

# The Western Tanager

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## Some word on behalf of the Scientific Collector

By Thomas Howell

**I**n late June of this year, a graduate student working under the direction of Dr. Stephen M. Russell of the University of Arizona collected a family group of five gnatcatchers in southeastern Arizona near the Mexican border. This incident resulted in angry editorials and articles in the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, the nationally-distributed *Defenders of Wildlife News*, *The Western Tanager*, and doubtless other publications that I have not seen. Dr. Russell is probably best known to birders as the author of the definitive work on the birds of British Honduras (A.O.U. Monograph No. 1). I spoke with Steve Russell at the 1971 annual meeting of the A.O.U. in Seattle during the first week of September, and he agreed to let me reply in his behalf to Arnold Small's article in *The Western Tanager*. I believe this is appropriate as I am a member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, but I must make clear that these views are my own and that Dr. Russell has not seen or approved or disapproved the content.

There are some people who are opposed, on principle, to collecting of bird specimens for any purpose. I do not agree with this view but will not debate it in this limited space; rather, I address those who are not opposed to scientific collecting within reasonable and appropriate limits. In particular, I wish to consider the following points made in Arnold's article: 1) that these gnatcatchers represented "one of the rarest of American birds", and that collecting them was comparable to taking the last of the Carolina Parakeets; 2) that the gnatcatchers were collected only "to substantiate their presence and confirm the identification"; 3) that the specimens could not provide any worth-while information beyond that supplied by field notes, photographs, and tape recordings. I wish to reply also to other critics who go farther than that.

First, I cannot agree with the definition that makes the Black-capped Gnatcatcher a "rare" bird. Every species of bird becomes rare beyond the limits of its normal range. Surely there is a difference between truly rare species such as the California Condor and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, whose entire populations consist of a few individuals, and a numerous and widespread species of which one or two individuals happen to cross an imaginary line separating Arizona and Sonora. The latter individuals would be more accurately called extralimital birds rather than rare ones, and although that term does not precisely define them either, I will use it to distinguish between the two.

The Black-capped Gnatcatcher is a common bird from central Sonora to southern Mexico. Some authorities (Check-list of the Birds of Mexico, vol. II, 1957) consider it to be a subspecies of the White-lored Gnatcatcher, which ranges from

southern Mexico to Costa Rica. Any birder who wishes to add it to his life list may find it no farther away than the vicinity of Hermosillo. I do not deny that there is fascination in seeing an extralimital species, but I do not see that the locality is more important than the bird.

The major point is that this gnatcatcher is not a rare or endangered species, and no one has been denied the opportunity of seeing it in life, if not in Arizona. To ask rhetorically "Would these collectors have taken the last remnants of the Carolina Parakeets...?" is quite unfair.

Secondly, the gnatcatchers were not collected merely to add the species officially to the United States list. A typical female Black-cap is readily told from a typical female Blue-gray, but there is enough variation within each species to raise doubts about an extralimital individual. Only by comparing such an individual with a series of females of each form is it possible to identify it beyond doubt. The group of five was collected to determine if this was a hybridizing pair, and if so, to study in detail the extent to which the characters of each of the parental types were transmitted to the offspring. This is a valid objective, although whether it could best be accomplished by collecting the birds is open to debate; I have not seen the specimens and cannot comment on their identity. But at least let the criticism be directed at the real objective of the study and not at some other issue.

Thirdly, I agree that for purposes of identifying an extralimital bird to species or even subspecies it may not be necessary or desirable to collect a specimen. In fact, I do not know anyone who disagrees. However, others (not Arnold Small)

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who have written about the gnatcatcher incident are quoted in the Tucson press as saying that there is no longer any reason to collect specimens for taxonomic purposes. This view is tenable only if one believes that taxonomy is unimportant or that it consists only of assigning each individual to some species or subspecies as presently constituted. Again, lack of space prohibits discussion of the place of systematics in biology, and I will refer the interested reader to the writings of Ernst Mayr and G. G. Simpson for this. My point is that specimens are essential for taxonomic and other kinds of study and cannot be replaced by photographs, notes, and recordings although these may be adequate to identify individuals with clearly defined characteristics. Specimens are analogous to books in a library; they are an inexhaustible source of information, and no matter how many times you consult a book - and even if you xerox some of the pages - you still need to return again and again to the original source. Most of us have read every word in our field guides and looked at every plate many times, but we still consult them and find things that we failed to notice before. New characteristics and criteria are constantly being discovered and used in taxonomy, and no one can possibly anticipate, while examining a mist-netted bird, everything that may ultimately prove to be important. No, I am not saying that a specimen is more important than a living bird; I am saying that we could not possibly know as much as we do about living birds without the collection of specimens, and we are far from having exhausted that source of information. Who could have anticipated that specimens of eggs - often collected as though they were postage stamps - would prove to be such a valuable index to pesticide pollution, or that the feathers of birds collected for taxonomic and distributional purposes would turn out to have been sensitive indicators of levels of mercury in the environment? One might as well say that with all the volumes assembled in our vast libraries, there is no need to cut trees to provide paper for more books. Continuing the analogy, if we are careful not to cut (collect) too many, or the truly rare kinds, we can have flourishing live populations and also our sources of information derived from them. Because many birders traveled long distances to see this group of gnatcatchers, one may question the judgment used in collecting them and one may legitimately ask if the potential scientific value of the specimens is enough to compensate for the damage to public relations. One may also legitimately inquire if the spate of outraged and sometimes vituperous articles about this matter serves to advance bird study and the cause of conservation.

The articles in the Tucson press and Defenders of Wildlife News seem to regard collecting of the gnatcatchers as a serious moral crime. A Tucson editorial was entitled "Too Bad Birds Can't Shoot Back". Has the same newspaper ever wished, editorially, that the thousands of game birds killed every year in Arizona could "shoot back"?

Taking all these articles at face value, one would think that scientific collectors pose a major threat to the preservation of bird life, comparable to the polluters, poisoners, strip miners, clear-cutters, marsh-drainers, freeway-pushers, etc. I maintain that all the scientific collectors in the United States do not reduce bird populations as much as a single fleet of bulldozers, and that the collector's shotgun is no threat compared to a stroke of the pen in the offices of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Is the issue "reverence for nature and life itself"? Most of us do not revere the lives of house flies, cockroaches, garden snails, or our fellow mammals, the household rodents. But what about birds? Lupi Saldana, hunting and fishing columnist of the L.A. Times, writes on Sept. 6, 1971: "Last year 272,400 hunters in California bagged an estimated 4,712,200 doves and this year's kill is expected to equal that number." A January-1971 report to the National Science Foundation entitled "The Systematic Biology Collections of the United States: An Essential Resource" gives the following figures. The bird collections of the 18 largest museums in the U.S. contain a total of 3,141,600 specimens. Let us estimate generously that there are another one million specimens in all of the smaller museums. The entire total of bird specimens accumulated since the days of Audubon and Wilson over a century ago does not equal the number of doves killed in a single state in a single season. Of course, the Mourning Dove remains one of our most common species and the heavy toll of lives taken by sportsmen (suppose it had been by collectors?) provokes no outcry.

Surely, few things could be as heartening to the opponents of conservation as to see us squabbling among ourselves. A lot of adrenalin, ink, and energy (including mine) that could have been better employed in thwarting the real destroyers of wildlife has been directed toward this minor incident, yet it is being developed as a national issue. Not demands and wranglings over proposals for new legislation on collecting, but common sense and good judgment are what is needed. Being human, both scientists and birders are sometimes found wanting in one or the other. But we will only damage each other and our common causes by exaggerating our differences, of which some that are alleged don't even exist. Among other hazards, any furthering of divisions between birders and scientists could cause an outbreak of schizophrenia, for many of us are both.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas R. Howell is a Professor of Zoology at UCLA, a member of the A.O.U. Checklist Committee and Editorial Advisor, "American Birds." He has had a California collecting permit for over 20 years but has never collected an extralimbed bird in this state; in fact, he has not collected any birds in the United States for years.

# bye bye 'blooby'

BABS  
KOBALY

He was a scraggly sight, lame and exhausted, standing about two feet onto the Freeway #10 pavement, about half a mile west of the turn-off up to 29 Palms. Though sunny in that particular spot, there were storms all around the area that day—Aug. 15, 1971. Perhaps this seabird had been blown off his course from the Mexicangulf to the Salton Sea, and in the late afternoon sun, mistaking the asphalt for a strip of welcome water had made a crash landing. Since he needed at least twenty feet of water to take off in, he was now stranded, wounded and bewildered. Another foot onto the highway and he would also be dead. Even though his long conical beak looked menacing, Theil and Glen Easterbrook stopped, picked him up and brought him home to friends in Morongo Valley—John and Babs Kobaly always welcomed wildings in trouble.

By flashlight we flipped through the pages of bird guides, looking for a waterbird like the one now sitting in the dark on the grass before us, a bird that "had eyes in its bluish beak," a white upper back, white "pantaloon" and a white continuous "eyebrow."

"Let's see now... He doesn't happen to have blue feet, of course," I said.

"As a matter of fact he does," said Theil. She lifted the drowsy bird and exposed its completely webbed blue feet. Excited, I read on... "A casual visitor to the Salton Sea and the lower Colorado River... Breeds on islands... in the gulf of California and along the west coast of Mexico and South America. Boobies were so named by sailors who could easily catch the trusting birds who landed on their ship decks."

Trusting? The next morning before we had acquired any technique, "Blooby," as we now called him, had reached up with his sharp beak and slashed John's wrist. Examining his bill closely, we could see that the "weapon" was notched on both upper sides in a way that formed two backward-pointing spikes to help hold or spear his food.

His menu now consisted of raw black cod and speckled trout cut in small pieces. His long beak held open wide, we'd poke in a sliver of fish and a vitamin E pill, then another bit of fish, then tamp it all down with long-nosed tweezers. Holding his beak closed, we then stretched up the long neck and gently shook. Still, he fought swallowing and pranced off, shaking his bill and flapping his neck pouch until often the fish came back up again. Gloves were used to open his beak until we got the hang of it. Water, Blooby promptly shook out of his bill indignantly.

Long sleeves and socks were imperative for the job of feeding. Until he regained his strength and could manage a bit of grooming, he was undulating—it seemed—with little ripples of lice, who ducked in and out of his feathers and crawled up our arms and legs. Yet, the children fought for the fun of stuffing food "down the booby hatch!"

It was easy to see why relatives of Blue-footed Boobies were guano birds. Blooby seemed to relieve himself every time he changed position, mostly aiming outside the screens of his pen. But it was a great opportunity to get rid of old newspapers, rags and worn out mimeo slipsheets.



Every day, his injured ankle was rubbed with vitamin E and for a few days his entire right foot was bandaged to prevent use. In a few days, he was strong enough to begin his morning ritual, preening, ruffling, scratching all over. He'd yawn, stretch his long powerful black wings, wiggle his little wedgetail and limp around his pen. He seemed to have accepted his confinement.

Television and friends were forgotten. We read everything we could find about boobies, then just sat beside the pen and appreciated our visitor: the pattern of his crossed wings folding over the little wiggly tail; the way he slept—standing, with beak-under-wing; sitting, with beak lying tucked backward into a wing; or wprawled out, his head stretched along the floor. The way he padded and waddled, or pranced like a proud little colt, back and forth on wide blue paddles. The way he quacked softly, as though some noise, some tone, had sounded vaguely familiar. The way he fanned his dark outer tail feathers to enframe the central white ones. We shut our eyes, and for awhile we were on a South Sea island watching Blooby diving for fish. We could almost hear the palm-sway, almost taste the seaspray.

But Blooby was getting well—and restless. Boobies are sociable birds and ours was lonely. From the day the bandage was removed and he began slowly to reuse his foot, he began to resent everything and everybody. He pecked at the corners and edges of his cage and climbed up the screens using his strong beak for a lever. All else failing, he would try to take off vertically... His one thought was escape. But we dallied; it was a long way to the Salton Sea, we rationalized. Perhaps we'd take him "next" week.

His pen (in our mimeograph room) started merely as a trio of screens propped longways into a crude enclosure. Each day, as Blooby progressed, more screens were added and placed upright, then a roof of chicken wire and bits of cardboard were tucked here and there.

Gingerly, we'd undo the complicated, pre-

*Continued on page nine*



#### STATUS OF UPPER NEWPORT BAY LAWSUIT

"1) The Orange County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in January to cancel the trade and notified the Irvine Company. 2) The Irvine Company has filed a separate suit in the Orange County Superior Court to force the County to go through with the tideland exchange, claiming the County no longer has the right to withdraw from the agreement. 3) The County has hired Mr. Herman Selvin, an outstanding Appellate lawyer, at a cost far less than his usual fee, to represent the County both in the original case which soon will be heard by the Appellate Court, and in the second suit filed against the County by the Irvine Company. 4) Mr. Selvin will plead the County's new point of view-namely, that the County no longer considers the trade to be in the public's best interest and wished to withdraw. 5) The Interveners' continued participation in the Appellate Court proceedings is vital, because their lawyer, Mr. Phillip Berry, raised many pertinent points of law on the public's behalf which having not been a part of the pleadings of the attorney previously hired by the County to defend the public's position, legally cannot be intro-

duced in the Appellate Court by Mr. Selvin. 6) If the ruling of Superior Court Judge Claude Owens is not appealed and a reversal obtained by the higher Court, our traditional protection of public tidelands guaranteed in Article XV, Section 3, California Constitution, will have been eliminated."

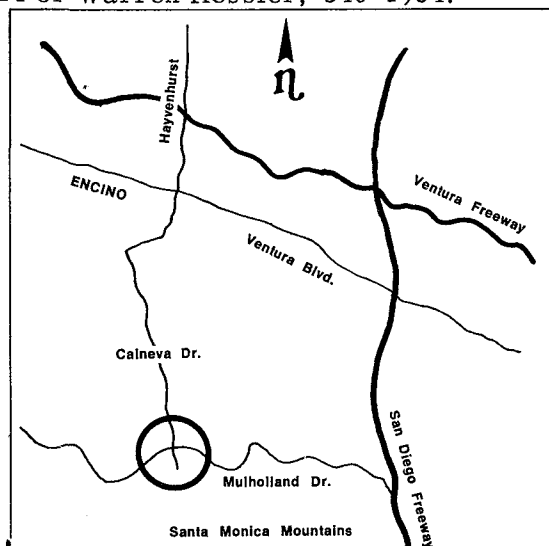
The authors of the above statement, the Orange County Foundation for Preservation of Public Property, need your financial support to pay court costs. All Auduboners should consider this cause of primary importance. Whether you have any birds to look at in the coming years depends on the outcome of these suits! Mail donations to OCFPOP, 410 South Bay Front, Balboa Island, Ca 92662. For information, call Mrs. Fran Robinson, (714) 646-8009. (The Foundation superceded the Upper Newport Bay Defense Fund, a volunteer organization.)

#### JOIN HIKE-IN TO SAVE SANTA MONICA MTS.

Sunday, Nov. 14 - 9:30 a.m., meet at Calneva Dr. and Mulholland Dr. Over 200 organizations will be represented and many concerned citizens. Land speculators have filed a petition to pave and grade Mulholland according to city plans... a potential six lanes for high density traffic loads, leading to development and the ultimate destruction of the last great air shed serving the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The Hike-In is organized by the Sierra Club and actively supported by many others. For more information call: In West L.A.: Cecile Rosenthal, 391-7562 and in the Valley: Jill Swift, 344-8714 or Warren Kessler, 340-1964.



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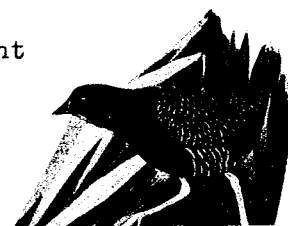
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Mrs. Abigail King, Executive Secretary  
700 Halliday Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90049

**Audubon  
Bird Reports  
874-1318**



- Nov. 2 TUESDAY - NEWPORT BACK BAY - repeat of Oct. 5 trip. Meet at 9 a.m. behind Newporter Inn.
- Nov. 4 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8 p.m., Audubon House.
- Nov. 9 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m., Plummer Park.
- 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 offramp). Meet at the Bird Refuge to the right just under the bridge. 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. Prior sightings include: Red-breasted Merganser 68, White-tailed Kite 68, Knot 65, Pectoral Sandpiper 68, Parasitic Jaeger 65, Black-legged Kittiwake 69, Terns (5 Species) 65-70. Bob and Bonnie Kennedy, leaders. Phone 456-8783.
- Dec. 2 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8 p.m., Audubon House.
- Dec. 4-5 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - CARRIZO PLAIN. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Maricopa at the junction of US 399 and & 11-12 State 166. 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. Prior sightings include: White-tailed Kite 70, Rough-legged Hawk 70, Ferruginous Hawk 69-70, Golden Eagle 67,69,70, Prairie Falcon 70, Mtn. Plover 66-70, Sandhill Crane 66-70, Barn, Long&Short-Eared Owl 70, Horned Lark 66-70, LeConte's Thrasher 66-70, Mountain Bluebird 66-70. Larry Sansone, leader Dec. 4 Phone 870-6398. Jim Huffman, Leader Dec. 11 Phone 545-1224. (For alternate trips refer to next two listings.)
- Dec. 4 SATURDAY - WILDWOOD CANYON - 7:30 a.m., NEWHALL. Take Golden State Freeway north to Lyons Ave. offramp, turn right about 2 blocks and meet in Thriftymart parking lot (west end). We will caravan to the canyon. Leader: William Barber phone (805) 259-2308. Chaparral birds will be seen.
- Dec. 7 TUESDAY - MALIBU LAGOON. Details will be in December Tanager. Abigail King, leader.
- Dec. 11 SATURDAY - DANA POINT - 8 a.m. Meet at new harbor entrance just west of traffic light on Pacific Coast Highway. Local shore and land birds. Leader: Trudy Siptroth phone (714)546-4314.
- Dec. 14 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m., Plummer Park. Professor Thomas R. Howell, Dept. of Zoology U.C.L.A. will present a color film on the Fairy Terns, Red-tailed Tropic Bird and other sea birds of the Mid-Pacific.
- Dec. 26 SUNDAY - Los Angeles Audubon Society Christmas Census Count  
Sandy Wohlgemuth, Chairman
- Jan. 11 TUESDAY - Los Angeles Audubon Society Annual Dinner



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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EDITOR - GILBERT W. KING  
Assistant Editor - Donald Adams  
Field Notes - Shumway Suffel  
Conservation - Kathryn Brooks  
Typing - Hanna Stadler  
Mailing Supervision - Hans Hjorth

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# audubon activities

## BOAT TRIP IN MONTEREY BAY - Sep. 25



Val da Costa arranged a boat trip into the Bay to see the autumn activities of the pelagic species which frequent the coast in unpredictable numbers.

This year an unusual number (150) of New Zealand Shearwaters were seen, both sitting and flying near the boats. Another infrequent sighting was that of four Skua's near the boats, occasionally sitting on the water. The golden mantle on some of them may identify a subspecies.

Pomerine and Parasitic Jaegers (also skuas) were seen. The only alcids were a pair of Xantus' Murrelets, six Cassins Auklets and one Rhinoceros Auklet. Only one Sabine's Gull was seen, and remarkably enough, only forty Black Petrels and four Ashy.



SKUA  
L 17½" W 16"

FIELD TRIP - San Pedro, 25 September - Twenty-two Audubonites met at Harbor Lake to start a day looking (hopefully?) for fall migrants. Because of a lack of any major number of water or land birds at Harbor Park, we moved to Pt. Fermin Park at about 8:30. We were greeted upon arrival by several small parrotlets with yellow wing patches, stubby tails, and green bodies. Warblers were fairly common in the park with the best species being an immature BLACKPOLL. Just as everyone was getting good views of this warbler someone flushed a POORWILL up at our feet. When it later settled under a bush, everyone got some of their finest views of this seldom seen bird. Our party was joined by a group from the Sea and Sage Audubon, which also had excellent looks at "our" Poorwill and the Black poll (which may have been present since the 19th). Some fifty-six species were recorded and most of us saw nearly all of these. A few of these were added at Averill Park where the trip concluded.

Jay Sheppard, Leader.

FIELD TRIP - Tijuana River Bottom - October 2 - With weather perfect, wind mild, full sun, 33 eager members went immediately to 19th Street where we began counting the 78 species that we saw during the 7 hours we spent there. The TROPICAL KING BIRD was reported to be around, but was not seen by the group. But the BOBOLINKS obliged by mixing with many SAVANNAH SPARROWS. Hundreds of BLACKBIRDS - YELLOW-HEADED, RED-WINGED, TRI-COLORED and BREW-

ERS - circled in tight masses throughout the day. In the alfalfa the LONG-BILLED CURLEWS, MARBLED GODWITS, WILLETS, and WHIMBRELS browsed. Along the stream a LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN sounded off in alarm. The bird for the day, besides the hawks and eagles, were the warblers. At the Meyer Ranch in the Tamarisk were the CHESTNUT-SIDED and MAGNOLIA WARBLERS - a first sighting for the L.A. group. In all we saw 8 different warblers. In the tomato patch a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was a life bird for the group. Several WHITE-TAILED KITES were seen - at one time 8 were in the air at once. A GOLDEN EAGLE, RED-TAIL, COOPER'S, SHARP-SHINNED, MARSH, SPARROW HAWKS and an OSPREY were noted. Although birding has changed considerably since the valley is no longer farmed as extensively as it was, it is still a rewarding trip this time of year.

Otto Widmann, Leader

EVENING MEETING - On a very warm Sept. 14th, the audience was treated to some beautifully cool pictures of the Galapagos Islands. Dr. George A. Bartholomew, Chairman of the Biology Department, UCLA, showed two of nine films he has made for educational distribution. The first was an introduction to the islands, all of which are volcanic in origin. Because of their remoteness from the continent - they are 600 miles due west of Ecuador - their flora and fauna are for the most part indigenous. The iguanas, both land and sea types, looked like creatures from a prehistoric time. The commentary, partly Old Testament and partly Darwin, helped create the feeling of seeing the islands in their formation, and as Darwin did on his famous voyage. One could understand how Darwin could gather such a wealth of data from this evolutionary museum. The second 12-minute film showed the unique flightless cormorants in their island setting. Following the films Dr. Bartholomew answered many questions, and we anticipate his next program to learn more about these fantastic islands.

FIELD TRIP - Newport Back Bay, Oct. 5. Because of the very high tide, we had literally dozens of RAILS (CLAPPERS, VIRGINIAS and SORAS) and one BLACK, which disappeared so fast only Abigail King saw the whole bird. The LEAST BITTERN was seen with six VIRGINIA RAILS in the grasses and we all saw it very well. Due to the intense heat rising off the mud flats, we didn't even look at the thousands of shorebirds, but contented ourselves with the many rails, the three AMERICAN BITTERNS, many GREAT BLUE HERONS, a perfect GREEN HERON, and an OSPREY. Some of the twelve participants stopped on the way home at Bolsa Chica for good looks at the terns and were rewarded with a BURROWING OWL.

Jean Brandt, leader.

FIELD TRIP - Newport Bay, Oct. 9

Betty and Laura Lou Jenner led an unusual field trip to Newport Bay, duplicating the success of the Tuesday, Oct. 5 group in locating four species of rails, Sora, Virginia, the endangered California Clapper Rail and the rare Black Rail. This last made numerous appearances during lunch and was seen by everyone present. Marsh Wrens and many species of shorebirds were seen. Also seen were two Ospreys, a White Tailed Kite and a Burrowing Owl.



THE RALPH NADER TASK FORCE POINTED OUT SOME DISTURBING BUT NOT SO SURPRISING facts concerning the Irvine Company and the Upper Newport Bay in their report "Power and Land in California." Though there appears to be some legitimate criticism about the report, I have yet to see it concerning the Upper Bay. Some of the comments appearing in Chapter IV are as follows. "Approximately 67% of the estuarine acreage deemed a 'basic area of important habitat' for wildlife (by the Department of Interior) in California have been lost by dredging and filling. No other state has lost more than 15% of such areas, and nationally about 7% have been lost (excluding California, the national average is only about 4%). . . According to the National Estuary Study, 'Upper Newport Bay is the last major baylike body of water remaining in a fairly pristine condition along 400 miles of coast between Morro Bay and Estero de Punta Banda in Mexico! . . The Department of Interior has estimated that 'such a development will destroy about 90 percent of the present natural resource value of the Bay.' " (Irvine would turn it into a marina-residential complex.)

The Nader Report points out serious errors in the land appraisals, such as the value of the islands to be traded to the County being over assessed by 100 times! . . . "there is a serious flaw in the State Lands Commission's finding of equal value. The three islands and uplands to be given to the County are valued at \$14 million. This figure is based on the assumption that the islands can be developed for residential purposes, a questionable assumption given the propensity for flooding. However, under the terms of the exchange, the islands are to be dredged and used to fill the tidelands which Irvine is to receive (and the County and Irvine are to share the expense of this dredging). Thus, the County will actually end up with a waterway instead of the three islands. This Alice-in-Wonderland result is achieved by phrasing the agreement in such a way that the County actually does receive title to the islands, but with the proviso that they be dredged. There appears to be some confusion about the value to the County of islands that the County must wipe out at partially its own cost to then give back as earth fill to Irvine."

The President of Irvine, Mr. Mason, elucidated their position by referring to the Upper Bay "as 'a great big mudhole,' and denigrated studies (e.g., by State Fish and Game) asserting it to be of critical importance. Moreover, President Mason stated that they were disturbed over the current concern for ecology because they're for ecology and they're afraid that this concern for ecology will lead to a reaction against ecology which will be bad for ecology and they don't want a reaction against ecology and therefore there shouldn't be so much concern for it (!)"

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Urge that Upper Newport Bay be established as a National Refuge. Write to Secretary of Interior Rogers C. B. Morton, Washington D. C. 20240 and Secretary of Natural Resources Norman B. Livermore, State Lands Commissioner, and Senator Dennis E. Carpenter, State Capitol, Sacramento 95814 (address for the last three).



#### ST. MONICA MTS. UNIQUE-IRREPLACEABLE

The Ventura-Los Angeles Mountain & Coastal Study Commission presents significant preliminary conclusions concerning the zone extending from Pt. Mugu to Griffith & Elysian Parks in their Preliminary Report. The Commission strongly endorses AB 1056, the Z'berg bill placing a moratorium on development. They specifically propose that Mulholland Drive from the San Diego Freeway to the Pacific Coast become a slow speed, scenic parkway, with bicycle and horse trails and scenic turnouts. They recognize that the mountains & coast are a unique & irreplaceable natural resource. They recommend a rollback of zoning to forestall further development. The scientists that testified were unanimous of opinion that impending development of the zone represents a major threat to marine life & the physical integrity of the shoreline. They recognize the value of the estuaries at Malibu Lagoon & Mugu Lagoon.



# !announcements!

THE  
LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
ANNUAL DINNER  
WILL BE HELD  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1972  
PROFESSOR BARTHOLOMEW  
WILL PRESENT  
FILMS ON THE GALAPAGOS  
(not those shown at the recent evening meeting)

## PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION

The cost of bonding the Treasurer has increased ten-fold, and is now \$50 per annum per \$1000 protection. For this reason the Executive Board of the Los Angeles Audubon Society proposes to eliminate from the Constitution of the Society Article VI, General Finances, Section 3. "The Treasurer shall be bonded" by vote of the membership at the next Evening Meeting, Tuesday, November 9, 1971, and announced at the Evening Meeting in October.

ANYONE WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHRISTMAS  
COUNT OF THE SANTA BARBARA AUDUBON SOCIETY MAY  
GET IN TOUCH WITH BILL URE, 2310 SANTA BARBARA  
STREET, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93100, PHONE  
805 966-5350 OR 805 965-6537.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY

*Continued from page nine*

some long-nosed tweezers, pink bandages ripped from a sheet, a jar of empty vitamin E capsules, and a vial of alcohol where we kept Bobby lice, gathered for someone who might know how to unlock a louse's secrets.

Blooby's gone, and we know that he's on his way, somewhere... All that lingers is a faint fishy smell when I mop the room, a tiny feather or two that I refuse to sweep out of the door. Blooby's visit wouldn't mean much to a real birder, one who can chase wings freely—from south sea bouy to far flung glacier. But to us, he was a precious bit of seafoam from some tropical shore, plucked up by a wild wind and brought to rest in our dry desert-bound hearts for only a moment, then it was gone...



## \* Sales Audubon House Department

### BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

We recently added to our ecology section a very unusual new book entitled "An Island Called California" by Elna Bakker. With so much interest in our environmental conditions today, the author explains with clarity and illustrations why California is an ecological wonderland.

For those who are fortunate enough to travel we have another foreign field guide book entitled "Birds of the West Indies" by James Bond which covers birds of the Caribbean Islands, 400 to be exact. In the record racks a new arrival is added to the many others called "Common Bird Songs" which feature the calls and songs of 60 common eastern birds.

Lastly, but most important, we now have a wide selection of Kay Dee handprint towels, calendars (wide & narrow) plus several sets of matching apron, mit and potholder. With the Christmas holiday season not far away these will come in handy for that "last minute gift". We are truly proud of our new display case which holds our many new varieties of stationery such as original nature block prints by Gwen Frostic and Richard Sloan's wild life painting note paper. Do come in and browse.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1971

## Rare 'Kangaroo' Bird Found in Mexico

Discovered in 1833

A rare "kangaroo" bird that carries its young in pouches under each wing has been found in southern Mexico.

The bird, called the American finfoot, keeps the young in the pouches even during flight or while swimming.

Announcing the find in an article in its annual publication, *The Living Bird*, the Cornell group said the bird was noticed by Miguel Alvarez del Toro, director of the Institute of Natural History in Tuxtla Gutierrez, a small city in Chiapas.

(The species was first discovered in 1833 by a German ornithologist in Brazil.)

In writing to Cornell, he said that the nest contained empty egg shells but no chicks, and that the male finfoot became alarmed when he approached and flew away.

Subsequently, the scientist said, he captured the male and discovered on each side beneath the wing a pleat of skin forming a slight depression, or

cavity, into which the young fit.

"Numerous side feathers, which enclose the body of [each of two] chicks, add to the effectiveness of this pocket," he wrote. "Muscular control probably holds the chick [one on each side] against the body, offering warmth as well as concealment. In this depression the chicks are perfectly secure, even when the male swims or flies."

He said the female had no skin pleats under its wings, and probably did not take care of the chicks, at least not in the early period following hatching.

The scientist said it was likely that the male placed the chicks immediately into the pockets in some unknown manner and kept them there for several days.

While carrying the young, he said, the male reaches beneath each wing to feed them.

He said the bird, about the size of a small duck, ranged from southern Mexico to North-eastern Argentina.



(Guy McCaskie, et al). MAGNOLIA WARBLERS are normally rare in the fall and three sightings is above average. Ernie Abeles found one in Tuna Canyon on September 20 and two individuals were seen in the Tijuana River Valley below San Diego on September 19 and October 3. PALM WARBLERS (rare but regular in fall and winter) were seen at Malibu Lagoon (Lee Jones) and in the T.J.R.V. in early October. LUCY'S WARBLERS (rare along the coast) were reported from Tapia Park, Malibu on October 2 (Sandy W.) and below San Diego on September 22 (Jon Atwood). TENNESSEE WARBLERS were found only below San Diego with at least three individuals there between September 12 and October 9. BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLERS (rare but regular) were found at Morro Bay (Mike San Miguel), Pt. Fermin (Heindels) and two below San Diego—one on September 20 (Hank Brodtkin) and one on the 28th (Alan Meyerfeld). The Heindels found a very rare BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER in Recreation Park, Long Beach. Sandy Wohlge-muth reported another at Tapia Park on September 26. Both of these reports are early for this difficult warbler, as it is usually very late (November). It is easily confused with a Hermit-Townsend hybrid. Whenever a Black-throated Green is suspected, a complete field description should be written and confirmation by other qualified observers should be requested.

In recent years the area below San Diego (Tijuana River Valley and Otay Mesa) has had the most vagrants and the best coverage, chiefly by Guy McCaskie who recognized its potential almost ten years ago. This fall was no exception, as Guy and others found many rarities there: a WORM-EATING WARBLER (2nd record in our area); a PINE WARBLER (3rd record); two CAPE MAY WARBLERS (3rd and 4th records); a CANADA WARBLER (less than 10 records); at least three TROPICAL KINGBIRDS (rare and



Sharp-tailed



Chipping



Clay-colored

irregular along the coast in fall); at least four CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS (rare and difficult to identify—another was found at Morongo Valley on October 6; two ORCHARD ORIOLES (rare in fall and winter); and a single BALTIMORE ORIOLE (rare but regular in winter).

There were several interesting reports other than warblers from our area. BOBOLINKS were more widely reported than ever before, with several in the Sepulveda Recreation Area (Jon Dunn), two at Malibu (John Mencke), two at Harbor Lake, San Pedro (Shirley Wells), and up to five at three different places below San Diego. Two LEWIS' WOODPECKERS were found in the riparian growth along a river in Camp Pendleton (Shirley Wells) and one was at Tapia Park (Sandy W.). This may portend a winter invasion to our area of this species. Grace Nixon had a GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET in Palos Verdes on October 9. This is our first lowland report this fall. Trudy Siptroth reports a SHARP-TAILED SPARROW at Upper Newport Bay on September 18, which is very early for this rare and secretive winter straggler. From the preceding reports of rare birds it can be seen that there is little space for a discussion of the more important, but less glamorous movements of summer birds leaving, winter birds arriving and common migrants passing through our area.

## Continued from page three

cariously balanced pen and enter, to pet the mottled brown-white neck while it shivered violently, ready to peck at us if our hands strayed too far down his back.

Meantime, we were proudly showing Blooby photos all over town. "Well," snickered one un-appreciator, "some people show baby pictures and some show booby pictures!" Fallen nestlings, snakes, lizards, toads, wandering turtles, cocoons, a badger, a wounded shrike, —okay, but a Blue-footed Bobby? "Whatcha been squeezin' up at your house?" asked one telephoner.

"I didn't know 'they' had feet!" cackled another.

One morning at 5 a.m., Arnold Small and Jay Sheppard stopped by on their way to see frigatebirds and redheaded woodpeckers reported at the Salton Sea area. Blooby, they said,

was an immature bird and the small iris indicated that he was, indeed, a male. And Blooby wasn't as rare in the area as we had thought him to be. About the same day as he was found, all over Southern California there was a mysterious mass exodus, an "explosion" from the Gulf of California. Boobies were reported down in reservoirs and ponds in Pasadena, Ontario, Riverside, San Bernardino, Palos Verdes and off the coast. Twenty to thirty had been reported from the Salton Sea... They offered Blooby a lift...

They put him in a box and drove away quietly, before the children could awaken.

At the Sea, Blooby swam out and took himself a long, ecstatic, leisurely bath. Then he swam out to a little rocky isle to dry his feathers, to contemplate the journey home.

There wasn't much left to remind us of Blooby. His sickbay accessories included only



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Birds

# Shumway Suffel

**IT** is timely to quote a paragraph from my first regular article for the *Tanager* 4 years ago:

Activity in November settles down to a normal pace, after the hectic migration days of early fall. Once again we see robins and juncos on our lawns, White-crowns and Kinglets in the bushes, and hear the high-pitched notes of Cedar Waxwings overhead. Each one of these species may have a rarer sibling species in close association with it. So, the eager birder examines the flocks in hopes of finding that one odd bird - a Varied Thrush, a Slate-colored or Gray-headed Junco, a Harris Sparrow, a Golden-crowned Kinglet or a Bohemian Waxwing.

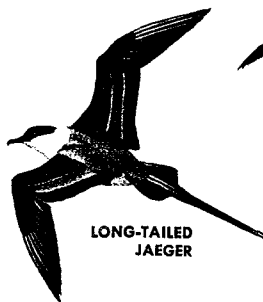
If anyone thinks those days in early fall were hectic, he did not go birding along the coast in September or early October. Shirley Wells' BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER was last seen by Peter and Sunny Christensen on September 18 after two weeks sojourn in Palos Verdes. A single STILT SANDPIPER (rare coastally) was found at the Goleta Sewer Plant on September 24, but was not seen on the 26th. PECTORAL SANDPIPERS were widely reported, with two near Goleta (Bruce Broadbooks), three at the mouth of the Santa Clara River (Christensens), three at Malibu Lagoon and three at Legg Lake in El Monte (Ed Navajosky), five at San Elija Lagoon and several more in the San Diego area. SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were solitary for the most part, and several individuals were sighted in our area, but Ed had two together at Malibu with one staying well into October. No BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS were reported after early September. They are very early migrants.

Other birds of interest along the coast included: an ARCTIC TERN at Malibu (almost unknown ashore, unless sick or "oiled," as this bird probably was), found independently by Jon Dunn and Ed Navajosky on September 20. It or possibly another one was found at the same place in early October (Jean Brandt). This one was definitely "oiled". Ed also found an immature FRANKLIN'S GULL at Malibu the next day. A BLACK SKIMMER stayed along the Silver Strand below Coronado in mid-September. Since this is only the second coastal record in recent years, one wonders if this could be the same skimmer that was seen at Upper Newport Bay on September 5 and 6. PARASITIC JAEGERs were noted along the coast, usually in pursuit of those excellent fishermen—the Elegant Terns. The pelagic trips found POMARINE JAEGERs almost as common as gulls or shearwaters with about 200 being counted off San Diego on September 11. Birders on this same trip had the treat of a lifetime—a LONG-TAILED JAEGER with a long tail, normally difficult to distinguish from Parasitics. OS-

PREYS have been reported in unusual numbers with single sightings near Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands, near Malibu, above Newport Bay, at both the north and south ends of the Salton Sea and below San Diego. An early FERRUGINOUS HAWK was found near the Mexican border below San Diego on October 8 (Ron Beck, et al).

Every fall we hear that there are a good number of vagrant warblers but not as many regular West Coast warblers as usual. Guy McCaskie theorizes that warblers are spring migrants along our coast, not fall migrants, and that we should think of them as vagrant Western and Eastern warblers. Naturally, the West Coast vagrants outnumber the Eastern because they are here in great numbers to start their vagrancy, whereas, the Eastern vagrants start their vagrancy thousands of miles to the north or east of us. If this is so, then what route do the regular West Coast migrants take in the fall? They follow the mountains, not the coast for the main reasons: the mountains provide better habitat in the fall than in the dry and almost waterless coast. (We must think of conditions obtaining when the patterns of migration were being developed.) The mountains lead more directly to the west coast of Mexico where most of our warblers winter rather than in Baja. In the spring the coast provides a more favorable climate with adequate water and food.

Even though REDSTARTS are normally our commonest vagrant, very few have been seen this fall—a few near San Diego and four at the south end of the Salton Sea, where a few regularly winter. BLACKPOLLS (next most common) were widely reported from Morro Bay to San Diego between September 24 and October 10, with sightings at Tapia Park in Malibu (Sandy Wohlgemuth), Malibu Lagoon, Pt. Fermin and several near San Diego. There were at least a dozen sightings of VIRGINIA'S WARBLERS in September with single individuals at Malibu Lagoon (Jean Brandt), at Pt. Fermin Park (Shirley Wells), and about ten below San Diego



LONG-TAILED  
JAEGER



PARASITIC  
JAEGER