

*Los Angeles Audubon Society*

# **The Western Tanager**

Volume 40, 1973-74 No. 5 February

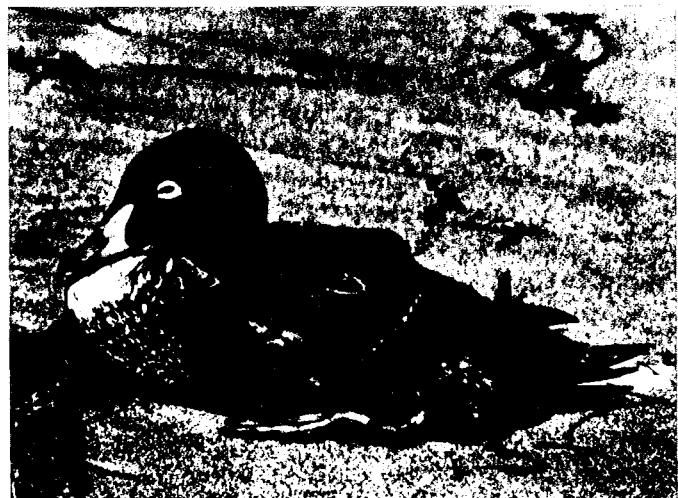
## **1973, A YEAR OF MANY VISITORS**

*by SHUMWAY SUFFEL*

1973 was a California birder's dream year, with almost 90% of the species previously recorded here being found in this one year alone. From the northwest corner of the state where SNOWY OWLS were found in numbers for the second time since 1916 (one was even seen atop an apartment building in San Francisco) to the southeast corner of the state at Imperial Dam, on the Colorado River above Yuma, where California's first RUFOUS-BACKED ROBIN (See your Mexican field guide) was found by Kenn Kauffman on Dec. 17, the year ended as it began extraordinary. Had I been writing the script for 1973 in advance I would have written in our most conspicuous "no-shows" — the BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIES — which have visited the Salton Sea in each of the previous five summers, but were not reported this year. However, I would not have dared include the many much rarer birds which were found in 1973. Some of these, well publicized and widely seen, are covered in the season by monthly reports.

Last winter continued the invasion of northern and mountain birds which started in the fall of '72; VARIED THRUSHES and LEWIS' WOODPECKERS were downright common in the woodlands; NUTHATCH, CHICKADEE and EVENING GROSBEAK numbers tapered off as the winter progressed; and WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKERS, CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS and PINYON JAYS were seen seldom or not at all after the first of the year. The EASTERN PHOEBE at Lake Sherwood stayed into early January, and while searching for the phoebe, the COMMON TEAL was rediscovered, and, while looking for these, Southern California's first TUFTED DUCK was found. Our HARLEQUIN DUCK, first found as an immature in March '72, became a handsome adult male which was widely admired until March 1973. The high tides in January at Upper Newport Bay exposed to view many rails, including at least one BLACK RAIL, and three SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS. California's first PYRRHULOXIA and COUES' FLYCATCHER stayed in the Imperial Valley to be counted on our 1973 lists, as did the HARRIS' SPARROWS and the NORTHERN SHRIKE in Eaton Canyon, near Pasadena.

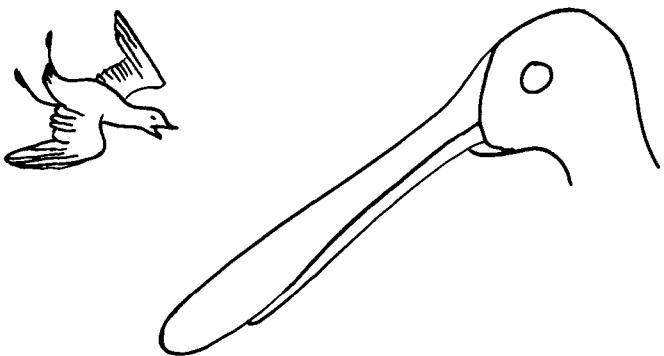
Spring migration was somewhat disappointing at the usual concentration spots, as the migrants disbursed over the countryside lush with flowers and insects as a result of the abundant winter rains. Another disappointment was the apparent failure of LUCY'S WARBLERS to return to Morongo Valley as nesting birds. The only report there was of a singing male on June 2, a late date for these early migrants. The reason that confirmed birders hate to miss a pelagic trip became obvious on the afternoon of May 13, as a staccato cry of HORNED PUFFIN jarred some forty dozing L.A.A.S. members to attention. This was not the first sighting of this Alaskan alcid off our coast, but it was the first time it had been seen by an organized group of birders, and Keith Axelson's photograph proved sufficiently noteworthy to make the cover of American Birds in August. It was a life bird for everyone on board but Bruce Broadbooks, who had seen them in Alaska. A week later Lee Jones saw two more Horned Puffins



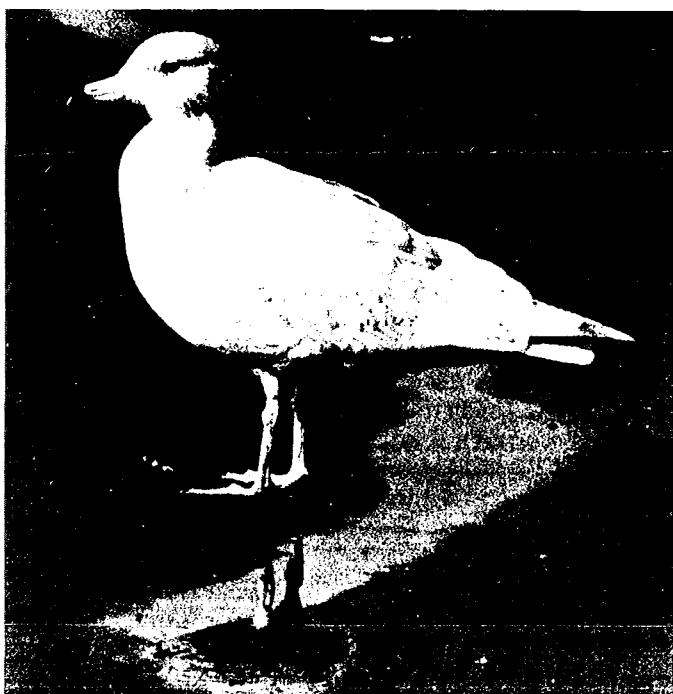
King Eider at Malibu, Nov. 23, 1973. Photograph by Jim Polkinghorn.

in the same area — which shows that rare birds are there, but who looks in the vastness of the ocean except pelagic birders? A scattering of Eastern warblers were seen during April and early May. — a PAINTED REDSTART in Death Valley, several NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES and REDSTARTS, and an unprecedented three rare HOODED WARBLERS in San Diego, Orange and Inyo Counties. Late May and early June produced some exceptional rarities — two MISSISSIPPI KITES in Death Valley, a GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER at Deep Springs, three male CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS at Deep Springs and Palos Verdes, a KENTUCKY WARBLER on Santa Barbara Island, a BAY-BREASTED WARBLER in Morongo Valley, and rarest of all, a RED-FACED WARBLER at Buckhorn Camp in the San Gabriel Mts.

The summer of '73 will be remembered as the SUMMER OF THE ROSEATE SPOONBILLS. Before this June they were known chiefly as casual stragglers to the Salton Sea area, having been seen in seven summers between 1927 and 1972



with the highest count being seven in 1972. Gambel's statement in 1849 that "small flocks occurred up the coast as far as San Francisco" cannot be verified (Amer. Birds Oct. '73), and a paper is now in preparation refuting this, according to Guy McCaskie. The first Spoonbill was found on June 14 and by July 21 more than sixty had been counted around the Salton Sea and along the Colorado River, and at least four more had reached our Pacific Coast for the first time. Salton Sea birding, usually almost unbearably hot, could be done in relative comfort from one's own car on the Whitewater River dike where 14 SPOONBILLS, a LITTLE BLUE HERON, five or more BLACK SKIMMERS, and occasionally FRIGATEBIRDS, FRANKLIN'S GULLS, GULL-BILLED TERNS and even a single WOOD STORK could be seen. At the south end of the Sea the main attraction was a group of three BLACK-BELLIED TREE DUCKS, but these were not found until October. A well publicized nest of FLAMMULATED OWLS as Buckhorn Flats in our local mountains attracted dozens of birders and despite being gawked at nightly, banded, and photographed at point black range, they apparently fledged two owlets. On the other side of the San Gabriel Range the nesting of BLACK SWIFTS was confirmed, as adults were seen feeding an in-nest young bird at Santa Anita Falls. In the San Bernardino Mountains at least two pairs of HEPATIC TANAGERS nested and were later seen feeding young. Our common nesting birds also had a successful season with adequate seed and insect food for the nestlings.



Glaucous Gull at Terminal Island, Los Angeles Harbor, Dec. 23, 1973.  
Photographed by Richard Bradley.

Fall migration, as usual, started in July for the shorebirds, hummingbirds, swallows etc., and brought one of the year's rarest birds -- a HUDSONIAN GODWIT at Eureka on Aug. 9. Richard Webster could find no other birders to confirm this second California record, but did get pictures showing the upturned bill and the dark underwings which are diagnostic. More than a dozen each AMERICAN RED-STARTS AND NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES, our commonest "eastern" warblers, were seen east of the mountains in early September, along with two very uncommon RED-EYED VIREOS on Sept. 1 and 2. During September and throughout October rare warblers became almost commonplace, as compared with thirty years ago. In the following list of warblers the first number is the approximate count in 1973 vs. the total records prior to 1944 from "Grinnell and Miller": CAPE MAY (3 vs. 1), BLACK-THROATED BLUE (5 vs. 1), BLACK-THROATED GREEN (6 vs. 2), BLACKBURNIAN (5 vs. 0), CHESTNUT-SIDED (7 vs. 1), and BAY-BREASTED (3 vs. 0). The most probable explanation for this phenomenon is the greatly increased coverage, particularly of the Channel Islands and the desert oases, by a much larger number of skilled observers. The most sought after birds of the fall was the BAR-TAILED GODWIT at Bolinas during November and December and few were disappointed.

This winter seems to feature the larger non-passerine birds -- waterbirds, hawks, owls etc. -- as contrasted with last winter when we had major invasions of woodpeckers and passerines. Of all the invasion species cited earlier only VARIED THRUSHES were present in any numbers during December. Unlike last winter, KITTIWAKES were found along the coast in good numbers (8 at King Harbor and another 6 at Malibu), and a few FULMARS were seen (2 in Los Angeles Harbor) on Dec. 7 with two singles elsewhere. Surf Scoters were present in the harbors and near the ocean piers in normal numbers and with them, between Newport and Ventura, were at least a dozen BLACK SCOTERS and three OLDSQUAWS (there were four on San Diego Bay). Five HOODED MEGANSERS, including one drake, returned to Legg Lake in time for the Pasadena Count and another was seen at Lake Sherwood. There were few surprises on the local Christmas Counts except for Palos Verdes, where a possible CHIMNEY SWIFT (a confirmed "chaetura") and a GLAUCOUS GULL were found.

Malibu's "Three Graces" consumed hundreds of birder-hours as they were discovered one by one. Olga Clarke found California's second PIPING PLOVER on Nov. 18 while Herb and Arnold Small were photographing gulls; four days later Lee Jones and Jon Dunn, having seen the plover, strolled out on the pier where they discovered an immature male KING EIDER (Southern California's first) which walked out the next day to have its picture taken; and on the 29th, Arnold Small, photographing the plover and the eider, found an "ATLANTIC" BRANT. With a little luck one could see these three rare birds in a half hour's time. Unfortunately, the eider swallowed a fish hook and could not be found on Malibu Count Day, Dec. 17.

Yes, 1973 was a great year for California birders, and the birds will be there in 1974, but with gasless Sundays, maybe Saturdays too, possibly rationing, how will the birders get out to find them? One of my friends, frustrated about rare-birding and listing, swore he was going to take a month off to study the common birds in depth, even swearing he'd write feather-by-feather descriptions of House Sparrows and Starlings. Will it come to that? We think not, but it may give us a greater appreciation of our common yard birds than the less common ones which we use our precious gasoline to see.

# audubon activities

## DONALD ADAMS

**SANTA BARBARA, Nov. 3.** The party met at the Andre Clark Bird Refuge at 8:30 and birded there until about 9:45. Then we birded the harbor breakwater and sandpit until moving to Goleta Beach Park for lunch. Later we moved to the UCSB Lagoon. The migrating land birds have been so scarce along the coast this fall that we visited only water and shore bird areas this time. Some of the water birds seem very late; however, we tallied 4 species of Grebe, 5 of heron, 9 of ducks, 5 of gulls and 4 of tern, including COMMON, ELEGANT and ROYAL. In all, 65 species were observed. Nelson Metcalf, leader.

**McGRATH STATE PARK, Nov. 17.** The first storm of the season kept all but six stalwart birders cringing in their homes — a pity! At McGrath it was surprisingly warm and windless and we saw some fine birds. There were adult and immature BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS in the willows, a BLACK BRANT over the beach, and a WHITE-TAILED KITE over the marsh. After slogging through knee-deep water in an unsuccessful attempt to flush the resident owls, we were rewarded with a great spot to view the birds in the lagoon. We saw two REDHEADS and one CANVASBACK. We walked completely around the lagoon, stirring up thousands of gulls. Long lines of SURF SCOTERS and a couple of hundred stately WESTERN GREBES were in the ocean. It was good to see the many DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS and the large number of BROWN PELICANS, including a considerable proportion of immatures. A female OLDSQUAW was the best bird of the day. Our total was 74 species. Sandy Wohlgemuth, leader.

**CARRIZO PLAINS, Dec. 2.** Because gasoline is unavailable at California Valley, and the lack of confirmation of reservations at the Lodge (apparently preempted by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society) this field trip was reduced to one day. Three thousand SANDHILL CRANES were seen feeding, flying, and bugling. MOUNTAIN PLOVER were about and two GOLDEN EAGLES. Two ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were seen but no Ferruginous. Several LECONTE'S THRASHERS were on the wire fences near Maricopa, but their breeding grounds are being destroyed by motorcycles. MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS were a spectacular sight everywhere. TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS are resident on the Plains. Twenty-three species were seen all told.



# BOOK STORE

**Now Available: GROUSE & QUAILS OF NO. AMERICA** by Paul A. Johnsgard. Beautifully illustrated with photographs and paintings, range maps and pictures of downy young.

**DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIRD NAMES** by Ernest A. Choate. For all who have ever wondered how the Skua, Scoter or Booby acquired their names. Some curious facts, conjectures, and anecdotes on the history and habits of American birds.

**THE LIFE OF THE HUMMINGBIRD** by Alexander B. Singer. The full account of life of hummingbirds, their appearance, what they eat and many other interesting facts. Depicts aspects of hummingbird behavior never before seen.

**OWLS OF THE WORLD** by John Burton. Habits and structures of 133 species of owls, ranging from arctic tundras to tropical rain forests to Arizona deserts. An excellent gift.

**CRANES OF THE WORLD** by Walkinshaw. Includes illustrations in color, and black and white photos, drawings, migration patterns. Complete descriptions on cranes the world over.

**PARROTS OF THE WORLD** by Forshaw. One of the most beautifully illustrated books on parrots ever published. You must see it to believe it. A must for YOUR library.



Los Angeles

## *Audubon Society* ANNUAL DINNER



The Annual Dinner of the Los Angeles Audubon Society will be held Tuesday, February 12, 1974. Reception 6:30 p.m., Dinner 7:30 p.m. — Tenderloin of Beef Brochette. Price: \$6.90 per person (includes sales tax and gratuity). Place:

**THE LOBSTER HOUSE  
4211 Admiralty Way  
Marina Del Rey**

located on the Marina near Palawan Way, reached from Washington Street or Lincoln Boulevard via Bali Way. Marina Del Rey can be reached from Route 405 (San Diego Freeway) by taking the Marina offramp and proceeding to Lincoln Boulevard.

The evening program will feature the Society's president, Dr. Gerald Maisel, and Mrs. Maisel, presenting their "Alaskan Odyssey."

# 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

Dr. Gerald Maisel, PRESIDENT

Agnes Evans, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Audubon  
Bird Reports  
874-1318**

Sat, Feb. 2 MORRO BAY. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the foot of Morro Rock. This is one of our best areas for wintering coastal birds; it also provides excellent birding in wooded areas and canyons in the vicinity. Many people go up Friday night in order to have a full day Saturday and a half day Sunday. There is camping at Morro Bay State Park or many motels located in Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo. Morro Bay is approximately 210 miles north of Los Angeles via US 101. Leader: Jim Clements, 472-3902.

Thu, Feb. 7 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8 p.m., Audubon House

Tue, Feb. 12 ANNUAL DINNER, The Lobster House, Marina del Rey. Please mail reservations to Joann Gabbard, 823 19th St., Apt. D Santa Monica, Ca. 90403. For cancellations or information call Joann at 395-1911 after 4

Sun, Feb. 17 LOS ANGELES ARBORETUM. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at main entrance on Balwin Ave., Arcadia. Take the San Bernardino Freeway to Rosemead Blvd., north on Rosemead to Huntington Dr., east on Huntington Dr. to Baldwin Ave., then north on Baldwin to the main entrance of the park.

Tue, Feb. 19 CONSERVATION MEETING, 8 p.m. at Plummer Park.

Sun, Mar. 3 TUJUNGA WASH & HANSON DAM. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on north side of Foothill Blvd. by bridge, 2 miles west of Sunland. Cactus Wren and Costa's Hummingbird possibilities.

Thu, Mar. 7 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 8 p.m. Audubon House;

Tue, Mar. 12 EVENING MEETING, 8 p.m., Plummer Park. Dr. Joseph Jehl of the San Diego Museum of Natural History will give a slide program on "Sea Birds of Tierra Del Fuego and the Strait of Magellan."

Sat, Mar. 23 MALIBU LAGOON & TAPIA PARK. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the supermarket parking lot adjacent to the upper lagoon. Leader to be announced.

Mon, Mar. 25 to Thu, Mar. 28 NATIONAL AUDUBON WESTERN CONGERENCE. The Western Regional Office cordially extends an invitation to attend a renewal of the popular Asilomar Conferences. The challenging theme for the Conference is: "Golden Opportunities in Conservation" with special emphasis being placed on WHAT'S NEW IN 74?

## NOTICE

Owing to the energy crisis Audubon House will be closed on Saturday. The House will be open Monday through Friday from 10 to 3.

**Field Trip Information:** The society cannot be responsible for transportation. Always bring binoculars and lunch. No pets or collecting permitted. On weekend trips leader is scheduled for Saturday only. The Los Angeles Audubon Society and its authorized leaders accept no responsibility for the protection or well-being of persons attending field trips, or for any accident, personal or otherwise, incurred during a society sponsored trip. For last minute changes or cancellations always call the Bird Report 874-1318 on the Friday before a scheduled trip.

"The Western Tanager" is free to members of National Audubon Society assigned to the Los Angeles chapter. For all others annual subscription is \$3.50. For first class mailing, send \$1.00 to Audubon House.

Official Publication of the  
Los Angeles Audubon Society

**The Western Tanager**

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Audubon Activities . . . . .	Donald Adams
Calendar . . . . .	Caroline Adams
Typing . . . . .	Hanna Stadler
Mailing Supervision . . . . .	Hans Hjorth

# Bomb Range Called Threat to Rare Cranes

From the Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, one of the country's most avid birdwatchers, has been told by the Interior Department that his "birds" — B-52 bombers and smaller attack jets — are endangering the survival of real and increasingly rare birds — whooping cranes.

The damage is being done, Interior says, at an Air Force practice bombing range along a part of the barrier island of Matagorda off the Texas Gulf Coast.

The island and a nearby wildlife refuge are the winter home of virtually all of the remaining 50 or so whooping cranes outside of captivity.

Interior sent to Schlesinger the results of an investigation into the situation at Matagorda. The report said that whatever actual value the island had as a bombing range, "it is widely and quasi-officially held in the state that Matagorda is first and foremost an officers' country club."

## GREAT GRAY OWL.

IN YOSEMITE

-- from the "Pacific Flyway"

In the early part of May we spent several days in Yosemite for the express purpose of trying to find a Great Gray Owl. Although it is the extreme southern edge of their range, three had been reported at widely separate points the previous year. On May 8, following directions from a Park Ranger, we drove up the Glacier Point road which had just been cleared of snow. We parked at the entrance to the road to Bridal Veil Creek Campground and hiked in with snow piled high on either side. After about a quarter of a mile and just as I was wondering how we could possibly hope to find one lone owl in all of the thousands of trees surrounding us, Nora abruptly turned off the road across a bare place in the snow to the edge of a large snow-covered meadow.

She looked up into the tree she was standing beneath and there was our owl just over her head, apparently looking out his pantry. He didn't even deign to move through all our observations and picture taking. The only conclusion I can reach for our finding him at all is that my wife must think like an owl — and that's a compliment to both of them—I think! To make our day complete we also found a male Williamson's Sapsucker and a Blue Grouse in the same area.

— Hyrum Strong

## THE RING

The Los Angeles Audubon Society receives in exchange for "The Western Tanager" a Polish publication, "The Ring." "Ringing" is called "bird-banding" in America, and this journal is devoted to the subject on a world-wide basis. It also carries articles of general interest, such as an account of Manomet Bird Observatory, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Bird books of all kinds are reviewed in a refreshingly straightforward way, and include those published in all languages.

Our readers may enjoy looking at this publication in the library. It can be ordered for \$3.00 from Ars Polona RUCH, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 7, 00-068 Warsaw, POLAND, or through the European Publishers Representatives, Inc., 36 West 61 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003.

## PREDATOR CONTROL

Mark-up on H.R. 38, the House predator control reform legislation (which we support if no weakening amendments are added) has been postponed again (Subcommittee on Fish & Wildlife & the Environment, House Committee on Merchant Marine & Fisheries, Chairman John R. Dingell, R-Mich.). Informal hearings have been completed on the cancellation of strichnine, cyanide, and 1080 — poisons still legal for the control of prairie dogs and other rodents. (We have joined the Environmental Defense Fund as party to the overall Environmental Protection Agency hearings.) Expert witnesses (such as biologists, toxicologists, persons connected to relevant state agencies, and others) will be testifying at the formal hearings beginning early next year in Washington. If there are potential witnesses you would like to recommend, please get in touch as soon as possible with Cynthia Wilson, our Washington Representative, at 1511 K Street N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005. There may also be field hearings.



## BARGE-MOUNTED LASER FOR CONTROL OF WATER-HYACINTH

Laser power, one of the miraculous and most amazingly versatile tools of modern science, is being used experimentally by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to destroy a beauty that has turned into a "beast" scouring many important U.S. waterways.

The problem being attacked is one of tremendous proportions, which has successfully resisted nearly 40 years of continuing control effort, and is of vast ecological as well as navigational importance to the nation.

The beauty turned into a "beast" that bids to become the bitter enemy of environmentalists, by destroying the wildlife of many U.S. waterways, is the water hyacinth. Research efforts to control this proliferous beauty — a single plant can produce 1,200 offspring in four month — have proved persistently frustrating to scientists.

As it proliferates, the water hyacinth completely covers the water with huge masses of vegetation. The brilliant green leaves cut off all sunlight from the water beneath. All other aquatic vegetation dies. So, too, does wildlife. Almost no fish or other water animals can survive in the growth.

The laser barge method, hopefully, will present a means of effective control, at no risk to wildlife or any other impairment of the natural state of the water in which the hyacinth thrives.

How did this Beauty and the "Beast" story start? Very innocently, as do most of the beauty and the beast fictional creations. The water hyacinth is not native to the United States. At the New Orleans Cotton Exposition of 1884, Venezuela contributed a magnificent floral display, which included a floating plant that was acclaimed as one of the most beautiful blossoms in the world.

Nearly everyone, it seemed, wanted one of these dazzling plants to ornament their garden pools. Once released, the immigrant plant naturalized, and spread with incredible speed.

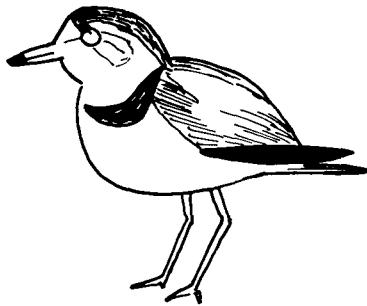
Within a few years, the water hyacinth had infested all the main bayous and streams of Louisiana, and had spread into Florida and other southern states to such an extent that Congress was requested to take action.

## LATE OBSERVATIONS

(con't from page 2)

Because of the combined December — January issue of the Tanager, and the 1973 Review in this issue, there is an unusually large backlog of reports on hand. More or less in A.O.U. order they are: All three species of Loons were common along our coast this winter, but a RED-THROATED LOON at Legg Lake, El Monte in early January was unusual (Bob Copper). HORNED GREBES also are unusual away from salt water, so five on Lake Cachuma (Ed Navajosky) and one at Big Bear Lake (Jon Atwood) in December should remind us to sort through all flocks of Eared Grebes for that one odd bird. Malibu Lagoon and pier have been well covered recently because of the three rare birds there, but it remained for Dick Erickson from Eureka, to find the only RED-NECKED GREBE of the winter on Dec. 14. Southern Herons were scattered along the coast in very small numbers. The REDDISH EGRET on south San Diego Bay proved difficult to find, but was seen in December (probably the same individual found there in 1972). In the same area there were at least three newly arrived LOUISIANA HERONS and one or two others were in the Bolsa Chica-Seal Beach area. Also at Bolsa Chica was an unusual LITTLE BLUE HERON, light blue with white primaries and a few white secondaries, probably sub-adult. Arnold Small reports a large number of ROSS' GEESE at the Salton Sea. The new lake behind Devil's Gate Dam above Pasadena had about 400 CANVASBACKS and 300 RING-NECKS on it in mid-December (this must be one of the largest concentrations of diving ducks in Southern California) Priscilla Brodkin found a full plumaged male HARLEQUIN DUCK at Marina del Rey on Jan. 5. Could this be the same drake that wintered there last year?

As mentioned in the Review, ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were common in central California, but only two were reported here — one seen from the Ventura Freeway near Agoura on Nov. 27 (Harry Kreuger), and another near the Sepulveda Recreation Area on Dec. 2 (Bill Borman). While looking for the Spotted Owls which are sometimes seen at Nojoqui Falls Park near Buellton, Hal Baxter sighted an adult GOSHAWK on Nov. 19 (they are seldom seen away from the Sierras). BALD EAGLES were rarely reported — five on the Big Bear Lake C.C. (Dave Foster) and one at the south end of the Salton Sea (Jon Dunn) — but there are sure to be a few more at Lake Matthews as there are every winter. Only two MERLINS (a much better name for Pigeon Hawk) were reported — one at Upper Newport Bay on Nov. 25 (Chuck Sexton) and another adult male at the Arcadia Arboretum on Dec. 9 (Hal Baxter and S.S.). Six GOLDEN PLOVERS were seen at Upper Newport Bay by Chuck Sexton, and two were seen at Marina del Rey on Nov. 17 by Bruce Broadbooks. They are expected in winter at both these places. A RED PHALAROPE which was found at Legg Lake in a dying condition was brought in to the Robert Coppers on Nov. 17. They are virtually unknown except near salt water. Recently a very few FRANKLIN'S GULLS have been found here in the winter — Harry Kreuger saw one at the Newport pier on Nov. 23 and Shirley Wells saw another on Terminal Island on Dec. 20. The only BLACK SKIMMER to be found along the coast since May was a single bird at south San Diego Bay on Dec. 2 (Hank Brodkin). Hank Brodkin's report of a WHITE-WING DOVE at Marina del Rey on Dec. 15 was the only one this winter.



VERMILION FLYCATCHERS seem to be regular in winter at Legg Lake, where Dave Foster saw three of them in December. Dr. Walter Nichols studied another male at Pt. Mugu on Dec. 6. GRAY FLYCATCHERS are rarely seen along the coast, especially in winter, but Shirley Wells observed one in South Coast Botanic Gardens on Nov. 21. A CURVE-BILLED THRASHER found by Arnold Small near Bard, across the river from Yuma, on Dec. 28 was the second one in 1973 and about the tenth California record. VARIED THRUSHES were widely seen in December — three in Averill Park, San Pedro (Jesse Morton), two in Rosedale Cemetery and one at Lake Hollywood (Ed Navajosky), one in La Canada (Jean Russom), one at Imperial Dam, Colorado River (Alan Driscoll) and several on the Palos Verdes Peninsula (S. W. et al) even one in the Aerospace Corporation's parking lot (Jim McClelland and Taylor Gabbard). The only report of a NORTHERN SHRIKE was an immature seen in the Lockwood Valley on Nov. 24 by Ernie Abeles et al. BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were reported in Northern Calif. and in the Owen's Valley — two in Independence on Nov. 17 (Dick Newman) and a large flock in the Saline Valley (Pam Greene and Keith Axelson). They should be looked for locally. Except for wintering Audubon and Orange-crowned the only warblers reported locally were three PALM WARBLERS — one at Marina de Rey on Nov. 17 (Bruce Broadbooks), one at Little Lake on Nov. 24 (Dick Neuman) and one at Furnace Creek Ranch on Oct. 29 (Bob Yutzy), a TENNESSEE WARBLER at Furnace Creek Ranch on Nov. 23 (Bob Y and Ted Chandick); a NASHVILLE and HERMIT at S.C. Botanic Garden in late Nov. (S.W.); a BLACK-THROATED GRAY at Marina del Rey on Dec. 4; and a WILSON'S WARBLER on the Malibu Christmas Count Dec. 17. Two RUSTY BLACKBIRDS were seen in Death Valley by many birders there in late November. Shirley Wells reported lots of FOX SPARROWS and a few CASSIN'S SPARROWS on the P. V. Peninsula. At least seven WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were seen: one in Reseda on Dec. 21 (Curt Wohlgemuth), two at S.C. Botanic on Nov. 21 (S.W. et al), one at Irma Roger's feeder in Monrovia during November and December, and at least three at Furnace Creek Ranch. A McCOWN'S LONGSPUR in the Imperial Valley on Nov. 18 (Guy McCaskie) was a rare bird in California.

