

Los Angeles Audubon Society

The Western Tanager

VOLUME 39, 1972-73 No. 9 MAY

BIRDS & BIRDERS IN SANTA BARBARA by T. NELSON METCALF

Your editor asked me to write an article for *The Western Tanager* on my reminiscences of birding in the Santa Barbara area over the years. Since I have lived here only sixteen years and feel that my personal experiences would not be of much interest, I suggested that it might be better if I wrote something about how it happens that Santa Barbara is such a fine place for birds and birders. I like to brag about our natural history museum and our fine nature education programs that have trained so many dedicated birders.

399 species of birds have been recorded within fifty miles of Santa Barbara, an area that includes almost all of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. This is an unusually large number for an area not in the tropics. It exceeds the state lists for 36 of our 50 states. One reason so many birds have been recorded is that, for the last hundred years, Santa Barbara has had a great many good amateur and professional ornithologists. More important is the fact that our terrain is so varied that almost every California bird can find the food and environment it needs. Within fifty miles we have deep and shallow ocean; four of the Channel Islands; sandy beaches and rocky shores; harbors; nine tidal estuaries with marshes, lagoons and mud flats; large and small ponds and reservoirs; deciduous and coniferous woodland; grasslands; canyons; cliffs; high plains and potreros; cultivated areas; parks; gardens; chaparral; desert scrub; and mountains to 9000 feet. In fact, we have here about all the bird habitats to be found in the temperate zone other than very dry deserts and mountain areas above the timberline.

Several years ago, when I was preparing a list of the birds of the Santa Barbara region, I searched the A.O.U. *Check-list*, the *Audubon Field Notes*, the *Auk*, the *Condor*, the *Wilson Bulletin* and Alden Miller's 1944 and 1951 monographs on the *Distribution of Birds of California* to make sure that no species were overlooked. I was surprised at the many birds that were seen or collected in this area in the period from 1870 to 1920. I was interested to learn that there was an "active and enthusiastic Santa Barbara Society of Natural History" from 1875 to about 1905.

Good evidence of the abundance of bird species in this area is to be found in the Annual Christmas Bird Counts. For the past ten years Santa Barbara has been one of four communities in North America that always has been among the first ten in the number of species recorded. The four communities—Cocoa, Florida; Freeport, Texas; San Diego and Santa Barbara—are also the only communities ever to have recorded more than 200 species on a Count Day.



Front Entrance

Rolle Kroll

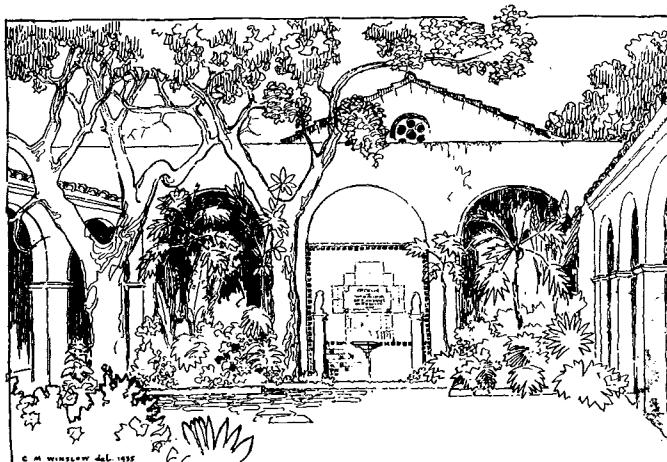
It is interesting that, in spite of the intensive birding that has been done here for many years, we keep adding new species to our list. In every one of the last thirteen years, from one to ten species new to the area has been recorded. We don't know whether new species are moving into the area or they have always been here and more intensive birding has located them.

The Santa Barbara region attracts many birders as well as many birds. I doubt if there is any community in the country where there is greater interest in nature and especially in birds. I believe this is largely due to the presence and programs of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The Santa Barbara Audubon Society and the bird classes of the adult education division of the Santa Barbara City College have also contributed to this great interest.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is perhaps the finest and the most beautiful museum in any small city. It is devoted almost exclusively to the flora and fauna of the State of California. Its Ornithology Department has always been outstanding. The founder and first Director of the Museum was a famous ornithologist and author, William Leon Dawson. He wrote the *Birds of Ohio* (1903), the *Birds of Washington* (1909), and was living in Santa Barbara while writing his four-volume tome *Birds of California*. In 1916 he founded the Santa Barbara Museum of Comparative Oology. Its first exhibit was his nest and egg collection which is still on display in the three table cases in the Sarah Hamilton Fleischmann Bird Hall.

I was interested to learn of Leon Dawson's connection with the Museum because I had met him in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1903 just after he had published his *Birds of Ohio* and was about to leave for the West to start work on his *Birds of Washington*.. He was visiting Dr. Lynds Jones, Professor of Zoology at Oberlin College. Jones was the leading ornithologist in Ohio and had been Dawson's sponsor and counselor in the preparation of his book. Lynds Jones was the one who had got me interested in birds in 1902 and with whom I did much of my birding for a dozen years. He was the founder of the Wilson Ornithological Society and was editor of the *Wilson Bulletin* for its first 36 years.

In 1923, the trustees of the Museum of Comparative Oology decided to expand the organization into a complete natural history museum and adopted the present name. Dawson resigned and was succeeded by another famous ornithologist and author, Ralph Hoffman, whose



W. Leon Dawson

William Leon Dawson, founder and first Director of the Museum, famous ornithologist and author.

Birds of the Pacific Coast has for 45 years been considered a must in the libraries of many West Coast birders because it gives much more information about bird behavior and migration dates than other field guides. In 1932 Hoffman lost his life in a fall while on a collecting trip on San Miguel Island.

Our Museum is probably best known for its two beautiful bird halls. The Sarah Fleischmann Bird Hall displays the birds of California in taxonomic order. The Chase-Coggshall Bird Habitat Hall contains ten habitat groups in natural settings with background paintings of actual locations in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

Practically all of the taxidermy work in the bird and mammal halls of the Museum is the work of Egmont Z. Rett, who came to the Museum in 1924. He was Curator of Mammology

Continued on opposite page.

Quetzalitis

CONTINUED

by Reginald Denham.

Before moving into the Panamanian high-lands we had a couple of days in the Canal Zone. One was spent along the Gamboa Pipe-Line Road and another at Barro Colorado Island. The latter was somewhat of a let-down thanks to the "closing in" of the forest round the landing dock. This used to be a clearing of open country. It is no longer so. With the result (we were told) that a hundred birds have been struck off their list. However, the antics of the monkeys in the tree tops below the lodge were some compensation.

We eventually found ourselves near Quetzal country at the Panamonte Inn on a Sunday at Boquete. We were lucky in being given a driver for our sturdy conveyance who knew exactly where Quetzals had been recently seen. He'd taken a party to see them the previous Sunday. It was fairly near the Collins finca, a location mentioned by Mr. Keith in his article. But though near in distance, as the Quetzal flies, it was at least an hour's drive. The road had been completely washed out a couple of years ago by a flash flood that had destroyed several homes in Boquete, including one belonging to the owner of the Panamonte Inn. It had been a real disaster. Many lives were lost.

After fascinating birding along the way, we finally found ourselves at "Quetzal dell," a hollow at the bottom of a hill

where there was a stand of towering trees. We searched tree after tree for about an hour but there was no sign of our birds -- not a movement in the foliage, not a note of song. So we decided to call it a day and eat our lunch. We got our boxes out of our bus and sat around, silently and gloomily munching.

Suddenly, after about two minutes, one of our party (again, a lady) pointed to the tree immediately above our heads and whispered, "Look! Something just flew in there."

We consigned our lunches to the ants, rose cautiously one by one and peered up into the tree. There, at the top of the corona was, "the world's most fabulous bird," a male. However, its "greener green" back was all that could be seen, plus a portion of the long frond-like tail.

Soon the bird flew into a neighboring tree and perched much lower down. This time we had a splendid view of the scarlet breast. Then the bird started calling and his call was echoed by two other birds. They came nearer and we had good glimpses of both of them. One was a male with a much shorter tail -- probably an immature bird -- and the other was definitely a female. These three continued to call and haunt the trees for the remainder of the time we spent in the dell. As we drove back to Boquete nobody spoke very much. I think we were all too moved.

A few days later we found ourselves in Costa Rica. Our second day was spent at San Isidro el General, at Dr. Skutch's lovely farm. He was extremely hospitable and allowed us to sit on his porch and study the many species of vivid Tanagers that come to his feeder. He also took us for a stroll through the adjacent forest. He has a fabulous ear. His recognition of the innumerable songs was an education in itself.

To be concluded in the next issue

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In addition to the biographical notes in the above, our readers are reminded that Nelson Metcalf has led many trips out of Santa Barbara, some for the Los Angeles Audubon Society. He is the author of the useful guide, "Birds of the Santa Barbara Region," which was revised in 1972, and is available at Audubon House.

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audubon activities

DONALD ADAMS

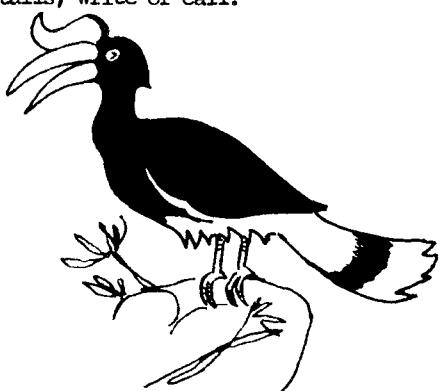
MORRO BAY, Feb. 10. After a stormy night, 10 birders (2 local) turned out in the rain to demonstrate once again the unwavering optimism of the true birder. This optimism was not misplaced, however, because the skies cleared enough for us to have lunch in warm sun, followed by a nice afternoon. Birds weren't as numerous as they sometimes are on this trip, although 74 species were recorded including SURFBIRDS, COMMON MURRE, GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL, CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE, and comparative views of LESSER and GREATER SCAUP as they flew about below us. Freeman Tatum, leader.

LEGG LAKE, Mar. 19. Monday field trips are becoming popular, with 17 people and 61 species of birds showing up. The highlight of the day was the first WESTERN KINGBIRD reported this year. We also saw a SNOW GOOSE, many CARDINALS, 9 species of ducks, 4 species of swallows, a BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER and a PURPLE FINCH. Olga Clarke identified all of the wildflowers for us; 2 jackrabbits and a striped skunk were also seen. It was a very good day! Jean Brandt, leader.

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A FABULOUS TRIP TO MALAYSIA AND INDIA

To see the wonders of these lands and their people
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INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL BIRDS
You'll be escorted by Jim Huffman and Olga Clarke,
who've planned such goodies as:
Birding from the back of an elephant!
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TRY IT! YOU'LL LIKE IT!
For details, write or call:



Mrs. Olga Clarke
2027 El Arbolita Drive
Glendale, Calif. 91208
Phone (213) 249-5537

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

CHANTRY FLAT & SANTA ANITA CANYON - Apr. 14. Thirty-one birders turned out on a cool, threatening morning for the walk around Chantry Flat and the hike down into Santa Anita Canyon. Migrants were not too abundant with only four species of the hoped-for warblers and vireos seen. However, there was an ASH-THROATED and OLIVE-SIDED FLY-CATCHER and a VAUX'S SWIFT, in addition to many BULLOCK'S ORIOLES and several BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS to show that spring is here. Two CANYON WRENS were found at one of the cabins along the stream, and three DIPPERS helped satisfy those who had particularly hoped for this specialty. Altogether, 42 species were seen. Hal Baxter, leader.

JALAMA BEACH, Mar. 31. Accompanied by strong March winds and early morning sprinkles, 21 eager birders met at Jalama village under a perfect rainbow. Proceeding down the narrow, winding road toward the beach, the group found shelter from the wind in the canyons and on the leeward side of the hills where the birding was superior and the wildflowers were spectacular, the display being at peak bloom. Some 55 species of birds were listed, the most exciting one being a GREAT HORNED OWL perched conspicuously, its wind ruffled feathers glinting in the sunlight. Les Wood, leader.

Bird migration in the Baltic republics is concerning Soviet military and civil aviation authorities. Radar center has been set up at Vilnius, Lithuania, to track migrating birds, and another unit in Lithuania is using tape-recorded hawk cries to frighten migrating birds.

BOOK STORE

Supplementary List L. A. Audubon Book Store

BIRDS OF ALASKA Gabrielson

BIRDS OF NEWFOUNDLAND Austin

BIRDS W. & EQUAT. AFRICA VOL. I & II

Bannerman

BIRDS OF SOUTH AFRICA Roberts

BIRDS S. THIRD AFRICA VOL. I & II

Mackworth

SAFARIE JOURNAL (checklist birds & animals
East Africa) Williams

BIRDS OF COSTA RICA Slud

A FIELD GUIDE BIRDS OF MEXICO Edwards

BIRDS REPUBLIC PANAMA VOL I & II Wetmore

BIRDS OF EUROPE Brunn & Singer

DARWIN'S ISLANDS Thornton

BIRDS OF KERALA Salim Ali

INDIAN HILL BIRDS Salim Ali

HONG HONG BIRDS Herklots

BIRDS OF FIJI Belcher

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BIRDS OF MALAY PENINSULA Glenister

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INTRODUCTION TO MALAYAN BIRDS Madoc

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COMBINATION LIST BIRDS N. AM. Tucker

HANDBOOK BIRDS OF INDIA & PAKISTAN

VOLS. I THRU VII Salim Ali

SOON AVAILABLE: Handbook Birds of Cyprus
& Migrants of Middle East Bannerman

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**

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. Take Interstate 10 east from L.A. to the Twenty-nine Palms Hwy. (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 on Sunday in nearby Joshua Tree National Monument or in the Salton Sea area. There are dry camping facilities in the Monument. Bring water if you plan to camp. Motels are available in Twenty-nine Palms and Yucca Valley. Leaders: Jim Huffman (May 5 & 6), phone: 454-4279; Larry Sansone (May 12 & 13), phone: 664-1488.

May 8 TUESDAY - EVENING MEETING, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Dr. Ed Harrison will present a program on the California Condor.

May 13 SUNDAY - PELAGIC TRIP - CHANNEL ISLANDS. Board the "Paisano" at Channel Island Harbor at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Lee Jones. Because this trip is by reservation only and was over-subscribed, another pelagic is scheduled for June 17. See below for particulars.

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, phone: 476-5121.

May 27 SUNDAY - MT. PINOS. Meet at 8 a.m. at Frazier Park turnoff by restaurant at Shell Station. Frazier Park turnoff is approximately 2 miles beyond Gorman on Rte 99. A good trip for montane species such as Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, Calliope Hummingbird and possibly Condor. Leader: Ed Navojosky, phone: 938-9766.

June 2 SATURDAY - MALIBU LAGOON. Meet at 8 a.m. in the supermarket parking lot adjacent to the lagoon. Leader to be announced.

June 9 SATURDAY-SUNDAY - GREENHORN MTN. This is an overnight camping trip and will involve about 350 miles of driving. Meet at 8 a.m. at Rancho Bakersfield. From Freeway (Rte. 99) take 24th St. turnoff east about 15 blocks to H St., turn left (north) on H which runs directly into the Rancho Bakersfield located on old Hwy. 99 (business). Be prepared to leave at 8:15 sharp as there will be a lot of driving and birding ahead. Motels are available in Kernville 15 miles east of Greenhorn. Leaders: Don & Caroline Adams, phone: 545-6406.

June 17 SUNDAY - PELAGIC TRIP - CHANNEL ISLANDS. Board "Paisano" at Channel Islands Harbor at 7:30 a.m. Directions and instructions will be sent with reservation confirmation. Fare - \$10. Make check payable to L.A. 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:

June 23 SATURDAY - MT. PINOS - same as May 27. Leader to be announced.

July 7 SATURDAY - BUCKHORN FLAT)

July 15 SUNDAY - IRVINE & O'NEIL PARKS) Details on July trips will appear in the July-August issue.

July 28 SATURDAY - MT PINOS) CALIFORNIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS'

WORKSHOP FIELD TRIPS

APRIL 26 & 28 "Mountain Birds Workshop"
Emphasis on recognition of songs and calls
Angeles Crest Highway, 7:30 to noon; meet
at Charlton Flats Recreation Area. \$3.00
per person. Lee Jones, 215 455-2398
213



Details on July trips will appear in the July-August issue.
CALIFORNIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS'

SPRING MIGRATION PELAGIC TRIP

SPRING MIGRATION PERIODIC TRIP
May 19 May 1973 Leave 6 a.m. Return

Saturday, 19 May 1973. Leave 6 a.m. Return 7 p.m.
> Tentative destination waters around San Clemente
Island or Los Coronados Islands. \$15.00 per per-
son for members, \$16.50 for non-members. Send
checks payable to California Field Ornithologists to
P.O. Box 369, Del Mar, Calif. 92014. List all mem-
bers of party by name, include stamped self-addressed
envelope. Depart Seaforth Sportfishing Landing, Qui-
vera Rd., Mission Bay, San Diego.

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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Official Publication of the LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY

CONSERVATION

EASTERN WILDERNESS AREA ACT

The Eastern Wilderness Area Act (S. 316) or the Jackson-Buckley Bill which has been endorsed by the Wilderness Society, Provides for:

- A. The designation of 16 wilderness areas in the East, Midwest and South.
- B. The inclusion of twelve areas listed earlier by the U.S. Forest Service, but which do not qualify as wilderness.

This very important bill goes on to:

1. Reassert the exclusive Authority of Congress to make final judgment on what areas of our National Forests should be given wilderness protection.
2. Keeps the jurisdiction areas in the Interior Committees of Congress.
3. Provides for the prospect of immediate protection for 28 wilderness areas facing the threat of logging and other destructive exploitation.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Wilderness Act which permit mineral prospecting until 1984, the Jackson-Buckley bill would withdraw all of the areas covered from all forms of appropriation under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing, and assure full authority for acquisition of private holdings.

Copies of S. 316 are available from any senator, and the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Comments are invited by any interested persons living anywhere in the country.

TRADE IN ENDANGERED WILDLIFE

An 80 nation conference in Washington has concluded the first treaty to central trade in endangered wildlife and plants. The conference, including countries from both the free and Communist nations, found that 780 species of Birds and Animals (including sea animals such as various whales) were in danger of extinction and at least 475 species had disappeared from the earth since the year 1600.



Who would have thought this skimpy tree....

HUNTING FROM AIRCRAFT

Texas Senate Bill 251 passed and has since been referred to a committee in the Texas House of Representatives. This bill provides for issuance of permits by the Parks and Wildlife Dept. for individuals to hunt predatory animals from Aircraft, in eight Texas counties. An applicant must simply file an affidavit stating the kind and number of predator animals that are to be taken by use of aircraft, and why, in their opinion, the permit should be issued. The permit is valid for one year and may be renewed.

COASTAL ALLIANCE

Keep May 7th open, as the California Coastal Alliance has the First Bi-Annual Coast day, to start Coast Week, slated. Send your ideas on what you would like done to keep Californians coast conscious. Suggestions may be sent to:

California Coastal Alliance
P.O. Box 4161
Woodside, Calif., 94062
RECYCLING CENTER

On Sept. 23, 1971 there came an outgrowth of Ecology Action which was called the Westside Environmental Center located at 2021 So. Barrington Ave. in West Los Angeles. The center is run entirely on a volunteer basis, and after more than one year this recycling center has grossed over \$9,000 after operating expenses and netted approximately \$6,000 not to mention the hundreds of tons of waste materials which have been prevented from reaching the dump sites.

Most of the money netted from the center has been put right back into the community through contributions to various concerns such as; Pet Pride, Save the Santa Monica Mountains Comm. No Oil, Calif. Coastal Alliance, Friends of Animals, Environmental Action and many others.

This recycling center is for everybody's benefit. The center volunteers hope soon to be able to send representatives into the community to educate the populace in the purpose of recycling centers. They always need volunteers and can be reached by phoning 478-3429.



would have contained this Anna's Hummingbird's nest?

Photographs taken at The Aerospace Corporation by Taylor Gabbard.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRDS

Continued from back page

LEAST and ELEGANT TERNS. Two more GLAUCOUS GULLS were found in March, both in almost white plumage: one was studied by Ernie Abeles, his companions and many others at McGrath State Park, near Ventura, from March 24 until early April; and the other was separated from 80,000 gulls of nine species by Lee Jones on San Miguel Island about March 20. WHITE PELICANS with their nine foot wingspread, perform a spectacular migration over the 5,000 ft. San Gabriel Mts. on their way from the Salton Sea to their nesting lakes in the Great Basin. This is seldom reported. Richard Neuman watched a large flock, which he estimated at 300 birds, fly over Palmdale on March 24.

As if May with migration and two pelagic trips, were not too busy already, there are two worthwhile research projects which need the help of enthusiastic birders this month. The first is the Cornell Nest Record Program which gathers and correlates nesting information from all over the country. While nest watching is a rather sedentary avocation, Breeding Bird Surveys are anything but sedentary. They take only four hours, but they are four hours you'll never forget. You start on your twenty-five mile route before dawn, make a three-minute stop during which you look and listen for birds, then drive one-half mile while recording the species and numbers

seen and heard at the last stop, then you repeat the whole bit forty-nine times more. Even "old-hands" find it exciting. Information on this and the Nest Record Program can be obtained from Shirley Wells at 831-4281.

Last minute news comes from Joan Mills that warbler activity was increasing in Franklin Canyon, Beverly Hills, where it was rather quiet on April 8, and from Guy McCaskie that a PAINTED REDSTART was seen at Scotty's Castle, Death Valley, last weekend by a Bay area birder. This will be the story during April and May--activity one day, relative quiet the next; a rare bird for a day or two, then only expected migrants. There is no magic formula for finding rare birds--persistent, intelligent birding of likely areas is as good a plan as any.

Where are these likely Areas? Nearby Pt. Fermin and Averill Parks in San Pedro, Tuna and Big Sycamore Canyons and Tapia Park in Malibu are well worked and productive, but your neighborhood park or cemetery, particularly if it has weeds, water and insect food (not too well groomed, we mean) can be almost or quite as good. A little farther afield, McGrath Park near Ventura, Fairmount Park in Riverside, and particularly the desert oases mentioned last month offer a better chance for rare birds, and a look at desert birds as well.

CONDOR FUND

Each year the Los Angeles Audubon Drive conducts a drive for the Condor Fund. The proceeds are forwarded to the National Audubon Society, who apply it to the support of the protection of the California Condor, by field work, appearance at hearings and discussion with neighboring mining and ranching interests. John Borneman is the Condor Naturalist appointed by the National Audubon Society. We hope this fund will be well supported this year. Condors are still worth saving—many local naturalists visit the refuge and observation fronts every year, as also many visitors from the East.

Alaska

There are only a few reservations remaining open on the BIRDING TOUR TO ALASKA - August 5 to 22, 1973. Come see this beautiful state before rampant development spoils it.

Congenial and enthusiastic fellow travelers will make this a trip to long remember. We will see many birds and animals in spectacular surroundings.

For information call or write:

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

APPRECIATION

The Los Angeles Audubon Society is very grateful to Carol Stone for her work in responding to telephone calls about wounded birds.

WANTED

Office Equipment for Audubon House.

IBM Executive Typewriter

IBM Selectric Typewriter

Tax-deductible Donation.

Nomination of Officers for 1973-74.

The nominating committee, Mr. Arnold Small, Chairman, has announced the following slate of officers for the year July 1, 1973, through June 30, 1974. The slate is as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| President | Dr. Gerald Maisel |
| 1st Vice-Pres. | Dr. Freeman Tatum |
| 2nd Vice-Pres. | Mr. Sanford Wohlgemuth |
| Executive Secretary | Mrs. Agnes Evans |
| Treasurer | Miss Mary Stewart |
| Corr. Secretary | Mrs. Mary Clements |
| Registrar | Mrs. Ruth Lohr |

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Birds SHUM SUFFEL

Exciting times are here! The spring migration should peak-out within a week before or after the first of May which makes this the time to be out in the field. If you've skimped on birding in April, don't be discouraged. You may have missed the maximum migration numerically, but May, and into early June, promises the greatest number of species, and by far the most interesting ones, for the late season is the time for those much sought after vagrant passerines--lost, late, and ever-fascinating.

MARCH as expected, was a dull month for birders. The invasion species, which made this winter outstanding had dwindled away until only a few VARIED THRUSHES remained (except on Santa Cruz Island where Lee Jones estimated 250 individuals in March); a few in Tapia Park, Malibu, one in Hal Baxter's Arcadia garden and another in Franklin Canyon on April 8 were the only late mainland reports. A few RED-BREASTED and WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES remained in the pines at Rolling Hills (Jean Muller) and elsewhere, but PYGMY NUTHATCHES have not been reported since December. A late CLARK'S NUTCRACKER was reported by Deanna Turnstall at Hansen Dam on March 15, and a STELLER'S JAY remained in Rolling Hills until early April (Jean M.). The WINTER WREN, previously reported in Santa Anita Canyon, stayed on until at least March 25 (Richard Neuman), and the NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH which wintered near Duarte was banded on March 23, and netted again on April 8 by Mike San Miguel. One of the two HARRIS SPARROWS which wintered at Eaton Canyon Park in Pasadena, was seen in late March, and a few CASSIN'S FINCHES were on the high desert of Yucca Valley on April 1.

If March was anything, birdwise, it was a time for first reports, but even these "firsts" were rather meager. SWALLOWS, particularly Violet-greens and Cliffs, were migrating through the region in hundreds, and the expected HUMMING-BIRDS--Rufous, Allen's and Black-chinned had arrived, but the other migrants just trickled into our area. WESTERN KINGBIRDS were first reported at Legg Lake, El Monte, on March 19 by the Monday birders and were widely seen by month's end. WESTERN FLYCATCHERS were a little later with a first report on March 24 east of Desert Center (Olga Clarke), and a pair of VERMILION FLYCATCHERS had returned to Morongo Valley by April 1 (the Jenners et al.). The only ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER report also came from the Jenners who saw one on the high desert, east of Mecca, on March 30. TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE sometimes winter in the lowlands, but were not reported this winter, however, two were seen in March--one at Scotty's Castle on the 21st (Andrew Hazi) and one east of Desert Center on the 24th (Olga Clarke). The first few WARBLING VIREOS were seen in late March--one on the high desert, east of Mecca, on March 20th (Jean Brandt), and within the

week they were widely observed. A few ORANGE-CROWNED and WILSON'S WARBLERS were seen and heard in late March, but the first BLACK-THROATED GRAY and NASHVILLE WARBLERS were not observed until early April. The Jenners found LUCY'S WARBLERS at Corn Springs, a palm oasis near Desert Center, and along the Colorado River on March 31, but they could not be found at Morongo Valley on April 1, possibly because of the high winds. Lucy's are early migrants and were seen at Morongo on March 24 last year. BULLOCK'S ORIOLES (mostly males) were widely reported after mid-March, but the first HOODED ORIOLES arrived about March 22 in Pacific Palisades (Ed Schaar), in Glendale (Olga Clarke) and in Brentwood (the Kings). All three reporters commented that this arrival date was the same, almost to the day, as in previous years. The only SCOTT'S ORIOLE was found, not on the high desert where they are expected, but on Santa Cruz Island, where they were previously unknown (Lee Jones). The earliest BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK was found in Big Sycamore Canyon, Malibu, on March 30 by Ed Navajosky.

Most of the winter raptors drifted away during March, although REDTAILS (probably residents), and COOPER'S and SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS were seen in early April. Three OSPREYS were reported--one at West Pond, north of Yuma, (where one is often seen) on March 31 (the Clarkes), a second at Lake Cachuma (where one or two usually winter) on April 3, and another probable migrant near Oceanside on April 9 (the Monday birders). Migrating TURKEY VULTURES provide one of our great avian spectacles between late February and early April. The Baxters and the Suffels watched a loosely knit column (estimated at about 500) of these black giants (6 ft wingspread) pass high over their heads on the west slope of the Sierras on March 19, and the Clarkes had a similar experience with about fifty north of Lancaster on April 8. In past years, SWAINSON'S HAWKS too, migrated through our area by the hundreds but today--one was reported near Duarte by Mike San Miguel on March 23, and a probable dark Swainson's was sighted from the freeway near Beaumont on April 1 by Gus Daniels, Hal Baxter and S.S.

Although the waterbirds were mostly going or gone by early April, a few noteworthy observations came in. A BLACK BRANT was seen along the San Gabriel River near Whittier Narrows by Dave Foster in early March (they are rare inland except at the Salton Sea). An OLDSQUAW (also rare inland) was spotted on Lake Cachuma, Santa Barbara County, by the Guy Commeaus on April 8. A male COMMON TEAL (our second this winter) was found at San Elijo Lagoon, Solano Beach, on March 17 and nearby were four male BLUE-WINGED TEAL (both Steve Summers). On April 9 the Monday Birders found five male Blue Winged Teal not far away above Oceanside. On the same day they saw five species of terns, including very early