortunately, the wind didn't reach the Park until we were all at lunch, and while there were not great quantities of birds, 104 species were seen from dawn to noon at Covington, Morongo and the water hole on the Yucca Valley Golf Course.

Things got off to an auspicious start when a WHITE-WINGED DOVE posed atop a pole so that everyone had a chance to study what was a new bird for some. A pair of BARN OWLS obligingly circled the cottonwood trees several times, and then a RED-SHOULDERED HAWK put on a low level flight display. LUCY'S WARBLER was back at its usual spot near the head of the spring - one of 7 warblers seen.

All six swallows were easy to observe as they insect-hunted low over the pond. They were joined on Sunday morning by both the VAUX and WHITE-THROATED SWIFTS - a rare sight to be looking down on them!

Jay Shepard and a number of other banders were manning a number of nets in the area near the stream below the park, part of Operation Transect which will go on for nine days. Jay gave us some interesting observations on banding, migration dates and patterns, the Nature Conservancy purchase of the streambed area, plus comments on the impossibility of distinguishing between the LADDER-BACKED and NUTTAL'S WOODPECKERS unless one hears their call.

Only a few hardy souls camped at Indian Cove Saturday night, and a few others motored it. It SNOWED! But Sunday morning was again clear and windless, and the total species ran up to 115, including the SUMMER TANAGER which had arrived that day.

George Venatta, leader.

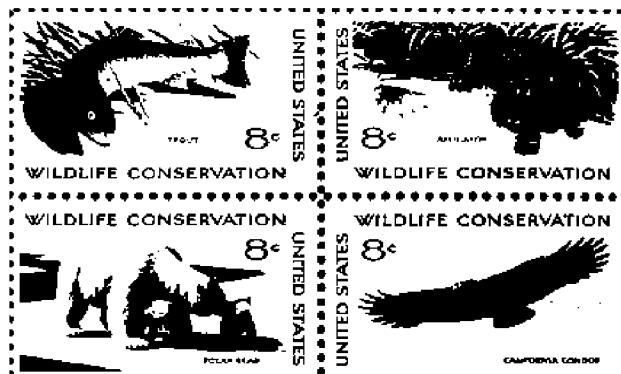
**FIELD TRIP**, Chantry Flat, April 30. It was a beautiful clear day as 32 birders gathered for the spring trip around Chantry Flat and down into Santa Anita Canyon. Everything was ideal except that the spring migrants were a little late. The only warblers seen were AUDUBON'S, BLACK-THROATED GRAY and TOWNSEND'S - the latter by only one person.

However, an OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER was seen and heard conspicuously at several points and excellent views were had of CANYON WRENS and DIPPERS. At least one pair of DIPPERS appeared to be preparing to nest in one of the small dams well below the falls. A total of 39 species was recorded for the trip.

Harold Baxter, leader.

## CONDOR POSTAGE STAMPS

Postmaster General Winton M. Blount made public today designs on the four postage stamps in the Wildlife Conservation Series. The 8-cent stamps will be issued with first-day ceremonies June 12 at Avery Island, Louisiana. This bayou area is farmed as the locale of Longfellow's poem, "Evangeline" and is a sanctuary for more than 10,000 birds, including the egret, which was thus enabled to escape extinction.



A polar bear, a California condor, an alligator and a trout appear on the jumbo-sized horizontal stamps which will be issued in panes of 32. The four subjects appear on the same pane. All but the trout are threatened with extinction, and increased water pollution endangers some of these. Stanley W. Galli, a California artist, whose forte is picturing wildlife, designed the stamps. Stamp collectors voted his 1968 wood ducks stamp the best design of the year. The stamps will be printed in three passes through the offset presses and one through the Giori press. Identification of the modelers and engravers, along with color detail, will be made later.

Collectors desiring first-day cancellations may send addressed envelopes, together with remittance to cover the cost of the stamps to be affixed, to the Postmaster, Avery Island, Louisiana 70513. Personal checks will not be accepted in payment. The outside envelope should be endorsed "First Day Covers Wildlife Conservation Stamps." Orders for covers must not include requests for uncanceled stamps. Cover requests must be postmarked no later than June 12, 1971. Envelopes should be addressed as close to the bottom, left, as possible to allow for the large size stamps. Requests for specific stamps will be honored by the U. S. Postal Service.

To perpetuate the work of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, remember it in your will.



# environment besieged



by  
Kathryn  
Brooks



## DELAYS PLAGUE SAN FRANCISCO REFUGE

PROPOSAL. "Californians and a growing number of concerned Americans from other states have been working since 1968 to preserve three wetland areas along south San Francisco Bay as a National Wildlife Refuge. The open space, recreational, educational and ecological values of the area are threatened by urban encroachment. But a bill to establish the refuge never even got a hearing last session and -- reintroduced this session as H. R. 1111, by Rep. Edwards -- is now still languishing in committee.

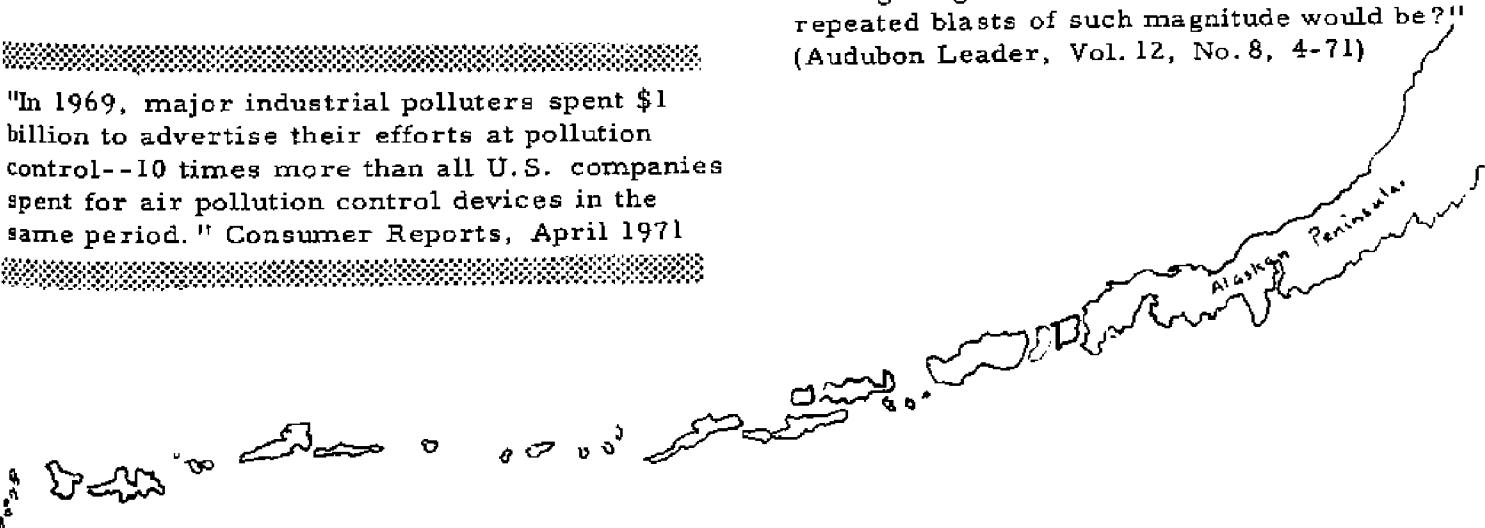
The major snag has been the Interior Department Congressional Committees normally wait to hear the views of the government agencies concerned before calling hearings on a bill, and so far no report on the San Francisco proposal has been sent by Interior. Although Interior's Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife (which would operate the refuge) is enthusiastic, the proposal was also studied by another arm of the Interior, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which was interested because of the large size (22,000 acres) and near urban location of the refuge.

BOR's report was completed shortly before former Secretary Hickel left, and it may now be that the ensuing bureaucratic changeovers have led to re-reviews and are contributing to the delay. Letters to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton could urge him to pry loose a favorable report and get the San Francisco Wildlife Refuge moving." (Audubon Leader, Vol. 12, No. 9, 5-71)

"In 1969, major industrial polluters spent \$1 billion to advertise their efforts at pollution control--10 times more than all U.S. companies spent for air pollution control devices in the same period." Consumer Reports, April 1971

BIGGEST UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR WEAPONS TEST IN HISTORY OF U.S. IS PLANNED FOR AMCHITKA, IN THE ALEUTIANS, IN EARLY OCTOBER. "The Atomic Energy Commission has announced that it plans to explode a nuclear weapon with a force of five millions tons of TNT 6,000 feet underground on Amchitka Island -- in the Aleutian chain off the coast of Alaska -- in early October. This will be the largest underground nuclear test in the history of the United States. Though details are not available, it is understood this will be a test for an enlarged warhead for the Spartan ABM missile. The 1969 underground nuclear test there was conducted to see if still larger tests could be conducted; the AEC has concluded it can safely conduct tests in the area with an explosive force up to a limit of 25 megatons without danger of setting off "serious" secondary earthquakes.

So once again the Federal Government is treating the Aleutian Islands as a deserted and expendable wasteland rather than a valuable natural resource. The test is to be conducted right in the midst of the Aleutian wildlife refuge, home of the sea otter, the puffin, and many other species of wildlife. The National Audubon Society is strongly opposed to the conducting of these nuclear tests, and particularly so in the absence of any public statement or commitment from the AEC of making the fullest possible long-range impact evaluation and specific plans for all necessary environmental precautions and wildlife protection. Does the AEC really know what the long-term geological and environmental impact of repeated blasts of such magnitude would be?" (Audubon Leader, Vol. 12, No. 8, 4-71)



# !announcements!

## Elected and Appointed Officers of L.A.A.S for 1971-1972

At the May 11 Evening Meeting the following officers were elected by the Membership:

### OFFICERS

President	Mr. Herbert Clarke
First Vice President	Mr. Leslie E. Wood
Second Vice President	Dr. Gerald Maisel
Executive Secretary	Mrs. Gilbert W. King
Treasurer	Dr. Moulton K. Johnson
Registrar	Mrs. Moulton K. Johnson
Recording Secretary	Mrs. Gerald Maisel
Junior Past President	Miss Laura Lou Jenner

The elected President appointed the following Chairmen of Standing Committees:

### CHAIRMEN

Finance and Tours	Mr. James Huffman
Program	Mr. Arnold Small
Conservation	Mrs. Eric Brooks
Education	Mrs. Ruth Lohr
Field Trips	Miss Frances Kohn
Sales	Mr. Herbert Clarke
Librarian	Mrs. James Huffman
Social	Mrs. Donald Adams
Publicity	Mr. Robert Copper
Membership	Mr. Eric Brooks
Christmas Count	Mr. Sanford Wohlgemuth
Western Tanager	Mr. Gilbert W. King

## BRITAIN EXPANDS BIRD CHECK LIST

Addition of 5 New Species Brings Number to 469

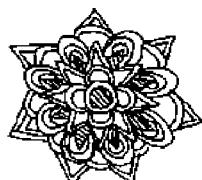
Dispatch of The Times, London

LONDON—The new official check list of British and Irish birds of the British Ornithologists Union stands at 469 species, of which 229 have nested.

The list includes the recent addition of five introduced species now breeding wild in various parts of Britain—the Egyptian goose (especially in Norfolk), Chinese mandarin duck (in Surrey), American ruddy duck (in Shropshire, Staffordshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire), golden pheasant (in Nor-

folk and Suffolk), and Lady Amherst's pheasant (in Bedfordshire).

Two birds, the flamingo and the red-headed bunting, have been deleted from the list, as there is no proof that any bird found in Britain had not escaped from captivity. Three more, Reeve's pheasant (in the Highlands and north Lancashire), Carolina wood-duck and North American bobwhite "quail" (a partridge), which have been introduced to several parts of the country, are still under consideration as possible further additions.



## **Audubon House** Sales Department

Owing to the cutback in staff, we have found it necessary to give up our gift items and are no longer taking orders for Shaklee Products. For the present the sales department will be limited to books, records and small items such as stationery.

We have several new books on the birds of AUSTRALIA: on FLYCATCHERS, WARBLERS and WADERS among others. If you are thinking of joining the Australian Tour in the fall you will want these. For in depth study we now have a very outstanding book on biology: ORNITHOLOGY by PETTINGILL.

By popular request we now have several different types of bird feeders available. These are made to order by two of our members and samples are on view at Audubon House.

### THE BRUNSWICK NEWS

#### Golden Isles Profile

## *Octogenarian Ornithologist Explains Birds' Importance*

By JUDY GILLIES  
News Staff Writer

What's the difference between a *Mimus polyglottis* and a mockingbird?

About the same as the difference between an ornithologist and a bird watcher.

"Bird watching is pretty much a hobby," explains Earle R. Greene, "while ornithology, the study of birds, is a science."

Greene, who at age 84 has seen and studied many birds, simplifies his terms by just referring to himself as a "birder."

Why is studying birds important?

"Well, if anything happened to the birds, you'd die in something like 90 days — eaten by insects. Birds play an important role in our ecology," he explains.

"While bird-watching is a pleasure, it is the scientific aspect of it that is really important," he feels.

"Just recording birds is of little value — this must be followed up by real studies of habits, range, mating, nesting, call notes, song, migration and abundance," he explains.

Born in Atlanta in 1886, Greene has studied natural history — particularly ornithology — since his boyhood.

### Audubon Society Sponsors Talk Next Monday

Russell and Marion Wilson, naturalists and members of the 600 Club for those who have identified 600 or more species of birds, will speak at 8 p.m., Monday, May 10, at the First Federal Savings and Loan Building on St. Simons Island.

The Wilsons have been traveling cross-country for several years in their trailer, speaking and showing slides of scenes from across the United States.

Earle R. Greene, ornithologist, now a St. Simons resident, is a friend of the Wilsons and responsible for their visit here. He recommends their speech to anyone interested in nature, particularly birds.

The Wilsons' speech is being sponsored by the Coastal Georgia Audubon Society.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Birds

Continued from page ten

two near Oceanside (Shum Sufel), and a large "wreck" (flock) of about 800 near San Diego (Guy McCaskie). Although the twelve species of West Coast warblers were reported in large numbers, Jon Dunn believes there were fewer TOWNSEND'S and HERMIT WARBLERS than last year in his part of the San Fernando Valley. Yet he and Kim Garrett report six HERMIT WARBLERS at Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills on May 2nd, which seems like a goodly number for a warbler species which usually makes up the smallest part of any mixed flock. LUCY'S WARBLERS were seen throughout April at Morongo Valley but were not seen there in early May. Jay Sheppard fears that a SCREECH OWL, whose nest is only a few yards from the Lucy's nest, may have had something to do with their disappearance. The only vagrant warbler of the spring to May 10th was an oddly plumaged TENNESSEE WARBLER banded at Morongo on May 7th by Jay Sheppard and Shirley Wells.

Irma Roger's feeder in Monrovia paid off like a Las Vegas slot machine seldom does. On April 12th a HARRIS' SPARROW just moulting into summer plumage arrived—her first rare yard bird, and two days later a brightly plumaged WHITE-THROATED SPARROW joined it. This provided local birders a rare chance to see all four species of Zonotrichia at once, since WHITE-CROWNED and GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS were also present. Take heart feeder watchers—it could happen to us.

Lee Jones, conducting a U. C. L. A. field trip, found an OLIVACEOUS CORMORANT at West Pond above Yuma on April 13th for a first California sighting. Its small size and white facial markings were noted when compared to the DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS which are common there. For several years Peter Christensen has been keeping track of a pair of GOLDEN EAGLES just off the Angeles Crest Road, not too far above La Canada. He found them again this April but noted that they were not nesting at their traditional location. Bruce Broadbooks has made two tries for the ELF OWLS at Cottonwood Springs without success. This is the only known nesting spot west of the Colorado River for this

Continued from page two

and came to trap and cage an adult condor pair. For two years furor over the zoo's condor-trapping plan brewed, until the matter was finally brought to a halt by the California Legislature in 1954.

Audubon Research Report No.4, entitled "The California Condor", was published by the National Audubon Society in 1953. It was the summation of Carl B. Koford's monumental condor study which he began in 1939. The genesis of Koford's

tiniest of all owls. Lew and Kim Garrett, who have recently moved Blue Jay near Lake Arrowhead, found a PYGMY OWL there in mid-April, which they felt was "quite easily seen." Several birders made the attempt but were defeated by the rain and winds. The GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS which have nested for several years on the grassy hillside above Dana Mesa Road, San Juan Capistrano were found again in March by Shirley Wells and were still singing in early May despite a chilling drizzle.

The nesting of mountain birds in the lowlands as cultivation creates a more mountain-like habitat has been the subject of much speculation. The Robins and Band-tailed Pigeons moved down in the thirties, but others were slow to follow. There was a single confirmed nesting (with others suspected) of RED CROSS-BILLS at Palos Verdes four years ago and a few reports of nesting RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES in the pines on Pt. Loma in San Diego recently. Rusty Scalf suspected that RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES were nesting near his Palos Verdes home last year, but was not able to confirm this until he found adults feeding a fledgling this May. A STELLAR'S JAY seen in Brentwood on April 22nd by Pat Andrews again confirms their presence in the lowlands during the nesting season. One wonders how long it will be before the nesting of STELLAR'S JAYS and MOUNTAIN CHICKADEES (another regular lowland visitor) will be similarly confirmed.

June offers many opportunities to be afield. The easiest and most productive trip is a picnic supper above the falls in Santa Anita Canyon for Dippers, Black Swifts and, on the way down, after dark for Spotted Owls. The Arrastrae Creek - Round Valley area, east of Baldwin Lake, requires a long day or pleasant overnight but should produce Gray Vireos and Gray Flycatchers. The Cima-Cedar Canyon area east of Baker is a long trip but the only sure place for Bendire's Thrashers, with Gilded Flickers and late vagrants as possibilities. It's good for the soul and good for your list, so, let's go where the birds are.

study was his belief that a 25% to 30% ratio of young birds to adults was necessary to maintain the condor population.

During the early 60's private interests began to increase in the sanctuary under permits granted by the Forest Service. Land order 695 which provided a portion of the sanctuary available to mineral exploration saw several companies maintaining drilling operations. The Forest Service by 1963 had appointed one of their own men to serve as Condor Warden.

To be continued in the next issue

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

For those birders who feel they can relax now that June is here and migration is over, let me reiterate that while the number of migrants will be way down this month, the quality, for "rare-birders" at least, should be superior. Early June is a time for vagrants—lost birds, disoriented and late, whose instinct drives them on, but fails to keep them on course toward their traditional nesting areas. This is the month when MISSISSIPPI KITES (all three records in early June), SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (at the north end of the Salton Sea), the only WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (at the north end of the Salton Sea), RED-EYED VIREOS (two at Palos Verdes last June), and a host of vagrant warblers (see the July 1970 Tanager) were found in our area. Where should one look for vagrants? They'll be in exactly the same places where migrants were found in April and May—the desert oases, the coastal canyons and suburban parks are good, but the eastern part of our region where water is scarce is even better, and this is the reason that the Colorado River, Death Valley and Deep Springs, to name only a few watering places, are concentration points in the parched desert.

A series of storms in late April and early May with low clouds along the coast and high winds in the desert set the stage for a spectacular spring migration. VAUX'S SWIFTS, in particular, were more conspicuous this spring than at any time in my memory. From the deserts and foothills to the coast they could be found in hundreds—usually mere specks in the sky, but, when the clouds were low, often at eye level and, if one stood still, within arm's reach but much too fast for catching by hand. The banders, however, had the chance of a lifetime. Shirley Wells and Grace Nixon had a houseful of swifts near Palos Verdes. These birds funneled into the chimney of a vacant house every evening, and, since the damper was open, many ended up in the house itself. Although they banded over one hundred swifts, they have no desire to repeat the experience. VAUX'S SWIFTS have tiny legs and feet which makes banding difficult; they are hosts to many unpleasant parasites; and to make a dirty job even dirtier these birds had come down a sooty chimney. At Morongo Valley the banders found that while Swifts and Swallows, because of their keen eyesight and high maneuverability, almost never fly into a fixed net, there is a more active way to catch them. This method consists of rigging the net between two strong poles, laying it flat on the ground in a location where birds are flying, and raising the net quickly into the path of one of these avian projectiles. Then, if the timing is perfect and the swift doesn't bounce out of the net, you have your bird. At the worst, you've

## Shumway Suffel

had a lot of exercise. One such catch, a BARN SWALLOW, is of exceptional interest since this bird was already banded. Very few swallows are banded and these few nearly always as nestlings; and recoveries, except at the nest, are almost unknown; so, information on this recapture is anxiously awaited. We'll try to bring it to you in the September Tanager. BANK SWALLOWS, always difficult to find, were reported in small numbers—a few at the settling ponds north of the Hollywood Hills (Jon Dunn and Kim Garrett), and one at Morongo Valley on the L. A. A. S. field trip (Harold Baxter, et al.).

Swallows have the most extended migration timewise of any local birds, beginning in mid-February and extending well into May. This is largely due to their extensive breeding range which stretches from the tropics to the arctic. As an example, thousands of Violet-green Swallows were migrating along the foothills above Pasadena in early May, bound for their more northerly or mountain nesting areas, at the same time that Cliff Swallows were feeding their nestlings at nearby Devil's Gate dam.

Aside from the above "high in the sky" birds, the migration, with the exception of Raptore, was very satisfactory, particularly in early May. SWAISON'S HAWKS, which formerly migrated through our area in hundreds, are now reported singly if at all. Bruce Broadbooks, David Gaines, Jon Dunn and John Menke found one near Riverside on April 17th and John saw another one in the Antelope Valley the next day. The only report of a PEREGRINE FALCON comes from Ed Masthay, who found one at Lake Sherwood on May 7th. Guy McCaskie found Death Valley rather uninteresting in late April, except that of the twelve male Teal he saw there, six were BLUE-WINGED and six were CINNAMON TEAL. This is an unusually high proportion of Blue-wings, which are considered to be an Eastern species. FRANKLIN'S GULLS were seen at Big Bear Lake on April 15th (Lee Jones) and at Malibu on the 22nd (Abigail King). They are a much handsomer bird in their summer plumage—black head, red bill and rosy pink breast—than the nondescript immature or immatures which wintered along our coast for the first time this year. SOLITARY SANDPIPERs are seldom reported in the spring, but Ron Beck found a single bird near the Porter Ranch in the San Fernando Valley on April 18th. RED PHALAROPES, usually a pelagic species, were found along the coast in late April—two at Malibu and seventeen north of Trancas Beach (Ed Navajosky).