

Los Angeles Audubon Society

# The Western Tanager

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# HAWK WATCHING IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

by J. Richard Hilton

The absence of raptor migrations in Southern California may be insignificant to the average L.A. Audubonite, but to those of us who hold a special interest for the hawks and owls, either by banding them or by observing them in the wild, this absence is heartbreaking. While raptor enthusiasts along the east coast and Great Lakes area enjoy spectacular spring and fall migrations at dozens of lookout sites, we Southern Californians consider ourselves fortunate to catch a mere glimpse of a soaring red-tail or hovering kestrel.

But, then, we do have two hawk species the easterners don't: the white-tailed kite and our famous California condor. Both are examples of unparalleled uniqueness in avian variety, but respectfully, I think I'd gladly put them aside for an opportunity to view a kettle of broadwings pass Hawk Lookout at Rochester, N. Y., witness an "invasion" of goshawks at Hawk Ridge, Minn., or watch in awe a troop of sharp-shinned hawks wheel their way past Hook Mountain, Upper Nyack, N. Y.

It must be a mind-boggling experience to perch atop some lonely ridge while dozens of hawks of all varieties glide and dart by as though headed for the same destination. Unfortunately, no Angelenos can locally witness such an occurrence, although to millions of easterners this opportunity avails year 'round.

HAWK MOUNTAIN, Kempton, Pa., is perhaps the best known of the raptor migration lookouts in the east, although in terms of the number of hawks sighted it doesn't compare with Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, Minn. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, established in 1934, operates the 2,000-acre Hawk Mountain wildlife sanctuary and is open year

around, although the hawk migration season officially runs from August through November. In 1972 Hawk Mountain's best day was Sept. 22, when 3,042 raptors decided the wind and weather were right for travel. That day's migrants were mostly broad-winged hawks, which favor the month of September to make their yearly jaunt. Generally, the greatest variety of species can be observed at Hawk Mountain in October; red-tails and golden eagles pass with the colder winds of November.

Hawk migrations occurring along the bluffs of Duluth, Minn. are perhaps the most spectacular in North America. HAWK RIDGE movements begin in August with kestrels, sharp-shinned hawks and broad-winged hawks and continue into December with the last of the rough-legged hawks, goshawks, and eagles. Like Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, Hawk Ridge was once, not too many decades ago, visited only by local gunners who used the wide-soaring, large-sized birds for target practice. Now, under a trust agreement with the city of Duluth, the Duluth Audubon Society manages the 115-acre Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. Before the season ended last year I received reports from Hawk Ridge that 43,120 hawks had chosen the Ridge as their flyway. And what numbers! 26,860 broad-winged hawks; 6,271 sharp-shinned hawks; 81 ospreys; 25 bald eagles; and 35 immature golden eagles to name but a few. The 1972 goshawk invasion, witnessed at most other northeastern migration sites, was particularly evident at Hawk Ridge, where 4,762 of these woodland hawks were counted before the season's end.

Hawk watching at Hook Mountain and Mount Peter, N. Y. afford the city folk an

opportunity to count and observe hawks in less spectacular, but nevertheless exciting, numbers. Hawk counting at MOUNT PETER, located in Orange County, N. Y., began in 1957. In 1971, observers at Mount Peter witnessed a record flight of migrating hawks. On one day alone a total of 6,787 hawks was seen. Visitors to Mount Peter, who include birders and nonbirders alike, seem to agree one of the distinct advantages of the lookout is that you can drive your car right up to the observation site.

The newest location for observing and recording hawk movements in the East is at HOOK MOUNTAIN in Upper Nyack, N. Y. Annual counts since 1971 have been coordinated by the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey. The "Hook," as it is referred to by local hawk watchers, is not as impressive a migration site as Hawk Mountain or Hawk Ridge, but it is particularly advantageous to hawk enthusiasts in New York since it is only 23 miles from New York City. What a sight to observe kettles of migrating hawks with the New York City skyline in the background! Hook Mountain hawk watchers begin their yearly record-keeping with an informal spring count in mid-March and continue counting through April.



Broad-wings at Hook Mountain

A daily autumn count begins the first week in September and continues to the end of October.

What makes HAWK LOOKOUT at Rochester, N. Y. such a unique migration lookout are its unique spring hawk flights. While most migration sites receive their travellers between September through November, early spring migrants appear at Hawk Lookout around the end of March. In late April the large flights of broadwings occur, and in some years hawks have been observed migrating into early June. Hawk Lookout is actually the parking lot of Braddock Bay State Park located in the town of Greece, northwest of Rochester.

These are but a few of the locations for watching hawks in the northeastern United States. Other lookout sites occur at Mount Cadillac, Me., Mount Belknap, N. H., Hogback Mountain, Vt., Mount Tom, Mass., Cape May Point, N. J., Assateague Island, Md., Cape Charles, Va., and Hanging Rocks Fire Tower, W. Va.

Recording and studying hawk movements is a serious concern among many eastern raptor enthusiasts, and for others, merely observing the flights with camera and binocular is an enjoyable and rewarding pastime. Eastern birders have a special regard for hawks and owls in the wild because of a long-standing interest in hawk watching. Eastern birders are rightfully disturbed when they see hawks in captivity because so often, and in such spectacular numbers, they are afforded the opportunity to view hawks flying free. Those of us who have watched birds of prey riding the thermals, whether over Hawk Mountain or above the skies of Southern California, can't help but admire the beauty and grace of the birds of prey--and staunchly defend their freedom.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Richard Hilton is the President of the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey, with Headquarters at P. O. Box 293, Pacific Palisades, California 90272. He has persevered in many investigations of depredations against birds of prey which violate state and federal laws.

# OIL SUMPS THE DECEPTIVE KILLERS

prepared by  
**Philip P. Schaeffer**

From an airplane flying low over California's southern San Joaquin Valley, one can look out and see hundreds of tiny ponds dotting the arid earth below. They reflect, like jewels, the blue and white of the sky and clouds above.

Walking across this featureless landscape, broken only by the steel framework of the equipment used to draw and process the vast reserves of oil from beneath the valley floor, the ponds in the distance still appear jewel-like. But as one gets closer the reflections give way to a new recognition; a thick coating of oil covers their surface. Even closer now, dark objects are seen to litter this oil surface. Those dark objects are the birds, the reptiles, and the animals of the San Joaquin Valley...dead and dying. These are not just ponds, these are oil sumps.

--In February of 1964 a Warden of the California Department of Fish and Game was patrolling this area to measure the extent of wildlife losses in these sumps. In one small sump measuring only 50 square feet, he counted the bodies of over 1,500 songbirds.

--Another Warden in March of 1971 investigated the contents of a somewhat larger sump operated by Shell Oil Company. Its contents: one Owl, three Herons, five Geese, one Snowy Egret, 90 songbirds, 87 Ducks, two Rabbits, and three Dogs.

--On the same day, a sump operated by the Standard Oil Company yielded ten Ducks, one Hawk, and two Barn Owls.

While these are distressing statistics the full enormity of this destruction becomes even more evident when, according to the Department of Fish and Game figures, it is realized there are over 1,500 of these sumps in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Union Oil's Santa Barbara spill caused the loss of approximately 3,500 birds; Standard Oil's San Francisco Bay spill resulted in the destruction of some 7,000 birds. Contrast those catastrophies with the losses incurred in the oil sumps; based on California Department of Fish and Game statistics, approximately 50,000 waterfowl die in these sumps *each year*. Losses of songbirds, shorebirds, and raptors can be conservatively estimated at over 100,000 birds *each year*. Add to that the unknown numbers of mice, rabbits, snakes, squirrels, gophers, coyotes, deer, and even domestic sheep and dogs who become trapped and die in the oil sumps. The much publicized spills pale in comparison to the magnitude of this tragic situation virtually unnoticed and unattended to for over seventy years.

They're called oil sumps in California but referred to in various other oil producing

regions of the country as oil retrieval ponds, waste effluent disposal ponds, storage ponds, or settling ponds. The California Department of Fish and Game explains why they exist:

"When crude oil is pumped from the ground, it is usually combined with a certain amount of water, which in this area (San Joaquin Valley) averages around four barrels of water to one barrel of oil. This oil and water is generally first pumped into tanks where it is separated either by the use of chemicals or high voltage charges, neither of which separates all of the oil from the water. From these tanks the water, which still contains oil, is discharged into one or more settling basins. Further separation of oil and water takes place here, water on the bottom, oil on the top (skinned periodically from the surface). From these settling basins, the water (still oil impregnated) is either pumped back into the ground or discharged into a natural drainage where it flows downstream to some distant waste effluent disposal area. These disposal areas are of several types and eliminate the water through percolation into the ground and evaporation. Evaporation however is limited because oil and water separation again takes place, eventually forming a tar-like layer on the surface of the sump. It is these waste effluent disposal areas that create the greatest problem with respect to wildlife resources."

This system of processing the crude oil breaks down in almost every instance; the residual oil surfacing in the settling ponds is not skimmed off with the frequency it should be; the operators who do the skimming with vacuum trucks quite frequently dump the oil into natural drainages and flowing streams or just on the open ground and surrounding vegetation; uncontrolled sumps periodically overflow, with the oil then being carried along several miles of natural drainage creating yet another wildlife trap. Pumping the waste back into the ground, below the water table, which would eliminate this wildlife hazard occurs in far too few instances.

*To be continued in another issue*

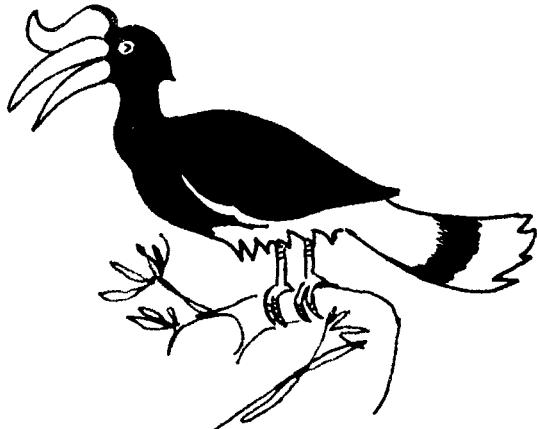
**A Special Report by the:**

**WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
555 Audubon Place  
Sacramento, California 95825**

# audubon activities

## DONALD ADAMS

BUENA VISTA LAGOON, Jan. 13. The morning was clear and mild when the group met at the lagoon. Thirteen eager birders arrived promptly at 8 a.m. Rafts of SHOVELERS were still holding their sleeping positions on the water, possibly two to three thousand birds. Three species of grebes were immediately listed. The YELLOWTHROAT and the LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN were spotted on the reeds. Later in the morning other ducks began to arrive including CINNAMON TEAL, GADWALL, BUFFLEHEAD and others. In all, a total of 45 birds were sighted. Leaders: Les and Ruth Wood



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Glendale, Calif. 91208  
Phone (213) 249-5537

# Alaska

Flying Carpet Tours is scheduling a BIRDING TOUR to ALASKA, August 5 to 22, 1973, from Los Angeles, under the leadership of Herb and Olga Clarke. This will be an excellent chance to run up your U.S. life list as well as enjoy the magnificent scenery and other flora and fauna of this interesting state.

This tour is recommended by the Florida Audubon Society.

For prices, itinerary and other information please contact:

Olga L. Clarke  
2027 E. Arbolita Dr.  
Glendale, Calif. 91208  
(213) 249-5537

### "DOWN UNDER" NATURE TOUR

An ecological tour of Australia and New Zealand designed specifically with Audubon members in mind is being conducted by The Golden Gate Audubon Society. The trip scheduled at the peak of the "Down Under" spring will leave late in September 1973 under the guidance of George Peyton who led a successful ecological safari to East Africa last summer. He will be assisted along the entire route by local bird experts and naturalists. This trip is patterned closely after the very successful Australian tour conducted by LAAS in 1971.

For further information either write to Mr. George Peyton, Tour Leader, 4304 Adelaide Street, Oakland, Calif. 94619, or Golden Gate Audubon 1973 Tour, Siemer and Hand, Ltd., One Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, Calif. 94111.

### GIANT METEORITE OBSERVED BY BIRDER

On the early afternoon of August 10, 1972, a meteorite streaked across Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Alberta. Although the passage of this object occurred during daylight hours, there were numerous sightings of this extremely bright fireball by observers on the ground as well as in aircraft [see "Sky and Telescope" 44, 269 (1972)]. One was Allan E. Morton of Springville, Utah, who was photographing birds in Timber Mountain. With his loaded 300 mm camera he was able to obtain a photograph of the meteorite in broad daylight (1/500-second exposure).

From the various observations it is estimated that the meteorite had a diameter of six yards, travelling at 10 miles a second and came within 30 miles of the surface of the Earth, with enough energy to have created an impact like the Meteor Crater in Arizona (estimated to have been formed with 20 megatons of energy). R. D. Rawcliffe, Special Correspondent.



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Mar. 1 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

Mar. 10 SATURDAY - TUJUNGA WASH & HANSON DAM. Meet at 8:00 a.m. on the north side of Foothill Blvd. by the bridge, 2 miles west of Sunland. Cactus Wren and Costa's Hummingbird are possibilities. Leader: Phil Sayre; phone: 939-7622.

Mar. 13 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. The Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association will present "Behind the Scenes at the Zoo"; Bob Sandmeyer will present "Hawaiian Highlights."

Mar. 18 SUNDAY - ARBORETUM. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Take San Bernardino Freeway to Baldwin Ave., then go north on Baldwin to Arboretum parking lot. For further information call Audubon House.

Mar. 19 MONDAY - LEGG LAKE and WHITTIER NARROWS RECREATION AREA. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at north side of parking lot. Take San Bernardino Freeway (Interstate 10) or Pomona Freeway (State 60) to Rosemead Blvd. then south to Durfee Ave. The group will go on to the El Monte Nature Center for lunch and further birding. Leader: Jean Brandt; phone: 788-5188.

Mar. 31 SATURDAY - JALAMA BEACH. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Gaviota Village on Hwy. 1. We will caravan from this point to destination. Tidepools, shorebirds and possible wintering waterfowl will highlight this trip. Leader: Les Wood; phone: 256-3908.

Apr. 5 THURSDAY - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

Apr. 10 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Program to be announced.

Apr. 14 SATURDAY - CHANTRY FLAT & SANTA ANITA CANYON. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the end of Santa Anita Canyon Rd. Take San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., north on Rosemead to Foothill Blvd., east on Foothill to Santa Anita Ave., then north to the end of Santa Anita Rd. Be prepared to hike down to the canyon stream and upstream to the falls to see resident Dippers and spring migrants. Leader: Hal Baxter; phone: 355-6300.

Apr. 23 MONDAY - BIG Sycamore CANYON. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at entrance to Big Sycamore State Park. Leader: Joan Mills; phone: CR 5-4821.

Apr. 28 SATURDAY - BUTTERBREAD SPRING. Take Antelope Valley Freeway through Mojave. Meet approximately 20 miles north on U.S. 14 at the Jawbone Canyon turnoff at 8:30 a.m. Leaders: Keith Axelson and Pamela Greene; phone: 394-2255.

May 13 SUNDAY - PELAGIC TRIP TO SANTA CRUZ ISLAND. Board "Paisano" at Channel Islands Harbor at 7:30 a.m. Directions and instructions will be sent with reservation confirmation. Fare = \$10.00. Make check payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society and send with stamped, self-addressed envelope to Joann Gabbard, 823 - 19th St., Apt. D., Santa Monica, CA 90403. Please list all members of your party. Group will land on Santa Cruz Island for lunch and hike. Chance to see nesting birds and Santa Cruz Jay. Leader: Lee Jones.

May 21 MONDAY - MT. PINOS. Take Frazier Park turnoff from Rte 99. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Lake 'o the Woods and Mt. Pinos turnoff. Leader: Abigail King; phone: 476-5121

**AUDUBON NATURE TRAINING**

For spring 1973 dates, locations, fees and enrollment information write or call Audubon Nature Training, Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2840 College Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94705 843-2222.

**NATURE STUDY COURSE TO BE GIVEN**

Are you interested? If so, contact Rick Halsey of the Long Beach branch of Audubon for application and details. His address is 4455 Faculty Avenue, Long Beach, 90808. The course will be given at the El Dorado Nature Center, 7550 E. Spring Street, Long Beach, featuring weekly lectures and field trips when needed.

All Field Trips will start at the stated times. Party moves off five minutes later. Allow enough time to fill up with gasoline at the start. People with pets will not be allowed to join.

Annual subscription to "The Western Tanager" is \$3.50; first-class postage \$4.50. Free to members assigned by the National Audubon Society to the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

*Los Angeles Audubon Society*

**The Western Tanager**

Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

EDITOR	Gilbert W. King
Field Notes	Shumway Suffel
Audubon Activities	Donald Adams
Calendar	Caroline Adams
Typing	Hanna Stadler
Mailing Supervision	Agnes Evans Hans Hjorth

# CONSERVATION

## IMPORTANT-- THE NAT'L WATER COMMISSION REVIEW DRAFT

Mr. Paul Howard, Western Regional Representative of the National Audubon Society made these comments regarding The National Water Commission Review Draft when appearing at a Public Conference in Spokane, Washington this past month. "We commend the Commission for 'strongly' advocating 'serious' consideration to a wide range of realistic choices in future water planning. The Commission's observations confirm that current agricultural uses for water are not only wasteful but are that way because Federal subsidies have distorted production through artificial price support." We commend the Commission for recommending protection be given 'important characteristics of estuarine and coastal waters and marshlands'. However, it is our concern that this section be strengthened to call for the prohibition of projects such as stream channelization and drainage programs." He concurred with the statement that "there is adequate productive capacity in the nation's agriculture to meet food and fiber demand under various alternative futures at least until the year 2000. There consequently is no need in the next 30 years for federally subsidized water resource development programs to increase the agricultural land base. On the contrary, such measures as irrigation and drainage of new land, protection of existing and potential cropland from floods, and providing supplemental irrigation water for existing croplands have added to the excess productive capacity of agriculture and have thereby contributed to the high costs of crop support and land retirement programs."

Mr. Howard also concurred with the recommendation that "the primary responsibility for the reduction of damages resulting from urban erosion and sedimentation remain with the local governmental entities, and any Federal assistance be limited to the provision of technical advice."

In the section regarding Fish and Wildlife the Commission acknowledged the Federal project agency's historic indifference to those agencies responsible for wildlife and fish. On making better use of existing supplies, he made the following comment. "We wish to place special emphasis on this point which gives consideration in particular to recreation, scenic, esthetic, water quality, fisheries and similar values which heretofore the Commission acknowledges have been neglected. Pyramid Lake in Nevada and Mono Lake in California are examples emphasizing the need for appreciation and value on esthetics as well as non-game wildlife species." Regarding the reduction of water losses, "We would emphasize the need to implement immediate controls over wasteful water mining practices in deserts of Oregon, California, Nevada, and Arizona. In some areas flood and furrow irrigation of arid lands is depleting aquifers and causing serious land subsidence such as in the San Joaquin Valley. There is considerable citizen opposition in California to the continuation of the East Side Project."

Mr. Howard felt that in allowing the Bureau of Reclamation to continue "the backlog of authorized projects should be brought out and subjected to public review and evaluated against current thinking. There is no sound logic to perpetuate for another decade construction of ecologically unsound projects which would further degrade the environment and waste resources of money and manpower. Last November the California Legislature gave approval to a strong Wild Rivers protection bill, which was also signed by Governor Reagan. We feel this, plus the overwhelming passage of strong coastal protection initiatives in Washington State and California, indicates the current trend of citizen concern, awareness, and involvement in water resource conservation and management."

The following statements sum up Mr. Howard's review. "We are especially impressed with the concern the Commission has placed upon wildlife and esthetic values and the emphasis on a fair project cost-sharing program. National acceptance of the philosophical spirit of the Commission's Report and implementation of its recommendations can give greater protection to our country's natural resource. It can help resolve many disputes and halt disruptive, disastrous, and expensive single interest projects. We have every reason to believe the implementation of these recommendations by Congress, the President, the departments and agencies should bring about good results."

Mr. Howard urges that all Audubon members *write letters now giving support to the National Water Commission Draft Report Act immediately and send your letters to National Water Commission, Room 405, 800 N. Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia 22203.*

## BOOK STORE

Looking ahead to the future birding tours coming up, BIRDS OF ALASKA by Gabrielson is beautifully illustrated by color plates from paintings by O. Murie. What makes this very handsome volume unique, it describes some species which have never been covered in any other bird books and goes into detailed descriptions on each bird.

THE SHORE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA by G. Stout was a strong competitor to Birds of North America by E. Porter during the holidays so we reordered a few copies for that "special" occasion. It's well worth it!

Another new book to our sales department is THE BIRDS OF COSTA RICA, Distribution and Ecology, by Paul Slud. This contains excellent descriptions on the range of birds and a very detailed map in the back as to where to locate all these areas.

THE BIRDS OF ARIZONA by A. Phillips is another special book that we are always proud to display on our shelves. All bird enthusiasts will find inexhaustible insight and information within these 215 pages including fifty-one color action photographs by E. Porter.

We still have a few cloth calendars left both narrow and wide so we have reduced the price to 75 cents apiece!

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

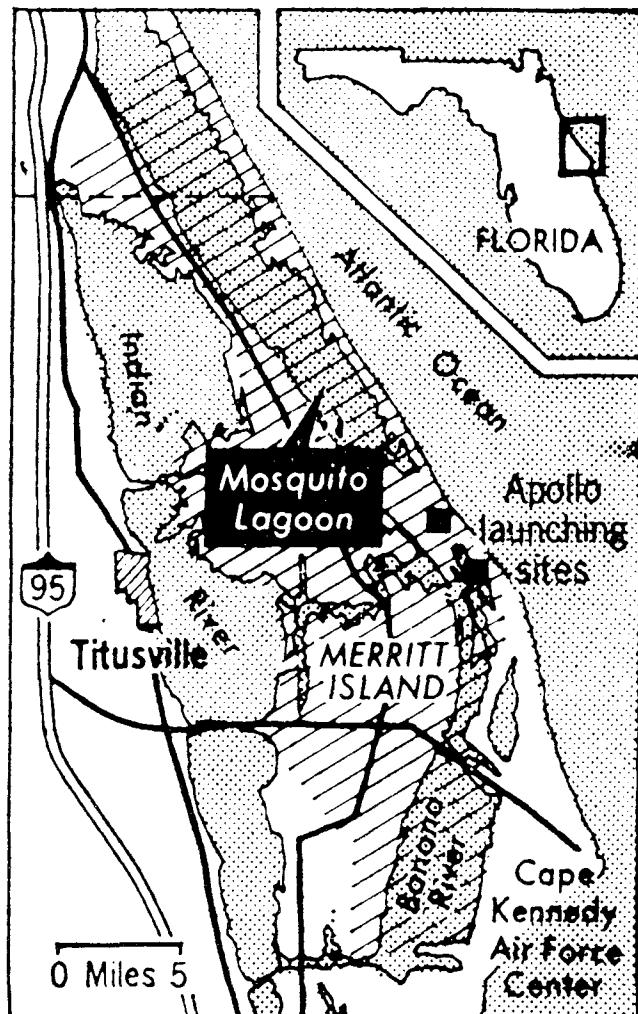
al), and an adult was seen not far from there along Los Virgenes Road just south of the freeway. BALD EAGLES were sparingly but widely reported--two at the north end of the Salton Sea (Olga and Herb Clarke), one or more at Lake Matthews, and several at Lake Henshaw, San Diego County (G. McC.). Ed Navojosky reported our only OSPREY, at Malibu Lagoon on January 9, and a PIGEON HAWK at Rosedale Cemetery on January 6.

A small remnant of the more than 17 SANDHILL CRANES seen by four parties on the Los Angeles Count, was a single crane found by Shirley Wells at Harbor Lake on January 25. A LESSER NIGHTHAWK flying over the ponds of a Mugu duck club on December 7 is probably a new winter and coastal record (Walter Nichols). Pure YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKERS have been reported recently now that observers recognize the signs of hybridism; such was the case with Ed Schaar of Pacific Palisades whose "Yellow-shafted" Flicker showed head coloring more like a "Red-shafted" with a very small red crescent on the nape. A wintering Empidonax flycatcher found by Lee Jones et al at the Arcadia Arboretum on December 10, was refound there on January 30 and February 2 by Hal Baxter and Shum Sufel and identified as a DUSKY FLYCATCHER (there are very few winter records). Another wintering Empidonax in San Pedro remains unidentified (Shirley Wells). A few CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS were still in the area with two in Rancho Park on February 4 being the latest report (Lee Jones). The only report of a NORTHERN SHRIKE south of Inyo County was a "picture book" immature banded by Dave Foster in Eaton Canon on January 7. On the same day Dave netted a HARRIS' SPARROW there. The HARRIS' SPARROWS at Leo Carrillo Beach were not reported after December, but one showed up on Christmas Day at the Wells' home in San Pedro, and another was seen at the Salton Sea on December 23 (G. McC.). The two NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES previously mentioned south of the Salton Sea were not unexpected, as they have wintered there before, but one found by Mike San Miguel along a tiny stream near Duarte on December 25 was most unusual. It was re-found in the same place in late January. EVENING GROSBEAKS decreased as the winter progressed but Peppi Van Essen observed a small flock of 10 to 15 in Temple City several times during January. Several RED CROSSBILLS were seen in the pines on the Palos Verdes Peninsula by Shirley Wells in January, and Hal Baxter found two red males near Lake Hollywood Dam on February 2. WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS seemed less common than usual with only two reports--an adult at Tapia Park, Malibu, on December 28 (Ernie Abeles) and another "White-throat" was apparently wintering in San Pedro (Jess Morton).

Although the earliest migrants had already arrived in late January-- a RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD at the El Monte Nature Center, and a few ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS at the south end of the Salton Sea--most reports in February and March will be first reports of migrant species. These old friends--flycatchers, swallows, warblers and a host of others--are most welcome, but we must be patient for the full tide of migration does not hit until late April. After our ample, early and well spaced rains the wild flowers should be the finest in years, and may well deserve major attention. As for me, I'll probably be birding as energetically as ever despite disappointing prospects.

## ECOLOGICAL SITE MAY BE SUB BASE

Kennedy Space Center Refuge Area



The New York Times/Feb. 2, 1973

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds SHUMWAY SUFFEL

March is a month of transition in birding activity, with our fantastic winter invasion of northern species being almost over and the spring migration starting this month but not reaching full strength until late April. As with all change there is a dead spot, a hiatus between winter and spring activity, which occurs during March.

Most of the action in January was concentrated in three places--Lake Sherwood in the Malibu Mountains, the south end of the Salton Sea, and along our south coast. The action at Lake Sherwood began on January 1st when the Kings and the Adams started the New Year right by refinding the EASTERN PHOEBE (there since December 3) in a slightly different area. A few other birders found it for their 1973 list before the final sighting on January 5. While looking for the phoebe on January 11, Jon Dunn scanned the fifty or so teal on the pond near the fire station, and filtered out a COMMON TEAL (probably the same individual that wintered there in '71 and '72). It has proved very difficult to relocate but can usually be found after several early morning searches. Last but far from least, Jerry Johnson, looking for the phoebe or the teal on January 25, located a male TUFTED DUCK among the Ringnecks on the lake by its shining white sides and long white wing stripe. At close range or with a "scope," the slender pendant crest could be discerned. This is the fifth record for California and the first sighting south of the Bay region.

The first weekend after hunting season (January 27 and 28) at the Salton Sea was a bonanza for local birders. Beside several field trips, including L. A. A. S., there were many unattached birders checking out every lead on a rare bird, and the results showed that it was difficult for a rare bird to stay out of binocular range. The tens of thousands of SNOW GEESE flying in an azure sky are an annual spectacle, and a challenge too, for with them were a few ROSS' GEESE, similar but much smaller, and at least two BLUE GEESE. One of these was in unusual plumage with the dark of the body extending up the back of the neck and narrowly onto the crown, a mark which may have been the basis for reports of an Emperor Goose there. Among the rarer birds were two widely separated PYRRHULOXIAS (California's first and second records); a COUES' FLYCATCHER (at Brock Ranch since October); two VERMILION FLYCATCHERS; a few REDSTARTS, two WATER-THRUSHES, and a YELLOW WARBLER all on the New River dike; one or more ROUGH-LEGGED and FERRUGINOUS HAWKS nearby; and a TREE SPARROW above Westmoreland (furthest south record--Guy McCaskie).

Along the coast attention centered on the SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS at Upper Newport Bay. Since there are less than a dozen California

records, observers on January 19 (last very high tide of the season) were amazed to find that the two "Shaptails" (there since November) had been joined by a third individual which stayed near, but not with, the two original birds. Nearby, at Bolsa Chica, the threesome of LITTLE BLUE HERONS (1 adult and 2 immatures there since fall) seemed to scatter with one immature remaining. The adult reported at Seal Beach on January 16 (Jon Dunn) and an immature at Upper Newport Bay in mid-January. THE REDDISH EGRET below San Diego stayed into January but proved difficult to locate. While searching unsuccessfully for the egret, Jon Dunn separated a GLAUCOUS GULL from the thousands of scavenging gulls at the Otay dump. Strangely enough, the only two reports of GLAUCOUS GULLS this year come from the extreme northwest corner of the state, Eureka, and the extreme southwest corner below San Diego. Russ and Marian Wilson found an OLDSQUAW at Bolsa Chica on January 2, and Larry Sansone saw one fly into Marina del Rey from the ocean on February 4 (there were very few in our area this winter). COMMON SCOTERS, too, were seldom reported with a female above Malibu on December 11 (Ed Navojosky) and another female at Cabrillo Beach, San Pedro, on December 18 being the only reports since fall. The only Southern California report of a EUROPEAN WIDGEON was of a male wintering at Whalen Lake near Oceanside (Guy McCaskie). The drake HARLEQUIN DUCK, now in striking plumage, remained at Marina del Rey through February 4. Nearby, a COMMON MURRE (Hank Brodkin) and a RED-NECKED GREBE (Jerry Johnson) were found in early February. It seems probable that one or both of these birds were the same individuals which were found on the Los Angeles Count, but had not been seen during January. At least three GOLDEN PLOVERS were found in the flooded fields of the adjoining Hughes Airport (Bruce Broadbooks).

Elsewhere, there were many noteworthy reports listed more or less in A. O. U. order. A SLENDER-BILLED SHEARWATER off Palos Verdes on "Count" day was the first report locally in many years (Arnold Small). An immature WHISTLING SWAN found on a small pond on the Brookside Golf Course by Shirley Wells during the Pasadena Count was seen by many local birders in January. Another "Whistler" on a pond in California, San Luis Obispo County was reportedly joined by a larger TRUMPETER SWAN on January 22. Since the identification of "Trumpeters," except by voice is very difficult, an examination of photographs taken at the time may or may not make positive identification possible. An immature FERRUGINOUS HAWK was seen and photographed in January "at the upper end of Malibu Canon" (Ernie Abeles et

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