

# The Western Tanager

VOLUME 38 1971-72 · No 9 MAY

## Botanic Gardens as Bird Refuges

by ROBERT and ELIZABETH COPPER

**The** continuing press of urbanization on natural areas and the growing realization that habitat preservation is an integral part of species preservation are leading those concerned to more closely examine the wildlife potential of non-urban areas within our population centers. Botanic gardens are particularly important because they contain primarily non-native plants, and represent on an enlarged and protected scale the dominant plantings found in the general urban environment.

**The Los Angeles** State & County Arboretum in Arcadia is a 127-acre botanic garden operated by the County of Los Angeles, containing over 8,000 types of plants representing every continent. Once the center of the historic Rancho Santa Anita, the property's development has been particularly well documented. In the early 19th century, the area consisted of a mixed Coast Live Oak and Engelmann Oak forest, a large marshy pond, and a climax chaparral community. Water was surprisingly abundant, and a number of artesian wells provided the water needed for extensive agriculture. The land was obtained in the 1830's by Hugo Reid, a Scots entrepreneur. Reid imported olives, almonds, dates and some of Europe's finest wine grapes and turned the rancho into a highly productive agricultural concern. Shortly before the Mexican War began in 1846, Reid sold a large part of the ranch for 20¢ an acre. The land passed through the hands of a number of owners, all but one of whom made large profits from developing its agricultural potential. In 1875, E. J. Baldwin, a tycoon of the Comstock Lode, purchased the property and expanded the rancho to nearly 80,000 acres. Baldwin developed the citrus orchards planted by earlier owners and also planted an astounding selection of ornamental plants collected on world voyages. Many of these plants remain today. After Baldwin's death, his heirs sold most of the property to subdividers, but retained the central 127 acres containing Baldwin's and Reid's houses. This area was used as a World War I Army Flying Service training camp and was then essentially abandoned. Plantings and orchards were neglected, and much of the area was once again covered with native plants. The property was eventually sold to the State of California, but remained untouched until the California Arboretum

Foundation was formed in 1947 to create a botanic garden on the site. The development that was to take place in the next 25 years transformed the land from a half-naturalized ranch into Southern California's largest botanic garden. Acres of poison oak, scrub oak and other natives were removed. The tule marsh was cut back to once again make a pond, and a second pond was excavated on the west end of the grounds. Thousands of ornamental plants were placed in geographic sections, drawing largely from areas climatically similar to Southern California, notably the Mediterranean, Australia, and South Africa.

**The** horticultural development of the Arboretum has been well-documented; the consequent faunal adjustments have not. The Arboretum has long been utilized by birders, and some sight records were kept; however, habitat selection and population variation have never been studied closely. A superficial view of Arboretum avifauna reveals a total of 175 native species observed in the last five years, and a comparison of sight records over the years



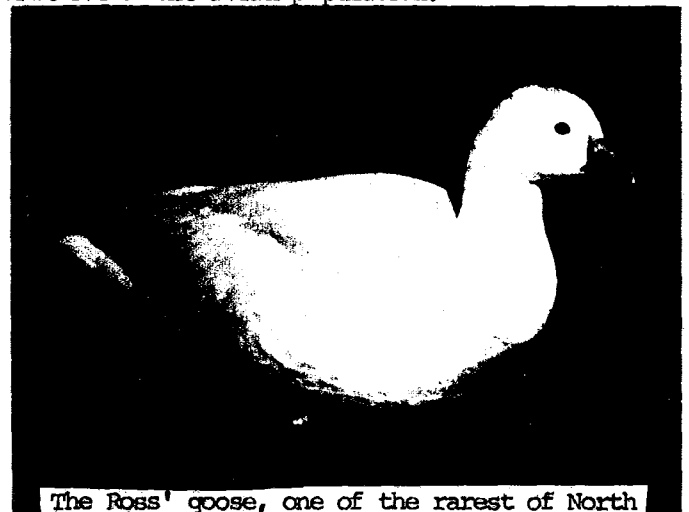
The ruddy duck, the male shown in full courting display, feeds on deep water pond organisms.

*Photograph by Robert Copper.*

does show a decline in such species as the large herons, eagles and rails. These declines are most likely attributable to public pressure on the habitat. Sight records, however, cannot fully describe the habitat selection and population variation of the many other species present. In order to determine these factors, we have undertaken a project involving bird banding and a thorough biological survey of the area, since the avian population cannot be properly analyzed without awareness of its ecological community.

**The** bird population at the Arboretum is best discussed in terms of the botanical communities that constitute the main habitat areas. The Australian plant section at the north end of the grounds contains eucalyptus, acacia, melaleuca, callistemon and other species from Australia's semi-arid regions. These regions are climatically very similar to Southern California, and many of the plants are in the chaparral group. In fact, a nearly complete chaparral community seems to exist in the Australian section, with Australian plants substituted for California natives. Birds are a prime indicator of the existence of this community, in that although some chaparral birds can be found throughout the Arboretum, the greatest concentrations are found in the Australian section, including the entire populations of those species most dependent on the chaparral habitat, such as California Quail, California Thrasher and the Roadrunner. The presence of the Roadrunner indicates the presence of his food supply, mainly reptiles. The presence of the reptiles indicates that their preferred insect food has also taken up residence. Chaparral insects are well-documented parasites of introduced Australian plants. It has also been noted that high concentrations of migratory warblers and sparrows are present in this section, and banding recapture data indicate that many of these migrants restrict themselves to this area. Flickers also seem to prefer the Australian section, for the insects found in the layers of eucalyptus bark and the many ants attracted to the flowers of the myrtaceous and proteaceous plants. Most of the hawks found in the Arboretum, particularly the buteos, are restricted to the Australian section. Several species of rodents are present, and in large enough numbers to provide a steady diet for the hawks. Even though there are a few native Engelmann Oaks present, the rodents seem to prefer the dense foliage of the acacias for nesting. It is interesting to note that relatively few hawks were present in the Arboretum before the construction of the Foothill Freeway, which destroyed several hundred acres of essentially native oak forest. During the freeway construction, the number of rodents, predatory mammals and hawks on the ground increased dramatically. Nesting activities in this section indicate a preference of most species for native material, but no preference for site. It has also been observed that Australian plant material similar to native material is used when no native material is available. The Australian section has been heavily mulched, and this mulch seems to be the equivalent of the duff found in mature chaparral communities as far as the insects, reptiles, and birds are concerned.

Two riparian woodland areas exist on the grounds, the jungle and the willow bog of the upper pond. The jungle, approximately three acres bordering the lower pond, contains a mixture of over 1,000 ornamental plants and three main native plants, dogwood, grape and Arundo cane. The willow bog, less than one acre at the upper end of the upper pond, is a dense thicket of weeping willow, mulefat and some grape. Most of the species that can be found on the grounds will at one time or another occur in the jungle, which is most likely attributable to the permanent water supply available; however, very few birds restrict themselves to this area because of the heavy public usage. The jungle presents great potential for a bird habitat area, but this potential cannot be realized without proper management of the plantings and the public. The jungle was once an ornamental parkland, and was allowed to grow wild. The resulting rampant growth has not proved particularly beneficial. The jungle is, however, an important buffer area for birds that live and nest on the border of the pond, notably Redwing Blackbirds, Yellowthroats and Long-billed Marsh Wrens, which are certainly more abundant in the lower pond area because of this buffer zone. One of the best bird habitat areas in the jungle is a one-acre meadow that was burned to the ground three years ago. The fire removed the choking canopy of grapevine that severely limits the growth of other plants, and stimulated the growth of a large variety of native plants, including some that had not been found in the Arboretum for over 100 years. The area now contains a fairly mature, balanced riparian plant community, which in its diversity of native and non-native plants has become most attractive to the avian population.



The Ross' goose, one of the rarest of North American waterfowl, made a unique visit to the Arboretum in 1968. Photograph by Robert Copper.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The authors are confirmed birders, banders, and photographers who have been active in Audubon since 1967. In five years they have accumulated nearly 60,000 birding miles and over 7,500 photographs. Elizabeth is a student at Cal State Los Angeles and Bob, in addition to his duties at the Arboretum, is information officer for L.A. Audubon. The Coppers plan a joint career in ornithology.

The greatest variety of birds in the Arboretum can be found in the willow bog of the upper pond. The presence of water is again an attraction, but the area is greatly enhanced by the presence of mulefat and the non-native weeping willows. The insectivores are particularly prominent, indicating that their food supply has accepted a non-native botanic area. Although native to China, weeping willows are taxonomically so similar to native willows that they easily replace the native species, and are readily accepted as substitutes by the faunal populations. The area closely resembles an eastern willow bog, and the appearance of associated vagrant species has long been expected. These expectations were in part fulfilled last fall by the appearance of a Northern Waterthrush, which was banded and remained there several days. The quiet water, an inherent part of a willow bog created by the root system of the willows, is an attractive insect breeding area, hence providing an abundant food supply for warblers and other insectivores.

The two ponds attract a large variety of waterbirds to the Arboretum. The vegetation on the borders of the ponds not only provides nesting habitat for the passerines mentioned, but is also used extensively by waterfowl for nesting and feeding. The two ponds are used by migratory waterfowl as both wintering grounds and as a resting area. Ring-necked Ducks, Ruddy Ducks and teal winter every year, with Pintails, Gadwalls, Shovellers and even occasional Canada and White-fronted Geese using the area as a feeding stop. The most unusual bird attracted to the ponds was the Ross' Goose that arrived in the fall of 1968. He remained on the grounds until the following spring and then left in migration with the other waterfowl. Coots and Ruddy Ducks are the most numerous resident waterbirds, and a number of crippled geese have been introduced. Many of these breed and produce young that leave in migration. Both ponds are healthy, with thriving populations of fish (gambusia, carp and four types of native perch), crayfish, turtles and frogs. Botulism is a problem in the summer, but is due primarily to the shallow margins of the lower pond. Many of these areas have been filled and all waterfowl are inoculated against botulism. The fish eaters in the ponds, grebes and coots, seem to prefer the introduced gambusia to the native perch. Gambusia are smaller, easier to catch since they feed on the surface, and lack the sharp spines found in perch. Vegetative food is abundant also, and is exclusively native, although some types have been planted as part of the waterfowl management program. Mats of algae, however unsightly, are a main foodstuff in the pond, and wild celery, wild rice, tules, duckweed and other aquatic plants are also present. Many waterfowl nest in the small areas available, and native plant material is almost exclusively used in nest construction. It is interesting to note that waterbirds show a marked preference for native tules over the introduced papyrus, even though the two plants are very closely related. Kingfishers and Green Herons are also part of the pond life, but no more than two of each of these species has ever been present, and there is

no evidence to suggest nesting. Nesting habitat for Belted Kingfishers is virtually non-existent, and the Green Herons are probably prevented from breeding by the public use of the grounds. It would seem that waterfowl have stricter habitat requirements because of their more rigid feeding and nesting habits. Consequently, emphasis should be given to the preservation and management of potential waterfowl habitat, whether natural or man-made, including especially the planting and maintenance of native plants. It is, of course, obvious that it is much more important to preserve what natural areas we have now rather than to think they can be easily replaced once destroyed.

The historical area most clearly resembles a deciduous eastern forest, with deciduous oaks, walnuts, persimmons and other plants either native or naturalized to the east. This flora combined with native dogwood has attracted such vagrants as the Harris' Sparrow and the White-throated Sparrow. Western species have also adapted to the plantings in the area. White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows are abundant in the fall and winter, and Cedar Waxwings and Robins feed heavily on the berries of the cotoneaster. It is worthy of comment that an introduced species, the Red-whiskered Bulbul, could pose a serious threat to this food supply. It is also interesting to note that all berry-eaters, both native and introduced, prefer the non-native cotoneaster to the native dogwood. The same ecological adjustments have been made by birds in the historical area as found in other parts of the grounds, and it is apparent that entire biological systems, including insects, birds and mammals have adapted to the non-native vegetation.

*To be concluded in next issue*



## CONDOR FUND

ONCE EACH YEAR THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY ASKS ITS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE

### CONDOR SANCTUARY FUND

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE OF COURSE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO "CONDOR SANCTUARY FUND" AND MAIL TO LAAS, PLUMMER PARK, 7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD., LOS ANGELES 90046.

THIS FUND IS FORWARDED TO NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, WHICH USES IT TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY'S CONDOR NATURALIST, RESIDENT AT THE SANCTUARY.



CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 1177- WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT OF 1972  
Introduced by Senator Peter Behr, the bill does the following. 1. PREDATOR CONTROL: No toxicants which cause secondary poisoning may be used; nor may hunters or trappers use saw-tooth or spike traps; no coyote getters may be used or possessed. 2. RODENT CONTROL: The Agricultural Code Section which deals with the control of rodent populations will be amended. The use of 1080 and Thallium will be outlawed altogether. Aerial broadcasting of poison will not be permitted. ALL poisons will have to be identified by simple symbols as to their nature and effect. The Director of Agriculture will have to develop regulations for the safe use of poisons in rodent control programs. When using rodenticides: a permit has to be issued; the chemicals can be put out by licensed agricultural control operators only--but not in areas listed as the habitat of a rare or endangered wildlife species. 3. BOUNTIES: Outlawed at all (state or county) levels. 4. SAW-TOOTH AND SPIKE TRAPS: Outlawed. 5. CRIMINAL PENALTIES for torturing, maiming, or harrassing wounded or trapped animals. 6. NO SHOOTING at ANY birds or mammals from air-planes, snowmobiles, powerboats, sailboats or motor vehicles. (This extends to federal, state or county personnel!) Part of the bill repeals that Fish and Game Code Section which allows for shooting whales, seals and sea lions. (The COALITION AGAINST POISONING OF WILDLIFE, c/o 13 Columbus Ave., San Francisco, Ca 94111, urges your support of SB 1177 by writing your senator today, State Senate, State Capitol, Sacramento, Ca 95814)

Additional Bills in Sacramento 1972  
(See the March and April issues of the "Western Tanager" for bills introduced earlier in the year.)

SB 568-Would require Department of Parks and Recreation to inventory state lands to determine which should be recommended for use by off-road recreational vehicles. Mills, to Senate Natural Resources & Wildlife Committee.

SB 620-Would require state Public Utilities Commission to adopt plan by June 30, 1973, for undergrounding utility lines. Beilenson, to Senate Public Utilities Committee.

AB 886-Would set up mandatory auto inspection in 1974 for all vehicles in the South Coast Air Basin. Biddle, to Assembly Transportation Com.

AB 1104-Would Authorize state Air Resources Board to set standards for gasoline additives. Sieroty, to Assembly Transportation Com.

Find out how each member of the House of Representatives voted on 15 key environmental issues. Available for \$1 from the League of Conservation Voters, 324 C. St. S. E., Wash. D.C. 20003

SB 973-Would require the state Department of Public Works to prepare a statewide plan for bikeways and would appropriate \$80,000 for the plan. Marks.

AB 1559 -Would regulate siting of certain thermal power plants and electric transmission lines through special council. Z'berg, to Assembly Planning and Land Use Committee.

AB 1776-Would declare intent to encourage municipalities to beautify environments with parkways and median strips. Sieroty, to Local Gov't Com.

SB 1366-Would require cities of 100,000 populations or more to form master plan for acquisition of parks. Beilenson.

AB 2157-Would ban importing wild animals not native to California for resale. Burton, to Assembly Natural Resource & Conservation Com.  
SB 1367, 1368-To develop a master plan for land use in the Santa Monica Mountains, from Point Mugu to Griffith Park. Two-year moratorium on new subdivisions or other developments in the zone that might contribute to soil erosion, air or water pollution, or other harm to the public welfare. Stevens, to Senate Local Government Committee.

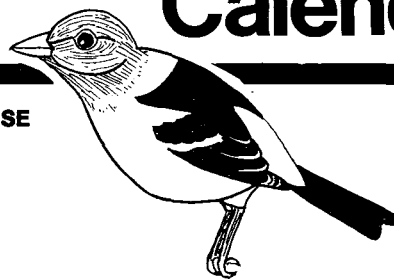
# Los Angeles Audubon Society

# 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**



- May 4 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - 8 p.m., Audubon House.
- May 6 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - MORONGO VALLEY. Meet between 7 and 8 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley.
- 7 Take Interstate 10 east from L.A. area to the Twenty-nine Palms Highway (State 62, 2.5 miles east of Whitewater). Go north approximately 10 miles. Excellent for migrants. Although this is a one-day trip, many stay over to bird Sunday in the Salton Sea area or in nearby Joshua Tree National Monument. There are dry camping facilities in the monument; be sure to bring water if you want to camp. There are motels in Twenty-nine Palms and Yucca Valley. Jim Huffman, 545-1224, leader.
- May 9 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m., Plummer Park. Herb and Olga Clarke will present "Austrian Walkabout," a photographic record of the Los Angeles Audubon Society trip last November.
- May 13 SATURDAY - BUCKHORN FLATS. Take Angeles Crest Highway, State #2, to Buckhorn Ranger Station. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking area about 30 miles from LaCanada. We will walk into camp, about 1½ miles round trip. Woodpeckers, nuthatches and Purple Martins are possibilities. Les and Ruth Wood, 256-3908, leaders.
- May 27 SATURDAY - PELAGIC TRIP - VANTUNA - on board at 5:30 a.m. Directions to Vantuna's berth will be sent with confirmation of reservations. Reservations are limited to 30 persons and will be accepted by mail only. Fare = \$12. Make check payable to the Los Angeles Audubon Society and send to Joan Gabbard, 823 - 19th St., Apt D, Santa Monica. CA 90403. Trip will be to San Clemente Island. Gilbert King, leader, 476-5121.
- May 28 SUNDAY - MT. PINOS. Meet at 8 a.m. at Frasier Park turnoff by restaurant at Shell Station. Frasier Park turnoff is approximately 2 miles beyond Gorman on Highway 99. A good trip for montane species such as Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finch, Calliope Hummingbirds and possibly Condors. Ed Navojowski, 938-9766, leader.
- June 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
- June 3 SATURDAY - PELAGIC TRIP - VANTUNA - on board at 5:30 a.m. Directions to Vantuna's berth will be sent with confirmation of reservations. Reservations are limited to 30 persons and will be accepted by mail only. Fare = \$12. Make check payable to the Los Angeles Audubon Society and send to Joan Gabbard, 823 - 19th St., Apt. D, Santa Monica, CA 90403. Herb Clarke, leader.
- June 10 SATURDAY - SUNDAY - GREENHORN MT. This is an overnight camping trip and will involve about 350 miles of driving. Meet at Rancho Bakersfield at 8 a.m. Follow Highway 99 to Bakersfield. Take 24th St. off-ramp and go east about 15 blocks to H Street. Turn left at Rancho Bakersfield. Some of the group may plan to eat breakfast here and should be prepared to leave by 8 a.m. We will caravan to Greenhorn, birding along the way. Motels available in Kernville, 15 miles east.
- June 13 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING - 8 p.m., Plummer Park. "Birds of the World," an illustrated slide program by Arnold Small, which will survey the 27 orders of living birds.
- June 24 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - THORN MEADOW. Same directions as those for Mt. Pinos except proceed to Lake -25 of the Woods and take left fork to Thorn Meadow Campground. Meet at campground. Bring your own water, it is a dry camp. Bob Blackstone, 277-0521, leader.
- 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 the leader is only responsible for the first day. Participants are expected to arrange their own schedules on the second.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

## The Western Tanager

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LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
7377 Santa Monica Boulevard  
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# audubon activities

**FIELD TRIP, MARCH 11—TUJUNGA WASH.**  
On the Tujunga Wash trip we had a nice combination of desert and water birds. Not far from where we saw the Cactus, Rock and Bewick's Wrens were Bufflehead (4 pairs) Pintails, Cinnamon Teal, Pied-billed Grebes, Dowitchers, Western Sandpipers, Ruddys and about 100 Ring-billed and California Gulls. The Hansen Dam area had recently been restocked with trout—the gulls moved in unannounced. The Wash itself had several migrants. The Swallows and Swifts were on the move: Violet-green Rough-winged. At one spot about 100 American Goldfinch stopped long enough for us to get a good look. Several Lesser were among them. We had Costa's, Anna's, and Allen's Hummingbirds and a couple of Cassin's Kingbirds, and the usual chaparral birds, Wrentits, Bushtits, Thrashers, Towhees (both brown and rufous-sided). Hawks, Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned and Sparrow brought the final count to 46 species. The weather was warm in the sun with a mild wind from the west. There were 22 of us with half dozen new faces. Otto Widmann, leader.

**EVENING MEETING - Mar. 14.** From the beauty of tropical birds in a Caracas hotel garden, to the splendors of Angel Falls, John and Barbara Hopper's program was fascinating. Some close-ups of South America's colorful hummingbirds were possible by using a mist net to capture the birds. The birds were released after being examined and photographed. The trip to Venezuela not only focused on the birds, but also on flowers, insects, the people, scenery and country in general. The excellent slides and detailed narration made the evening a memorable one.

## L. A. Audubon Field Trip to the Arboretum,

On March 26, about 20 people assembled at the Arboretum in Arcadia for a field trip, conducted by Ray Robinson substituting for Bob Copper. Although migration had not really begun, a fairly large number of birds were observed. A hummingbird nest near the youth education buildings attracted attention because of the decorative applique of bits of bark. Shortly after this, an American Bittern was observed in the upper pond. The bittern is an unusual bird for the Arboretum, and is one of only a few recent sight records. The upper pond area also yielded two Red-whiskered Bulbuls, new birds for most on the walk. The Bulbuls are a federally-prohibited bird, and are known to have established a breeding population at the Arboretum in 1968. Some early migrants were observed, two Hooded Orioles, and miscellaneous warblers.

*More on page nine*

The best and most persistent reports have come from remote sections of Louisiana and Texas and the portion of western Florida lying along the Georgia border. Audubon officials believe the bird might also be in the lowlands of South Carolina. There was a widely publicized report that the ivory-bill had been found in the Big-Thicket of Texas in 1967. Some ornithologists now doubt that report.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1972

## Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Lures a Louisiana Expert

By ROY REED

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, April 14—A flutter of excitement ran through the world of nature enthusiasts after a National Audubon Society publication, American Birds, printed in its October issue the following item, almost hidden in a column of notes on other birds:

"On May 22 [1971] a pair of ivory-billed woodpeckers was seen and photographed 'somewhere in Louisiana.' The anonymous observer has been reporting the species for three years but has seldom seen it. The photographs, though taken without high-priced camera equipment, leave no doubt as to the subject's identity. The location was not in virgin timber, long presumed by most people to be necessary for survival of this species."

With that, an old search quickened again. Across the South, from the swamps of the eastern coastal plain to the Big Thicket of eastern Texas, ornithologists and serious bird watchers scanned the high trees with special alertness and longing.

### A Leading Bird Expert

The item in American Birds had been sent in by George H. Lowrey Jr., founder and director of the Museum of Natural Science at Louisiana State University, one of the most respected ornithologists in the United States.

Several times in the last generation, the nation's leading ornithologists have been tempted to assume that the rare and desperately endangered ivory-bill was extinct. It was not seen for long periods. The last report of a live ivory-bill that satisfied virtually all critical scientists was in the early nineteen-fifties, when a trained ornithologist, Sam Grimes of Jacksonville, Fla., saw one in western Florida.

Hundreds of persons have reported seeing the bird since then, but the Audubon Society, the recognized monitor in these matters, has discounted almost all the reports. Most of the observers have mistaken the pileated woodpecker for the ivory-bill. The former is similarly large and marked with the same colors—black, white and red. The pileated woodpecker is the size of a crow, 15 to 19½ inches long, and the ivory-bill is larger, usually measuring about 20 inches. Their calls are different.

### Evidence Hold Convincing

Audubon officials have credited only a handful in recent years with being what they call "hard reports," meaning probably reliable but not firm enough to be considered proof.

Audubon's research Director, Alexander Sprunt 4th of Tavernier, Fla., a leading expert on



Ivory-billed woodpecker

the ivory-bill, considers Dr. Lowrey's report convincing evidence that the bird still lives. He agrees with Dr. Lowrey that the bird in his informant's photographs is an ivory-bill and that the anonymous Louisianian had no reason to falsify the pictures.

The pictures, of rather poor quality, show a woodpecker type of bird on the side of a tree. The bird is black with a red crest and a large patch of solid white on the back.

In a recent interview, Dr. Lowrey said that the bird was "absolutely, unequivocally" an ivory-bill.

### Search to Resume

"But I would like to see or hear it myself before making it final," he said. He and his wife, the only person except his informant who is permitted to accompany him on this quest, made several trips last summer looking for the pair of birds the informant reported. They will resume the search this spring.

Dr. Lowrey, like the Audubon officials, does not believe the birds' whereabouts should be pinpointed. Explicit reports about past sightings have caused crowds of bird watchers and wildlife photographers to flood the areas and perhaps frighten away the birds. Dr. Lowrey will say only that his informant saw the birds in the Atchafalaya Swamp of southern Louisiana.

Dr. Lowrey is one of the few Americans who can say without contradiction that he has seen the ivory-bill. He saw several in the nineteen-thirties in a remote stand of virgin timber once known as the "Singer Tract" in northeastern Louisiana.

The bird is prone to disaster. Its preferred food is a beetle larvae found only in the bark of dying trees, which apparently means that a large tract of mature timber would be necessary to provide a steady diet for the woodpecker.



CALIFORNIA ATTY. GEN. EVELLE YOUNGER  
PETITIONS U.S. TO BLOCK PHOSPHATE PIT  
MINE IN LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST.

Atty. Gen. Evelle Younger asked the federal government to give environmental laws priority over outdated mining law by petitioning to block plans for the phosphate pit mine proposed by U.S. Gypsum in the Los Padres National Forest about 25 miles north of Ventura. According to Dep. Atty. Gen. Larry King as reported in the L. A. Times, "If we prevail, it will establish a national precedent favoring environmental law. If the mining lease is granted, I expect we will sue the Department of the Interior."

The mine would be adjacent to California 33, a proposed scenic highway, with mining operations to last 50 years or more, terracing Pine Mountain, and requiring a million gallons of water per day. It has been estimated that more sulfur dioxide would be emitted to the air than all existing sources in Ventura County combined.

The National Environmental Policy Act was passed after the U.S. Geological Survey declared the phosphate deposit "valuable," and Younger claims that the Act mandates a reconsideration of "valuable," taking into account the long term social costs and environmental harm that would result from the removal of phosphate from a national forest.

Audubon has long opposed this pit mine because of its possible threat to the endangered California condor.

MORTON WITHDRAWS ALASKAN LANDS, EPA RESTRICTS POISONS, HIGHWAY FUNDS URGED FOR MASS TRANSIT, TREATY PROTECTS HAWKS AND OWLS. "There's been a spectacular burst of good news which Dr. Stahr, in a congratulatory letter to President Nixon, described as 'a record week . . . of outstanding environmental decisions.' The Secretary of the Interior set aside vast acreages in Alaska to protect them from piecemeal, unplanned economic development. The Environmental Protection Administrator suspended use of four poisons against wildlife. The Secretary of Transportation proposed that part of the Highway Trust Fund be used for mass transit. And a treaty with Mexico has in effect extended federal protection to the hawks and owls and to some other previously unprotected species." Audubon Leader, Volume 13, Number 6.

OFF ROAD VEHICLES . . . "The Sierra Club called for the prohibition of ORV's on all public lands unless it can be proven they do not harm the land. President Nixon's Executive Order allows for ORV use on public lands but requires 'administrative designation of the specific areas and trails on public lands on which the use of off-road vehicles may be permitted.' Both policies call for designation of specific trails and areas for use and both demand that trails be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other resources, that the effect of ORV's on wildlife be considered, and that natural scenic and esthetic values be given complete consideration. The President asks for joint enforcement of pertinent regulations by appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, and for a continuing review of ORV use on public lands. . . Send a letter to the President which delineates your thanks for this executive order and ask for strong implementation. . . Send a copy of your letter to: Mr. Russell Penny, BLM, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2841, Sacramento, Ca 95825." Larry Moss, Southern Sierran, April 1972.

TRANS-ALASKAN PIPELINE . . . A letter from sixteen environmental organizations to President Nixon requested that discussions be initiated concerning Alaska-Canadian oil development. The letter stating that the environmental impact statement on the trans-Alaska pipeline "acknowledges that it will create great environmental hazards to Alaska and to North American west coast marine values," also noted that it is almost certain that natural gas occurring with oil at Prudhoe Bay will be transported by pipeline from Alaska through Canada to the U.S.





# !announcements!

The following slate for officers of the society for the year 1972-73 was announced by the nominating committee at the April 11th Evening Meeting.

President: Mr. Leslie Wood  
1st Vice President: Dr. Gerald Maisel  
2nd Vice President: Dr. Freeman Tatum  
Executive Secretary: Mrs. Dorothy Dimsdale  
Treasurer: Dr. Moulton K. Johnson  
Recording Secretary: Mrs. Laurette Maisel  
Registrar of Members: Mrs. Virginia Johnson

## WARREN BLAZER

Members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society deeply regret the death of Warren Blazer, on March 31, 1972. Warren Blazer was an active birder, remembered by most of us as the leader of the Tujunga Wash and Santa Clara River field trips. He was also Chairman of one of the LAAS Christmas Census Counts. His early birding was on the East Coast, centered in New York City.

The family has requested that anyone wishing to commemorate Warren Blazer may send a donation to

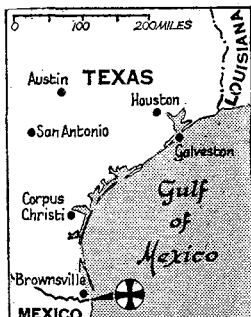
The Nature Conservancy  
Big Morongo Canyon Project  
c/o Wells Fargo Bank  
P. O. Box 60616, Terminal Annex  
Los Angeles, California 90060

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 1972

## Palm Grove Will Be Sanctuary

The last natural palm grove in Texas, described as a "unique treasure," has been purchased by the National Audubon Society and will be preserved as a sanctuary. The price paid was not disclosed.

The grove, comprising about half of a 172-acre tract, is about 10 miles from Brownsville, at the mouth of the Rio Grande on the southern east coast of Texas. It is in an area that commercial interests are seeking.



OFFICIAL SUMMARY OF THE 600 CLUB AS OF APRIL 15, 1972  
(abbreviated for California)

Submitted by Earle R. Greene, P. O. Box 1058, St. Simons Island, Georgia 31522

Joseph W. Taylor (NY)	693	Russell Wilson	643	Fredrxc Haerich	615
Don Bleitz	669	Kenneth Burden	633	Richard Webster	614
R. Dudley Ross (Mass)	666	Herbert Clarke	628	Harold Baxter	613
Elisha Atkins (Conn)	663	Olga Clarke	626	Theodore A. Chandik	612
Earle R. Greene (Ga)	661	James Lane	623	Alan M. Craig	609
Stuart Keith (NY)	658	Ellen L. Stephenson	622	Frank Becherer	606
Roger Tory Peterson (Conn)	656	Allan D. Cruickshank (Fla)	622	Jay M. Sheppard (Md)	604
Ann Follis	645	Laurence C. Binford	620	H. Glenn Stevens	603
Arnold Small	644	Joseph Greenberg	617	Echo Stevens	602
Marion Wilson	643	Valeria DaCosta	615		

## BINOCULARS FOR BIRDING part 9

### Coatings

were invented in 1936 to reduce reflection, which resulted in elimination of internal reflection and bothersome "ghosts" of bright objects. Coatings double the brightness of the image, a valuable factor for owling. Beware of coatings which change color as this can very definitely detract from clues of identification based on shades—such as in empidonax.

If the lenses get dirty, no great decrease in performance is noted. There is a saying among astronomers that "a dirty mirror is better than a cleaned one." The owner of binoculars should take great care in cleaning both the eyepiece and the object in order to prevent scratching. Scratching is bad, since it creates scattered light and lowers the contrast of the image.

To clean the eyepiece or object lens, blow first to get grains of sandy dust off. Ball up lens-cleaning tissue and wipe in rotary motion out in a spiral motion. (Do not use silicone-treated spectacle wipers, because silicone oil is actually used to grind lenses to their final curvature.)

## ARBORETUM BIRD WALKS

For quite a few years now, the Arboretum has offered public bird walks on the first Sunday of every month. The walks have consisted of the leader, currently Bob Copper or Ray Robinson, taking a group (30 average) around the grounds for an hour and a half pointing out birds. Local Audubon affiliates have suggested changing this format into a bird identification training series similar to one currently conducted at South Coast by Mrs. Shirley Wells. Plans have been made to do this at the Arboretum. Each month a different group of birds will be studied, based on the season and the interest of Audubon members. The first half hour of each session will be indoor instruction utilizing slides, specimens, etc. to point out the fine points of bird identification. The remaining hour will be spent in the field giving the birdwatchers the opportunity to put their new knowledge to use.



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Continued from page ten

wind above a nearby hilltop on April 16th. Three immature BALD EAGLES were still at Lake Cachuma in mid-March according to Ed. Navojosky and Phil Sayre. Later in the day they found 150 COMMON LOONS at the lower end of the lake (an extraordinary concentration). Robert Fleisher reports a CLAPPER RAIL at Morro Bay on March 29th. The status of "Clappers" there is uncertain, as only a few have been recorded, and these few may represent a small resident population, or wanderers from the north (obsoletus) or south (levipes) according to Grinnel and Miller. Any clarification on their status there would be appreciated. Robert also found a LONG-EARED OWL'S nest east of San Louis Obispo on the same trip. Another nest with two downy young owlets was found by the Clarkes at the Mojave Narrows Park, above Victorville, in mid-March. By late March they were feathering out, and by April 5th the nest was empty. The sighting of a pair of SPOTTED OWLS in broad daylight at Nojoqui Falls Park, near Solvang, sent local birders trekking around the loop north of Santa Barbara, and most of them added a new bird to their lists. Several LEWIS' WOODPECKERS remained from last winter's invasion- one near Oceanside on March 27th (Alice Fries), and eight or ten at Furnace Creek Ranch as late as April 7th. Jean Brandt missed her weekly telephone Bird Report on March 8th, but it was all worth while, when she awakened early, stepped out of her motor home parked under a tree in Los Baños Refuge, and found a NORTHERN SHRIKE calling in the tree right over her head. One's first Northern Shrike is a bird to study and remember, so this highlighted a day filled with geese, cranes and waterbirds.

Having mentioned the sighting of eight Fulmars feeding in the surf at night in the April "Tanager," it is co-incidental that The Condor for spring 1972 has an article on "The Relation of Pineal Atrophy to Nocturnality" (I didn't say that, W. B. Quay did) which cites the Procellariiformes (Tubenoses) as one of the families in which "Nocturnal activity typifies diverse species of shearwaters...". Although Fulmars are not specifically mentioned, their close relationship to shearwaters makes nocturnality a probable characteristic, and Rusty's observation one of real interest.

In this same issue of "The Condor" there is an article by Gary Stiles on "Age and Sex Determination in Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds" much of which is based on measurements and tail feathers taken from hummers netted by Shirley Wells on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. She has a unique opportunity to study Selasphorus hummers, as Rufous and Allen's hummers are migratory there, while the sedentary "island" race of Allen's (S. s. sedentarius) is resident on the Peninsula, a fact which was not known until Shirley found them nesting, and later wintering there a few years ago. This article has a key for identification in the hand of species and race, sex and age, but cautions that ONLY ADULT MALES ARE SEPARABLE IN THE FIELD.

Recently Guy McCaskie received word that a large bird, possibly a Cooper's Hawk, was eating oranges from a tree in a San Diego suburb. His curiosity was whetted by such uncharacteristic behavior, and his investigation revealed a male WHIP-POOR-WILL feeding in the orange tree in daylight. Whip-poor-wills are a rare bird in California in any case, and this one doubly rare since it was present in March, and was probably of the eastern race - a "Whip" of the eastern race was netted, measured and photographed in San Diego on Nov. 14, 1970 (Calif. Birds V. 2 No. 1). These are the only California records, except for a few nesting pairs of the Arizona race in the San Jacinto Mts., and the only "winter" records.

A few late reports are of interest. Mike San Miguel found a BLACK-HEADED GROSBEL on March 30th (prior to our other "first") and two MAC GILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS on April 8th, both near Duarte. In Palos Verdes, Grace Nixon had six BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS on April 10th, and Shirley Wells observed a small migratory movement of LAZULI BUNTINGS on her San Pedro hilltop. "The bird of the month", however, was at Pamela Greene's Santa Monica feeder, an "almost full breeding plumage" male DICKCISSAL. She and Keith Axelson studied it as it fed for almost five minutes on April 9th and then flew on.

Wherever there is water, on the desert, along the foothills, even on the coast there should be migrants in May, but probably the desert will be best- Morongo Valley, Twenty-nine Palms, Borrego Springs, Finney Lake and Furnace Creek are the better covered spots, but there are many more. Along the coast and at the Salton Sea a water and shorebirds will be moving north. Some of the rarer shorebirds are more likely to be found in fresh water marshes, streams and flooded fields- Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers are almost unknown in Spring, but "Solitaries" are a possibility. Pamela Greene suggests the flooded Santa Clara river-bottom near Ventura, as a freeway-close spot for waterbirds. This is the month for exciting birds. It's more satisfying to find them yourself, but listen to the bird tape (874-1318) so that you won't miss the rarer ones.

## Audubon Activities

CONTINUED

FIELD TRIP - Apr. 9. On a beautiful spring day, 29 birders made the annual trip around Chantry Flat and down into Santa Anita Canyon. We were apparently a little early for most migrants, so the trip was somewhat disappointing on that score. Many BULLOCK'S ORIOLES were seen but a total of only 6 migrant warblers of 4 species. However, we were successful in finding a pair of DIPPERS apparently feeding young in a nest hidden under a large rock beside the stream. Altogether 43 species of birds were noted. Hal Baxter, leader.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

## Shumway Suffel

**may** should provide a continuation of the migratory activity of late April, and that should be good, as even now, in early April, interesting reports are coming in. This migration, particularly, is unpredictable, because our unprecedented drought continues- not even a sprinkle since the first of January, a period which covers our rainy season- with a negligible chance for meaningful rain in April or May. We can predict drought will concentrate the small migrants near available water supplies, but will migration be early (it seems possible) or will it be late, and if so, how do the migrants on their wintering grounds in Central or South America know that we're having a drought, or an early spring, in Southern California?

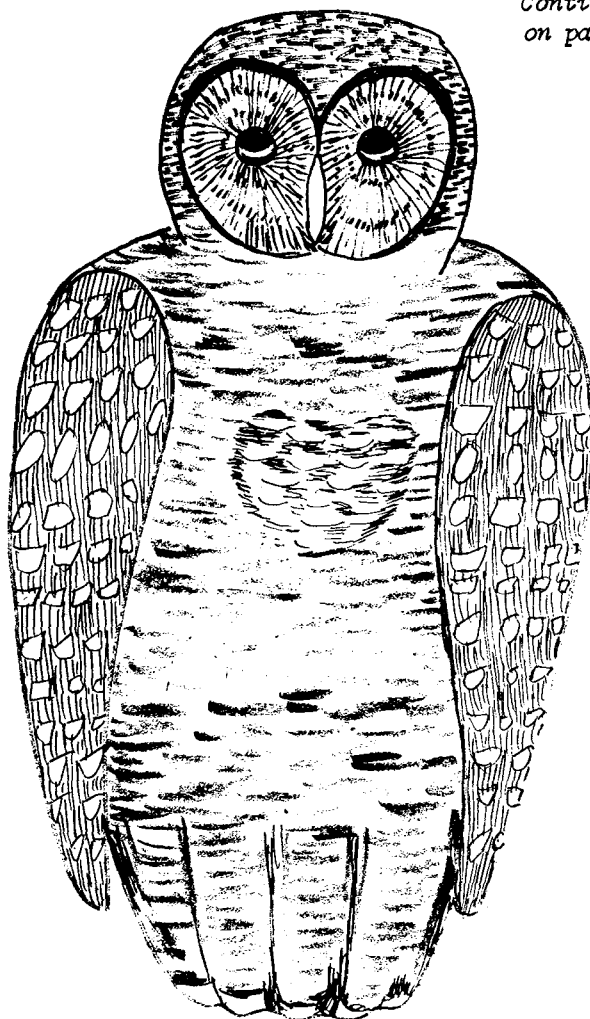
Most of the interesting reports are of "firsts" for the year. You may very possibly have had earlier observations, but if you did, we did not know of them. Ed Navojosky reports "a few" very early VAUX'S SWIFTS at Malibu on March 16th. This is at least a month early. My first WESTERN KING-BIRD was seen near Pt. Mugu on March 25th, which is late, as they are often reported early in the month. ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHERS were seen in early April with one at Mojave Narrows Park, near Victorville, on the 5th (S.S.), and another in Malibu on the 8th (Hank Brodtkin). WESTERN FLYCATCHERS, our earliest Empidonax, were quite common in Tuna Canyon, Malibu, on March 25th, and undoubtedly were seen before that time, but not reported. All of the swallows, except "Banks" and Martins, were common by mid-March. Single BANK SWALLOWS could be found on the desert side of the mountains - one in Death Valley, and one or more at Afton, E. of Barstow, on April 7th were early reports. The best chance to find this uncommon little swallow is at Yucca Valley or Afton in early May.

The first migrant warblers - Nashville, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, MacGillivray's and Wilson's - were seen in late March, but their numbers should increase into early May. LUCY'S WARBLERS are notably early migrants, but are seldom reported because, who looks for them before late April? Hart Schwartz did, and saw them at Morongo Valley on March 24th, and Jan Tarble and Shirley Wells did at China Ranch, North of Baker, and found them common there on April 5th. Ed Schaar reports that his HOODED ORIOLE returned to Palos Verdes on March 25th, which is about a week late if memory serves correctly. BULLOCK'S ORIOLES also returned before April 1st and SCOTT'S ORIOLES were present on the high desert near Inyokern by April 5th (Bruce Broadbooks). It is odd that our first report of BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS should come from

Santa Barbara, to the north of us, where the Monday Birders (mostly those dedicated L. A. A. S. headquarters' ladies) saw two of them on April 2nd. Finally, Bruce Broadbooks brings word that both the BLACK HAWK and the GRAY HAWK had returned to Southeastern Arizona by late March. Many birders miss the Black Hawk there, because they are best seen early in the season.

In addition to the migratory "firsts" there were reports of resident and late wintering birds. Although the LOUISIANA HERONS have not been seen recently at Bolsa Chica or Pt. Mugu, Alice Fries had one near Oceanside on March 27th. After watching the SAGE GROUSE on their strutting grounds above Crowley Lake, Bruce and I found a very late ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK riding the north

*Continued  
on page nine*



*Spotted Owl at Nojoqui Falls*