

The Western Tanager

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A word on behalf of the Rare Bird

By Arnold Small

Eshotgun speaks loudly for the bird collector and the advancement of science is his mission, and it is sacrosanct. If a rare bird has the misfortune to stray northward across the Mexican border or perchance to survive a perilous ocean crossing, then its doom is sealed if some members of the "scientific" community learn of its arrival. I should like to speak on behalf of this oppressed minority.

Let me begin my arguments by citing an example. In June, 1971, an interesting gnatcatcher was discovered to be nesting near Sonoita Creek, southeastern Arizona. This gnatcatcher was surmised to be a Black-capped Gnatcatcher—an endemic species to western Mexico, and never before recorded in the United States. The male, with his glossy black cap and large white patches under the tail was quite distinctive (although could not readily be separated from the closely related White-lored Gnatcatcher (that also occurs in Mexico). The female was obviously not a White-lored since only she has the white lores in summer. The word spread quickly, especially to California. Some of us were lucky enough to arrive in the Nogales area in time to see the bird alive. On the day of fledging (there were three young plus an infertile egg) we succeeded by mist net, in capturing the entire family (all five birds). The voices of the adult birds were tape recorded and the nest and infertile egg of the gnatcatcher were obtained. With all of the birds captive now, it was but a simple matter to photograph each individual in the hand while detailed plumage notes and measurements were being taken. The photographs showed both sexes from all aspects and are of excellent quality. It should be mentioned that prior to the mist-netting, extensive field notes were made of the birds by those who first discovered them, and that after capture, measurement, and photography, the five birds were released back into the wild. It would seem that more than enough evidence had been gathered to substantiate their presence and confirm the identification. Unfortunately no. Three days later, ornithologists from the University of Arizona returned to the area and collected the entire family of five birds.

"Why look'st thou so?" With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

- The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Now what was gained and what was lost? The assertion that the Black-capped Gnatcatcher occurred and nested successfully north of the Mexican border could now be made on the basis of the nest, single egg, and the five corpses. But what further *necessary* features were needed that could not be supplied by the field notes, measurements, and photographs? Was the professional reputation of some ornithologists advanced? Did the science of ornithology advance one further micron? Did the stature of the University of Arizona gain by the actions of some of its representatives?

Perhaps for a short while this little group constituted the entire nesting population of this species within the United States. This would classify it as one of the rarest of American birds. We do not know if there are others, but this is of no consequence because *at the time* there were no other known groups. Hence, what might have been a pioneer pair (?) that had almost succeeded in establishing a significant range extension was exterminated before it had a chance to succeed. This incident marks an almost perfect case *against* collecting the rare bird. All of the necessary information pertinent to its positive identity had been secured. Scores of birders were descending upon southeastern Arizona to view it and left disappointed. Arizona, and the entire U. S. lost another potential breeding species.

In this day of ecological awareness and of professing reverence for nature and life itself what right does any individual have to kill a bird of this kind? Does the possession of a valid collecting permit for Arizona give that individual dominion over the birds of that state? If I were to be issued a "bird-watching permit" for Arizona would I have equal rights to view that bird alive rather than executed? The license to kill or capture wild birds for scientific endeavors seems to abrogate the "rights" of birders or even the "rights" of the birds themselves. Would these collectors have taken the last remnants of the Carolina Parakeets or the now biologically extinct California Brown Pelican?

The days of "shotgun ornithology" are past. Great Britain realized this years ago and thus the British Rare Birds Committee was formed and still functions as the final authority for additions to the British list. These additions are primary based upon recognizable photographs and carefully obtained field descriptions. Except for a small number of irresponsible professional and pseudo-professional ornithologists, the tide of opinion in the United States has turned against the collected specimen. With the possible exception of the lone field birder armed with collecting permit and .410 shotgun who encounters a lone individual of undeterminable species, there is no justification any more in the killing of rare birds.

Continued overleaf

Birders are more skillful than ever before, optical equipment is superior to those of the past, cameras and telephoto lenses are almost always available, and tape recorders add a new dimension to crystallizing the identification. In addition to these more practical arguments, there is the subtle questions of public relations and the traditionally good relations between field birders and museum men. These may be jeopardized by the irresponsible actions of a few collectors, who, unfortunately, are often in a position to influence the attitudes and actions of their graduate students

The newer ornithological literature is replete with "professionally accepted" records of such species as the Hook-billed Kite, Berylline Hummingbird, Wandering Albatross, Green Violet-ear, etc., and in each case the birds could very easily have been killed, only to lie in state in some dusty museum tray. Recently an Eastern form of the Whip-poor-will was captured in a mist net on Point Loma near San Diego, California. It was carefully photographed while captive, its racial status was determined (astonishing as it was), and the bird was released. How much easier to have wrung its neck and have your name entered into the history books of scientific ornithology.

To this end the A. B. A. Checklist Committee has organized its subcommittee, **the North American Rare Birds Committee**. By its success and acceptance by the membership of A. B. A. it is hoped that the fate which befell the five Black-capped Gnatcatchers will occur to fewer and fewer rare birds.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

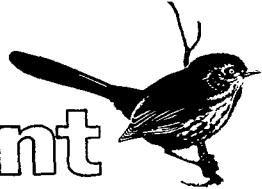
Arnold Small needs no introduction to the readers of *The Western Tanager*, as he is a well known leader of field trips, especially the pelagic ones. He is our Program Chairman for the Evening Meetings, and has given some remarkable lectures himself. He has been President of the Los Angeles Audubon Society three times and was the first editor of *The Western Tanager* in its present form. He is known all over the country, and the world, as a great field ornithologist and authority on Californian birds. The "Annotated Bird-list of Southern California" is still a best seller, as, we hope, his forthcoming book with our President, Herbert Clarke, "Birds of the West" will be. He contributed two chapters to Clin Pettingill's "The Bird-walker's America".

Arnold Small (638) is a charter member and First Vice-President of the American Birding Association, and Chairman of its check-list committee. When not birding he is Professor of Biology at the Los Angeles Harbor College.

Should we all give up and say dooms-day is upon us? NO! We must fight for all life with everything we've got. We must support every aspect of pro-environmental reform and legislation--from population control of the human species, to all constructive anti-pollution efforts, to establishment of new National Parks, Wilderness areas, State parks, etc., to massive support toward every threatened creature and plant, such as the cougar, tule elk, condor, and Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander. We're in a fight for life, are you ready?

Arden H. Brame, Jr.

a message from the president



of the Pasadena Audubon Society

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For my first words as president of Pasadena Audubon, I wish to echo concern for the world's rapidly vanishing plants and wildlife. The May 13th issue of New Scientist and Science Journal published in England includes an article titled "One Flower in Ten Faces Extinction" in which it is stated that 1/10th of the world's flowering plants (angiosperms) are in danger of becoming extinct. That's 20,000 species of plants! It will take the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) ten years to get these 20,000 species of plants documented into their Angiosperm Red Data Book, Vol. 5, and, by that time, who knows how many more plants will be on the brink of oblivion.

I feel that it is worth repeating excerpts from Russ Leadabrand's shocking report of February 18th from the Pasadena Star News: "APPROXIMATELY \$60 million worth of defoliating poison has been dropped on the jungles of Vietnam, previously rich in wildlife." "THERE WERE 40,000 tigers in India in 1930, now there are only about 2,000-2,500. An expert has recently reported that in approximately 3 years time there will be no tigers living in the wild in India." "THE WORLD population of tigers is now about 2,500-3,000. All 7 species are in danger of extinction." "BEFORE the Second World War there were approximately 30,000-40,000 blue whales, now the world total is somewhere between 630 and 1,950." "THE UNITED STATES pet trade is responsible for the killing of probably a half million parrots in the Amazonian basin per year; this provides 10,000 live specimens by the time they arrive in the U.S.A." "TWENTY-FIVE different species of primate will soon be in danger of extinction as a result of the need for providing specimens used in scientific experiments. In 1967, 1,500-2,700 chimpanzees were killed to enable the United States to import 400 of them." "IN CHAD 90 percent of the addax and scimitar-horned oryx have been shot in the past 20 years, mostly by oil men. This represents 10,000 addax and 40,000 oryx." "IN THE United States in 1968 15,236,000 fish died as result of water pollution." "EVERY YEAR in the present century at least one animal has become extinct." TWO HUNDRED SPECIES of animals have disappeared in the last 20 centuries, 38 percent of which have become extinct in the last 50 years." "IF current birth rates trends continue, by the year 2,500 A.D. there will be only one square yard of dry land for every human being." "THE WORLD population increases by 70 million people per year." "IN 1970 the world population was 3.5 billion. By the year 2,000 A.D. it will have doubled." "WORLD Wildlife International recently reported that 200,000 ocelots and 20,000 jaguars were killed annually in the forest areas of South America." "EVERY DAY in the U.S.A. 3,000 acres of land fall to the bulldozer; 1 million acres per year." "SIX MILLION tons of carbon monoxide are emitted by cars every year."

Gymnogyps concluded by J. Richard Hilton

The 70's—WHAT FUTURE FOR THE CALIF. CONDOR?

The condor land rush grew steadily after the Interior Department's Geological Survey reported all sanctuary lands prospectively valuable for oil and gas, though the Bureau of Land Management proposed a ban on mineral leasing in seven earlier-recognized "vital" condor areas. This action was approved by the Secretary of Interior on February 24, 1970, and was a major accomplishment towards condor welfare.

Some twenty-eight lease requests were filed for lands within and adjacent to the condor sanctuary early in 1970, again under protective land loophole 695. Those oil corporations whose intentions were to drill in the sanctuary were snuffed when then Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel declared a moratorium on all drilling in the Sespe Condor Refuge in mid-1970. Meanwhile, a phosphate prospecting permit was issued to the U.S. Gypsum Company for mineral exploration near Pine Mountain in Ventura County. Gypsum's plans were aimed towards a future five-mile-long open pit mine. The proposed operation is located in an important condor foraging area as well as in the Sespe Creek drainage. The Bureau of Land Management makes the decision on mining permit applications, and the Forest Service acts in an advisory capacity to the BLM. Gypsum's prospecting venture—"a valuable discovery"—resulted in an application for a 20-year preference right lease under the proper applicable regulations, and two more prospecting permit applications in the same approximate area. Both applications are pending, say BLM officials.

Hopeful progress towards condor preservation came on February 16, 1971 when Interior Secretary Rogers Morton announced his refusal to extend the U.S. Royalty Oil Corporation's drilling rights within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary. Morton said of the lease which expired January 31, 1971: "We are refusing this request because the California condor, one of our

Save Birds of Prey
SUPPORT H.R. BILL 5821

Book Review

By LEWIS GARRETT

A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS. By James A. Lane (1971). 72 pp. Available at Audubon House. \$2.00

Any birder with a sizable library has his share of beautiful books with color plates and fancy bindings with little to recommend them except esthetics. "Non-books" they are labeled in the trade—great for status and decoration but not much help in finding that wanted bird.

Jim Lane's paperback guides are another story. Jammed with accurate information on the birds of the area covered; where to find them and when. His new guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas is as excellent as his prior books on Southern California and Southeastern Arizona.

My first experience with Jim's Arizona guide was a trip including Patagonia. Following his directions to the letter, we stopped at a small road-side park. There, as described, was a Rose-throated Becard nest, with male and female happily feeding young. A few yards away was a Thick-billed Kingbird as Jim said it would be.

These guides are not only tops for birding, but include hints on places to stay and eat, charts listing birds from "Hard to Miss" to "Forget It." Lists of mammals, amphibians and reptiles; references to other books to read, and an ample index. If you don't get number 600, it isn't Jim's fault.

The new Rio Grande Valley guide carefully documents birding trips in the entire area including Brownsville to El Paso, Edwards Plateau, Big Bend National Park and the Davis and Guadalupe Mountains.

Our only addendum is a hint on eating in Brownsville. Don't. Walk across the bridge to the charming Mexican town of Matamoros. It looks like a below-the-border Beverly Hills. Try eating at the "Drive Inn"—not a drive in as we know them, but a fine restaurant with good food, wine and music. Several other nearby cafes in this beautiful town are worth a try.

Other than that, Mr. Lane has missed nothing.

country's most endangered species of birds, inhabits the Sespe Sanctuary, and there is reason to believe that loud noises associated with drilling inhibit condors from hatching and rearing their young."

Today, the causes of condor declines are few. No longer is shooting a factor—it hasn't been for nearly five years, and there is little proof that the small amount of pesticide and predator-control poisons taken in by adult condors have any serious affect on reproduction. It is evident from the few fledgling condors seen that many

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HUNDREDS OF COYOTES AND EAGLES SHOT
BY HELICOPTER HUNTERS, GRAVES FOUND.

The L. A. Times on August 4 reported that pilot James Vogan said he saw gunners kill 570 eagles on the Wyoming ranch of Herman Werner, and about 200 on other ranches. He testified that hundreds of coyotes were killed also. Federal agents located an underground cache of eagle carcasses on rangeland owned by Mr. Werner. At the time of this writing, the Senate appropriations environmental subcommittee investigation continues.

The July 22 Audubon Leader reported that "Van Irvine, the wealthy Wyoming rancher who was arrested as a result of the eagle poisoning investigation, did not contest the charges brought against him in Justice of the Peace Court #2 in Casper, Wyoming. He was fined \$675.00, the minimum penalty. The small fine is a clear indication of the lack of concern about preserving our national wildlife heritage that still exists in many parts of this country. However, the eagle deaths have also created widespread reaction across the nation, in Congress, and in the Administration. The incident may turn out to be the best opportunity conservationists have ever had to rally public opinion for reform of the predator control program and pesticide regulation, and strengthening wildlife protection laws.

Irvine, a force in local politics, pleaded nolo contendere to 29 counts of violations of state game laws concerning eight antelopes he shot, poisoned with thallium sulfate and set out as bait. (It was the same type of poison that caused the death of 22 eagles found dead in the area by Murie Audubon Society searchers, but because authorities could not present legal proof that it was eagles Irvine intended to kill--rather than coyotes--he was not charged under the federal law that authorizes far more severe penalties for willful killing of eagles.)

Said Prosecutor John Burk in a post-trial press conference: 'I admire and respect Irvine for accepting full responsibility. . . predator losses are a problem. . . and predator control is more important than the loss of a few eagles.' Irvine went on to say that government predator control programs are not effective enough and that he was therefore entitled to and in fact driven to take extra measures."

Additional sad and disturbing information came forth in the Congressional Record of Thursday, July 8, 1971, when Representative Glenn Anderson cited facts and figures to explain the need for H. R. 9668, Predator Control and Protection Act, which would stop the use of strichnine, thallium, or compound 1080 on public land. On page E7511, "Presently, the Department of Interior--through its Division of Wildlife Services--distributes enough poison 1080 bait to kill 73.4 million coyotes. Last year, the Department distributed enough 1080 bait to kill every coyote in an area covering 388,800 square miles, or an area larger than the entire States of California, Colorado, and Idaho. . . In addition to the 1080 bait, the Department placed 822,043 strichnine baits last year." The Department's own figures for fiscal year 1970 are reported, "73,093 dead coyotes were discovered, autopsied, and credited to the Department of Interior; 8,403 bobcats were killed under their supervision; 121 mountain lions were killed under Interior programs, and 403 black bears were killed. . ." These were only the ones discovered. The Dept. is not alone in killing. "Total sales of 1080 in the United States over the past 3 years have averaged approximately 2,600 pounds annually."*

The use of these poisons results in the death of endangered species. The poisoning program is more expensive, more destructive, and less efficient. Also on E7511 of the Record, "According to the League of Conservation Voters: 'Kansas and Missouri have programs to teach farmers and ranchers to trap the specific animal doing the damage, and these programs have proved more effective and less costly than efforts to wipe out an entire species. Predator losses in Missouri have been cut 80% since this program began, but cost only 5% as much as the Division of Wildlife Services program in Oklahoma.' "

YOU can help correct this situation. Write to your representative in Washington urging support of H. R. 9668. It specifies that the regional offices of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife shall provide advice and demonstrations to State-employed specialists in methods of instructing farmers and ranchers in techniques of preventing depredations and trapping individual mammals causing depredation. The poisons would be prohibited unless the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator deemed it necessary for an individual case, such as a rabid coyote.

More on page seven

*"24 pounds of 1080 diluted in bait is sufficient to kill 73.4 million coyotes."

Los Angeles Audubon Society

Calendar

HEADQUARTERS, LIBRARY AND NATURE MUSEUM LOCATED AT AUDUBON HOUSE
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Mrs. Abigail King, Executive Secretary
700 Halliday Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90049

**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**



Sept. 4 SATURDAY - PELAGIC BIRD TRIP - We are again chartering the research vessel "Vantuna," which will depart from San Pedro early in the morning for a 12-hour cruise out to sea to find and observe pelagic birds. Departure time, directions to "Vantuna's" berth, etc. will be sent along with confirmation of reservations. Reservations will be strictly limited to 30. Deadline for reservations will be August 30. Fare of \$15 should accompany your reservation.

Checks should be made payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society
Send reservations to: Joann Gabbard, 823 19th Street Apt. D, Santa Monica, CA 90403, telephone: 395-1911

Sept. 11 SATURDAY - FIELD TRIP - Mouth of the Santa Clara River. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in parking lot of the Colony Kitchen Ventura. Take Ventura Freeway to Ventura. Exit via Seaward Avenue off-ramp and follow Seaward Avenue in the direction of the beach. Trip should be good for shore-birds and other early migrants. Warren Blazer, leader. telephone 272-8598

Sept. 14 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - Dr. George A. Bartholomew, Chairman, Dept. of Biology, UCLA, who spent parts of 3 years in the Galapagos Islands filming the extraordinary life on Darwin's "Enchanted Isles" will show two of his sound films in color, THE GALAPAGOS and THE FLIGHTLESS CORMORANT OF THE GALAPAGOS. Should be a "good shew."

Sept. 25 SATURDAY - MONTEREY PELAGIC TRIP - 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Fare, \$8.00 per person. Reservations may be made by sending a check payable to Valeria G. DaCosta, 2090 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109. PLEASE ENCLOSE STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE to receive confirmation of reservations. Please list the names and addresses of each person in your party. Reservations close Sept. 15, or earlier if boats are filled.

The open ocean can be cold and rough, so be sure to bring along plenty of warm clothing, including head wear, rain gear and waterproof shoes.

Birds seen off Monterey at this time of year include: Black-footed Albatross; Pink-footed, New Zealand and Sooty Shearwater; Ashy and Black Petrel; Pomarine and Parasitic Jaeger, and Skua; Sabine's Gull; Artic Tern; Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot and Xantus' Murrelet. Both Fork-tailed and Wilson's Petrels have been seen regularly here in recent years. Marine mammals are an added attraction in this area.

Sept. 25 ALTERNATE TRIP - CABRILLO BEACH - 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Meet at Harbor Lake parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Take Harbor Freeway to Anaheim off-ramp, enter parking lot from Anaheim Street near Vermont. Will probably go to Averill Park and Point Fermin to look for vagrant fall warblers. Shirley Wells, leader. telephone 831-4281

Oct. 2 SATURDAY - TIJUANA RIVER BOTTOM - Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Oscar's Restaurant on Palm Avenue in Imperial Beach. This is reached by going south on Route 5 to the Imperial Beach turnoff, which is Palm Avenue, and proceed 3/4 of a mile to the restaurant which is on the right hand side of the street. We hope to see rare migrants. Otto Widman, leader. telephone 221-8973

Note: Because of the large number of birders in recent years, some private lands and ranches are now closed to birders. Please observe posted areas. Birders who remain in the area for a second day are expected to schedule their own activities.

Oct. 9 SATURDAY - 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.

Oct. 31 SUNDAY - NEWPORT BACK BAY - repeat of Oct. 9 trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Golden West Ponds. Leader: Irwin Woldman, telephone 346-9226

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

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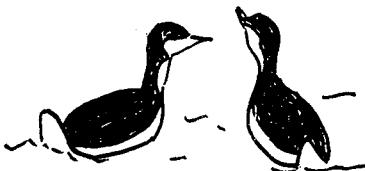
audubon activities

PELAGIC TRIP TO SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND, July 17.

 Pelagic trips continue to be unpredictable. This one was a great disappointment to those who went to see the Red-billed Tropicbird, reported several weeks earlier. The first thirty miles were dull, the only bird being the Heermann's Gull. Pierre DeVillers pointed out the white tips to the feathers of the first-year birds. Single Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklet were seen in the second half, but the big surprise, for this time of year, was a Fulmar seen close to the boat. A Black-footed Albatross following a small freighter was a new bird to some visitors from the East. About 40 Black Petrels were seen, and a hundred or so Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters.

The return journey was enlivened by flocks of ten to twenty Northern Phalaropes, and by four Sabine's Gulls.

During the trip, Pierre DeVillers explained the "Xantus' Murrelet" complex, with a photograph showing the different markings of the true Xantus' (*Endomychura hypoleuca*) found principally in the Pribiloff's; the Scripps' Xantus' (*E. h. scrippsei*) which is now considered a subspecies, the usual bird found off California; and the Craveri's (*E. craveri*), considered to be a full species in the 1957 AOL Checklist. One well-marked pair of Craveri's were seen close by, to illustrate the point, and later the Scripps' Xantus' were seen.



UPPER NEWPORT BAY NEEDS LETTERS NOW.

The battle continues, with the Irvine Co. still trying to decide the fate of the Upper Bay. As a concerned citizen, write to Secretary of the Interior, Rogers B. Morton (Washington D.C. 20240) and tell him that the establishment of the bay as a wildlife refuge is essential for the preservation of thousands of resident and migrant water and land birds, in addition to the ecological community itself. The Resources Agency of California proclaimed in their report of March 1970 that "Upper Newport Bay is without doubt the most outstanding example of a relatively natural estuary in southern California; in fact, in the area it is one of the few remaining examples of this type habitat... The bay forms a vital link in the ecological system of southern California, especially for marine fish and wildlife. With the continued thrust of urbanization, which al-

Increase in Number of LAAS Field Trips

In the last few years there has been a marked increase in the number of members attending field trips. While this is encouraging from an ecological viewpoint, it is also obvious that too many people in the same place at the same time make for confusion and poor birding. Increasingly, birding groups previously allowed access to private lands are being denied because of the large number of persons involved.

Consequently, we are attempting during the coming year to schedule more trips, and when possible, to schedule two trips on the same day to different areas. The success of the maneuver depends upon the recruiting of sufficient leaders.

A field trip leader should consider himself as "manager" of the trip whose responsibility it is to organize the activity of the day. He need not be an expert birder as there are usually several experienced birders on the trip who can assist the leader in making identifications and helping new birders. Such experienced persons attending field trips are encouraged to offer their services to the leader who can identify them to the group at large. A guide for trip leaders is being prepared with suggestions which will make the task easier. Or, if necessary, the Society is prepared to reimburse trip leaders' travel costs. Expenses incurred in leading an official field trip of the Los Angeles Audubon Society are tax deductible.

On all field trips lasting more than one day, the trip leader will be responsible for managing the first day of the trip and the second day if so stated in the announcement in *The Western Tanager*.

Trip leaders will be asked to complete a trip check list together with a brief statement regarding the overall conditions of the trip (availability of birds, weather, etc.) and mention of any unusual species seen.

There are some regularly scheduled trips to areas of special interest, for example, to Morongo Valley in spring migration and to Carrizo Plains in early December, and these will be continued. Beyond a certain number of trips, it is hoped that leaders will suggest new trip areas to locations they personally enjoy visiting and would be willing to share with other members. As an inducement to leaders, a few special field trips for leaders only will be arranged to selected areas not available without special permit.


ready has resulted in the loss of most estuarine habitat in southern California, the role of Upper Newport Bay is becoming extremely important. . . At the start of this century, there were 28 sizeable estuaries in southern California. . . over 60% of such estuarine areas already have been destroyed." The bay plays many ecological roles. It contains specialized fauna and flora, a wide variety of plants and marine invertebrates vital links in the food chain of "higher" animals.

A World Without Birds?

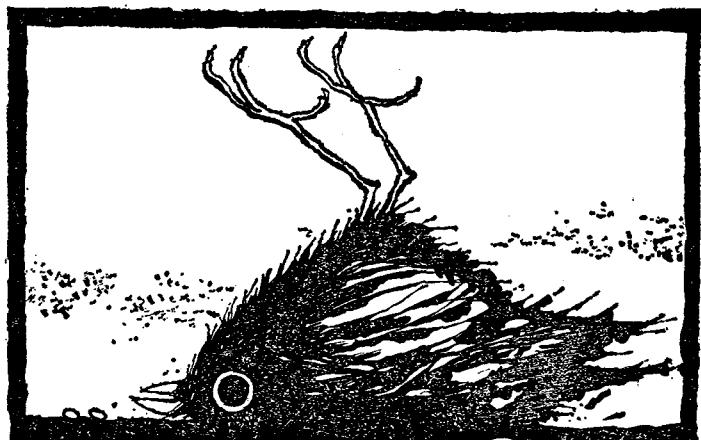
By THOMAS C. SOUTHERLAND Jr.

PRINCETON, N. J.—When people who know I am hooked on conservation ask me the familiar question, "What's more important—birds or peoples?" I am tempted to reply, "birds." As I know such a response never converts anyone, I try to convince them it is not an "either/or" situation, that there is plenty of room for both if we only cared enough to save them. It is sad that as a nation we have not cared enough.

During the last century, we literally shot the heavily populated passenger pigeon into extinction. We did the same thing to our country's only member of the parrot family, the beautiful Carolina parakeet. We exterminated the Labrador duck, the heath hen, the Great Plains wolf, great auk, the sea mink, and Stellar's sea cow.

Today a number of other species hang by a thread (over 200 are listed as rare or endangered in the Interior Department's Red Book) and these include the Everglades kite, whooping crane, golden-cheeked warbler, California condor, mountain lion and timber wolf, to name a few. The American bison, trumpeter swan, alligator and sea otter may have been saved at the eleventh hour, but one is still not optimistic. It may already be too late for the Eskimo curlew, the ivory-billed woodpecker, and the black-footed ferret.

Many states still place a bounty on the mountain lion and coyote. Minnesota paid \$350 for seven bountied timber wolves suspected of killing a goat valued at \$15. (In Ontario 1,551 were killed for bounties last year). The grizzly bear may be the state



Ewert Karlsson

animal of California but it can only be seen there imprisoned in a zoo. The polar bear (last spring at least 100 were shot illegally), the wolf, the Alaskan brown bear are still hunted by airplane until the poor beasts, terrified with fright and with no place on the empty tundra to hide, fall from utter exhaustion where they are then shot by the "sportsmen." Yet Congress was unable to pass proposed legislation last year to outlaw such criminal hunting by airplane.

Modern technology has produced an enormously efficient, persistent, nonselective weapon in DDT—which, as most everyone knows, endangers the bald eagle, osprey and peregrine falcon (the world's fastest bird). What is not so well known is that many other birds are also threatened. Although the brown pelican is the Louisiana state bird, it has disappeared

from that state and is fast decreasing in California. Last spring in Florida where the pelican population has been rather stable, the first thin-shelled eggs were found. In Utah, thin eggs were responsible for the "crash" in one year of the white-faced ibis, from 5,200 to 900 birds. What may be even more ominous is that cracked eggs have been found in the nests of herring gulls at Ontario and this is the gull commonly seen along East Coast beaches.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and nine Southeastern states are planning a \$200-million twelve-year program to spread a persistent chlorinated hydrocarbon, Mirex, to eradicate the fire ant. The program is to be carried out despite previous criticisms from former Interior Secretary Hickel and complaints from the Florida pollution-control director that Mirex will have

a devastating effect on crustaceans in the Gulf of Mexico.

The needless destruction of animal habitat such as the draining of marshes, the cutting of virgin forests, the destruction of our prairie grasslands, and a pipeline on the Alaskan tundra must nearly equal pesticides as the greatest threat to animal life.

I refuse to accept the premise that man's dominion "over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and upon every living thing that moveth upon the earth" means we have a license to exterminate them. Saving them, on the other hand, would reflect well on our civilization and on our humanness. But are we human enough?

Perhaps the sensitivity of many human beings to nature can be an early warning system. Organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, the National Audubon Society, Friends of Animals, Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth are voices of conscience trying to be heard. Animals can't vote, so only a few mild laws have been written, and there has been no real support in Congress or state governments for animal protection. In my own state of New Jersey a municipality cannot ban hunting within its own boundaries—that is the state's prerogative and the state doesn't exercise it—and children 14 and under can set torturous animal traps without a license. Most bills on saving wildlife end up in committee.

Thomas C. Southerland Jr., an administrator at Princeton, is chairman of the South Jersey Group of the Sierra Club.

MORTON WILL APPROVE ALASKAN PIPELINE UNLESS PUBLIC CRY OUT AGAINST

Congressman Les Aspin wrote a very disturbing article for the June 1971 Sierra Club Bulletin.

". . . the effectiveness of one of the best anti-pollution laws passed by Congress. . . is in jeopardy of being subverted by bureaucratic slight-of-hand . . ." He reports that the Interior Dept's draft impact statement was inadequate, that the amount of influence over government policies by the oil companies is incredible, that Secretary Morton has already approved the pipeline, despite the native land claims, but is holding off announcement and go-ahead to appease conservationists into thinking a reevaluation is really being done.

". . . if the pipeline were not built for a long while it would not affect in any significant way the national security of the United States."

Congressman Aspin points out that "it is not within the competence of Interior to intelligently evaluate the national security argument," and that such assumptions included in the impact

statement were not appropriate nor helpful. Congressman Aspin claims that "the impact statement's projection for a 4 percent growth rate, on which its national security argument is based, is economically, factually, and objectively wrong."

A New York Times article, June 27, 1971 supports some of the ideas expressed by Congressman Aspin, "In Anchorage, the Secretary told a civic luncheon attended by 600 people, 'It seems perfectly compatible to me that here, in this great land, known for its beauty, vastness, and tenderness, should be the place where man decides to put the biggest proposition that he's ever put at one time on the crust of the earth—namely, a 48-inch pipeline across this state.'"

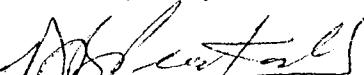
What to do? Write your Congressman, the President, Secretary Rogers Morton. It is imperative that a "sound impact statement be prepared, that land planning of the state is a prerequisite to granting any permits, that alternative plans must be fully explored.

Announcements

NORTH AMERICAN NEST - RECORD CARD PROGRAM
 CORNELL LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY
 159 SAPSUCKER WOODS ROAD
 ITHACA, NEW YORK 14850

At the top of the aquatic food-chain, the Great Blue Heron may well be an important indicator species. The Laboratory of Ornithology is planning a nation-wide survey of this species. The first step will be to compile an inventory of heronries. To this end, we appeal to all readers with knowledge on this point to write to us. Information may be recent or old; detailed or sketchy. Even "I remember seeing a heronry as a boy" is helpful if the site is remembered well enough to locate on a topographic map. We hope that this inventory will contain the exact locality of the heronry, a general description of the site, and as much history as possible. We hope that this stage of the program can be completed by the winter so that arrangements can be made for census work in the 1972 breeding season.

Sincerely yours,


 David B. Peakall, Ph.D.
 Senior Research Associate



BINOCULARS FOR BIRDING

Collimation is the act of orienting all the components relative to an *optic axis*, which is the line along which a ray from the center of the object field travels. The optic axes of the two telescopes in binoculars must be parallel to within the acuity of the eye, for although the two eyes can adapt to considerable lack of parallelism, they are subject to unconscious strain during a day's field

Audubon House Sales Department

SALES DEPARTMENT NEWS

Recent additions to the shelves are the Field List of the Birds of Maryland by Robbins and Velzen and the Check-List of Birds of New Mexico by J. P. Hubbard.

For those of you who are hoping to find cooler weather "East of the Mississippi" we strongly recommend Pettingill's A Guide to Bird Finding for that area.

For the ardent back yard bird feeder, our sales department has just received a number of custom made birdseed feeders, built and designed by one of our long time members, Earl Mahaffie which are guaranteed to rapidly increase anyone's "house list". These are in addition to our hummingbird feeders which include both the Tucker feeder and those constructed by Maurice Alvey, another well-known member.



Proposal to Hunt the White Ibis Stirs Louisiana

Bird Is Called Harmful to the State's Crayfish Farmers

By ROY REED

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, July 4—The Louisiana Legislature last year designated the white ibis as a game bird and instructed the State Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to open a hunting season for it.

The commission, which seems to have mixed feelings about permitting hunters to kill one of the nation's most elegant wading birds, has not gotten around to doing so.

But pressure is being applied this summer and the commission's staff is beginning a study of the bird's habitat, nesting periods, feeding habits, mortality rates, population and other information that the commission believes it needs to set a hunting season.



National Audubon Society/
 Allan D. Cruickshank
 A white ibis

Plan of Legislature Assailed by Conservation Groups

The Legislature designated it a game bird to try to protect crayfish farmers. The mud-burrowing crustacean has always been a popular south Louisiana food and in recent years farmers have found it profitable to raise crayfish commercially.

"Why should they shoot a bird that belongs to all America?" Robert Boardman, Audubon's public information director, demanded.

The Sierra Club's Delta chapter, which covers Louisiana, is urging the commission not to permit the bird to be hunted. Elvis J. Stahr, Audubon president, said in a recent letter to the commission that hunting the ibis would be an affront to the public.

Bird for 'All America'

Rural residents of Florida and south Louisiana have killed the ibis for food in the past. Mr. Boardman, interviewed by telephone in New York, said, "I am told, unfortunately, that it does taste good."

part 6

work. Lack of parallelism can be caused by poor manufacturing or by dropping and loosening a prism, so tests should be applied on purchase and periodically thereafter.

The parallelism of the two telescopes can be tested by looking at a horizontal straight line such as the edge of a roof. On moving the binoculars away from the eyes the two images can be seen separated. Throughout this motion the images of the horizontal edges should stay parallel.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Continued from page ten

Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, Lark Sparrows etc. and for some shore and water birds in the channel itself.

Despite the very dry summer, most birds nested successfully, at least in urban areas and mountains where some water was available. The best find of the summer was a pair of HEPATIC TANAGERS in the Ponderosa pines along Arrastre Creek, east of Baldwin Lake, discovered by Kim Garrett and John Menke on July 11th and seen several times during the next two weeks. This is the same general area where male "Hepatics" were seen in late May of 1968 and '69. Since the habitat is similar to the lower part of their nesting range in Arizona, nesting is a possibility. Rusty Scaf reported a male EASTERN BLUE-BIRD (and furnished a detailed description) on the desert slope of the San Gabriel Mts. on June 14th. This species occurs in Arizona, but there are no verified records for California. After all, WHIP-POOR-WILLS of the Arizona race are now found every summer in the San Jacinto Mts. and were heard calling near Julian in San Diego Co. this July by David Gaines. They were unknown in California before 1968, but had probably nested in the mountains for several years before being detected.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER is another mountain species which is not known to nest south of the Sierra Nevada, yet Shirley Wells has found them for several summers in the San Bernardino Mts. at Green Valley Campground. This July she banded four breeding condition males there, but so far no nest has been found. NASHVILLE WARBLERS are also good prospects for nesting in our mountains, and HERMIT WARBLERS are possibilities. Shirley also reports a male BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD which she saw and, more important, heard on the north slope of the San Bernardino Mts. on June 11th. This Rocky Mountain hummer nests in the White and Panamint Mountains, along the Nevada border, and, if nesting is ever proved in Southern California, it would probably be on the desert side of the mountains. An unusual sight at nearby Baldwin Lake was the more than two hundred RED GREBE nests, built by the birds with mud and debris like tiny islands in the shallow water.

gymnogyps? concluded from page three

adults within the population choose not to reproduce. Are these adult condors made sterile as a result of poisons digested from carcasses?

The eventual fate of fifty or sixty remaining California condors rests largely in the hands of mineral and oil corporations, land developers, and government agencies having jurisdiction over land

Southeastern Arizona had more than its share of rare birds, mostly wanderers from northern Mexico. A pair of BLACK-CAPPED GNATCATCHERS nested and hatched three nestlings for a first U.S. record. A male YELLOW GROSBEAK along Sonoita Creek was seen by birders from both coasts, but may have been an escapee as they are kept as cage-birds in Mexico. Two BERYLLINE HUMMING-BIRDS visited a feeder in Cave Creek, Chiricahua Mts. a few weeks apart in July, for the 2nd and 3rd U.S. records. The FIVE-STRIPED SPARROWS nested along Sonoita Creek for the third time since their discovery there in 1969. Finally, there was an unverified report of a BLACK-VENTED (WAGLER'S) ORIOLE in Cave Creek. The only other U.S. record was the much publicized oriole which spent several summers in Big Bend National Park, Texas.

Since September, in our area, is just an extension of summer, climatically, most of our summer visitors remain until the cooler weather in October, but their numbers are supplemented by migrants from the north and from the mountains. Many of these birds are in unfamiliar immature or winter plumage and can be difficult to identify. It is advisable to study in advance the fall plumage of the warblers, vireos, flycatchers and other "hard to identify" species, but once in the field write a description first and do your book work later. This procedure tends to encourage a thorough inspection of these difficult birds, including details - which may prove diagnostic later, and to discourage the difference between what we remember (or when you're my age "what we think we remember") about the bird and what the book says about the bird we think it might be (or worse yet, hope it might be). And there endeth the lesson - an annual one in this column which cannot be repeated too often.

For September birding stay along the coast: the coastal canyons and promontories with water and trees attract migrants and vagrants; the marshes and mudflats from Ventura to the Mexican border will be swarming with shore birds; and the deserts are hot and relatively less attractive birdwise in the fall, except for the Salton Sea which has rare birds even in September.

management in the Los Padres National Forest. The majority of condors nest within the 1,200-acre Sespe Sanctuary, and it is therefore vital that this area and bordering terrain be sealed from recreational and industrial encroachment.

Gymnogyps californianus, although guilty of nothing, is like a condemned man whose very existence rests in the hands of another. Man alone must decide whether it will be life or death for the California condor. - The End



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Shumway Suffel

September promises increased activity in the bird world, as the passerine migration builds to a peak in the latter part of the month, with most water birds arriving later in the fall. The shore birds have been here since early July, as they are the earliest of migrants. Guy McCaskie points out that migrant shore birds are still going north in late May and are coming south in early July, thus leaving June as the only month when we can say they are truly "summering" here, and these few birds are non-breeders - either immatures or retarded birds still in winter plumage. The small "peeps" - Westerns and Leasts - are almost unknown in June, but the larger waders - Godwits, Willets and Plovers - are present throughout the year with a minimum population of non-breeders in June. One of the earlier and rarer "peeps" is the BAIRD'S SANDPIPER. Alice Fries and Shirley Wells gave us our first report on July 16th near Oceanside, and Hank Brodkin found two BAIRD'S on July 31st at the south end of the Salton Sea. They are not as rare east of the mountains and several usually can be found in the shallow ponds of the Owen's Valley in late August and early September. Another early migrant is the SOLITARY SANDPIPER, but the only report to early August was of one seen at Playa del Rey on July 20th by Hank Brodkin. Baird's, Solitary and Pectoral Sandpipers should be looked for this September in flooded fields and grassy areas.

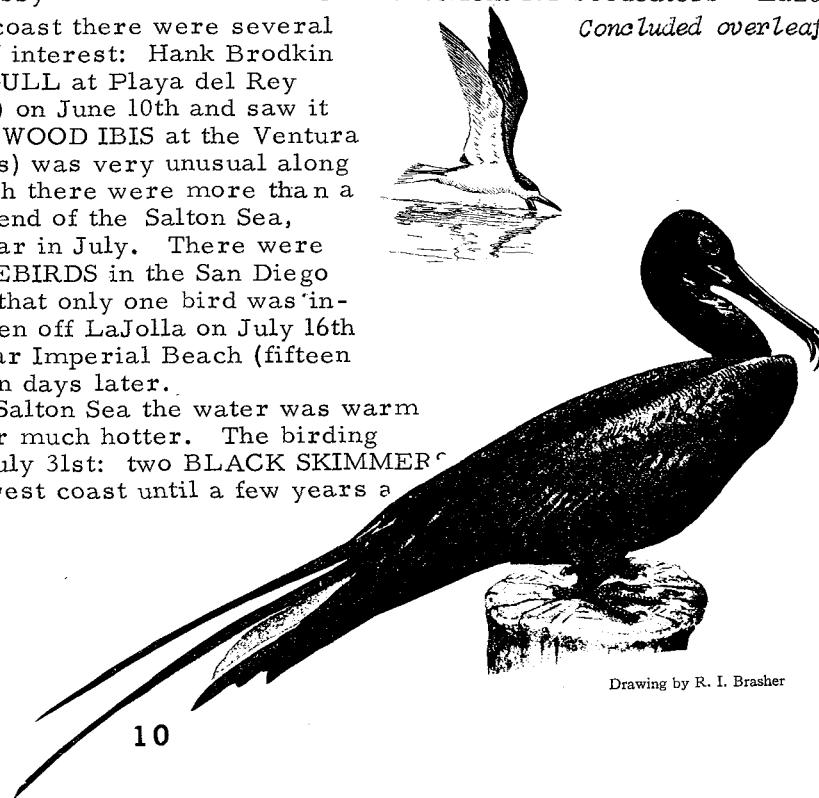
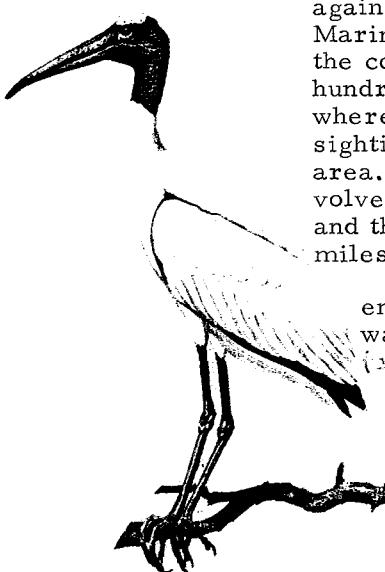
Along the coast there were several other observations of interest: Hank Brodkin found a LAUGHING GULL at Playa del Rey (where they are rare) on June 10th and saw it again on the 21st. A WOOD IBIS at the Ventura Marina (Ernie Abeles) was very unusual along the coast, even though there were more than a hundred at the south end of the Salton Sea, where they are regular in July. There were sightings of FRIGATEBIRDS in the San Diego area. It is possible that only one bird was involved as one was seen off LaJolla on July 16th and the other was near Imperial Beach (fifteen miles south) about ten days later.

At the Salton Sea the water was warm enough and the air much hotter. The birding was also hot on July 31st: two BLACK SKIMMERS unknown on the west coast until a few years a

were the prize of the Day (Bruce Broadbooks); four FRANKLIN'S GULLS were nearby at the north end of the Sea; a concentration of thousands of gulls, terns and shorebirds in a newly flooded field at the south end contained at least 300 LAUGHING GULLS - an unprecedented number for California (Ernie Abeles et al.); ten STILT SANDPIPERs near Rock Hill were early; and FULVOUS TREE DUCKS were seen at several places, including a flock of twenty-seven at Unit #1 of the Salton Sea Refuge.

After a late spring migration, with migrant passersines present until mid-June, it was not surprising that a few stragglers were found through July. Shirley Wells had a female BLACKPOLL WARBLER in her San Pedro garden on June 28th, but was unable to entice it into her nets. About two weeks later she heard a vireo in the shrubbery, but it remained a mystery bird until the next morning when Jay Shepard saw it "eye to eye" at ten feet - a rare RED-EYED VIREO. On July 19th Grace Nixon caught a male INDIGO BUNTING in the nets at her new home in Rolling Hills, on the Palos Verdes peninsula. Another male "INDIGO", in perfect plumage, was singing persistently in the sun flowers along the Los Angeles River channel in Encino on August 3rd (John Menke and Kim Garrett). This spot, north of the San Diego Freeway and east of Balboa Blvd. along the channel is excellent for seedeaters - Lazuli

Concluded overleaf



Drawing by R. I. Brasher