

# WESTERN TANAGER

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## Birdwatching in Hong Kong

by Gene Anderson



For two years, during 1965-66 and 1974-75, my family and I lived in Hong Kong. Though primarily involved in anthropological field research, we managed to find time for birding, generally on field trips organized by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society—a small but very active and enthusiastic group that numbers among its members several excellent and wide-ranging ornithologists, in addition to more casual birders like myself. Our home in Hong Kong was in the New Territories, an area leased from China and still quite rural in character. Most of the region is wild hill country, often burned over, and thus covered with grass, brush, heath, and thin pine woods. But nearby, at Tai Po Kau, there is a large and well-managed forest reserve in which the natural cover of the land has been more or less reconstructed.

In what follows I will not pretend to recount any great birding exploits or successes—for I had none. I will instead present a brief account of the birds of Hong Kong as I found them—a colorful community of birds that despite massive pressures from humanity nonetheless manages to hold its own.

The Crown Colony is, of course, best known for its urban complex, perhaps the most exciting and fast-changing metropolitan area in the world. Most of the city is stone and asphalt, supporting few birds except the ubiquitous Eurasian Tree Sparrow (replacing the House Sparrow in the Far East), the Spotted Dove (our naturalized Angelenos may have originated there), and the Rock Dove. Wherever trees occur, however, there are many birds. On Hong Kong University campus, for instance, one is never out of earshot of the bulbuls—Chinese, Red-whiskered, and (at least on the brushy hills nearby) Red-vented. The big, vivid Red-billed Blue Magpies chase one another through the trees, while small groups of White-eyes, the Asiatic equivalent of our vireos, drift past among the leaves. Many thrushes, Old World Warblers, and other birds occur during migration and in winter.

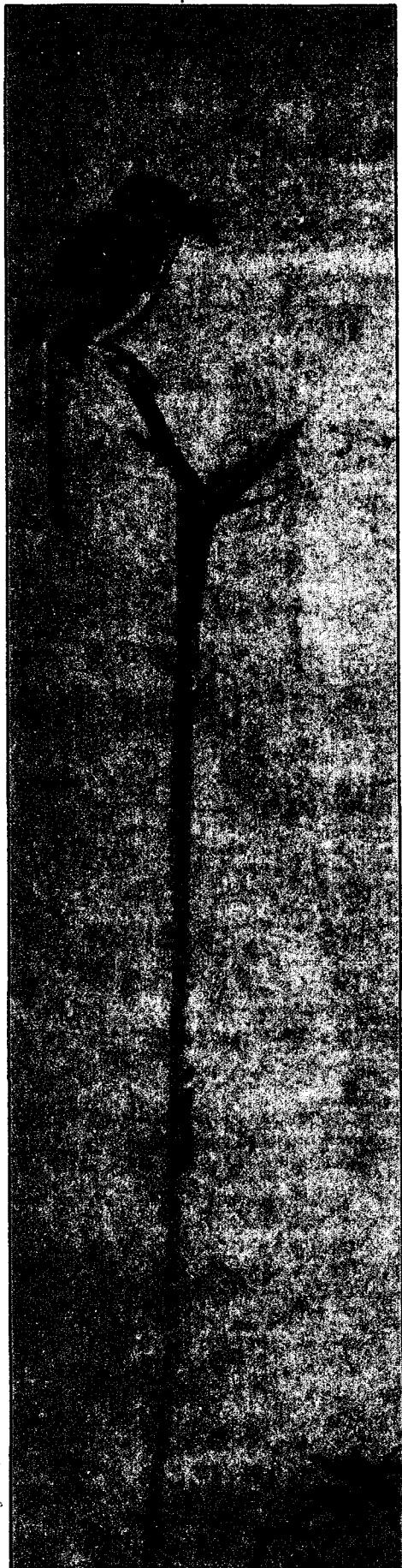
Naturally, however, the most interesting birds of Hong Kong are to be found in areas remote from the city. By far the best of the birding locales are the Mai Po marshes,



looking across the border into China from the northwest corner of the New Territories, and the Tai Po Kau forest reserve, at the center of the east coast of the Territories. But to put these sites into perspective, it is helpful to know something of the geography of the region.

Hong Kong proper is a mountainous island situated off the tip of the urbanized peninsula of Kowloon—immediately north of which the mountains rise. The block of land included in the New Territories is tilting in such a way that the west coast is rising while the east coast sinks. Thus, between coastal rising and rapid alluviation—thanks in large part to erosion due to farming and urbanization—the Mai Po marshes are growing and expanding steadily, while from its steep slopes Tai Po Kau overlooks a drowned valley. Between the two the mountain spine of the New Territories rises well over 3000' in a chaos of wild ridges clothed in thin woods and scraggly heath. Many small valleys and a few larger ones separate the ridges—the valleys farmed with the incredible intensiveness and thoroughness for which the south Chinese are justly famed. A few groves, however, have been left around the villages, not only to provide shade, firewood, and the like, but also because large trees are thought to shelter benevolent spirits—a laudable conservationist belief.

*Continued Overleaf*



Great Gray Shrike

The whole area can be roughly divided into four main habitats: coastal marsh (especially the Mai Po marshes, and including a wide range of environments from mudflats to dwarf mangrove thickets); forest and woodland (Tai Po Kau, and the good-luck groves); farmland, both wet and dry (rice paddies and water-meadows); and the grass and heath of the uplands. This last, though the most extensive, is relatively poor in birds; but numbers of Red-vented Bulbuls, Chinese Francolins, Crow-pheasants (actually *coucals*—a group of ground cuckoos), and hawks occur.

**T**he Mai Po marshes are now more or less protected, though wildfowl still suffers from poaching. Ducks have become common since the institution of protection: Teal, Spot-billed Ducks, Falcated Teal, and others. (Eurasian) White Ibis and Lesser Spoonbills are more frequent than they once were, and Dalmatian Pelicans winter offshore. Many species of herons occur: Gray, Purple, various egrets (Cattle is commonest), and a number of small bitterns. The Yellow Bittern is a year-round resident, reminiscent of an overgrown Least Bittern, but not so shy. Vast numbers of shore birds occur in winter and during migration, the commonest being the Mongolian and Greater Sandplovers. Red-necked Sandpipers are the most obvious "peeps," but Spotted and Common Redshanks, Long-toed and other Stints, Terek Sandpipers, Marsh Sandpipers, Green Sandpipers, and many other species occur. Strangest of all is the little Spoon-billed Sandpiper, resembling our Least Sandpiper except for its Spoonbill-shaped beak. Those I saw were using this bill by swinging it back and forth over the surface of the water, apparently straining small food items from the surface film. Many hawks winter in the marshes, most conspicuous among them the Marsh Harrier, a relative of our Marsh Hawk. Pied Harriers, (Eurasian) Buzzards, Kestrels, Ospreys, and other hawks also occur. But the commonest of all the birds are the passerines. Migration and winter bring tens of thousands of White, Yellow, and Gray Wagtails, and various marsh-dwelling Old World Warblers, some of which stay to breed. The sight of White Wagtails perched among wintry reeds is an image of stark simplicity and beauty—a favorite theme of traditional Chinese paintings.

**T**ai Po Kau and the other groves support a very different avifauna. In summer, the Great Barbet calls endlessly, its loud repeated cries ringing over the entire landscape; while the Koel—a cuckoo that parasitizes crows and the like—is also vocal. Several species of Old World Flycatchers (related to our kinglets and gnatcatchers and the Old World Warblers, not to our flycatchers) appear during migration, and some nest. Migration also brings vast hordes of Old World Warblers, especially the leaf-warblers of the genus *Phylloscopus*—tiny greenish things that are almost impossible to identify. Many species occur, some of them rare, and the birdwatcher is sorely tested thereby. Winter brings transient flocks of bulbuls, often rare species from the far interior such as the White-headed and Chestnut Bulbuls; occasionally a Jay from north Eurasia; Scarlet Minivets from the mountains of inland China; and many Siberian thrushes. In addition, where the forest joins cultivated land, one can always find Tailor-birds—those wren-like Old World Warblers who sew leaf edges together to protect their nests.

Among the open fields, little occurs in summer (farming is too active then)—but winter brings excitement. Besides the tens of thousands of Wagtails and Stonechats, there are larger and rarer birds: several species of eagles (Golden, Imperial, and Steppe are all rare but regular); occasionally a Eurasian Black Vulture—looking very much like an immature Condor in size and general conformation; and smaller birds—including Snipe, several species of starlings, pipits, thrushes, and the thrush-like Rubythroat—as well as much else. A stroll along a small brush-lined stream is always a worthwhile experience—for around the next curve might be the beautiful little Plumbeous Water-redstart—or, on the other hand, a giant and well-fattened hog rooting in the mud. Hogpens are worth seeking out; many birds, the rare thrushes included, are attracted there by the flies.

Continued on Pg. 4

**Dave Foster**

# Whittier Narrows Revisited

*It was in February 1975 that the bulldozers began work along the cement-lined banks of the San Gabriel River, transforming 150 acres of plowed fields into new wetland habitat—the culmination of a protracted campaign waged by L.A. Audubon members to assure a measure of mitigation for the destruction of nearby North Lake. Whittier Narrows biologist, Dave Foster, played a key role in implementing the refuge plan, and he continues to oversee its gradual transition into a thriving natural community. This is his second progress report.*

**T**he negotiations and legal battles have long since passed, the old North Lake is gone, Legg Lake is now back to normal, and everyone has settled down to the business of watching the growth and development of the mitigation habitat at Whittier Narrows. It's difficult for some to remember the old North Lake, for others it's not easy to believe it's gone, but for most it's even harder to believe that only two years ago the New Lakes Area was an agricultural field, producing nothing more than a crop of rhubarb.

Today, all three lakes have stable water levels and excellent production of such waterfowl food plants as Sago Pondweed and bulrush. The willows, Mulefat, Emory Baccharis, and Western Sycamores established along the peripheral berms now have a full year of growth and are four to five times their size at planting. And since its creation, a total of 90 species of plants have been discovered within the New Lakes Area—only 21 of them purposely planted—the remaining 69 species representing an interesting example of successful colonization.

Monitoring of plant, bird, mammal, fish, and invertebrate populations continues in full force; and water chemistry tests as well as plankton surveys are conducted on a regular basis—procedures that provide useful data concerning the status and condition of the developing habitat. In addition to routine monitoring programs, a number of special projects have been completed or are currently underway. Two university students have concluded studies in the Refuge: Bill Wisenborn of Cal State, Fullerton conducted a comparative study of American Coot populations between the New Lakes Area and South Legg Lake; and Wini Wilson of Whittier College did a breeding bird census at the 20-acre lake. Recently Tom Keeny, a graduate student at Cal Poly, Pomona, began his master's degree research involving the song dialect and territory size of the now-abundant Lakes Area Song Sparrow population; and last winter over 1,300 White-crowned Sparrows were banded by Bob McKernan and myself—part of a continuing project aimed at gathering simultaneous data over a broad geographical region.

At present three introduction projects are at various stages of development: Mickey Long, County Wildlife Biologist, and Pete Clark, Cal State, Fullerton student, have introduced Pacific Pond Turtles into the 3-acre lake, in an effort to establish another foothold in the County for this rapidly-declining species. So far, 10 turtles have been color-marked and released. Although attempts to reintroduce Burrowing Owls have met with minimal success, efforts are due to continue this spring. In addition, California Department of Fish and Game Biologist, Chuck



Marshall, will soon introduce the endangered Mohave Chub, as well as the potentially-endangered Desert Pupfish, into two of the lakes—a cooperative endeavor to establish additional breeding stock of these species.

**A**nyone who has either visited the Refuge or listened to the LAAS Bird Report in recent months is fully aware of the ability of this newly-created habitat to attract birds. At the time of writing, the mitigation area bird list stands at 137 species, including 10 species new to the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area Checklist—a list that includes the old North Lake. Among the new birds on the list are the Eastern and Tropical Kingbirds, a Tree Sparrow netted by Bob McKernan and Charlie Collins on Feb. 20, 1976, a Least Bittern observed last May by Steve Bonzo, and a Heermann's Gull sighted in Dec. 1975 by Ed Navojosky. Several species made repeat performances in 1976: a Hooded Merganser and two Blue-winged Teal last winter; five Black Terns during the spring and summer; plus Chimney Swifts, Black Swifts, Bobolinks, Cattle Egrets, and an Osprey during the fall. Waterfowl are now numerous—with over 1,400 individuals of nine species observed on the 20-acre lake on February 1st.

Several species of birds bred in the New Lakes Area during the past breeding season. Our first breeder, the Black-necked Stilt, was perhaps the most successful and obvious species. We found 17 nests, which produced over 55 young. (One of my fondest summertime memories was the expression on Audubon member Hal Foster's face as he told me of being hustled around the 20-acre lake by squawky stilts working in relays.) Mallards and Cinnamon Teal nested on all three lakes, and two broods of Ruddy Ducks were observed late in the season after the bulrush became well established. Although present throughout the year, no American Coots bred on the new wildlife lakes. Two White-tailed Kite nests and one Red-shouldered Hawk nest were found near the Lakes Area—undoubtedly the result of the new security and feeding territory provided by the Raptor Management and Lakes Areas.

*Continued on Pg. 7*

Jean Brandt

# BIRDING the Colorado River

The California side of the Colorado River northeast of Yuma has myriad locations well known for year-round birding. Though the region generally does not get as many rarities from the Gulf of California as does the Salton Sea, it nonetheless has had Magnificent Frigatebirds, both boobys, and at least one Least Tern. Many of the locales have not been well worked during vagrant seasons, but such birds as the Cape May, Magnolia, and Blackpoll Warblers, Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, and Scarlet Tanager have been found.

Check the ranch yards around Bard (ask permission), and in winter look for the Curve-billed Thrasher (rare) in the brush piles, plus Mountain Bluebirds in the fields, and Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows in the flocks of sparrows. Lesser Nighthawks are common throughout the whole region in summer.

**1. Shantytown** is an unmarked squatters' village just north of Laguna Dam. It is excellent in summer. Walk through, watching for such birds as the Yellow-billed Cuckoo (mid June-mid Aug.), Bronzed Cowbird (late April-July), and Weid's Crested Flycatcher (mid May-Aug.). White-winged Doves and Blue Grosbeaks are abundant. Resident birds include Crissal Thrasher, Abert's Towhee, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Gila Woodpecker, and Screech Owl (uncommon).

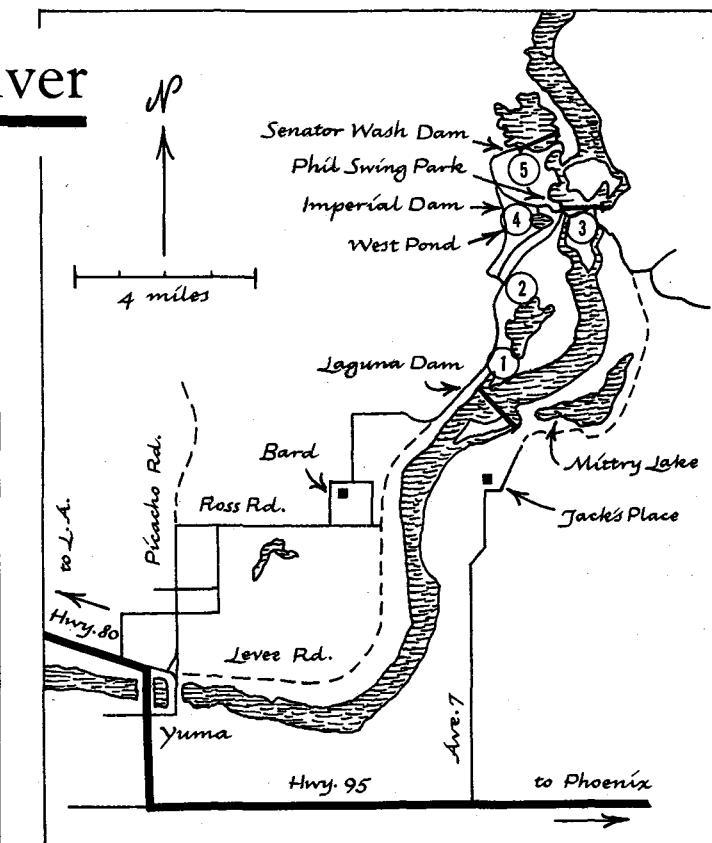
**2. Imperial Irrigation H.Q.:** Check in the trees around the houses and the riparian habitat beyond the houses for wintering land birds. Bronzed Cowbirds are found here in season.

**3. Imperial Dam Area:** The road, just before you reach the dam, is lined with date palms—supporting Great-tailed Grackles and Gila Woodpeckers. Check in the mesquite for wintering land birds and the ponds for wintering ducks—including numerous Common Mergansers, possible Hooded Mergansers, and Greater Scaup (rare). In winter, check the Tree Swallows for Rough-wings and Bank. Just west of here is Phil Swing Park, famous as the location of California's first Rufous-backed Robin (Dec.-March, '74). The Hepatic Tanager (one record, winter) and Blackpoll Warbler (one record, spring) have been found here. From the dam itself, scan for water birds. A Sabine's Gull was seen here once, in mid June, '74.

**4. West Pond:** After crossing the dam, go west about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to a short dirt road (on your left) that leads to the pond. Black Rails nest near the base of the dike. Though they are often heard (nighttime is best), they are almost impossible to see. Virginia and Clapper Rails also nest here, and Soras winter. The State's first Olivaceous Cormorant was found here in the spring of '71, and probably the same bird returned in '72 and '73. The Least Grebe nested here in 1946, but has not been found since. Swamp Sparrows are possible in winter, and California's first inland record of a Sharp-tailed Sparrow was here.

**5. Senator Wash Dam:** The site is not very productive for waterbirds, but check in winter for loons. The Arctic has been found here in the past.

A good map of the Colorado River basin is necessary for this excursion. The Automobile Club has an excellent one. Full facilities are available across the river in Yuma, and there is a public campground just south of Laguna Dam. 



## Hong Kong, cont'd from pg. 2

Unfortunately, conservation in Hong Kong is not what it could be. As a result of diligent efforts, some protection was won for the Mai Po marshes, and the main forest groves are safe—but most marsh, shore, and lowland areas are threatened with intensive development. Poaching is constant, and hardly discouraged—for the city continues to conduct an enormous commerce in live and stuffed wildlife and skins—almost all of these from China. Everything from quail to Black Vultures and from snakes to raccoon-dogs is eaten, if not as a delicacy, then on account of some alleged medical value (owl soup "cures" headache, for instance). This vast and unregulated trade is not only terribly destructive to wildlife, it introduces diseases and pests.

It is regrettable that the British colonial government cares little about wildlife and has shown no visible concern for its fate—despite much pressure from local naturalists and animal-lovers. Though most of the citizenry is far too busy making a living to be concerned about conservation, at least the populace is not hostile to the cause. The residents of Hong Kong love the out-of-doors and the remaining rural and coastal scenery of the colony, and as their city becomes ever more urbanized and polluted, one can hope that popular pressures for a more livable environment will continue to increase.

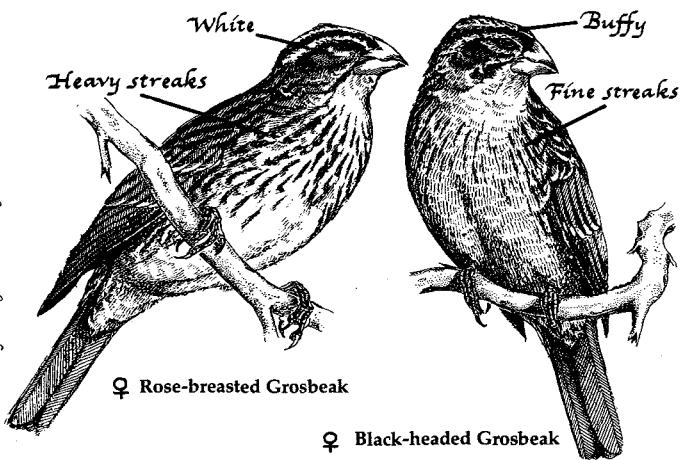
The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society is doing its best to help. And for the traveller who wishes to learn more about the colony's birds—or the current state of the struggle for conservation, the Society's Annual Reports are a fund of valuable information. 

*The author is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UC Riverside. His work in the Orient has centered around the "boat people" of South China.*

## Jon Dunn/FIELD NOTES

## Female Grosbeaks

Illustration by Mary Ellen Pereyra



**R**ose-breasted Grosbeaks are rare but regular vagrants to California during late spring and autumn, and usually a few winter at feeders and other thickly-vegetated locations along the coast. Statistically, in fact, the Rose-breast is more likely than the Black-headed in winter, so every female and immature sighted should be examined with care. The mature males of these two species present no problems of identification. The young male Rose-breast basically resembles the female, but it normally has a trace of *rosy color* in the breast—and in flight the *bright pink underwings* will immediately separate it from any plumage of the Black-headed.

Telling the females apart, however, is another matter. Not only are the birds very similar, but the problem of identification is compounded by the fact that the plumage is somewhat variable, and the key characters emphasized in the field guides are not entirely reliable. Apart from the call note, no single character is, in itself, diagnostic—so the birder must rely on a combination of characters to identify the bird in question. This is especially the case if the bird shows ambiguous characteristics.

Probably the best field mark on the female Rose-breast is the *heavy dark streaking* running vertically across the *whitish breast*. The Black-headed tends to have a more *buffy breast*, with *very fine streaks—restricted only to the sides of the breast*. Also, the head stripes of the Rose breast tend to be *whiter* than the *buffy stripes* of the Black-headed. In addition, the Rose-breast has slightly more *prominent back streaks*, and the wing linings are a slightly brighter *saffron hue*—as opposed to the *duller buff wing linings* of the Black-headed.

Unfortunately, though, these marks are not always definitive. The female Rose-breast can sometimes have very thin streaks across a breast that has a slightly buffy cast. And conversely, the breast of a Black-headed can become quite worn (in late spring and summer), so that the buffy cast disappears. Logically, then, some birds must remain unidentified. Unless they are heard....

Although both species give a whistled *wheet* flight-note, the regular call notes of the two birds are diagnostic. The call note of the Rose-breast, a shark *eek*, is much more high-pitched and squeaky than that of the Black-headed. If one learns the call of the common Black-headed Grosbeak, then the call of the Rose-breast should sound quite distinctive, and provide confirmation of identification. ♀

## Philip Broughton

## Entropy and Destiny

The Second Law of Thermodynamics deals with entropy. And entropy involves a basic constitutional principle. I am talking not of the Federal Constitution, but of the way the world is constituted. The point is that you can't have your cake and eat it too. You can't run the farm any more if you wash all the topsoil downstream. You can die by hanging only once.

When energy has been transformed, extracted from matter in one form and dissipated in another—the heat into the atmosphere, the topsoil into the sea—it is gone, depleted, exhausted for its previous use.

Oil, coal, soil, forests, habitable land, watersheds, our coast can be depleted, exhausted: a windmill doesn't "use anything up." The sun is not depleted when we dissipate its heat and use its energy. A waterwheel does not diminish the stream, but its usefulness is gone when its watershed is depleted by lumbering or subdivisions.

The measure of dissipation, this depletion, is called entropy. Energy production that "uses things up" means high entropy. Energy sources that are not depleted, or are exhausted very slowly, are said to have low entropy.

Physicists take the Second Law of Thermodynamics as true; it has been confirmed over and over again. But classical economists apparently never heard of entropy. They see the economic process as an endless pendulum that swings between production and consumption, in which the exhaustibility of natural resources raises no problem. The cure-all for pollution, according to them, is simply to get the prices right. Such conceptions are based on the mechanistic framework which economists borrowed long ago from physics, and which they never revised, in order to redress the basic omission—that of the law of entropy.

So avers Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, distinguished mathematical economist of Vanderbilt University, in his work, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (1971). His thesis is that the entropy law rules supreme over the economic process—and that the failure of civilizations to take heed of this law can trigger their destruction.

Take the barren hillsides of the Balkans and Asia Minor, laid waste by centuries of overgrazing by sheep and goats. Where once great forests tempered the environment and their lumber built the fleets of the Phoenicians, is now craggy, stunted growth; the cedars of Lebanon are gone forever. The devastation of the rich granary of North Africa presaged the decline of Rome.

If it is true that any civilization that ignores the exhaustibility of resources will decline and disappear, then how much time do we have? How long is hardly important. If a present estimate is that an oilfield or a thermal field will last 40 years, what difference if a new "expert" gambles on 70, or 100? Why argue about the length of the hangman's rope?

These days, when we talk about conserving fuel, about preserving forests and streams—relating development to natural resources and the carrying capacity of the environment—we are only seeking to observe the Second Law of Thermodynamics. And the Second Law will not be repealed, no matter how loudly we may seek to denounce it.

Shumway Suffel

# BIRDS of the Season



The new year started with a flurry of excitement, particularly for those birders who participated in the Santa Barbara Count on Jan. 2nd.

Despite a brewing storm which brought sprinkles in the morning and unbirdable rain by mid afternoon, 191 species were recorded, down from last year's 201—but certainly one of the high counts in the U. S. in this generally unproductive winter. The rarities alone—a **Rusty Blackbird**, three **Tropical Kingbirds**, and several birds not normally found there (**Golden Plover**, **Wandering Tattler**, **Snow Goose**, forty **White Pelicans**, and at least *nine* species of warblers) were exciting enough; but the real excitement came just after we Angelenos left in the late afternoon. The rains increased to flash-flood proportions, making most dirt roads impassable; and then about midnight the rains stopped and the wind blew, toppling hangars at the airport and blowing airplanes across the road onto the sewage plant property—where the Rusty Blackbird was found. It was definitely a memorable count. We were glad we went, and were grateful to be home.

Since the American Birding Association's controversial decision that the **Yellow-headed Parrot** is an established species (and therefore "countable") there has been increasing interest in *Amazona*-type parrots, particularly among Eastern birders—who seem to be more interested in introduced species than their California counterparts. Currently a study of our local parrots is being conducted by Jeff Froke, with some surprising results. Apparently, the total parrot population in Southern California is over one hundred birds, with Yellow-heads in the *minority*. A medium-sized flock in Pasadena on Dec. 23 consisted of 14 Red-crowns, 8 Yellow-heads, and one White-fronted Parrot. This is fairly typical of this area's population, except for a few Lilac-crowns which are sometimes seen. Ten years ago a typical flock might have consisted of 18 Yellow-heads, plus two or three Lilac-crowns. To my knowledge, Red-crowns were unknown then. The existence today of more than forty Red-crowned Parrots is perplexing, since they are worth two or three hundred dollars apiece, and it seems unlikely that so many could have escaped or been released. Nesting seems a probable explanation, but there is no specific evidence of nests or nestlings—though nuptial displays have been observed. Anyone who has information on parrots—or wishes to find out more about them—should contact Jeff Froke at 355-3685, or P. O. #174, Sierra Madre, Calif. 91024.

As far as our *native* birds are concerned, several of the species seen on the Christmas Counts stayed on into January, and many new ones were reported. A **Red-throated Loon** at the New Lakes, Whittier Narrows (Jan. 20) was very unusual inland; as was the **Arctic Loon** found there on Nov. 25. Four **Horned Grebes** (also salt water-oriented), 100 **Common Mergansers**, and an **Osprey** were observed at the Lakes on Jan. 9 (Dave Foster). Myra Ivey and Don Osborne joined the Fresno A.S. pelagic trip off Monterey on Jan. 8, a trip which afforded them a chance to study a **Laysan Albatross** at leisure. The California Field Ornithologists' cruise from Bodega Bay the following weekend failed



to find the hoped-for Laysan, but did have two or more **Black-foots**, and one very accommodating **Short-tailed Shearwater**, which circled the boat, displaying its diagnostic concolored underwings and body, as well as the slender bill (noticeably smaller than the Sooty's).

Thirty six **White-faced Ibis** were seen at San Elijo Lagoon, S.D. Co., on Jan. 10, and more than one hundred were at the south end of the Salton Sea (Don Tiller, S.S.N.W.R.). This is an unusually large number of this species, whose breeding population in the State apparently continues to decline. **Whistling Swans** have not been reported locally this winter, but eleven were seen on Little Lake (about 120 miles north) on Jan. 3 (Dan Guthrie). A "Eurasian" **Green-winged Teal** (with the white stripe horizontally over the wing, not vertically in front of the wing) was found on north Legg Lake, El Monte, by Jesse Morton, on Jan. 22. It was later seen on the nearby New Lakes. A male **European Wigeon** returned to Whalen Lake, Oceanside, for at least the fourth winter, and another male was found at Upper Newport Bay (Dan G., Jan. 22). The **Oldsquaw** remained at Bolsa Chica Lagoon at least through January, as did a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** at Malibu Lagoon. Another Oldsquaw was present at Pt. Mugu for several weeks prior to Jan. 19th, when it was found by Jon Dunn, et al.

**Bald Eagles** were reported widely in Southern California, and in unprecedented numbers: 24 at Big Bear Lake, about 20 at Lake Mathews (Doug Morton), several at Lake Henshaw, S.D. Co., and one at San Elijo Lagoon, S.D. Co., on Jan. 10. Single **Ospreys** were found at the New Lakes, El Monte, at Lake Mathews, and near Lakeview (both Riv. Co.). Another was at Upper Newport Bay. The previously-reported **Franklin's Gull** at Malibu Lagoon was still present in early February, but the **Ancient Murrelet** at King Harbor has not been reported since late December. Seldom is a roosting **Spotted Owl** found in the daytime, but when found, the bird has a tendency to stay. Such was not the case with the owl found by Dan Guthrie in a side canyon off the Mt. Baldy road on Jan. 23, and several searchers were disappointed.

A male **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was found at Agua Caliente Park in eastern S. D. Co., on Jan. 15 (John Butler)—only the third California record since 1964. The others were in Monterey, April 1969, and—as you will recall—in Los Angeles, Jan. 1976. Another late **Tropical Kingbird** at Huntington Beach was first identified as an immature "Western," until seen by Dale Delaney on Jan. 1. Any **Empidonax flycatcher** is rare here in the winter, and the one found by Armand Cohen in the Arcadia Arboretum (Jan. 20) was a puzzling bird. It remains unidentified. One of the very few "eastern" warblers this winter was a **Black-and-White Warbler** in Morro Bay S.P., found by Don and Caroline Adams on Jan. 15. They also found a **Swamp Sparrow** in the nearby willow clumps. A few orioles winter here, but are seldom observed, unless they are at feeders, as was the male **Hooded Oriole** in Jean Brandt's garden. The bird has visited irregularly since early October. Another male Hooded was in the Arcadia Arboretum (the Cohens, Jan. 22), but could not be found again. The **Rusty Blackbird**

above Santa Barbara stayed well into January, as did the female **Hepatic Tanager** near Oceanside. One of the **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** at Upper Newport Bay was found dead by Trudi Siptroth in December, and the remaining one (or more) proved difficult to relocate. However, one was seen Jan. 16 (Doug Morton).

The Salton Sea trip on Jan. 29 was a great success, as some fifty L.A. Auduboners enjoyed a day of cool weather, and a total of about eighty species of birds. Most rewarding were the thousands of **Snow Geese** (including one "Blue" Goose), and hundreds of **Canada Geese**, plus a few well-identified **Ross' Geese** (out of the estimated two hundred that are there). The unexpected birds were a **Black Scoter**, seen from Rock Hill (possibly the same one that was found there last August—the first documented record in the interior of California), and an adult male **American Redstart**, whose flashing plumage perfectly complemented the colors of a spectacular sunset over Finney Lake.

March can be, and probably will be, a dull month for birders, there are still many winter birds around, but they are old hat by now. The first migrants are arriving, and there will be some firsts for the year, but the full tide of migration can not be expected until mid-April. At that time we will need all the field expertise we can develop during these comparatively slow times. 

### Whittier Narrows, cont'd from pg. 3

To date many groups have utilized the Refuge, including classes from USC, field biology classes from Pasadena City College, and ornithology classes from Cal State, Long Beach, and Cal State, Los Angeles. Classes, Audubon chapters, and other groups may make reservations to enter the Refuge by calling the Whittier Narrows Nature Center at 213-444-1872. Individuals may obtain entry permits by visiting the Nature Center office, located at 1000 North Durfee Avenue, South El Monte. The Nature Center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 7 days a week. Those wishing an introduction to the birds of the area may wish to join one of the LAAS Field Trips to the Refuge, on March 19th and April 17th. 



## WESTERN TANAGER

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Audubon membership (local and national) is \$15 per year (individual), \$18 (family), or \$8.50 (student), including AUDUBON Magazine, and THE WESTERN TANAGER. To join, make checks payable to the National Audubon Society, and send them to Audubon House. Subscriptions to THE WESTERN TANAGER separately are \$3.50 per year (Third Class), or \$6.00 (First Class, mailed in an envelope). To subscribe, make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

## BOOKS

Each month Audubon House Bookstore adds many new titles to its impressive inventory of books dealing with natural history. It is likely that no other bookstore in North America has a comparable collection of volumes on the subject of birds—and many of these books are limited editions, difficult to obtain, and soon to be out-of-print. LAAS members and TANAGER subscribers are entitled to a 10% discount on any purchase over \$5.00. If ordering a book, however, be sure to inquire first about tax, postage, and handling—or let the Bookstore bill you. Below is a list of some of the new books now in stock:

**Faune de Madagascar: Oiseaux**, Milon, Petter, Randrianasolo, 1973 (\$52.00).

**Crows of the World**, Goodwin, 1976 (\$28.50).

**Birds of Trinidad and Tobago**, ffrench, 1976 (\$15.00).

**Birds of the Maltese Archipelago**, Bannerman, Vella-Gaffiero, 1976 (\$10.00).

**Finding Birds in Mexico**, with 1976 supplement, Edwards (\$8.00).

**Birds in Japan**, Yamashina, 1974 reprint (\$33.00).

**Key to Trees & Shrubs of the Deserts of So. Calif.**, Collins, 1976 (\$4.95).

**Guide to Eastern Hawk Watching**, Heintzelman, 1976 (\$5.95).

**Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts**, Wisc. Society for Ornithology, 1976 (\$4.95).

**Bird Finding in Illinois**, Illinois Audubon Society, 1975 (\$4.00).

**Guide to Bird-watching in Denmark**, Sanders & Berg, 1976 (\$3.00).

**Guide to Bird-watching in Mallorca**, Sanders & Berg, 1976 (\$3.00).

**Guide to Bird-watching in Sweden**, Sanders & Berg, 1975 (\$3.00).

**The Birds of Lebanon and the Jordan Area**, Benson (\$12.95).

**The Birds of Iran**, Scott, et al (\$15.50).

**Australian Honeyeaters**, Officer, rev. 1975 ed. (\$8.25).

**Familiar Birds of N.W. Forests, Fields, and Gardens**, Marshall (\$2.50).

**Familiar Birds of N.W. Shores and Waters**, Nehls (\$2.50).

**Discovering Sierra Trees**, Arno (\$1.95).

**Wildflowers 3, The Sierra Nevada**, Horn (\$7.50).

**Birds of Yosemite**, Stebbins (\$1.50).

**Yosemite Road Guide** (\$1.50).



### Use our Library

Many of our members may be unaware of the excellent library facilities at Audubon House. Not only are all the standard field guides and references available for consultation (including everything from the historical works of Coues, Baird, or Ridgway, to such exotica as Dementiev's *Birds of Russia*, and guides to the birds of places like Antarctica, Korea, and Viet Nam), but there is also an extensive collection of circulating books that may be borrowed for two weeks at a time. Marge Wohlgemuth, the Librarian, is on duty at the House on Thursdays, and she can help locate a title you may be interested in. Members are encouraged to stop by any weekday from 10-3, to check out books, or just to browse and to read.

### Beginning Birdwatching

LAAS Program Chairman Ron McClard is presenting four classes for beginning birders, Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., beginning March 15th. Classes will be held at the Santa Monica YWCA, with four weekend field trips to such places as Morongo Valley, McGrath State Beach, and Morro Bay. The fee is \$24. For information or enrollment, contact the YWCA Office at 213-399-7711.

# CALENDAR

Los Angeles Audubon Headquarters, Library, Bookstore, and Nature Museum are located at Audubon House, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 90046. Telephone: 876-0202. Hours: 10-3, Monday through Friday.

*Audubon Bird Report—call 874-1318*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 3**—Executive Board Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 5**—Upper Newport Bay. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in back of the Newporter Inn. Wintering shorebirds should still be numerous, and the Osprey and Sharp-tailed Sparrows are to be looked for. The Black Rail is a remote possibility. Take the San Diego Fwy. (405) south to Jamboree Blvd. off-ramp, go west on Jamboree to East Bluff Drive, then right on East Bluff to Back Bay Drive. Leader: John McDonald, 714-537-4001.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 6**—Pelagic Trip to Anacapa Island. The *Paisano* will leave National Parks Monument dock in the Ventura Marina at 8:00 a.m. and return about 6:00 p.m. You are requested to be at the boat one half hour before departure. The American Oystercatcher was seen on our two previous trips, and on the March '76 trip Rhinoceros Auklets, Ancient Murrelets, Cassin's Auklets, and Northern Fulmars were seen. Price: \$18.00 per person. No refunds accepted within 48 hours of departure. Make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society and send with self-addressed, stamped envelope, your phone number, and the names and addresses of all in your party to Phil Sayre, 660 So. Garfield Ave., Apt. 306, Monterey Park, California 91754. Phone: 288-0545. Leader: to be announced.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 8**—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Everyone welcome. Two of our most knowledgeable birders, **Herb Clarke** and **Arnold Small**, will present a joint program on the **Birds of the West**. The program will feature some of the most striking photographs from their recently published book, with a survey of the species to be found in our ten major natural habitats.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 12**—Point Mugu Naval Air Station Marsh, and the Callegua Creek Estuary. This trip is courtesy of the Commander at the Base, and is limited to 25 people. Call Gail Gifford (985-4321) for reservations before March 6. The Mugu Base is just south of Oxnard. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in front of the Acey-Ducey Club, which is just inside Gate #2. (Please note this is not the gate used last year). Elmer Colley, a naturalist from the Base, will lead the group.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 19**—Whittier Narrows Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at 5:15 p.m. This will be an evening bird and nature walk to enjoy the sights and sounds of the sanctuary. Dress warmly and carry a flashlight. It should be an excellent opportunity to see the Barn Owl. To reach the sanctuary, take the Pomona Fwy. (#60) east to the Santa Anita offramp, turn right (south) on Santa Anita to Durfee Ave., and turn left (east) on Durfee to the Nature Center. Leader: Nature Center Biologist, Dave Foster, 791-3084.



Roger Tory Peterson

**The Cactus Wren**, a typical bird of the southwestern deserts, can still be found in arid pockets within the city. Look for it on the dry slopes of Palos Verdes, Baldwin Hills, and Newport Bay.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 26**—Big Tujunga Wash and Hansen Dam. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the intersection of Foothill Blvd. and Conover Place. This location is just west of the westernmost of two bridges across the wash, and about one mile west of downtown Sunland. This is a beautiful canyon and chaparral area, where Costa's Hummingbirds, Rock and Cactus Wrens are among the birds to be looked for. Leader: Jim Stevens, 352-3057.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 3**—Malibu Creek State Park (formerly Century Ranch). Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot near the entrance. This spectacular area is one of the newest to be opened to birding. Early migrants will be looked for. Take Pacific Coast Hwy. (#1) north to Malibu Canyon, turn right into the Canyon, and go about 6 miles. Or take the Ventura Fwy. (101) north, and exit at Los Virgenes Rd., and go about a mile toward the coast. Leader: Ed Navojosky, 938-9766.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 7**—Executive Board Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 12**—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. Everyone welcome. **Dr. Ralph Schreiber**, the new Curator of Ornithology at the L. A. County Museum of Natural History, will present the program.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 16**—Pelagic Trip to Anacapa Island, and Out to Sea. Details are the same as those for the March 6th trip.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 17**—Whittier Narrows Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Nature Center. In addition to the ducks and shorebirds attracted by the New Lakes, this is the only place to see the Cardinal locally. Directions to the Sanctuary are found in the notes on the March 19th trip. Leader: Dave Foster, 791-3084.