

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 38 · 1971-72 · № 2 OCTOBER

Five Years in a Box by Russell Wilson

TO many of our friends our travel trailer looks like a box, a box on wheels, and they probably think of us as being boxed in, with our lives much circumscribed by our mode of travel. However, a peek inside would reveal that it is really not all that grim. Our bathroom with its toilet, washbowl and shower, is quite adequate. Our twin beds have box springs and inner-spring mattresses, in short are just such beds as one would expect at home. Our refrigerator has a capacity of seven cubic feet with a generous section for frozen foods and operates on gas or electricity. Our stove is a Magic Chef with standard size oven which has baked everything from a tray of muffins to an eighteen-pound turkey. The kitchen work space is large enough for Marion to roll out a pie crust or knead a batch of bread. How long has it been since you enjoyed the end cut of a loaf of bread just out of the oven with only a spread of butter on it? Pure ambrosia! I pity the younger generation that knows nothing of this gastronomic delight. But I'm getting away from my story. Our water heater and space heater are controlled by thermostats and are fully automatic. We have air conditioning although we make infrequent use of it as we are not often in areas where the temperature gets uncomfortably warm. Marion has often said: "We have everything we had at home, except space."

We have chosen this means of travel because it provides so well all of the requirements for our interest in birds and bird photography. We often stay in the national parks and state parks and national forest areas because this is precisely where many of the birds are. How else could one, in perfect comfort, spend two weeks on Mt. Pinos with the Condors or ten days in Michigan's jack pine country with Kirtland's Warblers? We spend each season in the best environment that the continent has to offer. We have spent two winters in Florida, one in southern Texas, one in southern Arizona and one in Palm Desert in California. Three times we have gone north with spring migration, once starting at Rockport, Texas, and proceeding up the Mississippi flyway and on into Michigan, twice starting from Florida and going through the Great Smokies, on each of the Appalachians and into Wisconsin and Minnesota, the second time traversing the eastern seaboard states, continuing up the Hudson River Valley, along Lake George and Lake Champlain and into Canada at Montreal. One of our most delightful springs was spent in Morongo Valley, simply staying in one place and letting the birds come to us. One summer we spent in the Canadian Maritime Provinces, another in Western Canada and the Canadian Rockies, two in the High Sierra and one in the American Northwest. We have enjoyed an autumn in New England at the height of fall colors. Twice we have spent this season along the Washington, Oregon, California coast, and once along the Southern California beaches from Huntington to San Diego. And always there are birds.

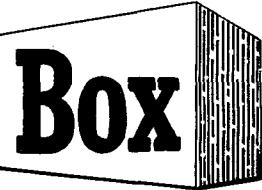
Moving a trailer presents no problem today and one does not need to use a truck. All American manufacturers offer a number of factory-installed optional items (they call it a towing package) that will equip the model of your choice to tow and you can enjoy the comfort of a standard car when not towing. It is absolutely essential that the car move the trailer well, but only slightly less important that you have a comfortable ride when *not* towing. A quick look at our log shows that we have moved the trailer 339 times, that is, we have spent all or part of 339 days towing. That leaves 1487 days on which we have not hitched up at all and one's comfort and convenience on those days should not be overlooked. Stated in miles, we have towed the trailer 39,300 miles and at the same time have driven an additional 72,940 miles without it.

Wherever we stop for a month or longer we try to get in touch with the local Audubon Society, which enables us to take their field trips, to attend their evening meetings, to see the Audubon Wildlife Films and to take advantage of the local bird-alert system. Wherever we are in December we help with Christmas Counts.

After five years, the lure of birding is undiminished. At the moment we are in Acadia National Park. Every morning we awaken to the songs of the birds and can put a dozen species on our day's list before we throw back the covers. On our walks we are not content to listen to a song and say: "That's a Magnolia Warbler" or "That's a Parula." We have to *see* the singer as each one is a thing of such exquisite beauty.

Continued overleaf

Continued from page one



by Russell Wilson

This morning we spent an hour following the song of a Winter Wren until we had satisfied our eyes as well as our ears. Monday we took the ferry from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth. It was a magnificent day, perfectly clear from horizon to horizon. We had been under way only a short time when a friendly birder made herself known to us, Margaret Hundley of Maine who was on her way to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland for some birding. For the entire crossing we stood together in the bow section visiting about birding experiences and birders whom we knew in common. She showed us our first Wilson's Petrels, we eventually saw over a dozen, and she expressed a personal embarrassment that there were no Greater Shearwaters, the other bird that we had come to see. On the return trip, however, we saw two, both near the ship and in view for a long time to provide perfect observations of a new bird. And so our day was complete.

But it's not all birding. We also do some of the tourist things. And this often leads to some interesting reading. After touring the South where there are so many historical monuments to the events of the Civil War we read Bruce Catton's trilogy on the War. While in Tucson we read all we could find by Joseph Wood Krutch. After a stay on Cape Cod we bought (paperback, of course) Henry Beston's *The Outermost House*. Yesterday we bought two paperbacks about Maine and New England.

What began as a plan for two years of travel in search of new birds for our life lists has grown into five years. In my diary under date of July 10, 1966, there is an entry which reads: "Today we set out on the road to everywhere." For five years we have been living along the road to everywhere.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Even though they have been on the road for five years Russell and Marion Wilson are regular well-known and well-remembered members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society. In fact they reappear quite frequently on our field trips. They are remembered for many years of devotion to the work of the society, serving as officers over a long period of time. Russell will be remembered more recently as the lecturer at an LAAS Evening Meeting entitled "After 600 Then What?" He and Marion are still working on it.

LIBRARY REPORT

By BESS HOFFMAN

How many Audubon members realize that our library is one of the finest specialized collections in the city outside of university or museum libraries? Here we have books, magazines and records for reference and circulation on many phases of ornithology and bird lore. This is our primary function, being an Audubon library, but there is material, too, on other life forms from spiders to whales, from butterflies to starfish, trees, fish, and wildflowers.

Books have color bands to signify various categories and make it easy to locate them. And of course there is a card catalog arranged in one alphabet by author, title and subject to show what books we have.

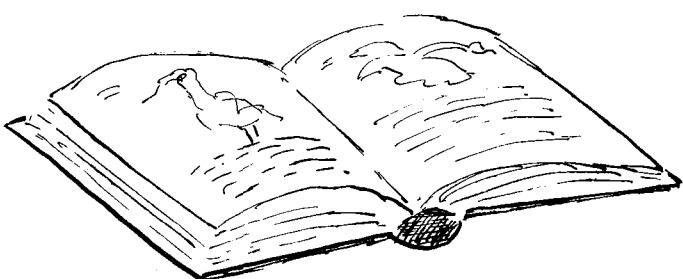
One of the important divisions of books on birds is BIRD SPECIES in which are found individual volumes on condors, woodpeckers, whooping cranes, gulls, warblers and a host of others. Here, too, is that monumental work, "Bent's Life Histories," all 25 volumes of them, which gives a detailed account of the life cycles and behavior of each bird and which is a sort of Bible for every serious birder.

For the global traveler there is a special section, REGIONAL BIRDS. The aim here has been to build as complete a collection as possible of books on countries around the world. In the last few years there have been many fine publications on Africa, Mexico, South America to name a very few. Because of the coming trip to Australia sponsored by the Los Angeles Audubon Society we have accumulated a good working collection of field guides and exceptional illustrated volumes of great beauty on Australia and New Zealand.

In the REGIONAL BIRDS section we have not ignored our own country, but have field guides to birds of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Georgia and many other states as well as a whole row of Californiana.

Another important group of books is under the subject NATURE WRITING and NATURE WRITING - BIRDS. Here are the books to read for pure pleasure.

Any member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society may draw out books. Anyone who has a need for information we can supply is welcome to use the library when Headquarters are open.



Book Review

By LEWIS GARRETT

Query to Western Tanager readers: What specific subject, after religion, accounts for the greatest number of published books? Birds, you say? Wrong. Cookbooks. But following close behind are books on birds and as a result the choice and chance of real bargains abounds.

The great book houses teem with remainders as they are known—the thousand of volumes which remain unsold at the original price. With careful buying you can often pick up some marvelous additions to your bird library for a song. Oops, sorry about that.

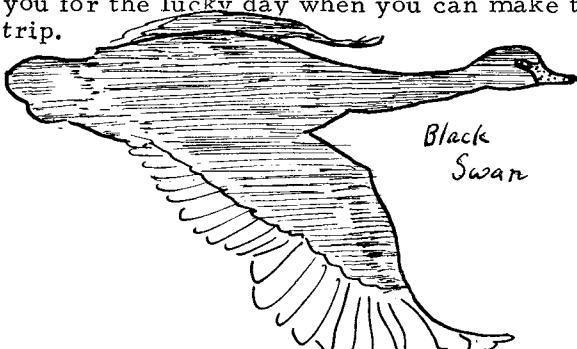
The problem is that unless you are familiar with what you order you may end up with a bummer. Buying by mail can be hazardous. I must confess that I recently ordered Mary McCarthy's "Birds of America" under the obvious misconception and still haven't been able to give it away.

My interest in Australian birds was whetted by the announcement of the L. A. Audubon Birding tour there to be led by Jim Huffman and Olga Clarke in November. So we took a chance and mail-ordered "Australian Birds" by Robin Hill. We received a beautiful 10 by 14 volume which had sold for \$30 but from Marboro was available at a small fraction of that price. Published by Funk and Wagnall in 1967 it contains some 300 pages of color plates and best of all voluminous commentary and data worthy of a Pettingill or Peterson.

Just reading it and looking at the Jabirus, Lorikeets, Bower-Birds and our favorite, the Emu-Wren gives one urge to stow away with Jim, Olga and the lucky handfull who will accompany them. An easy-to-understand discussion of classification and lists precede the text and the organization is first-rate. Field notes, sight records, nesting information and location are carefully documented.

This worthy volume is somewhat unusual in that Mr. Hill has done both the art work and text. Whether the plates are in the class of Gregory Mathews I do not feel competent to judge but they are certainly excellent and I would rate them with the best in a mass-published book. Hill is a native of Australia and a successful artist and writer.

This is no field guide, for its size and weight confines it to your library. But next to flying down under it is a book that will prepare you for the lucky day when you can make the trip.



NEXT MONTH RESPONSE TO ARNOLD SMALL

BY
PROF. THOMAS R. HOWELL
PROFESSOR OF ZOOLOGY, UCLA.
SOME WORD ON BEHALF OF THE
SCIENTIFIC COLLECTOR.

Night-Vision Scope Used for Wildlife Studies

Knowledge of nocturnal feeding and other activities of the nation's wildlife is being increased substantially with the aid of the U.S. Army's night-vision devices, developed to meet an urgent requirement to combat enemy night operations in Vietnam.

A letter from the United States Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, to the Life Sciences Division of the U.S. Army Research Office, Office of the Chief of Research and Development, recently reported on studies by the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, N.D.

The report is one of many that have been received in recent months to describe results of studies of animal nocturnal habits in the United States, Mexico, South America and certain islands in the Pacific.

Biologists at the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center used an Army night-vision crew-served weapon sight (Type AN/TVS-2A) during 1970 to study night-time feeding habits of waterfowl and red fox predations upon them.

Researchers said the night-vision scope "proved to be an indispensable aid" and that it "must be considered a significant breakthrough" in over-

coming the previous limitations upon nocturnal studies of wildlife.

Animal food (midges, mayflies, water fleas, etc.) comprised 99.9 percent of the diet of the ducks during their night-time feeding, when intake was much greater than during the day. The report states:

"The sight also was used to observe the behavior of wild red foxes preying on a group of mallard ducks equipped with small radio transmitters. The ducks were placed in an open area with relatively short grass and the scope was located on a small rise approximately 150 yards from the tether site.

" . . . Between 2400 and 0100 (hours) two red foxes intermittently visited the site. They killed and partially consumed two of the five ducks. The foxes were clearly observed in unobstructed moonlight. . . . During the bright conditions even the white tips of the foxes' tails were visible.

"Throughout this period the foxes could not be seen with the naked eye.



NATIONAL AUDUBON SUES to CURB POISONING

Seven organizations joined in a legal petition to the Environmental Protection Administration to ban interstate shipment of compound 1080, thallium sulfate, strichnine and cyanide for wildlife control. The petitioners are National Audubon, Natural Resources Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Earth, Humane Society of the United States, New York Zoological Society, and Sierra Club.

"The petition charges that these poisons are unsafe for such use, and have killed hundreds of thousands of wild birds and mammals needlessly. This includes "over kills" of target species (for instance, coyotes killed in areas where there is no livestock and therefore no 'coyote problem'), and non-target species that eat the poisoned bait, or that eat the poisoned coyotes or prairie dogs. Eagles, and at least one California Condor, have been among the known victims." (Audubon Leader, Volume 12, Number 15, September 3, 1971)



UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR BLAST ON AMCHITKA ISLAND STILL SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO COMPLAIN.

PT. REYES-YOSEMITE WILDERNESS HEARINGS

With new master plans, the Park Service is proposing wilderness designations under the Wilderness Act for Yosemite National Park and Point Reyes Seashore. To keep the wild portions forever free of incursions, we urge support of the Sierra Club-Wilderness Society analysis of the plans and recommend that their proposals for alternate plans and increased acreage be adopted. Maps and a discussion of the plans are available at Audubon House.

The hearings will have taken place by the time you read this, but statements to be included in the hearing records (and request this in your letter specifically) will be accepted until October 16 for Yosemite and October 23, 1971 for Pt. Reyes.

The Park Service is to be commended in proposing to remove private automobiles from the most popular and sensitive portions of the park--the Valley floor and the Mariposa Grove specifically. However, the draft master plan calls for a massive parking area, campground, and administrative center for Big Meadow--to eliminate congestion, noise, and smog from the Valley. But in order to connect the Wawona Road to Big Meadow and still keep cars from the valley floor, they propose a massive bridge to span the Merced River gorge. The Sierra Club-Wilderness Society

alternative is to have a second staging area at Wawona or near the south entrance. It would remove pressure on the Big Meadow and cost much less.

We also concur that an aerial tramway from Happy Isles to Illilouette Ridge near Glacier Point is unacceptable and that snowmobiles are out of place in this national park.

Letters on Yosemite should be sent to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, Yosemite National Park, California 95389.

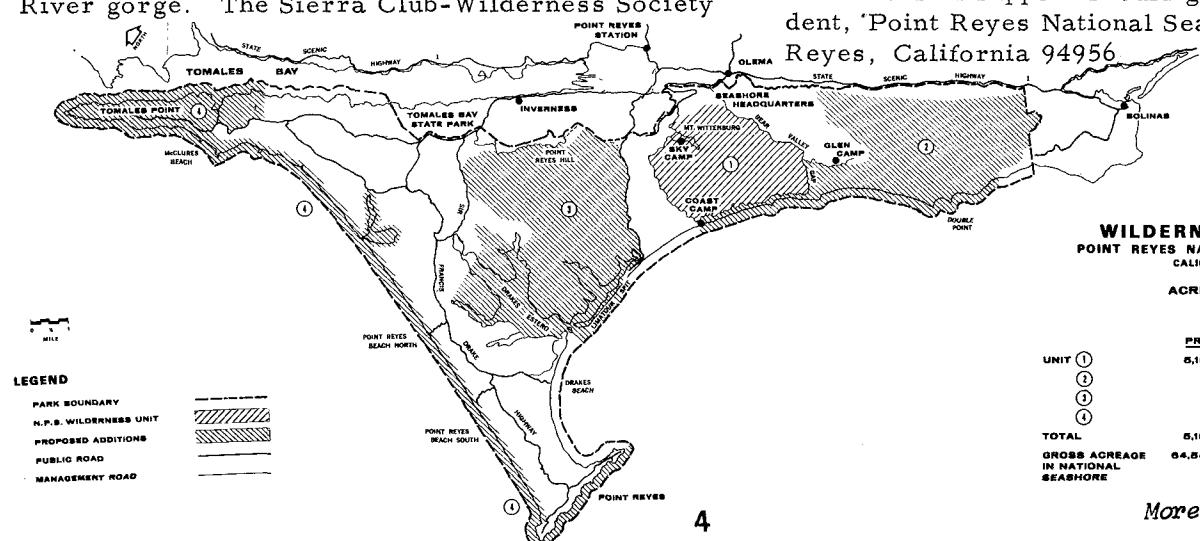
POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE, a major coastal sanctuary, is an unparalleled refuge for rare and endangered living things. Its residents include sea lions and seals, rare marine invertebrates, three hundred thirty nine species of birds, bobcats, mountain lions, albino fallow deer, Douglas Fir, and six kinds of plants that grow only at Point Reyes.

We support the Sierra Club-Wilderness Society proposal to include 32,900 acres in three wilderness units, with 35 miles of coastline. The Park Service proposes only 5,150 acres, less than a

tenth of the park, as wilderness and stops a thousand yards from the sea!

We support the establishment of Units 1-4 as wilderness areas--the Black Forest area on the main ridge of the Peninsula, the southern cliffs and forest, including the harbor seal rookery and tide pools at Double Point, the Limator and Drake's Esteros and adjacent valleys, Pierce Point and Point Reyes Beach. Protection for these natural resources is essential.

Letters of support should go to: Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore, Point Reyes, California 94956



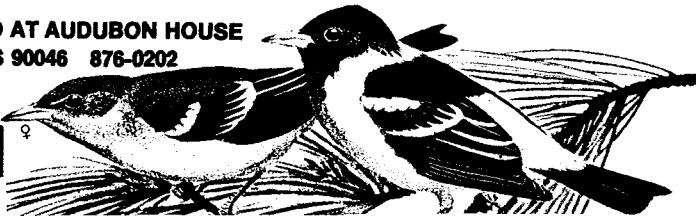
Los Angeles Audubon Society

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**



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

Oct. 2 SATURDAY - TIJUANA RIVER BOTTOM - Meet at 8 a.m. at Oscar's Restaurant on Palm Ave. in Imperial Beach. Go south on Route 5 to the Imperial Beach turnoff, Palm Ave., and proceed 3/4 mile to Oscar's on right hand side of Palm. We hope to see rare migrants. Because of the large number of birders in recent years, some private lands and ranches are now closed to birders. Please observe posted areas. Otto Widmann, leader. Phone 221-8973.

Oct. 5 TUESDAY - NEWPORT BACK BAY - Meet at 9 a.m. along road behind Newport Inn. Jean Brandt, leader. Phone 788-5188.

Oct. 7 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8 p.m., Audubon House.

Oct. 9 SATURDAY - NEWPORT BACK BAY - Meet at 8 a.m. at Golden West Ponds near Huntington Beach. This is on Golden West St. at Talbert Ave., 3 miles south of the San Diego Freeway, or 3 miles north of Pacific Coast Hwy. Excellent for migrating and early wintering water birds. Laura and Betty Jenner, leaders. Phone 748-7510.

Oct. 12 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m. Plummer Park. Frank Todd, Curator of Birds, Los Angeles Zoo, will give a program on ENDANGERED AMERICAN WILDLIFE, illustrated by color slides.

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

Nov. 2 TUESDAY - NEWPORT BACK BAY - repeat of Oct. 5 trip. Meet at 9 a.m. behind Newport Inn.

Nov. 4 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8 p.m., Audubon House.

Nov. 9 TUESDAY EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m. Plummer Park. Program to be announced in November Tanager.

Nov. 13 SATURDAY - SANTA BARBARA, GOLETA SLOUGH - 8:30 a.m. As you enter Santa Barbara turn off Highway 101 at Cabrillo Blvd. (left-hand off-ramp). Meet at the Bird Refuge to the right, just under the bridge. Wood Duck has wintered here. Nelson Metcalf, leader. For information phone Frances Kohn 665-0171.

Nov. 28 SUNDAY - MALIBU LAGOON - Meet at 7:30 a.m. on Pacific Coast Highway just north of the bridge over Malibu Lagoon. Bob and Bonnie Kennedy, leaders. Phone 456-8783.

Dec. 4-5 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - FIELD TRIP CARRIZO PLAIN. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Maricopa at the junction of and 11-12 US 399 and State 166. Besides Sandhill Cranes, this trip usually produces LeConte's Thrashers, Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles, and Mountain Plovers. Those planning to stay at California Valley Lodge should write or call for reservations early as lodge is usually sold out before the trip. Write to the lodge at California Valley, CA 93453 or phone (805) 475-2272. Larry Sansone, leader Dec. 4. Phone 870-6398. Jim Huffman, leader Dec. 11. phone 545-1224. Alternate trips are being planned for the above weekends and will be listed in the November Tanager.

Field Trip Information: The Los Angeles Audubon Society cannot be responsible for providing transportation on field trips. Bring binoculars and lunch on all trips. Please, no pets and no collecting! On weekend trips, leader is responsible only for the first day. Participants are expected to arrange their own schedules on the second day.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Western Tanager

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audubon activities

EVENING MEETING - June 10. Our program chairman, Arnold Small, provided the grand finale to the 1970-71 season with his own program "What Bird Is That?" He handed out pencils and test sheets (with some hints) before he enchanted us with about 150 slides of birds seen in the western United States which we had the opportunity to identify. The males in breeding plumage were fairly easy for most of the audience, but the tricky ones were females and young. Even the experts were stumped at times. A bonus much appreciated was the chance to view the slides a second time as Arnold quickly ran through them to give the correct identification. The unusually large crowd attested to the popularity of this kind of program - it was not only beautiful, informative and stimulating - but fun!

FIELD TRIP - Buckhorn Flats-June 27. From the bluest of blue skies that distinguishes our planet from all others, we looked down on a white capped burnt umber quagmire euphemistically called smog. For the time being the 20 of us could turn our backs on it and see nature as it is. The CAS-SIN'S FINCH at very close range was in full song and a few steps beyond the PURPLE FINCH obliged a bright study contrast. WHITE-HEADED and NUTTAL'S WOODPECKERS hammered away. Dozens of WILSON'S and some YELLOW WARBLERS were in the willows. WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES favored the azaleas and GREEN-TAILED TOWHEES and SAVANAH SPARROWS the buckthorn. Spring was still evident at this 6700' elevation with wallflowers, lupine, paintbrush, and owl-clock sprinkled everywhere. A few snow flowers still bloomed. We lunched at Chilao amid enormous yuccas, brodeas, and sunflowers which provided a backdrop for PURPLE MARTIN and SAY'S PHOEBE. In the wild roses were LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH. In addition to the usual robins, jays, grosbeaks, hawks, we saw ANNA'S, BLACK-CHINNED and COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRDS, in all - 26 species. Otto Widmann, leader.

BOAT TRIP OFF SAN PEDRO, Aug. 21, 1971

We (Los Angeles Audubon Society) took a boat off San Pedro during the day. We headed west from San Pedro towards Santa Barbara Island, deviating off course only to check-out flocks of birds visible from the boat. At Santa Barbara Island we checked the rocks at the south-east corner, then we headed south for a few miles and returned on a course that took us very close to the northern end of Catalina Island, and hitting the mainland coast at the northern end of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Species seen—Common Loon, Pink-footed Shearwater (2000), Sooty Shearwater (3000), Black Petrel (10), Brown Pelican, Blue-footed Booby (4), Brandt's Cormorant, Pintail, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Red Phalarope (25), Northern Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger (80), Parasitic Jaeger (10), Western Gull, California Gull, Heermann's Gull, Sabine's Gull (150),

Common Tern, Arctic Tern (150), Elegant Tern, Pigeon Guillemot (10), Cassin's Auklet (2), Mourning Dove, Yellowthroat, Brown-headed Cowbird.

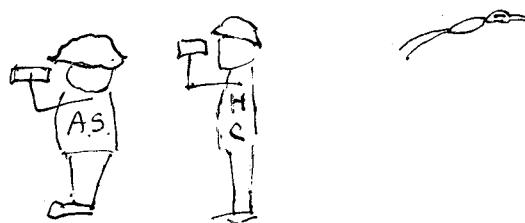
Four Blue-footed Boobies seen during the day were most unusual, but must be a reflection of the numbers of these birds that have moved northward from the Gulf of California in the past two weeks. (I believe these birds had reached the coast via an overland route through the Salton Sea and the Los Angeles Basin.) We saw the first Blue-footed Booby when we were about 5 miles west of San Pedro (it was flying alone, and heading towards the coast). The second bird was seen when we were about 2 miles west of Catalina Island (it was alone, and flying directly for the northern end of Catalina Island). The other two birds were seen in the afternoon when we were working our way south along the Palos Verdes Peninsula coast (they were together, and were flying northward along the coast very close to the shore). All four birds were seen well enough to determine they were without doubt Blue-footed Boobies, however, the first two birds were seen only at a distance from the boat when the characteristic shape and the white rump area was visible. (The first bird appeared to have much white on the underparts, and may have been adult.) There is only one previous record of a Blue-footed Booby from the actual coast (Point Loma, San Diego County - September 1969).

Most of the Shearwaters, Pomarine Jaegers, Sabine's Gulls and Arctic Terns were found in the San Pedro Channel between San Pedro and Catalina Island; the Parasitic Jaegers were all seen very close to the shore.

A most unusual sighting was that of the very rare Baird Beaked Whale. Guy McCaskie.

Sept. 4 PELAGIC TRIP TO PYRAMID COVE

The second pelagic trip sponsored by LAAS this season left San Pedro at 6 a.m., arriving at Pyramid Cove at noon. On the way spectacular views were obtained of a pair of Craveri's Murres (*Endomychura hypoleuca*), and a little later, of a fine specimen of Scripp's Xantus' Murrelet (*E. h. scrippsi*). The extent of dark feathers below the eye of the former, and of white forward and above the eye of the latter, as well as other differences were very apparent, visibility being excellent on account of the very calm seas. Sixty Shearwaters (110) were uniformly distributed over the ocean, the Pink-footed being in about four groups (79). Five Leach's Petrels and 19 Black's were seen, 3 Red Phalaropes and 25 Northern. Pomarine Jaegers were plentiful far from land (19), but Parasitics were essentially absent (3). To the disappointment of many, the Red-billed Tropicbird was not seen.



CLAPPER RAIL vs. BUREAU of RECLAMATION

The Bureau of Reclamation is planning construction of a kilo speedboat raceway in the center of 163 acres of excellent cattail habitat at the southwest end of Lake Moovalya, "another of the Bureau's tireless efforts to dredge, drain, fill, or obliterate wildlife habitat on the Colorado River - in the name of water conservation," according to Dr. Robert Witzeman, Vice President of Maricopa Audubon Chapter. As reported in his feature article in the Roadrunner, September 1971, "Other sites exist along the shores of Lake Moovalya for construction of the raceway. But just by coincidence, the selected southwest end of the lake happens to be the only area containing a large cattail marsh. In fairness to the Bureau it probably would be cheaper to construct it in this area. But in this age of earth moving technology, almost any other low level shoreline site on the lake could have been chosen.

Part of the proposed racetrack will be in Arizona and part in California, about three miles north of Parker, Arizona. Most of the dredging spill will be used to fill the cattail marshes on the California side. The marking flags for the center of the raceway to mark the course for the dredge have already been erected. . .

Lake Moovalya is not entirely a lake. It more closely approximates a dredged channel built along the former path of the Colorado River. As one drives upstream or downstream from Parker one sees high levees of sand and gravel spill placed along the sides of the channel. The steep banks serve to prevent growth of vegetation along the bank and to block the development of backwaters where marshes and ponds could develop. Such marshes were once a year round haven for marsh birds and waterfowl. Many of these original sites for hunting and fishing and birdwatching have been eliminated with only partial restitution, or mitigation, - as it is more correctly named. The Bureau feels that the mitigation developed at Mittry, Martinez, Cibola, Havasu, and Topock exceed what originally existed along

the Colorado. Needless to say, any oldtimer, whether a hunter or fisherman, would firmly deny this. Originally the profuse growth of cottonwoods supplied firewood for the river steamboats. Such harvesting, along what is left on the Colorado River would be impossible today . . ."

Over the past several years, Topock Marsh has shrunk from 12,000 acres to 4000 because of channelization efforts. The marsh is a stronghold of the Yuma Clapper Rail.

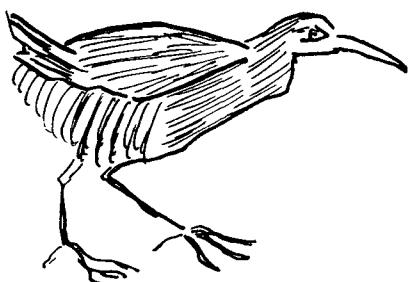
The Colorado Indian Tribe gave permission to the Bureau to dredge and maintain the Colorado channel downstream from Parker. Perhaps "in gratitude for the construction of this revenue producing racetrack?", as Dr. Witzeman suggests. He says that ponds and marshes are redeveloping behind the old channelization levees and that this may explain some of the eagerness of the Bureau to build the racetrack. If the entire Colorado channel were lined with concrete from Lake Mead to Yuma, such maintenance problems would be nil.

"The racetrack will be constructed in a marsh which is an active nesting area of the Yuma Clapper Rail . . . this rail has federal protection as an endangered species. More correctly, . . . an endangered race, as four other clapper rail races exist in the U.S. . . .

The big breakthrough for the Yuma Clapper Rail came with the advent of the portable tape recorder and an excellent study recently performed by Richard Todd of the Arizona Game and Fish Dept. and Roy Tomlinson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They studied the number and distribution of this rail on the Colorado River. Their studies show that each loss of marsh acreage on the Colorado causes a proportional decrease in clapper numbers. Even more sobering is the fact that some of the marshes on the Colorado are, for unknown reasons, unsuitable for rail breeding. Thus, the well utilized little 163 acre Moovalya marsh is more valuable than ever.

Not to be overlooked are other breeding species of waterfowl which use these cattail marshes on the lower Colorado, - Least Bittern, American Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Snowy and American Egret, and Black Rail. This last mentioned species, of inestimable fascination to birdwatchers, is protected both federally and by the state of California. . .

Several months ago the Bureau of Reclamation presented an environmental statement for its proposed raceway site. The statement was lacking in depth and content regarding the environmental impact. These inadequacies were spelled out in a rebuttal statement by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The Bureau is now drafting a new statement."



Announcements

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

EAST AFRICA SAFARIS EMPHASIZING BIRDS AND ECOLOGY

Two special safaris to East Africa for July and August, 1972, are now being organized by Golden Gate Audubon Vice-president, George Peyton, with strong emphasis on birds and ecology, as well as the big mammals. Informal study sessions will be conducted by Mr. Peyton during the coming year for tour members to provide preparation in the basic ecology and natural history of East Africa. Anyone interested in further information should contact Mr. Peyton by phone (444-3131 or 531-5588) or letter (4304 Adelaide Street, Oakland, California 94619).

Audubon House Sales Department

The Sales Department is very pleased to announce the long awaited book "Australian Birds" by Robin Hill has arrived. For those going on the Australian tour in November, it will be a tremendous asset. Also, it would be a cherished gift for anyone's library. There are many other books in our store on Australian birds not to mention a marvelous selection worldwide. Two more books that have just arrived and would appeal to those interested in sea birds are "Birds of the Ocean" by W. B. Alexander and "Birds of the Atlantic Ocean" by Ted Stokes and Keith Shackleton.

An informative book "California Historical Landmarks" only \$1.50, would be of interest to those who take pleasure in learning more about their state's history.

If you are interested in buying Bushnell or Bausch & Lomb binoculars and spotting scopes, a 20% discount is given through our Society. Contact Audubon House for further information.

The Sales Department is now working on a complete list of everything for sale in the store at Audubon House and should be ready for the next Western Tanager.

THE 600 CLUB

There seems to be a mistaken idea by some people what the 600 CLUB is. It has no official connection with any organization with the one exception: the Nomenclature Committee of The American Ornithologists' Union which gives us the Names, both Common and Scientific, of Birds seen within the Area of the Fifth Edition, 1957, of the A. O. U. Checklist. This area is stated in the Preface of the Fifth Edition under the heading "Scope of the Checklist."

The 600 CLUB has a few well-known rules in regard to exotics, visiting birds from other countries, etc.

Therefore, a person has the right and privilege of belonging to any bird club, ornithological society, etc., he may wish to be a member of. Or he can be one who does not wish to belong to any of them.

When an individual has definitely seen 600 species of birds within the area noted above, he can become a member of the 600 CLUB and when I am informed by him (or her) that he has recorded that number, I will be glad to place his name on the Summary. Earle R. Greene, Compiler of the 600 CLUB, P. O. Box 1058, St. Simons Island, Georgia 31522.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Continued from page ten

few inland sightings of this highly pelagic small gull and the only one in the Fall. Bill Borman reported a LEAST TERN on August 12th at Red Hill, near Niland, (they are very rare at the Salton Sea). ELEGANT TERNS normally arrive gradually from mid-July on through August; but this summer they were unreported north of San Diego until mid-August, after which time they could be found in good numbers along the coast.

Perhaps the most unlikely situation for a new California bird was that of a RED-HEADED WOODPECKER in the small eucalyptus trees at the Wister Refuge Headquarters near the south end of the Salton Sea. Alfred Driscoll found this bird on July 17th and reported it, but since he was a newcomer to Southern California, believers were hard to find. When he reported it again on August 1st, Gene and Steve Cardiff decided to investigate and there, exactly as reported was the red-headed Woodpecker. This is the first California record of a live bird, although there is a record of a mummified specimen which may have been brought out from the East, possibly in front of the radiator of a car. One wonders what this Eastern equivalent of our Acorn Woodpecker found to sustain life in this super-heated area.

It probably is to be expected that with Spring migration of small passersines late, as it was this year, Fall migration would also be late, and this seems to be the case. A Labor Day trip to Deep Springs and Death Valley revealed few Western migrants as compared with a similar trip in 1970. Although the quantity of birds was low, the quality of vagrants was quite satisfactory - a BROWN THRASHER and an ORCHARD ORIOLE were at Box Elder (Tollhouse) Springs, just west of Westgard Pass, two LARK BUNTINGS and a WATERTHRUSH were at Deep Springs Ranch; a VIRGINIA'S WARBLER was seen just above Scotty's Castle; and of all places, at Mesquite Springs, where there is only a wash basin sized puddle of water, there was a LEAST BITTERN.

Along the coast there were very few small migrants or vagrants until early September. The Palos Verdes Peninsula excelled for INDIGO BUNTINGS. Shirley Wells netted or saw one on Aug. 26th and three on Sept. 1st and Grace Nixon banded an INDIGO BUNTING and a VIRGINIA'S WARBLER there in late August. At nearby Pt. Fermin Paik Jo and Tom Heindel reported a BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER on Sept. 8th. For years I have looked for NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES in the flooded woodland above the upper pond in the Arcadia Arboretum, but it remained for Ray Robinson to locate one there on Sept. 6th and 7th.

Prior to the 1930's, WOOD IBIS visited the San Diego Co. coastal lagoons regularly in

summer, but since then they have been found only near the south end of the Salton Sea, but this summer one was found at the Ventura Marina in July and now (Sept. 8th) there are five at Upper Newport Bay (Shirley Wells). They obviously had just arrived as they were not seen by the dozens of birders there over the Labor Day weekend. There were two sightings of large Falcons at the Sea in August - Lee Jones found a small, dark PEREGRINE (Possibly a bird from the Gulf) at the south end on the 18th, and a PRAIRIE FALCON was seen at the north end on the 30th.

Four separate parties of L. A. Auduboners birded the higher parts of Yosemite Park in mid-August. Between them they found all eight central Sierra specialties - GOSHAWK, PILEATED and BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS, EVENING and PINE GROSBEAKS and ROSY FINCHES. Despite this 100% record, no one person saw more than five of these species in several hundred birder-hours of searching.

With so many noteworthy birds already reported, and with migration apparently on the late side this year, October should be better than ever. The coastal canyons (Big Sycamore, Tuna etc.) and promontories (Pt. Dume, Pt Fermin and Pt. Loma) with water are best for small landbirds, although the desert oases can also be productive. Upper Newport Bay was tops for water birds in early September, but the other coastal marshes and lagoons would probably be as good if they were equally accessible. If you've skipped the Salton Sea because of the heat, it should be cooler in October, and a few boobies should still be there, and of course, you can never tell what you might see at the Sea.

FIELD TRIP, SANTA CLARA RIVER, VENTURA AND Sycamore CANYON SEPTEMBER 11. Warren Blazer led a memorable trip starting at the mouth of the Santa Clara River. Three thousand Northern Phalaropes were feeding in the lagoon behind the sand-bar. Among them Warren distinguished four Red Phalaropes, one of which was resting on the sand at very short range, so that all its features could be studied. He also pointed out a very unusual occurrence, the presence of eight or more Parasitic Jaegers along the shore, some sitting on the water. One Pomarine Jaeger accompanied them, and very good views of both species were obtained. Elegant, Royal, Caspian, Common and Foster's Terns were in abundance.

The group adjourned to Sycamore Canyon for lunch and some land birding. The trip was greatly enjoyed by both newer and experienced birders. A total of fifty-four species was recorded.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Shumway Suffel

October may be the most exciting month for vagrants, as we've said so many times in the past, but it's going to be hard to beat the excitement of August and early September caused by an "irruption" of birds from the Gulf of California into our area. BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIES were the most numerous species with nearly one hundred sightings in twenty or more localities from the Salton Sea (50+) to Avila Beach (8), just south of Morro Bay. One hundred Blue-foots is more than the aggregate of all previous sightings in the U. S. A., just as the previous maximum of thirty Blue-foots in Sept. 1969 was greater than the aggregate of all sightings prior to that date. In 1969 the boobies were confined to the Salton Sea area, but this year they pushed on in a north-westerly direction to the coastal valleys, where they were seen flying over highways and to the larger lakes - Puddingstone Reservoir (7), Lake Elsinore (3), Hansen Dam (1) and Harbor Lake (1) - and even on the ocean itself, where there is only one previous record. In the 1969 irruption the thirty Blue-foots were accompanied by eight BROWN BOOBIES, but this year only two Brown Boobies have been reported to Sept. 10th, which is a very low percentage compared to prior years.*

One or two BLACK SKIMMERS, also from the Gulf, were seen at the north end of the Sea through August, but the real surprise was finding a Skimmer at Upper Newport Bay on Sept. 5th and 6th (Trudi Siptroth et al.). There is only one previous coastal record and that nearly at the mouth of the Santa Ana River in Sept. 1962. BROWN PELICANS were seen apparently arriving from the Gulf - first circling high in the sky, then spiralling steeply down and almost falling into the water where they drank, bathed and rested, as though exhausted from a long overland flight. Eight were seen on August 12th at the south end of the Salton Sea (where they are regular in late summer), while one overshot the Sea and arrived at Hansen Dam on Aug. 30th (Jon Dunn). This is one of the very few inland records except for the Salton Sea. FRIGATE BIRDS, probably from the Gulf, were seen at the Sea - one on July 31st and two on Aug.

*The cause of this irruption is not known, but possibly tropical storms, a die-off of fish due to warm water or "red tide", or exaggerated post-breeding wandering are responsible.

*Species which appear irregularly, sometimes in great numbers - usually applied to arctic birds moving south to temperate areas, but equally applicable in this case.

28th. In addition to the two sightings of FRIGATE-BIRDS (probably not from the Gulf) near San Diego reported last month, Ed Navajosky studied an immature as it circled over Malibu Pier for nearly two hours on Aug. 10th and Gilbert King followed a female (Frigatebird, of course) up the San Diego Freeway for about one-quarter mile on Aug. 12th. This is one time Gil didn't mind the slow pace of "going home" traffic.

SHOREBIRDS occupied a major portion of local birders time in the early Fall. The most exciting report (with description) was that of a CURLEW SANDPIPER at Upper Newport Bay on Sept. 5th (Hank Brodkin and Dennis Paulson). This bird was studied for almost half an hour at close range, but was in difficult moulting plumage - part the red-brown of summer and part the gray of winter. A succession of birders combed these marshes next morning without success, but were rewarded with a vast assemblage of shorebirds, gulls and terns, and the earliest ducks. Most people, independently, found the BLACK SKIMMER previously mentioned; many found the GOLDEN PLOVERS (also moulting into gray winter plumage) at the west end of the dike; and the Kings and Hal Baxter sqw the BLACK RAIL for the second time in as many weeks. Almost as exciting was a BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER found by Shirley Wells at the Greenhill Cemetery in Palos Verdes on Sept. 5th. There are only two previous records in So. Calif. - two together at Santa Barbara and one at Oceanside (also found by Shirley). So many people saw this Buff-breast in the next few days that it must have become slightly "stage struck." Elsewhere along the coast there were GOLDEN PLOVERS at Buena Vista Lagoon (Min Gerhardt) and at Malibu Lagoon with three BAIRD'S, a SOLITARY and a PECTORAL SANDPIPER (Ed Navajosky). At the Sepulveda Recreation Area, Jon Dunn and Bill Borman found both PECTORALS and SOLITARIES. STILT SANDPIPERs made one of their rare appearances (they are regular in small numbers at the Salton Sea) - five were seen at the Goleta Sewer Plant near Santa Barbara (Richard Webster) and one was at Upper Newport Bay on Sept. 8th (Shirley Wells). A late report of a BLACK OYSTERCATCHER at Pt. Fermin on Sept. 8th is the first sighting there in many years (Jo and Tom Heindel).

At least two FRANKLIN GULLS remained at the north end of the Sea until early September and several hundred LAUGHING GULLS (presumably from Mexico) stayed at the south end of the Sea. While checking the boobies at Lake Elsinore on Aug. 26th, Alice Fries reported an immature SABINE'S GULL there. This is one of the very

Continued on previous page