

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 38 · 1971-72 · Nº 10 JUNE

DRAMATIS

PERSONAE

Birding in Australia

by Josephine Vaughn



THIRTEEN of us boarded the big 707 jet to fly Pan-American to Australia on November 6, 1971. We were about two hours late leaving Los Angeles, but friends from the Los Angeles Audubon Society had come to bid *bon voyage* so the waiting period was not too arduous.

Jim Huffman, a long-time member of the Los Angeles Audubon, had birded in Australia before. He was our leader and is a dedicated birder, like the man who was asked if he were still interested in birding to which the answer came forth, "It is as if you had asked me if I were still breathing."

Olga Clarke, an energetic delightful person was the co-leader and as enthralled with birds as Jim. She is the wife of Herb Clarke who is the current L. A. Audubon president.

George and Lil Venatta from Palos Verdes are insatiables. Lil, as her husband says, "Is a hell of a good spotter." I am sure that birds appeared when Lil said they were there. We suffered with George laden with a camera, lenses, tape recorder, a sighting 'scope and Robin Hill's large book of Australian Birds.

Clyde Bergman, M.D. from Hacienda Heights, was trained as a child in the African bush where his father and mother were missionaries. If you have seen "Born Free," you saw his home in Kenya he visits frequently. This early training aided him in finding birds and the platypus, the rest of us missed.

Bob Prickett from Santa Barbara, an enigmatic young man, was the equal of any birder and kept meticulous notes. Bill Dow of Eagle Rock, an impeccably groomed gentleman at all times even

when we looked as if we had just come from "Alice." (Alice Springs, an oasis in the outback.) Bill took a great many pictures and filled us in with ecological material.

Polly (Margaret) Carpenter from Pacific Palisades, too, added color with her red blouses and equally red hat. She does research for the Rand Company and was attempting to forget deadlines by finding new birds.

Alberta Gail from La Canada, besides birding and taking pictures, went on to New Zealand for some mountain climbing to keep in trim for her Sierra Club activities with her husband Gene who had to stay home to fix fillings and toothaches. Laura Fisher of Holtville, and ideal roommate. Both of us coming from hot climates liked the same temperature and were overjoyed with Mt. Isa and Mildura. She was a new birder but an enthusiastic one and knew that bird trips are strenuous, having been on one in Hawaii. Unless one has been a member of a birding group, one does not know what it is like to rise at 3:30 a.m. and retire at ten o'clock that night or later, filling the hours between with constant peering for birds.

Amy Lou Duncan from Apple Valley had a birthday, too, on the trip the same day as Clyde. We celebrated at O'Reilly's with a cake and Crimson Rosellas peeking in through the dining room window coaxing for bites.

Josephine Vaughn: I am insatiable, too, and a "naturalist." Several times I have been "accused" of caring more about plants than birds.

Story on page two.

NOTICE

The last issue of Volume 38, July-August, will be mailed in the middle of July.

AUSTRALIA

Mrs. Margaret Sanderson and Mr. Arnold McGill were with us on a birding trip out of Sydney the afternoon of November 8 and immediately we began to see birds new to us—a Nankeen Falcon "hawking" over a paddock; Mudlarks a lap-wing type cousin of a Killdeer and in the same habitat; a Shrike; a Thornbill; a Jackie Winter (brown flycatcher); some water birds; Galahs of the parrot family; a black and white Willie Wagtail with the tipped-up tail that was almost ubiquitous throughout Australia, and an assortment of other birds as we climbed over and under fences to look at in the rain and in weather so cold we thought it surely couldn't be advertised as spring.

From then on until November 28 when our trip ended with us again in Sydney (after days of saying we couldn't see how another day could be better) to me it was like a kaleidoscope—of sounds, colors, new faces, plane rides, all kinds of airports, bus trips, new trees, deserts, breath-taking scenery, rain forests. Being difficult to sort them I want to tell about some special times.

The DAY OF THE PITTA to me was THE DAY! I had studied its picture in my World Bird Book and wistfully desired to see one some time. There are three species in Australia, the Buff-breasted or Noisy Pitta being the one we hoped to see. He is a brightly colored bird, about the size of a young fryer, with plumage of bright blues and greens. He has the appearance of no neck and a short stumpy tail that has stripes of blue and yellow across it. His breast is yellow the same color making a ring around the back of what should be a neck and his head is chocolate brown. My impression of him was a color spectacle.

Near Brisbane ("Brisbun") we visited Barry Morgan and his charming wife, Joanna, also their five-year old son, Robin, at their home in the bush. They were to be our guests while visiting O'Reilly's in Lamington National Park of the Green Mountains. Barry had made tapings of Australian bird calls and songs. We walked from the guest house down a road lined with eucalyptus and impenetrable bush, when Barry said that we were hearing the Noisy bird in the distance. We waited while he played a tape that was a repetition of the sounds off in the distant thick brush. The voice came closer. The Pitta is shy and stays in the thickest cover and will scurry away through the underbrush if approached.

Barry pushes his tape button again, the bird was coming nearer. We stood quietly in the middle of the road. There was a slight rustling and we turned our eyes in that direction. Then came a flashing streak of turquoise, emerald, and gold and onto a small rock at the edge of the road the Pitta posed as if for a command performance—a view we had never expected. I am sure no one took a breath for in the blink of an eye the Pitta had disappeared.

It was almost as if we had imagined him, but it was true and spontaneously we clapped. Polly turned toward me as I glanced at her and

we hugged each other. Barry looked as if he had performed a miracle.

The day before, someone mentioned about the likelihood of seeing a Tawny Frogmouth—the Australian relative of poor-wills and other goatsuckers. Barry and Joanna smiled mysteriously and we followed them to another eucalyptus bordered road not far away. Two delightful young women, also birdos, had a "find" to show us. The husband of one worked for a power company and on his job was climbing a pole and had made a discovery—a female Frogmouth.

"There she is," someone whispered. It couldn't be! On a bare limb extending from the trunk of a eucalyptus was a lump that looked like a woody growth. It was the Frogmouth sitting on a scantily put-together nest. We expected her to move her head to look down at us or even fly away but she remained motionless—the whole 19 inches of her. We could see plainly the hair-like whiskers around the mouth. Even when the two tiny morsels of baby Frogmouths fidgeted, their mother remained statue-still.

She belongs to a family that is nocturnal and is rarely found in the daytime. It was as if we had seen an unbelievable fantasy. There was a later murmur, "This is tops!"

But how wrong he was—colors and sounds turning and crossing—glossy black Cockatoos with reddish tails—staring kangaroos while we stared back—calls of Lorikeets and Rosellas—an agile wallaby skipping across a paddock—the sound of brakes to avoid hitting a young Cassowary. A kaleidoscope did I say? What else can I compare it to—a fantastic jumble.

But a clear picture comes again into view. On the shore of Phillip Island southeast of Melbourne people crowded around barrier ropes looking out toward the waters of Bass Strait. It was a cold November spring night and we had come prepared for this "unusual" weather. A loud speaker was explaining while we shivered that the Little or Fairy Penguins would soon be coming in from their day's feeding. These birds—the smallest of the penguin tribe—had gone in during the early morning hours to feed on tiny marine life. Their small heads could be seen bobbing in the rolling turf.

"Here they come," announced several voices. Slowly at first but determinedly leaning forward in a closely packed wedge-shape group they came across the sand. Several birds looking filled to the brim toppled over but picking themselves up hurried after the now single file of penguins trudging to the top of the bordering hillocks where in burrows waited hungry young ones. The parents feed them regurgitated food and then spend two or three days ashore before going back to the sea.

A searchlight flared for an instant but the phosphorescence found at the shore's edge showed these sixteen-inch tall "little men" in black coats and white vests, the beach was covered with them all in compact groups. We had forgotten it was cold but a heavy rain started and as we too trudged up a path to the waiting bus,

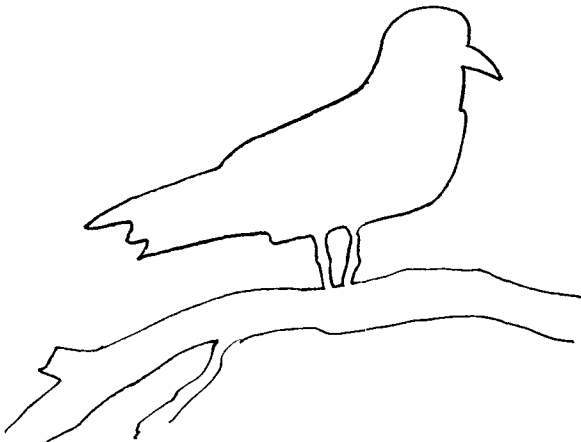
Continued on page eight

Botanic Gardens CONCLUDED

are significant refuges for native species, including insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals, and the relationship between birds and botanic gardens is certainly mutually beneficial, since birds are the single most important source of insect control. In fact, since all songbirds eat insects at one time or another during the year, it can be theorized that many non-native plants have been able to withstand native insects because of birds.

Tallac Knoll, a small hill on the grounds, contains several distinct habitat areas, which will not be discussed in detail here. They include an area of tropical vegetation, a pinetum, an exotic water garden, and a remnant of the Engelmann Oak forest that once extended from Sierra Madre to San Diego. These and other areas in the Arboretum are deserving of close attention in the study of avian adaptation to non-native habitats.

Botanic gardens are also important because they present convenient research areas for studying the compatibility of urbanized ornamental planting and native birds. Much more information is needed to have a thorough appreciation of the intricate relationship between birds and other native animals and their botanical environment. Even though botanic gardens are of obvious value to birds, they are not to be preferred to natural areas. Many birds do seem able to adapt to non-native vegetation, but this adaptation could constitute a serious threat to their populations. If urbanization continues to exert pressure on natural habitats, birds might not be able to make the further inevitable adjustments necessary for survival. The reliance on non-native plants for food is potentially dangerous in that exotic plants are not as well adapted to the environment as are the natives. The natives have the proven ability to endure many environmental changes, but exotics could easily be destroyed by a new insect pest or plant disease. The first priority must be the preservation of natural areas, but at the same time botanic gardens should be developed and utilized for maximum benefit to our native fauna.



ROBERT AND
ELIZABETH COPPER



This cackling goose, a subspecies of the Canada Goose about the size of a Mallard, is one of many injured birds brought to the Arboretum.

Photograph by Robert Copper.



WESTERN SWORD FERN
Polystichum munitum



Alaska

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE ADMITS HARM

From the nine-volume, 3,550 paged environmental impact statement on the proposed trans-Alaska pipeline, the Sierra Club in Vol. 4, No.15, of the National News Report, summed up some of the major problems to which the Department of Interior is now admitting.

"1. The largest remaining wilderness in the United States would be cut in half and its character forever changed. 2. Public access to northern Alaska would be considerably accelerated, both as a direct and indirect result of pipeline construction and operation. This would threaten the wilderness qualities of this area and render difficult the orderly and sensitive growth of potentially valuable developments that could benefit the state for a long time to come. 3. The construction and operation of the pipeline and its associated road, construction pad, and oil field in this permafrost-laden area will be difficult and expensive, and would result in considerable erosion, sliding, drainage pattern and siltation. 4. Pipeline construction will have a detrimental effect on the vegetation, destroying over 61 square miles of surface cover. Revegetation proves to be exceedingly difficult in the Arctic. 5. Pipeline construction will have a negative effect on freshwater life and on fisheries because of unavoidable siltation. 6. The extensive requirements for construction materials (83 million cubic yards) will place a heavy burden on gravel deposits near the construction right-of-way. 7. Despite all precautions, heat loss from the pipeline would cause significant changes over a wide area, particularly in drainage patterns. 8. The noise and activity of construction would reduce the size of the habitat for several species of large mammals and would indirectly and significantly increase the hunting pressure upon them. Aerial transportation for pipeline operation, maintenance and surveillance would cause continuing disruption. 9. The pipeline itself, elevated for over 50% of its length to avoid problems with permafrost, would create

a virtually uncrossable barrier to the migrations of several species of large mammals. 10. Oil terminal operations at Valdez and recipient ports on the west coast would contribute to the degradation of the marine environment, for a series of large and small oil spills are inevitable, as well as water contamination by ballast containing oil. This would be particularly hard on the relatively unspoiled marine environment and valuable fisheries of Prince William Sound. 11. The pipeline and associated systems would directly commit a total of 602,000 acres of Alaskan land to development. 12. There would always remain the threat of inevitable oil spills from the pipeline rupture due to earthquakes, landslides, differential land settlement in unstable soils, various permafrost effects and stream erosion. 13. The siting of several of the pump stations remains in question because of soil instability. Pump station operations would cause industrial-level noise, with unknown effects on wildlife, and they would also emit from 15 to 150 pounds of hydrocarbons per hour into the air to the detriment of delicate Arctic lichens. 14. The pipeline and oil development would be no panacea to the Alaskan economy. The result would be further inflation and continuing unemployment, in spite of the new jobs available in construction, and it would result in a surge in unemployment when pipeline construction is completed. The increased demand for goods and services would place heavy burdens on the Alaskan economy and on the state government in advance of any revenues from oil production."

The Wilderness Society reported on National Security. "The contention is made that the United States can't afford to be dependent on oil from the Middle East. Yet the report admits that North Slope oil (2 million barrels a day) would supply only 9 percent of our projected oil needs in 1980 (22 million barrels per day, according to Economic Analysis Vol. I, p. B-1). Depending on the amount which Canada and South America might be able to supply by that time, we would still need 5 to 6 million barrels a day from the Middle East. (Vol. I, p. B-12)

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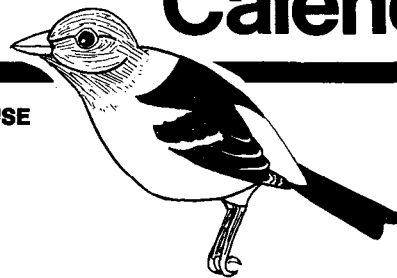
Los Angeles Audubon Society

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**



- June 3 SATURDAY - PELAGIC TRIP - 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 & 11 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. Don and Caroline Adams, leaders - 372-5536.
- 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 meet there at 8 a.m. The last 9 miles to the campground is fair-poor dirt road. Bring your own water - it is a dry camp. A rugged 3-mile hike to Thorn Point may be taken by those who wish. Bob Blackstone, leader - 277-0521.
- July 8 SATURDAY - MT. PINOS - for CONDORS. Take Interstate 5 north to the Frazier Park turnoff, 2.9 miles north of Gorman. Go west 6.8 miles through Frazier Park to Lake of the Woods. Then north right 15.3 miles to Mt. Pinos. Those wishing to walk, and bird, the 3 miles of unpaved road to the summit may park in the lot at the end of the pavement. No prescribed meeting time since we will spend most of the day at the summit. For information call Les Wood, 256-3908.
- July 23 SUNDAY - IRVINE - O'NEIL PARKS. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at entrance to Irvine Park. Take Santa Ana Freeway, Interstate 5, south to Chapman Ave. off-ramp in Orange. Follow Chapman Ave. through City of Orange to entrance to the park. A small parking fee is charged at the park. For information call Les Wood, 256-3908.
- TENTATIVE TRIPS - Details on the following trips will be in the July-August Tanager.
- Aug. 12 SATURDAY - BUCKHORN FLAT
- Aug. 27 SUNDAY - BUENA VISTA LAGOON
- Sept. 9 SATURDAY - MALIBU LAGOON & BIG SYCAMORE CANYON



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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audubon activities

SYCAMORE CANYON, April 17. Occasional cold, gusty winds hampered the warbler-watching for 12 birders, but the group had good views of TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS around a spring about a mile up Sycamore Canyon. There is still some water flowing from springs up Serrano Canyon, and this should keep the birds coming in during the summer. A SOLITARY VIREO was observed here, BLACK-CHINNED and COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRDS were at the mouth of the canyon, and at least one pair of WHITE-THROATED SWIFTS appeared to be nesting in the rock quarry. WARBLING VIREOS and HOODED and BULLOCK'S ORIOLES were everywhere. Other birds of note: PHAINOPEPLA, WILSON'S WARBLERS, LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCHES, and a WESTERN TANAGER. At lunch Richard Johnson pointed out another SOLITARY VIREO in the sycamore tree above the picnic table. After lunch a few persistent birders walked part way up La Jolla Canyon and found a RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD, YELLOWTHROATS, and LAZULI BUNTINGS - and an "Empidonax sp." that was not a WESTERN FLYCATCHER. Total: 47 species +1.

Joan Mills, leader.

ARROYO SECO, April 23. A beautiful day was enjoyed by the 25 participants who chalked up 50 species of birds in the Arroyo on this initial Los Angeles Audubon trip to the area. Another 10 birds were added at our lunch spot in nearby Oak Grove County Park which borders Devil's Gate Reservoir, bringing our total to 60. Six varieties of warblers were seen, but not the BLACK-AND-WHITE seen earlier (also last spring). A number of the group indicated they'd like to revisit the area. It's an easy pleasant walk in a peaceful scenic canyon sans noise from planes or traffic. In a normal rainfall year abundant wildflowers are an added attraction. Ellen Stephenson, leader.

MORONGO VALLEY, April 29. Over 40 eager birders were on hand at Covington Park on a warm clear, dry day. Before the group left the meeting area they had logged quite a few species, including MacGILVRAY'S WARBLER, several BULLOCK'S ORIOLES and PHAINOPEPLA. Only one pair of VERMILLION FLYCATCHERS was seen, but at least 2 male SUMMER TANAGERS were evident and the WIED'S FLYCATCHERS were busily nest-building in an old pipe. Other nests found were GREAT HORNED OWL (although the birds were not seen) and LESSER GOLDFINCH.

The number of birds seen was not high and by lunchtime we had logged only 79 species, more than 30 less than a year ago on the same trip. Mike San Miguel's bird-banding group explained their operation and said most of the birds banded that morning were HAMMOND FLYCATCHERS. Much excitement resulted when a 4-ft. Red Racer was seen robbing the eggs from a VERDIN'S nest! Afternoon saw most of us at the pond back of the Yucca Valley Golf Course where another 13 species were added, TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE vying with the many LAZULI BUNTINGS for top interest.

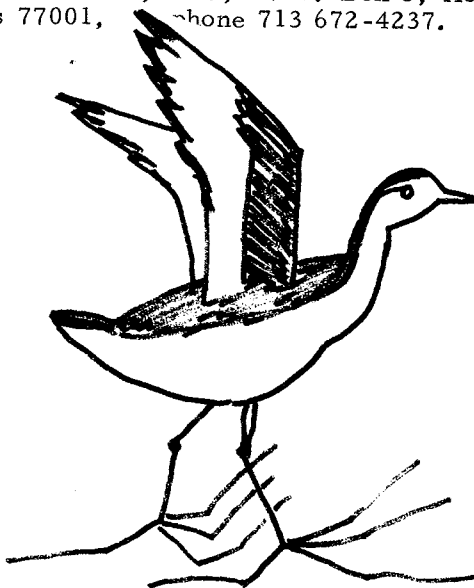
Sunday the remaining 8 birders regrouped and took the road through Pioneer Town and Burn's Canyon to Baldwin Lake. This 30-mile gravel road provided good birding, adding 32 species for a total of 124 for the weekend. Most interesting was the goodly number of SCOTT'S ORIOLES, these being found all the way up to the 7000' level.

George Venatta, leader.

MORONGO VALLEY, May 6. Although the day was cooler and windier than the previous week, most of the birds listed before were still to be found. The WIED'S FLYCATCHER was nowhere to be seen, but one had been banded that morning. A pair of LUCY'S WARBLERS responded instantly to Jan Tarble's tape of their song, and flew back and forth excitedly, showing their field marks to advantage. Jim Huffman lead 12 of us to a campground in Joshua Tree National Monument, pointing out a beautiful pair of SCOTT'S ORIOLES on the way in Saturday evening and a small flock of PIN-JAYS on the road out next morning. C.Adams

Bird Locations

Jacana's are very rare in the United States. One location, south of Houston, Texas, is Eagle Nest Lake. This is 2-1/4 miles east of West Columbia, or 11 miles west of Angleton on SH 35; six miles north of SH 35, 300 feet west of the Brazos River Bridge on County Road 25. The birds sometime move to Manor Lake, on private grounds. J. J. Jones (713 345-9913, West Columbia) has up-to-the-minute information, but permission to enter the private grounds must be obtained in advance from George Rayborn, Jr., Brown and Root, Inc., P. O. Box 3, Houston, Texas 77001, phone 713 672-4237.





Continued from page four

Last year conservationists were ridiculed by the president of Alyeska and officials of the Interior Department when they suggested that some of the Prudhoe Bay oil, allegedly needed for 'national security,' would end up in Japan. Now we find in the Economic Analysis an admission that some of the Alaskan oil would indeed go to Japan and that British Petroleum (which owns about 50 percent of the Prudhoe Bay reserves) has signed an agreement with Japanese oil companies for marketing Prudhoe Bay crude oil in Japan. . . "

CALIFORNIA COASTAL ALLIANCE INITIATIVE

Help save the coastline! Petitions are due now. If you have only a few signatures, send them in. The Los Angeles County coordinators are Doug Yingst, 202 N. Kenmore, Los Angeles, 90004 (384-4413) or Marie LaZar, 7460 Melrose, Los Angeles, 90046 (655-6370)

Help precinct too! Call the coordinators if you can put in a few hours.

ALASKA'S ADMIRALTY ISLAND to be BALD EAGLE MANAGEMENT AREA

10,788 acres of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska will be administered by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in close cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game. The purpose of the management unit is to study the bald eagle under optimum natural conditions. Additional research is needed on feeding habits, causes of mortality, and routes of migration. Unfortunately, it appears that recreational uses will continue to be available to the general public. The USDA News stated, however, that blinds for observation and photography of the eagles and other wildlife and public-use shelters will be added at strategic locations that will not interfere with the nesting activity.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT THREATENED BY AEC, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

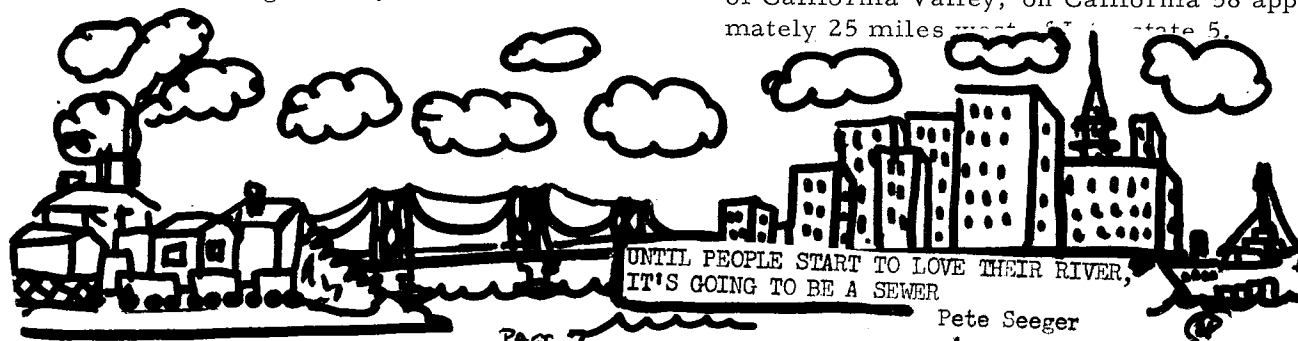
Attempts to destroy the most valuable tool in protecting the environment are underway. The Atomic Energy Commission seeks the power to issue interim operating licenses for nuclear power plants without first complying with NEPA requirements to file final impact statements. AEC claims possible power shortages due to delays, and the Sierra Club claims that only two plants of 13 plants had been temporarily delayed. The AEC bill, H. R. 13752 has passed the House, and if it became law, would be the opening wedge to destroy NEPA.

H. R. 14103 would amend the National Environmental Policy Act by exempting the Corps of Engineers from having to file impact statements relating to issuance of discharge permits under the 1899 Refuse Act.

CALIFORNIA TOMORROW SKETCH PLAN-- comprehensive plan for the future of California, will be presented June 8, at the Hilton Hotel, Golden State Room, from 12:00-3:00 p.m. Reservations may be obtained by writing the Regional Plan Association, 621 S. Virgil Ave., Los Angeles, 90005, or telephoning 380-1450, Ext. 244 (between 1-5 p.m.)

21,796 ACRES BOUGHT ON CARRIZO PLAINS

The L.A. Times recently reported that New York and New England area private investors bought the ranches which include 4,570 acres planted to wheat and barley and 2,600 acres in summer fallow, with the balance being grazing land principally used for cattle feeding. Oppenheimer Industries, Inc., a realty firm, will continue to manage the properties, but announced that a development program may be started in conjunction with properties owned by Armendaris and other owners. "It would include resale of smaller tracts as recreational land with development potential." The land is near the community of California Valley, on California 58 approximately 25 miles west of State 5.



Continued from page two

we saw these groups making haste slowly to the top of the burrowed bluff of this sanctuary set aside by the Bird Observers Club. Far out at sea on the horizon we could see dimly a long dark line of Short-tailed Shearwaters, or Mutton birds, perhaps also flying "home" to hungry young ones on islands bordering neighboring Tasmania.

One thing that is unique to the South Pacific Islands are the birds that build bowers and mounds. We were fortunate to see three of the Bower birds and the Lyre Bird with its "excavation" nearby, also the one of the mallee fowl. The Golden Bower Bird with its structure between two saplings covered overhead by a bridge and the Regent Bower Bird with blue decorations, and the deep holes of the Lyre and mallee fowl were fantastic. The latter's hollow is three feet in depth and ten feet in diameter, then filled with vegetation and sand until it is about two feet above the ground. This is made early in the spring when there is enough moisture to start fermentation of the contents. Eggs are laid and the parent watch the temperature of the contents of the mound daily, using the tongue it is said as a "thermometer." More covering is placed on the pile or taken off as seems necessary. The bird that impressed me was the Tooth-billed Catbird. Our guest ornithologist, Marion Cassels from Cairns, took us on a trip near Lake Foch in the Atherton Tableland dense brush that was made up mostly of bushes called "wait-awhile." This bush had long wire-like stems that stuck out over the path, the "wire" had thorns on it and small as they were caught on clothing to make one indeed "wait awhile." But we followed Marion doggedly and after a time never-seeming-to-end we heard her call, "Here is the camp ground the bird is building." (The Catbird makes a carpet of green leaves and sure enough there was the half circle of bright green leaves, the rest of the circle had dried leaves which the bird had been replacing. How did any bird get such an idea?) We had hardly time to inspect the playground of this bird when overhead from his "singing stick" the Catbird—medium-sized brown bird with a striped breast—started to sing. It is a mimic, and the concert no doubt had bird songs with which we were unacquainted.

To be continued in the next issue

such as

Goosander for Merganser, Little Auk for Dovekie, White-tailed Eagle for Gray's Sea Eagle. The thick-billed Murre retains its old name of Brünnich's Guillemot. The Hoary Redpoll becomes Arctic. In other cases an adjective is dropped: (Common) Eider, (Northern) Three-toed Woodpecker, (European) Tree Sparrow.

These changes are important when trying to locate descriptions or illustrations in this or other English books.

Book Review

A magnificent book "British & European Birds" text by Bertel Bruun and paintings by Arthur Singer (Paul Hamlyn Press) will be of interest to American birders. As it has 516 colored illustrations with 448 distribution maps obviously it serves as a necessary field guide for anyone going to the United Kingdom or Europe, especially as it also comes as a paperback.

In addition one should not neglect the fact that many species illustrated and described in this book are seen in the North American continent, so this book is a useful reference for American birders in their own habitat. There are better pictures in this book than can be found elsewhere for many of the less common birds of North America. Noteworthy for reference are

* Red-throated Loon	European Coot
Red-necked Grebe	Dotterel
Fulmar	Black-tailed Godwit
Manx Shearwater	Bar-tailed Godwit
Little Shearwater	Redshank
Cape Pigeon	Purple Sandpiper
Storm Petrel	Curlew Sandpiper
Bulwer's Petrel	Ivory Gull
Whooper Swan	Iceland Gull
Barnacle Goose	Black-headed Gull
Red-breasted Goose	Little Gull
White-fronted Goose	Ross' Gull
* Bean Goose	Sooty Tern
* European Widgeon	Sandwich Tern
Baikal Teal	Razorbill
Falcated Teal	* Black Guillemot
Garganey Teal	* Thick-billed Murre
Shelduck	Dovekie
Tufted Duck	* Hawk Owl
* Red-crested Pochard	* Northern Three-toed
Common Eider	Skylark Woodpecker
King Eider	Red-throated Pipit
Steller's Eider	Wheatear
* Smew	* Grey-cheeked Thrush
* Gray Sea Eagle	* European Tree Sparrow
* Willow Ptarmigan	* Redpoll
* Rock Ptarmigan	* Hoary Redpoll

This is a list of illustrations which either supplement those generally available in American publications, or give good detail not readily available elsewhere of European birds which are casual or occasional in the North American continent.

For the reader of English bird books a little language translation is needed. The names marked with an * are those which are different from those commonly used in British publications. In some cases there is merely a spelling difference (which however is important in looking up items in an index), e.g. Widgeon, (Great) Grey (Owl). Others are the transposition of vernacular family names, e.g., the Jaegers are called Skuas; Loons are Divers; the Willow Ptarmigan becomes a Grouse. Then there are specialties

ond year?) bird. We suspect that it joins the thousands of scavenging gulls at the landfill dump a mile or two west of there. A special delivery letter from Bishop brings word that Peter Brawn and David Gaines found 25 FRANKLIN'S GULLS in full breeding plumage at Baldwin Lake on May 7, while birding their way from Morongo Valley to Inyo County. BLACK SKIMMERS were so completely unknown until recently in the West that they are not even mentioned in the Western "Peterson" (1961), yet they have been found every year since 1968 at the north end of the Salton Sea, including 1972 with two found there on April 30 (Gene and Steve Cardiff). Until last fall when one was seen at Upper Newport Bay and another (?) near San Diego, there was only the original record on September 8, 1962, along the coast. Now we have our earliest record, and a coastal one too, at Marina del Rey on April 24 (Hank Brodtkin, et al). Unfortunately, the skimmer flushed and flew out to sea when the U. C. L. A. crew started rowing practice that evening.

There were many reports of "a few" VAUX'S SWIFTS—near Encino on April 11 (Jon Dunn), in the Santa Ana River Canyon on April 17 (Shirley Wells), at Legg Lake on April 19, etc., but no reports of large flocks such as we had last year. BLACK SWIFTS, in one of their rare appearances, were found near Santa Barbara in a large flock of about 50 birds (Richard Webster). SWAINSON'S THRUSHES came through in large numbers in late April, especially at Morongo, with the earliest one being banded by Mike San Miguel at Fish Canon, near Duarte on April 14. At Morongo they overlapped the wintering HERMIT THRUSHES which were present into early May. Warblers, as usual, were fascinating and much sought after, but few rareties were found. One of these rareties was a male HOODED WARBLER seen briefly on the grounds of the Santa Barbara Museum on May 6. A new nesting location for LUCY'S WARBLERS was found near China Ranch, just in Inyo County north of Baker, where a nest was found under an old railroad bridge (Jan Tarbell and Shirley Wells). GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS are difficult to find except when they are singing (usually in the early morning) as several birders have discovered to their sorrow. In addition to the traditional grassy hillside above Dana Mesa Road near Capistrano, keen-eared birders found them near Baldwin Lake (Betty and Laura Lou Jenner) and in the LaJolla Valley above Pt. Mugu (Lois Boylen). Our only local report of a HARRIS' SPARROW is of one which stopped briefly at a Pasadena feeder on April 19 (Dave Foster).

If you enjoy rising at 2:00 a.m., owling for an hour or two, driving until dawn, then birding and driving alternately for fourteen hours until dark, then owling some more, and starting for home about 10:00 p.m., then BIG DAYS are

for you. They are also for Lee Jones, Jon Dunn, Kim Garrett, and Hank Brodtkin who survived this ordeal on April 30, and came away with a total of 196 species, including 7 species of owls. They missed the 200 mark, but only because they neglected to find the easy ones—Roadrunner and Ground Dove near the Salton Sea, Fox Sparrow in the mountains, and California Quail and Downy Woodpecker in the lowlands. Still it is a remarkable achievement and with a year's experience they'll hit 200 in 1973, BUT somebody always spoils things—Guy McCaskie's group covering San Diego and Imperial Counties counted 227 species (including eight owls)—a NEW NATIONAL RECORD (to the best of my knowledge). This will give those high-counting Texans something to shoot at.

We can be a bit more leisurely in our birding now that June is here. How about a late afternoon, early evening picnic at the top of the falls in Santa Anita Canyon above Arcadia. There are Dippers along the stream, Black Swifts near the falls at sunset, and Spotted Owls on the hike back at night (with a tape recorder, of course). For a day's jaunt try a loop with Morongo Valley in the morning, then up the back way to Round Valley for Gray Vireos, then Arast'e Creek where the Hepatic Tanagers were found last July (possibly nesting), then back by way of Baldwin Lake, Big Bear, Rim of the World and home. A 500-mile trip makes a long day or an easy overnight to Cima and Cedar Canyon for Bendire's Thrashers, and possibly Gray Vireos and Gilded Flickers. The Colorado River should be done in two days with an air-conditioned motel in Yuma desirable. Both birds and birders find early morning and late afternoon the best times for activity. Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Great-tailed Grackles, Bronzed Cowbirds, Gila Woodpeckers, Wied's Flycatchers and possibly even the Olivaceous Cormorant are a few of the river's specialties. The local mountains from Mt. Palomar to Mt. Piños will be at their best this month before the drought really settles in. Since shorebirds are at their worst in June and waterfowl are almost non-existent, the coastal marshes are better left for later in the summer, but, along the coast, at Pt. Fermin or Tuna Canyon in Malibu there is always a chance for that one rare vagrant that makes your day, or maybe even your whole summer.

Los Angeles Times Snakes Blamed for Boys' Deaths

The youngsters were seeking a crow's nest that Mark needed to complete the requirement for a Boy Scout merit badge.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds

Shumway Suffel

june is a month for quality, not for quantity of interesting birds. For

the most part our June birds are residents, either permanent or summer; as the bulk of the spring migrants passed through our region in April and May, with only a few stragglers remaining into June. Strangely though, these few stragglers have a high proportion of vagrants—late, lost, confused, and often thousands of miles off course. This is the time when we might find a second *Whiterumped Sandpiper* or a rare *Semipalmated Sandpiper* at the north end of the Salton Sea; a fourth *Mississippi Kite* (all three previous records were in early June); or an Eastern vireo or warbler (recently we have had Red-eyed Vireos, Kentucky, Connecticut, Magnolia, Red-faced and other rare warblers in June). Looking for these vagrants, however, is a "needle in the haystack" business and they usually are found as a bonus while doing routine birding in promising places—some of which are mentioned later.

Late April and early May, as expected, were far from dull with the passerine migration in full swing at the well-birded Morongo Valley area and elsewhere. There was some talk of Parula and Tennessee Warblers, and a good solid report of a female PAINTED BUNTING on May 4 (Jim Fairchild), but the best and most widely seen bird at Morongo was a net-prone NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH which managed to get caught on three successive days, including the day of the L. A. A. S. field trip. The VERMILION FLYCATCHERS were feeding young there on April 27, and at least two male SUMMER TANAGERS were singing in late April, but the first report of a WIED'S CRESTED FLYCATCHER was on May 31 when one was banded by Mike San Miguel. Having banded many Ash-throats through the years, Mike was impressed by the Wied's large size, heavy bill, and rich colors. The banders also found that while they were catching many HAMMOND FLYCATCHERS there were practically no DUSKY'S in their nets—an observation which was confirmed by Jay Sheppard's records, i. e., 32 Hammonds and only 4 Dusks in 1971. It would be interesting to know whether the Dusks migrate earlier, or take a different route entirely.

Although Morongo Valley was the most intensively birded area, there were many fascinating reports from the vastness of Southern California which surrounds it. Kim Garrett and John Menke witnessed one of the major spectacles of bird migration from an ocean point on the coast above Ventura on April 23 as thousands of SOOTY SHEARWATERS passed in an unending

column on their annual counter-clockwise circuit of the Pacific Ocean. It will be of interest to those who saw the three WHITE PELICANS at Legg Lake to know that the one with the red marker, with an "N" on its left wing, was marked at the Clear Lake colony in 1970, and the one with the "green" was marked at the Anaho Island colony in 1969 or 1970. The third pelican was unmarked. The "Bird of the Month" was an OLIVACEOUS CORMORANT found by Guy McCaskie's group on April 22 at West Pond, north of Yuma along the Colorado River. The first California sighting of this small tropical Cormorant was by Lee Jones at the same place in April of 1970. Despite this coincidence, it is probably not the same bird, as Lee reported his as being in breeding plumage and this one was in non-breeding plumage (not as cleanly marked and not glossy). It remained until at least May 7 (Larry Sansone). California's first REDDISH EGRET in almost two years was found at the salt ponds near Imperial Beach in mid-April and remained until at least early May.

Despite the many unsuccessful tries that have been made for the COMMON TEAL near Lake Sherwood (five of them mine) and the resulting doubts that it was still there, Richard Webster found it on April 16 after all the Greenwing Teal but one had left. Two late FERRUGINOUS HAWKS were seen by Lois Boylen on May 15 near the Success Reservoir above Porterville. Although Ernie Abeles missed the Grasshopper Sparrows near Dana Point on May 22, he gives us our only report of a SWAINSON'S HAWK this spring. One needs only to read Hoffman (1927) "a company of fifty or a hundred large hawks in a field, etc.," or to consult his own records "Sept. 1945—thirty Buteos at 1,000 ft. over Pasadena," and more recently "April 1967—eleven flying with Turlsey Vultures near Desert Hot Springs," to realize the imperiled status of this handsome vari-plumaged Buteo in California.

After finding the Olivaceous Cormorant at West Pond on April 22, we waited until evening for the BLACK RAILS, and confirmed Guy McCaskie's statement that "there must be fifty to a hundred of them there." The chorus of "kik-ee-dooos" which answered our tape recorder was quite awesome. We, of course, saw nary a rail in the head-high cattails. The PECTORAL SANDPIPER is an extremely rare bird in the spring, but Jerry Johnson reports a single bird in the San Joaquin marsh near U. C. Irvine.

Arnold Small, who teaches nearby, keeps a sharp eye on Harbor Lake and observed our only wintering GLAUCOUS GULL—an almost all-white (sec-