

The Western Tanager

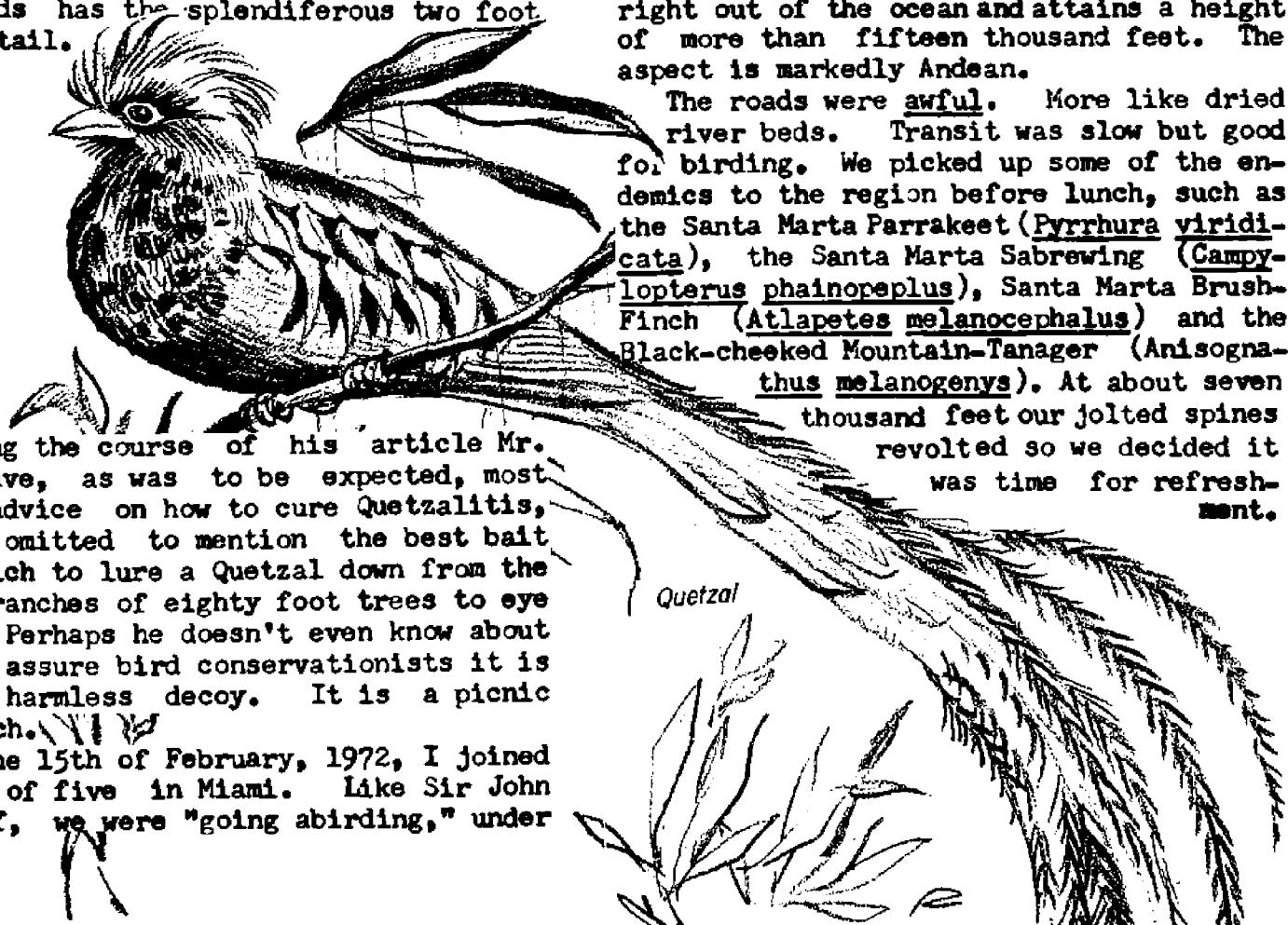
VOLUME 39, 1972-73 No. 8 APRIL

Quetzalitis



... Reginald Denham

In 1970 Mr. Stuart Keith wrote two beguiling articles for the News-Letter on the subject of that nervous disease that affects bird-finders, namely "Quetzalitis." This disorder is brought on, to use Mr. Keith's words, by "a frustrated desire to see the world's most fabulous bird." I presume he was referring to the sacred bird of the Mayans, the Resplendent Quetzal (Pharomachrus mocinno), though he didn't specify this. There are, of course, four other Quetzals, found in South America, that are almost as fabulous. In fact, I am not sure that the body coloring of the White-tipped Quetzal (Pharomachrus fulgidus) with its chrysoprase back and a breast of crimson which appears almost purple in shadow, is not more subtly beautiful. However, not one of these other four birds has the splendiferous two foot emerald tail.



During the course of his article Mr. Keith gave, as was to be expected, most expert advice on how to cure Quetzalitis, but he omitted to mention the best bait with which to lure a Quetzal down from the upper branches of eighty foot trees to eye level. Perhaps he doesn't even know about it. I assure bird conservationists it is a very harmless decoy. It is a picnic box-lunch.

On the 15th of February, 1972, I joined a party of five in Miami. Like Sir John Falstaff, we were "going abirding," under

the auspices of the Florida Audubon Society. Our destinations were the north east corner of Columbia, Panama and Costa Rica. Naturally we all hoped to see a Quetzal.

Once in Columbia we were joined by our guide, Dr. Kjell von Sneidern. We found him a superb field man who knew every call, song, chirp and twitter in the country side. Why shouldn't he? He spent years collecting for the author of "Birds of Columbia," Dr. Rudolph Meyer de Schauensee.

Our center of operations for a few days was in the outskirts of the little town of Santa Marta and, after a productive day's birding in vast, lonely marshes that fringe the Atlantic, we headed the following day for the Santa Marta mountains. This imposing massif in itself is eye shattering. It seems to rise precipitously right out of the ocean and attains a height of more than fifteen thousand feet. The aspect is markedly Andean.

The roads were awful. More like dried river beds. Transit was slow but good for birding. We picked up some of the endemics to the region before lunch, such as the Santa Marta Parrakeet (Pyrrhura viridicata), the Santa Marta Sabrewing (Campylopterus phainopeplus), Santa Marta Brush-Finch (Atlapetes melanocephalus) and the Black-cheeked Mountain-Tanager (Anisognathus melanogenys). At about seven thousand feet our jolted spines revolted so we decided it was time for refreshment.

We found a quiet spot where the road turns abruptly right and crosses a mountain rivulet. We left our three jeeps, took our box lunches down to the water's edge and prepared to enjoy our bananas, papayas and jamon serrano sandwiches. But before we opened the boxes one of our number called out in maniacal excitement the one word "Quetzals"! We immediately dumped our boxes in the dust and headed back up the road toward where she was pointing. It was to a high tree a few feet beyond the edge of the forest.

It was true enough. There were White-tipped Quetzals in the tree. They were feeding on some kind of hard nutty fruit and calling to each other. However they were pretty well hidden in the dense foliage. Only occasionally were we able to catch a glimpse of an entire bird. We stood there for almost an hour hoping that one of them would quit the tree and fly across the open road. We finally gave up and returned to our abandoned lunches, determined to keep the Quetzal tree under surveillance.

It was really most dramatic. The moment we started munching, a gorgeous male Quetzal flew out of the tree and landed on a leafless bough that protruded from the forest edge. We couldn't have had a more perfect view of any bird. It was at eye level and only about thirty feet away. The strange thing was that it seemed to be totally unperturbed by our presence. It sat on, even when we cautiously walked round the bare branch so as to get a view of the bird's back. Furthermore, it continued to pose while two of our group crept nearer to take pictures.

We stayed on for an hour at least. Sometimes the bird would fly back to feed, whereupon another bird would take its place on the enchanted perch. We estimated that there were five birds in all, perhaps six. Three males and two or three females.

We finally tore ourselves away and drove another three thousand feet up the mountain to continue our birding. In the late afternoon when we turned for home, the jeep I was in refused to start. After much discussion by our drivers it was discovered that the battery was completely dry. There were, of course, no gas stations in this wild spot where distilled water could be purchased so the drivers determined to try an experiment. We had bottles of coke and soda water left over

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reginald Denham is a long-established New York director of plays and motion pictures. Among his many successes are "Ladies in Retirement," "The Two Mrs. Carrolls," "Dial 'M' for Murder," and "Hostile Witness." He is also a noted playwright, and has written numerous articles on birds for ornithological journals, and will be remembered for "Denham's Bustard" in The Western Tanager of November 1969. Reginald has chased birds around the world, and at the same time keeps records of birds in Central Park—famous for its spring migration of Warblers. He is a member of the 600 Club.

from our lunch. They filled the battery up with these liquids and believe it or not, the jeep started. The Quetzals were still feeding on their tree as we passed on the way down. The whole day was like a mirage. I still don't believe it happened.

Before leaving Columbia three days later we had a spectacular ten hours birding from a tiny launch up the El Dique Canal -- an ancient man-made waterway that links the city of Cartagena with the river Magdalena. The terrain we passed through reminded me of the Argentine pampas near Buenos Aires. It is flat, marshy in spots and sparsely treed. Like the pampas it is rich in Screamers but those found along this canal are a different species from those I saw in the W. H. Hudson country. Our bird here was Chauna chavaria, the Northern Screamer. We estimated that we saw well over five hundred of them. As for hawks, there seemed to be one on every tree.

Once again a box lunch proved a talisman for birds. During our food break four species new to me flew by. A Bare-faced Ibis (Phimosus infuscatus), a Capped Heron (Pilherodias pileatus), a Crane Hawk, (Geranospiza caerulescens) and a Pale-legged Hornero (Furnarius leucopus). This hornero is a much more strikingly marked bird than the pampas' Rufous Hornero (F. rufus) -- a bird Hudson wrote of with affection, which nested in the *ombu* trees underneath his bedroom window. (Horneros were still nesting there when I saw the place a few years ago.)

On the way back to Cartagena we nearly drowned in the bay. Like the above mentioned jeep, the engine in our launch broke

Continued on page six

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600

A strange phenomenon has struck the world of birders in recent years—the urge to have seen 600 different species north of the Mexican border. Although listing dates back to colonial days, never has such energy been expended to tally exactly each bird seen in one's lifetime. The following list has been compiled on the basis of reports submitted by members of the American Birding Association lists of birds seen by midnight December 31, 1972. For further details, see "Birding", published by the A.B.A. quarterly.

50	623	Pete Isleib	Alaska
51	622	Ira Joel Abramson	Florida
51	622	Harold Baxter	California
51	622	Lee Jones	California
54	621	Allan Cruickshank	Florida
54	621	Noble S. Proctor	Connecticut
54	621	Ellen L. Stephenson	California
54	621	Jerry Strickling	Missouri
54	621	Karl H. Weber	Virginia
59	620	Frank Becherer	California
59	620	Nancy Strickling	Missouri
61	619	Laurence C. Binford	California
62	618	Richard H. Pough	New York
63	617	Val DaCosta	California
63	617	Joe Greenburg	California
65	615	Fred Haerich	California
66	614	Linda Snyder	Texas
67	613	Charles T. Clark	Illinois
67	613	Echo Stevens	California
67	613	H. Glenn Stevens	California
70	611	James W. Key	New York
70	611	Mary C. Key	New York
70	611	William Russell	Maine
70	611	George A. Scott	Ontario
70	611	Keith Taylor	Australia
70	611	Edward V. Thompson	Maine
70	611	Bill Williams	Tennessee
77	610	Robert B. Bates	Arizona
77	610	Richard L. Cunningham	Mass.
77	610	Jon Dunn	California
77	610	Michael Gochfeld	New York
77	610	Jack L. Kinsey	California
82	609	Alan Craig	California
82	609	Gilbert W. King	California
82	609	John F. Rothermel Sr.	Texas
82	609	Irene Williams	Tennessee
86	608	Oliver L. Austin	Florida
86	608	Carrol E. Kiblinger	Texas
88	605	Benton S. Basham	Tennessee
88	605	P. A. Buckley	New York
88	605	John B. Steeves	Quebec
88	605	James A. Tucker	Texas
92	604	Richard Brownstein	New York
92	604	Reginald Denham	New York
92	604	Lee R. Herndon	Tennessee
92	604	Charles T. Hotchkiss	Virginia
92	604	Carl S. Marvel	Arizona
97	603	Clarence Cottam	Texas
97	603	Horace Jeter	Louisiana
97	603	H. Granville Smith	Ohio
97	603	Alexander Sprunt IV	Florida
97	603	Alexander Wetmore	D.C.
102	602	Ruth Emery	Massachusetts
102	602	Charles E. Newell	New York
102	602	Ella D. Newell	New York
102	602	Rose Ann Rowlett	California
102	602	Jay Sheppard	California
102	602	Dorothy Snyder	Massachusetts
108	601	Henry S. Hoffman	California
108	601	Louise B. Hoffman	California
108	601	Rachel D. Tryon	Minnesota
111	600	Arthur A. Allen	Deceased
111	600	Winston W. Brockner	Colorado
111	600	Guy Emerson	Deceased
111	600	Ludlow Griscom	Deceased
111	600	Guy McCaskie	California
111	600	Allen H. Morgan	Massachusetts
111	600	Richard C. Nelson	Arizona
111	600	A. W. O'Neil	Texas
111	600	Jeffrey R. Sanders	Illinois

audubon activities

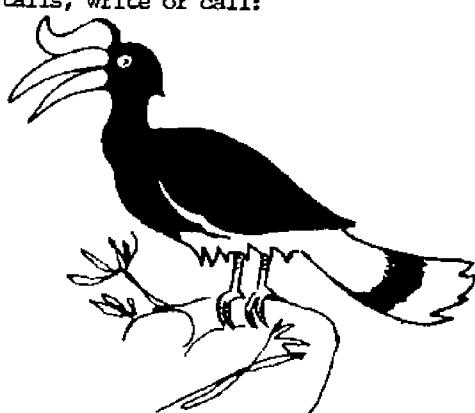
DONALD ADAMS

MORRO BAY, Feb. 17. The rains cleared and twenty-four birders gathered at Morro Rock under bright blue skies and warm sun. Some seventy-three species were seen during the day. Highlights were Peregrine Falcon, Short-eared Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Golden Eagle, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, all three species of scoters and three species of cormorants. Some of the birders en route to a camp site on Hwy. 66, saw Bald Eagle over Twichell Reservoir. Jim Clements, leader.

MOJAVE NARROWS, Feb. 26. Seventeen Audubonites were rewarded for their long drive by the fine view of Long-eared Owl and a Winter Wren, the wren being life bird for quite few. A total of fifty-six species were seen, three of which were not on the checklist of the Mojave Narrows Wildlife Area. We saw the American Bittern, Varied and Hermit Thrushes, and four species of woodpeckers, plus the usual marsh birds. It is still winter there, but in a month or so, warblers should be passing through. Camping is now permitted for those who might want to stay overnight. Ed Navojosky was great spotter and discovered several of the more elusive species. Ruth Lohr, leader.

WANT A DIFFERENT VACATION?

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To see the wonders of these lands and their people
not to mention
INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL BIRDS
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who've planned such goodies as:
Birding from the back of an elephant!
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Glendale, Calif. 91208
Phone (213) 249-5537

Mr. James W. Huffman
16856 Edgar Street
Pacific Palisades, Calif. 90272
Phone (213) 454-4279

A MISSION OF MERCY

At Marquez Elementary School, one of the projects in Mrs. Gabriel's class is to give her pupils a closer relationship with animals and at least once during the term a pupil takes one of them home over the weekend. Last Friday Laura was to enjoy this thrill. It was her turn to take one of the cuties, "Teddy," a beautiful zebra finch, home. All precautions were taken to lock the family cat out of Laura's room, but Saturday, the cat somehow pushed a door open, leaped on Teddy's cage and knocked it over. When the cage door sprung open the stunned bird was quickly caught by the cat who ran off shaking him in her jaws. We somehow got the cat to drop the injured Teddy who lay motionless on the floor.

Hoping that he was still alive, we rushed him to Dr. William Farber at the Pet Medical Center in Santa Monica, and he stopped everything to help Teddy. Dr. Farber's healing hands revived the bird who started to show signs of life. He first stopped the bleeding and with antibiotics he was able to save Teddy, and we were able to take him back to Marquez school on Monday. By Thursday his wounds were nearly healed.

It was refreshing to find one so dedicated as Dr. Farber, and because it was a school project he refused compensation.

(Mr.) Shirley R. Weinberg, member
(LA Chapter, Audubon)

BOOK STORE

New foreign books in the Sales Department include INDIAN HILL BIRDS by Salim Ali with excellent identification charts covering the Himalayan and peninsular birds of India. Also Volume 7 of the HANDBOOK OF BIRDS OF INDIA & PAKISTAN by Salim Ali has just been released which features Laughing Thrushes to Mangrove Whistlers.

FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA by DeSchauensee and SPECIES OF BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA with their distribution by DeSchauensee both contain vast amounts of information for the traveler interested in birds. DARWIN'S ISLANDS by Ian Thornton is the only book of its kind to be written about this area and since so many people are traveling to this part of the world, it is a worthwhile study of the bird and animal life of the Galapagos Islands. FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO by Ernest Edwards is another choice one has from a wide variety of Latin American books. To compliment it TRAVELERS LIST & CHECKLIST for BIRDS of MEXICO is now available. A COLOURED KEY TO THE WATERFOWL OF THE WORLD by Peter Scott is also new to the store, a very concise paperback book with 23 color plates and locations. No matter where you're traveling in the world, be sure and check with us for your bird books!

A pleasant reminder! With the early arrival of spring wild flowers, we have a fantastic variety of books on flora from the mountain to the desert wildflowers. Also we have some new selections of stationery with unusual nature motifs.

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

**Audubon
Bird Reports
874-1318**

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. Barbara and John Hopper will present a program illustrated with color slides on "Arctic Adventure."

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: 398-2955.

May 3 THURSDAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

May 5 SATURDAY-SUNDAY MORONGO VALLEY. Meet between 7 and 8 a.m. in Covington Park, Morongo Valley.

5 6 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 nearby Joshua Tree National Monument or in the Salton Sea area. There are dry camping facilities in the monument; be sure to bring water if you plan to camp. There are motels in Twenty-nine Palms and Yucca Valley. Leader: Jim Huffman (May 5 & 6); phone: 454-4279. Leader for May 12 & 13 to be announced next month.

12 13 May 13 SUNDAY PELAGIC TRIP TO SANTA CRUZ ISLAND. Owing to unexpected complications the group will not land on the island as planned. 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. Phone 395-1911. Please list all members of your party. Leader: Lee Jones. Number of persons limited to 48.

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

May 27 SUNDAY MT. PINOS. Bob Blackstone leader. See May Tanager for details.

HOUSING FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Denver Audubon Society Convention has announced a Host Family Program to be run during the June 7-11 National Audubon convention. They are currently building a file of DAS members willing to share spare bedrooms, sofas, and backyard camping space with out-of-towners attending the convention. For information write: Host Family Chairman, Mrs. Aleon DeVore, Star Rte. Box 75-A, Little, Colorado 80120.

Glenn Walsburg, a graduate of UCLA, is involved in an ecological study of the Phainopepla. He would appreciate information regarding where in the local chaparral and oaks Phainopeplas are sighted this spring and summer. Territorial and breeding birds are of particular interest. He can be contacted at home (862-9798) or at UCLA (479-9516).

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

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Audubon Activities

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Calendar

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Mailing Supervision

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AMIGOS DE LA NATURALEZA

by Betty Jenner

Western Tanagers called in trees on hillside slopes; Tennessee Warblers were abundant; Scissor-tailed Flycatchers by the dozen were visible from my hotel room window, hunting insects and perching on TV antennas. The place? Costa Rica in late January, 1973. I was impressed again by the fact that many of "our" species spend most of the year far south of our country; and that the problems of Latin America are our problems, conservation-wise. I was attending, as an observer, the Founding Conference of Pan-American Audubon Societies, sponsored by members of Florida Audubon Society, which has started branches in many Latin American countries. Roland Clement was an observer from National Audubon, with Mrs. Clement; Russell Mason, Mr. & Mrs. John Dunning, Dade Thornton, etc., were among those attending from Florida. The renowned naturalist, Alexander Skutch, was one of the speakers.

Field trips to Volcan Poas and Volcan Irazu, and to lovely Finca Las Lluvias, were rewarding bird-wise. The climate of Costa Rica is springlike. Peace Corps people are helping to develop the new National Park system of Costa Rica. One of them, Keith Leber, is based at the very birdy Santa Rosa National Park, and promised to show a variety of species to anyone going down there. Another young man, Ralph Holmes, is a gifted wildlife artist; anyone wishing to buy an original bird or animal picture in perfect pen-and-ink detail, from an artist who is certain to achieve fame in his field, can contact me through Audubon House.

Days of long and complicated discussions were rewarded by the formation of a constitution which, though simple, could be far-reaching in its effects in co-ordinating efforts of conservationists of many countries of diverse languages and political structures, toward the end of saving habitat, and educating those citizens who are unaware of the threats to the wild world as we know it. Anyone wishing to read the constitution may see it at Audubon House, where I will leave a copy.

The name was suggested by Dr. Skutch:
"Friends of Nature... Amigos de la Naturaleza"

ROAD THREATENS SAN JOAQUIN MARSH

The Friends of Newport Bay report that there are plans to continue Campus Road through the San Joaquin Marsh. At present the marsh is used by U. C. I. , local schools and others who are interested and qualified for studies of fresh water life. Regulations, protective of the plant and animal life, must be observed by all visitors. The road would not only disrupt the life of the marsh while it is being built, but the traffic, with its noise and fumes would permanently damage the wetland.

FRIENDS OF NEWPORT BAY

The Friends of Newport Bay have invested \$1100 in a 20 minute 16 mm. sound motion picture about the Bay which is now being completed by Gary Rogers.

Morro Coast Audubon Society members were duly surprised to find the news in the January 18th Telegram-Tribune of the acquisition of the Fairbanks Heron Rookery adjacent to Morro Bay State Park. The state announced that the purchase price was \$350,000 for the 5.7 acre site. Hopefully the nesting activities of both the Great Blue Herons and the Black Crowned Night Herons will continue indefinitely under the supervision and protection of the state parks system.

As a result of the letters generated by the local Audubon Society; thousands of letters from interested citizens were addressed to Governor Reagan and to Assemblyman Ketchum. Full credit is due Governor Reagan, Mr. Ketchum and Mr. Mott, but it should be pointed out that citizen interest prompted their interest and that citizen interest in this case was sparked and fanned by the local Morro Coast Audubon Society.

Chester A. Thomas, President
Morro Coast Audubon Society

GUETZALITIS

down. So did our ship-to-shore telephone. There was a terrific gale blowing, whipping up huge waves and heading us towards a rocky inlet and the threatening Caribbean. But I must not permit this article to degenerate into a travelogue about the hazards of any form of transport in Columbia.

So back to the birds. At the end of the day, safely home in our hotel by a miracle, we toted up our list for the Canal. It was 89. Also, to crown the day, just before we reached the dock, we saw an ocean bird that thrilled von Sneider more than any we poor Americans had seen that day. It was a Pomarine Jaeger -- a first record for the Atlantic coast of Columbia.

Two days later we headed for Panama and the Resplendent Quetzal. (to be cont'd)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

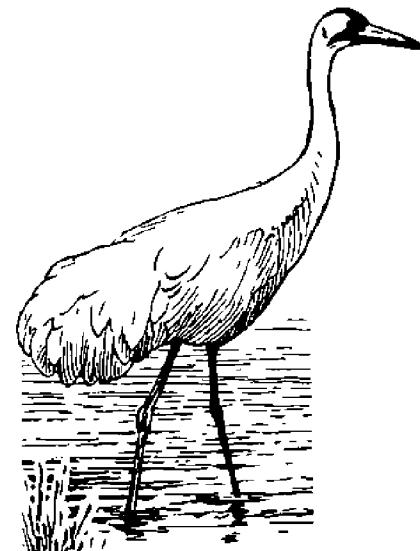
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B.C. which was studied by several Washington birders on March 4. This adds a "stepping-stone" record between northwestern Alaska, where they breed in small numbers, and the report of one in Ventura County last fall. Ted Parker in Tucson, Arizona writes that a **FERRUGINOUS OWL** is apparently nesting in nearby Sabino Canyon Nature Center, and that a **BLACK HAWK** and a **GREEN KINGFISHER** have been seen below Lake Patagonia, north of Nogales. The only report of a **YELLOW-BILLED LOON** in Calif. this winter comes from Eureka where one was found in late February. Last and most exciting, there is an absolutely unconfirmed rumor from an unreliable source in the east that a nest of the **ESKIMO CURLEW** was found in the Arctic last summer by a person or persons unknown.

As April progresses more and more birders will be casting their eyes toward the desert oases, particularly Morongo Valley, for the desert birds which nest there, and for the ever-fascinating migrants. A re-reading of Russ and Marion Wilson's "Spring Migration in Morongo Valley" in the July 1970 Tanager is suggested in preparation for these outings. For a discussion of the weather phenomena which dams up migrants at such places as Morongo and Whitewater, see Arnold Small's explanation which was written for the May, 1964 Tanager and reprinted in the April, 1970 issue. This with a study of the twelve species of West Coast warblers, the thirteen flycatchers, six swallows, three vireos and numerous seed-eaters which are likely to occur there in spring, should make your trips more meaningful. Although Morongo is one of the best and closest oases there are many others: nearby is Yucca Valley, where the pond and trees on the north side of the golf course (but not the course itself) are accessible and very birdy; slightly farther away are Twenty-nine Palms, Thousand Palms (by permission only), Cottonwood Springs, Finney Lake and several oases in eastern San Diego County; for two or three day trips, try the Colorado River above Yuma, Furnace Creek Ranch and Scotty's Castle in Death Valley, and the Afton, Kelso, Cima area.

Little mention has been made here of water birds and there is little to be said. With the ducks and geese gone or going, there is still excellent shorebirding along the coast and at the Salton Sea. The pelagic trip on May 13 will provide a fine opportunity to study many seldom seen species and perhaps to intercept the Sooty Shearwater migration, which is one of the great avian spectacles of the world. If anticipation is the spice of life, then there are a lot of spicy birdwatchers around, all eagerly awaiting the imminent tide of migration.

Correction of last issue: Instead of "Yellow-shafted Flickers have been reported....." read "Yellow-shafted Flickers are seldom reported....."



WHOOPING CRANE LOSS

The world's remaining flock of whooping cranes declined from 59 birds to 51 last fall and a search into other areas where extra birds might winter has failed to locate the missing eight.

EAST AFRICA EXPEDITIONS

Nature Expeditions International will have two natural history expeditions to E. Africa this summer. Expedition V, June 25-July 16 will be led by Glen Moffat, Biol. Inst., Foothill Col. and Ted Chandik, Naturalist, City of Palo Alto. Expedition VI, July 16-Aug. 5 will be led by Mr. Moffat and Robert Thomas, Biol. Prof., Col. of the Redwoods. Itineraries include parks and reserves in Kenya and Tanzania, coral beaches and life beneath the seas along the Kenya coast. The first expedition offers an optional week in the Seychelle Islands, the second a climb to Mt. Kilimanjaro. Trips limited to 16 persons. Cost, including round trip air fare from L. A. \$1690. For further information write Ted Chandik, 4238 Ruthelma Ave., Palo Alto (415-493-5330) or Nature Expeditions Internat., P. O. Box 1173, Los Altos, Ca 94022 (415-941-2910).

STUDY OF HOUSE FINCHES

Deformed house finches (growths on head, feet, and bills) have been found in Santa Barbara and Ventura. It is thought these birds have Fox Pox. Gerrie Human of Summerland is working with the Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History on a study to determine the extent of the problem and has asked for a report of any deformed birds in this area. Information should include sex of bird, location of deformity, date and place seen. They are also trying to determine if any of the affected birds make recovery.

Please send a postcard to Gerrie Human, 2510 Whitney Avenue, Summerland, Calif., if you can help. It will be much appreciated.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds SHUMWAY SUFFEL

APRIL

should see us emerging from that "Where are the birds?" feeling that usually plagues us during March. Most of the winter birds have left or are leaving now, particularly those northern species which have made this winter exciting. Only the earliest migrants and a few summer

residents will have put in an appearance by early April, but better days are ahead as the migration of small passerines and shorebirds builds to a climax at the end of the month.

Early March witnessed the first major invasion of PAINTED LADIES since 1963, but hold everything--before you give this column an X-rating, you should know that Painted Ladies are butterflies, and are very interesting ones at that. If you observed them carefully, you would have noticed that 90% of them were flying west or northwest (parallel to our coast) despite all obstacles, because they were migrating just as the better known Monarch Butterflies do. This mass migratory movement is very sporadic and occurs only after wet winters. An interesting sidelight is that this same species occurs in the Old World and flies across the Mediterranean Sea on its journey from Africa to Europe.

Surprisingly, the birds kept the birders busy in February and early March, usually a rather quiet time. Although a few species, notably Evening Grosbeaks and Varie Thrushs decreased after the first of the year, others such as robins, sparrows and their allies seemed to increase as the winter progressed. According to Jean Brandt, HARRIS' SPARROWS were downright common in early March at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley (where a few are expected every winter). Also, when looking for the HARRIS' SPARROW on Feb. 18, which was banded by Dave Foster on Jan. 9 in Eaton Canyon, Pasadena, a group of Bay-area birders found not one but two Harris' Sparrows there and the NORTHERN SHRIKE which Dave had also banded on Jan. 9. (It could not be found in the interim or afterward.) In addition to the two WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS reported last month, another was at Whittier Narrows Nature Center on Feb. 17 (Dave Foster), and others were in Modjeska Canyon and Irvine Park in Orange County. While looking for the latter bird, Hal Baxter found the only GRAY-HEADED JUNCO to be reported in our area this winter. Three RED CROSSBILLS came to a feeder and were photographed in Pacific Palisades on Feb. 14 (Lloyd Kiff), and another three fed on the emergent cottonwood catkins in Morongo Valley on Feb. 24. They were feeding with hundreds of PINE SISKINS and at least two male CASSIN'S FINCHES. A single CLARK'S NUTCRACKER in San Pedro on Feb. 8 was the latest sighting of this species, which was widely reported earlier in the winter. By late February the three immature BULLOCK'S ORIOLES which had wintered at Jean Brandt's feeder had increased to eight or more, and had been joined briefly by an immature male BALTIMORE ORIOLE and a female HOODED ORIOLE (possibly an early migrant). Also, an adult male BALTIMORE ORIOLE was much admired at a San Diego feeder. WINTER WRENS are seldom found in Southern California but when Ed Navajosky heard a strange song at Mojave Narrows Park near Victorville, he zeroed in on a thicket which concealed his life bird. Another WINTER WREN was reported from Santa Anita Canyon in early March. Ed found another life bird when a male WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER almost flew into his car as it was pursued by a territorial RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER in Elysian Park on March 1.

An update on several previous reports seems in order. The photographs taken of the two swans in California Valley on Jan. 22 by Brod Schram show that one of them had every fieldmark of a TRUMPETER SWAN--large size, bill shape and pattern, etc. This is the first record of a Trumpeter in So. Calif. in historic times, and the photograph verifies it. The previously mentioned lack of KITTIWAKES this winter has been alleviated somewhat by the finding of three or more at King Harbor in Redondo Beach (Bruce Broadbooks). The PALM WARBLER, which was found at Legg Lake, El Monte, in December was reported again on Feb. 10 by Bess Dickinson of Orange County.

A few firsts for the year make a proper prelude for the migration to come. A very early CLIFF SWALLOW was found at the South Coast Botanic Garden by Shirley Wells on Feb. 7, and eight or more were seen by Hal Baxter near the dam at Lake Matthews on Feb. 19. The first migrant VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS (a few do winter along the coast) were a group of 25 at Malibu Lagoon on March 5 (Ed N.). The only warbler first was a very early WILSON'S WARBLER in Tuna Canyon on Feb. 26 (Joan Mills and Abigail King), with another in Tapia Park, Malibu, on March 3 (Bruce B.). A female VERMILION FLY CATCHER at the Pt. Mugu duck clubs on Feb. 4 and a BLACK TERN at Marina del Rey on Feb. 17 were so far ahead of normal spring arrival dates that they must be considered winter records.

Any optimisitic note on the status of raptors deserves bold-face type. Several active observers confirm my belief that RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS are seen more often now in our area than they have been during the last ten years.

A few reports from further afield may be of interest. Despite a rather dull winter along the East Coast, Will Russel of Bar Harbor, Maine, writes that late February brought a FIELDFARE, GREAT GRAY OWL, several HAWK OWLS (which are currently keeping eastern birders on the move). Phil Mattock's card from his home in Bellevue, Wash. tells of a WHITE WAGTAIL just east of Vancouver,