

WESTERN TANAGER

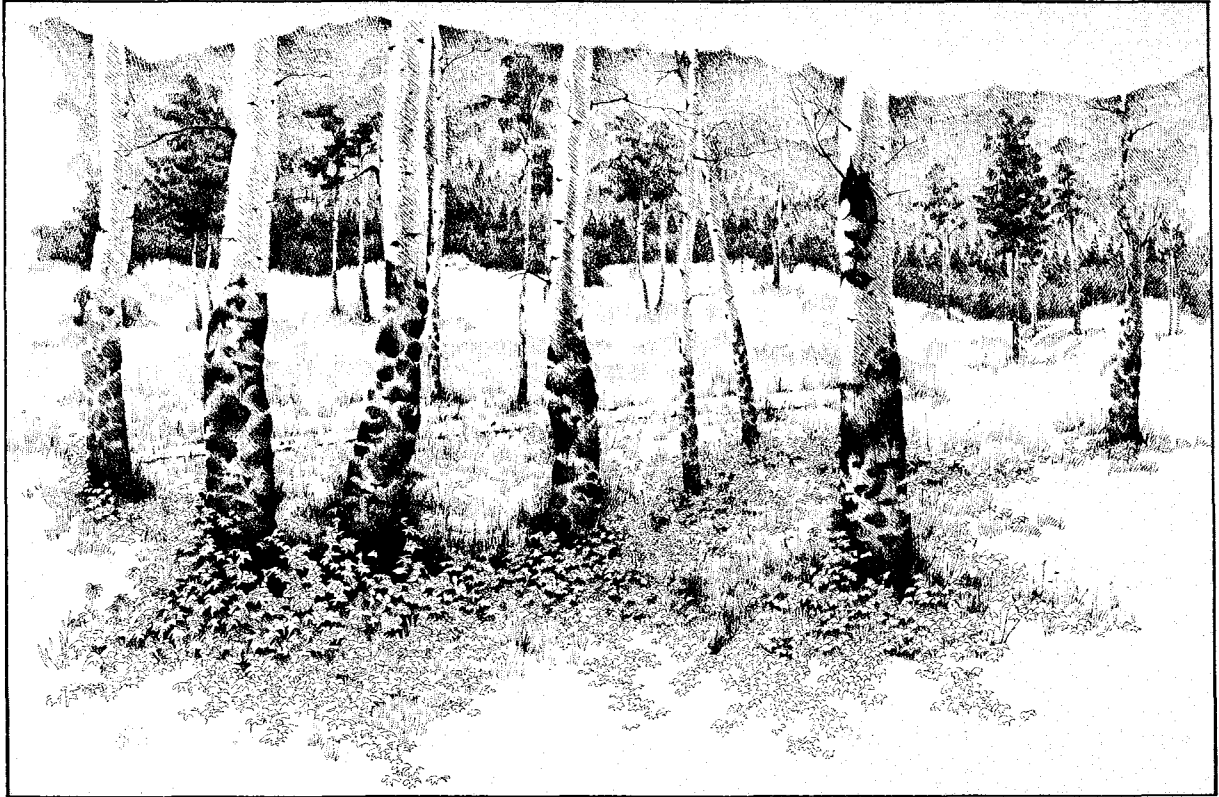
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10 Top Birding Spots



Anne Gordley

The Best of Birding in Southern California

by Jean Brandt and Glenn Cunningham



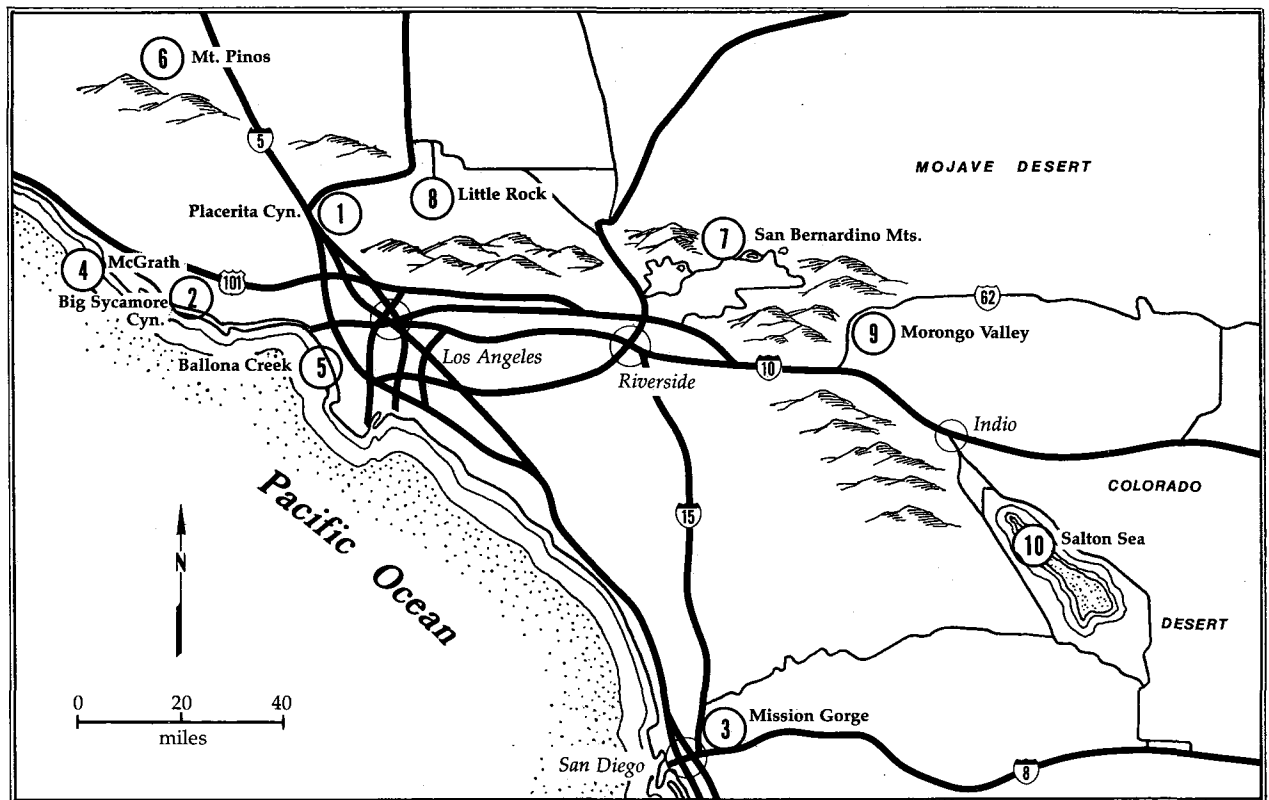
ew areas in the world can match the diversity of climate and terrain to be found in Southern California. From the coastal lowlands up through the mountains and down to the deserts, the land is endowed with a varied array of natural habitats, each with its own distinctive vegetation and bird life.

The coast itself boasts **sandy beaches**, **rocky jetties**, **salt water lagoons**, **salt marshes**, and **tidal flats**, while the seasonal and year-round streams support occasional **fresh water lagoons** and **marshes** plus patches of **riparian woodland**. The inland valleys and coastal plain harbor remnants of native **grassland** as well as scattered stands of **oak woodland**, while the drier, warmer slopes are clothed with **chaparral**, a shrubby formation unique to regions of Mediterranean climate.

The so-called **Transition Zone** of the mountains (4000-6000'), is characterized by forests of Black Oak and Yellow Pine, giving way to Sugar Pine and White Fir in the **Canadian Zone** (6000-8000'), and at last to Lodgepole and Limber Pine in the **Hudsonian Zone** (8000' +). The arid, desert slope of the mountains supports forests of **pinon pine** and **juniper** (2000-4000'), with **Joshua Tree woodland** at elevations below 3000'.

The **high desert** (the Mojave) hosts vast tracts of sagebrush and creosote, while the **low desert** (the Colorado) is characterized by clumps of mesquite and saltbush.

This wealth of habitats insures a wealth of birds—over 475 species in Southern California alone, at least 160 of which would be new to an East Coast visitor. In fact, with an effort one may hope to find over 200 species in a



single day—an achievement possible in few other places in North America.

Birdwatchers, of course, have differing objectives, and no list of birding localities can hope to satisfy all. But the following selection is designed to present the observer with a representative cross-section of the major habitats plus a generous sampling of the typical birds that make Southern California such an exciting place to explore.

1. Placerita Canyon

(OAK-CHAPARRAL-RIPARIAN)

This wooded canyon, a 30-minute drive from downtown Los Angeles, is situated at the northwest edge of the San Gabriel Mountains (elev. 1500'), and offers a good selection of the characteristic birds of *oak woodland* and *chaparral*, plus a few *montane* and *riparian* species as well.

The *oak woodland* dominates the canyon floor and supports such familiar resident birds as **Cooper's Hawk**, **Red-shouldered Hawk**, **Acorn Woodpecker**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, **Bushtit**, **Plain Titmouse**, **House Wren**, **Scrub Jay**, **Anna's Hummingbird**, **Hutton's Vireo**, and **Western Bluebird**. These are joined in winter by **Hermit Thrush**, **Purple Finch**, and (in some years) **Varied Thrush**. Summer residents of the oaks include **Western Flycatcher**, **Western Wood Pewee**, **Lawrence's Goldfinch**, **Black-headed Grosbeak**, and **Northern (Bullock's) Oriole**. The *montane* component is represented by resident **Steller's Jays**, **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos**, and **Mountain Quail**. **Lark Sparrows** frequent the grassy, open areas among the oaks, most commonly in summer.

The sparse *riparian* area along the stream has **Black Phoebe**s, **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers**, and summering **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**, while **Canyon Wrens** reside on the

rocky slopes.

The hillsides bordering the valley are clothed with *hard chaparral*, home to such typical resident birds as **Wrentit**, **Bewick's Wren**, **Brown and Rufous-sided Towhees**, **California Thrasher**, and **Lesser Goldfinch**. Winter brings **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, and summer adds such breeding birds as **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Costa's Hummingbird**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, and **Poor-will**. Resident **White-throated Swifts** may be seen overhead, plus **Violet-green Swallows**, in spring and summer.

The canyon also attracts a good selection of spring and fall migrants. Transients in the oaks and willows include **Hammond's Flycatcher**, **Solitary Vireo**, **Black-throated Gray**, **Townsend's**, and **Hermit Warblers**, plus **Western Tanager** and **Swainson's Thrush**. Migrant **MacGillivray's Warblers** may be found in patches of brush, **Lazuli Buntings** in the chaparral, and **Vaux's Swifts** overhead.

To reach the Park, go northwest on I-5 to Hwy. 14, then north on 14 to the Placerita Canyon State Park exit. Beware of the crowds on weekends.

2. Big Sycamore Canyon

(RIPARIAN-OAK-CHAPARRAL)

Big Sycamore Canyon, in Pt. Mugu State Park (45 minutes drive north of Los Angeles), offers all the birds typical of *oak woodland* and *chaparral*, plus a varied *riparian* community that includes **Hooded Orioles** (in summer) plus resident **American Goldfinches** and **Downy Woodpeckers**. **Canyon Wrens** are common along the *cliffs*, and **Rock Wrens** frequently winter. The dark Bell's race of the **Sage Sparrow** inhabits the upper reaches of the canyon, and in nearby La Jolla Canyon (2 miles north on Hwy. 1) the *soft chaparral* (coastal sage scrub) hosts resident **Rufous-crowned Sparrows**.

and summering **Black-chinned Sparrows**.

It is for migrants and vagrants, however, that the site is principally renowned, a result of its favored position on the coast. Since 1975 an impressive total of 25 species of warblers and 14 species of sparrows have been recorded, plus such rare finds as **Veery**, **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Wood Pewee**—all firsts for California (all seen in the fall). In addition to the usual transients, the willows along the dry streambed attract such riparian migrants as **Blue Grosbeak** and **Willow Flycatcher**, **Rufous** and **Allen's Hummingbirds**, (and, uncommonly, in the spring) **Calliope Hummingbirds**.

To reach Pt. Mugu State Park, take Hwy. 1 north, and watch for the entrance 5 miles past the Ventura County Line.

3. Mission Gorge (RIPARIAN-GRASSLAND-CHAPARRAL)

Though farther afield than Placerita or Big Sycamore (three hours driving time from Los Angeles), Mission Gorge, on the San Diego River, offers the best remaining *riparian* habitat in Southern California, with native *grassland*, *chaparral*, and *fresh water ponds*, all in close proximity. In fact, if an observer can visit only one locality in Southern California, this site would be an excellent choice. Notable breeding birds of the *riparian woodland* include **Blue Grosbeak**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, **Lazuli Bunting**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Swainson's Thrush** (scarce), and the almost extinct (*pusillus*) race of the **Bell's Vireo** (the highest concentration of this species in the State). The *ponds* frequently have nesting **Tri-colored Blackbirds**, and the **Least Bittern** may be found in summer.

The *rocky areas* have resident **Canyon Wrens**, plus wintering **Rock Wrens**, and the *grassy hills* north of the river host **Grasshopper Sparrows** and **Western Kingbirds** in summer (replaced in winter by **Say's Phoebes** and **Water Pipits**). In addition to the typical *chaparral* species, the shrubby slopes support **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** and summering **Black-chinned Sparrows**.



In some years **Golden Eagles** nest in the gorge; and **Varied Thrushes** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** occasionally winter. Like Big Sycamore, the area attracts large numbers of migrants, and is worth a visit in any season of the year.

To reach the location, take I-8 east from I-5. Turn north on Mission Gorge Rd., then left on Father Junipero Serra Rd. to the parking lot for Old Mission Dam Park.

4. McGrath (MUDFLATS-BEACH-ESTUARY)

McGrath State Beach, embracing the estuary of the Santa Clara River (1 hour's drive north of Los Angeles) offers the widest variety of waterbirds along the Southern California coast. The principal attraction is the extensive area of *mudflats* which, at various times of the year, permit easy viewing of such representative shorebirds as **Snowy Plover**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Marbled Godwit**, **Ruddy** and **Black Turnstones**, **Whimbrel**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Short-billed** and **Long-billed Dowitchers**, **American Avocet**, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Dunlin**, **Western Sandpiper**, and **Least Sandpiper**. Late summer brings thousands of **Northern** and **Wilson's Phalaropes**, while fall produces small flocks of such normally scarce migrants as **Pectoral** and **Baird's Sandpipers**, plus **Solitary Sandpipers** and a few **Red Knots**. Accidental species such as **Wilson's Plover** and **White Wagtail** have also been recorded.

The *ponds* at the north end of the fenced-in sewage plant are good for **Black-crowned Night-herons** and wintering **ducks**, with **Ruddy Ducks** and **Cinnamon Teal** remaining to nest. The *Yacht Harbor* to the north of the estuary is a good spot for wintering **loons**, **scoters** (occasionally all 3 species) and **grebes** (**Horned**, **Eared**, and **Western**).

Among the terns, **Forster's**, **Common**, **Least**, **Caspian**, **Elegant**, and **Royal** may all be seen at the appropriate times of the year, and the common gulls include **California**, **Western**, **Ring-billed**, **Mew**, **Bonaparte's**, and **Heermann's**. **Herring Gulls** winter, as do **Black-legged Kittiwakes** and a few **Glaucous-winged** and **Thayer's Gulls**. The rare **Glaucous Gull** has been recorded on several occasions, and the **Laughing Gull** has been noted once in midsummer. **Black Skimmers** are also occasionally seen in late summer.

Belted Kingfishers frequent the lagoon in winter and migration, and **Brown Pelicans** are common offshore. During the spring and summer large concentrations of **Sooty Shearwaters** may be seen offshore, and in the fall **Parasitic Jaegers** may be observed harrassing the terns.

The coastal *salicornia scrub* south of the estuary is home to the endangered Belding's race of the **Savannah Sparrow**, and the reeds at the upper end of the lagoon have **Sora Rail** (in winter) **Long-billed Marsh Wren**, **Yellowthroat**, **Song Sparrow**, **Green Heron**, and **Great Blue Heron**.

To reach the Park from Los Angeles, take Hwy. 101 to Oxnard. Exit at Victoria and go west along Olivas Parkway to Harbor Blvd, turning left to the entrance.

5. Ballona Creek (JETTY-MUDFLATS-SALT MARSH)

This highly urbanized area, just 5 miles from Los Angeles International Airport, still offers surprisingly good shorebirding, with a few specialties not present at McGrath. In winter along the rocky *jetty* **Surfbirds**, **Wandering Tattlers**,



Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants may be seen, plus an occasional **Black Oystercatcher**, while the mouth of *Ballona Creek* hosts **Scoters, Loons, Grebes, Red-breasted Mergansers**, and **Lesser and Greater Scaup**. At low tide the upper channel of the creek harbors an impressive assemblage of shorebirds, and resident **Burrowing Owls** may be observed perching on the banks. At high tide most of these birds favor the *salicornia marsh* south of the channel, a good place, as well, for **White-tailed Kite, Short-eared Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Loggerhead Shrike, Western Meadowlark, and Savannah Sparrow**. A lone **Golden Plover** of the Asiatic *fulva* race habitually turns up here among the flock of wintering **Black-bellied Plovers**.

In winter the *fresh water pond* just east of Pacific Avenue is worth checking for wintering **ducks and geese**. The *willow thickets* behind the apartment buildings on Vista del Mar can be productive for land bird **migrants**, and the *fields* at Hughes Airport are often good for wintering **raptors**.

To reach Ballona Creek go west on Culver Blvd. from Culver City, then north on Esplanade to the bridge across the channel.

6. Mt. Pinos

(CHAPARRAL-MTN. FOREST-MEADOWS)

At no other place on the continent is it possible, with a quick refocusing of the binoculars, to see the smallest bird in North America (the **Calliope Hummingbird**) and the largest bird (the **California Condor**). Though with the decline of the Condor this feat becomes less and less feasible, Mt. Pinos remains an excellent place to observe our characteristic mountain birds. A 2-hour drive from Los Angeles, Mt. Pinos embraces, within its 8831', all three montane Life Zones, each with its representative community of birds.

In the *chaparral* around the intersection of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mt. Pinos Rd. (5500'), **Sage, Brewer's, and Black-chinned Sparrows** nest, and the nearby pines support such typical *Transition Zone* breeding species as **Hairy Woodpecker, Western Bluebird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Pygmy Nuthatch**. **Mountain Quail** may be seen in the brush along the route to the summit, as well as large numbers of *Selasphorus Hummingbirds* (primarily **Rufous**) during fall migration (late June through August).

At McGill Campground (7400') all the typical summer birds of the *Canadian Zone* occur: among them, **Yellow-bellied**

(**Red-breasted**) **Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Band-tailed Pigeon, Dusky Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, Brown Creeper, Mountain Chickadee**, all three **nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglet** (firs), **Western Tanager, Red Crossbill** (irregular), **Pine Siskin, Cassin's Finch, and Townsend's Solitaire**. With diligence **Saw-whet, Pygmy, Spotted**, and summering **Flammulated Owls** can be found in the area, and in former years **Blue Grouse** inhabited these woods (the most southerly location for this species).

Higher up, at Iris Meadow, **Calliope Hummingbirds** nest, while **Fox Sparrows** and **Green-tailed Towhees** breed in the brushy borders. The dirt road to the summit starts here, winding up to the *Hudsonian Zone*, with its **Mountain Bluebirds, Rock Wrens, Cassin's Finches, Clark's Nutcrackers**, and soaring **Golden Eagles**.

During deer season (Aug.-Sept.) one may, with good fortune, watch a **Condor** sail past the summit. Failing that, Edmunston Pumping Station, 6 miles east of the nearby town of Grapevine, is another of their favorite haunts—and the only area south of Paso Robles where **Lewis' Woodpeckers** may be found year-round.

To reach Mt. Pinos take I-5 north to the Frazier Park exit and go west past Frazier Park to Cuddy Valley Road. Summer is best, as the road is often closed in winter.

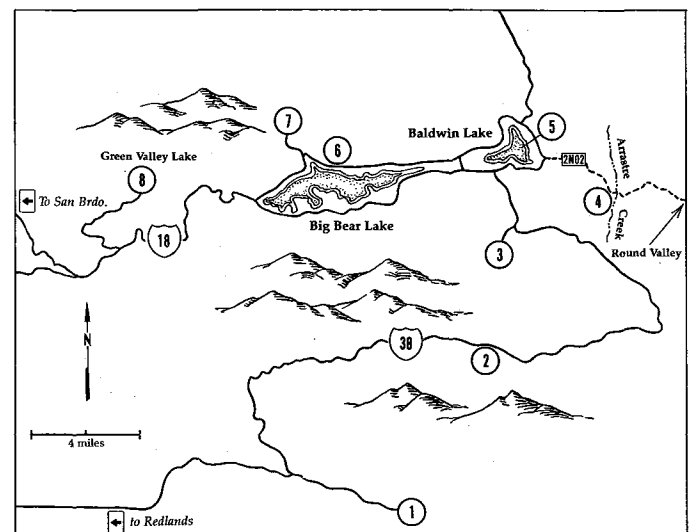
7. San Bernardino Mountains

(MTN. FOREST-GRASSLAND-PINYON-JUNIPER)

This strategically-situated mountain range, a 3-hour drive from Los Angeles, offers the broadest diversity of montane birds to be found in Southern California; for here may be seen, in addition to the forest species noted for Mt. Pinos, a few birds typical of the Sierras, plus a handful of others characteristic of the mountains of Arizona—species reaching the western terminus of their range in the *pinon-juniper-Yellow Pine* woodland of the dry, desert slope.

A full day is required to visit the locations listed here—numbered to refer to the sites on the map:

Mill Creek Canyon (1), in summer, has **Black Swifts** (at dawn and dusk), plus resident **Dippers** (by Big Falls, at the end of Fallsville Rd., 14.7 miles east of Redlands). The typical complement of *Transition Zone* species is present at South Fork Campground (2), plus a chance for a **Painted Redstart**,



reported on two occasions. At Green Spot Picnic Ground (3), **Virginia's Warblers** have nested the past two years. Arrastre Creek (4) is located in the *pinon-juniper* belt and has nesting **Solitary (Plumbeous) Vireos**, **Gray Flycatchers**, and **Hepatic Tanagers** (in the nearby Yellow Pines). **Whip-poor-wills** have also been recorded on one occasion. To reach the spot take Hwy. 38 to a "T" intersection and go east on unimproved 2N02 to the creek crossing. The very local **Gray Vireo** generally nests about 2 miles further down the road in the sage flats of Round Valley (a good place as well, for **Scott's Orioles**).

Sizable numbers of **Baird's Sandpipers** may be found in August by the sewage ponds on the south side of Baldwin Lake (5), and **Franklin's Gulls** are occasionally seen in spring. In fall and early winter **Chesnut-collared Longspurs** flock with the **Horned Larks** in the grassland near the lake, and in summer **Mountain Bluebirds** nest, as do **Vesper Sparrows** and the *nevadensis* race of the **Savannah Sparrow** (the latter two at the southern end of their range). **Common Nighthawks** may be seen overhead, and flocks of **Pinyon Jays** frequent the Yellow Pines nearby.

The north side of Big Bear Lake (6) is a good place for wintering **raptors**, including **Bald Eagles**; **Common Mergansers** winter on the lake, and **Saw-whet** and summering **Flammulated Owls** may be found at Hanna Flat Campground (7), reached via an unpaved road north of the town of Fawnskin.

Green Valley (8), at 7000' on the north-facing slope of the mountains, supports a few more nesting Sierran species (**Hermit Warbler**, **MacGillivray's Warbler**, **Lincoln's Sparrow**), and is the only area in Southern California where **Williamson's Sapsuckers** may be easily found. **Dusky Flycatchers** also nest in the area and **Red Crossbills** occur irregularly. To reach the campground take Hwy. 18 to the Green Valley Lake turnoff and continue past Green Valley Lake and Village.

8. Little Rock

(HIGH DESERT-RIPARIAN-PINYON-JUNIPER)

The area around Little Rock Dam (elev. 3300'), where the San Gabriel Mountains meet the Mojave Desert, offers typical *high desert habitat* plus a mixture of sparse *riparian* and *pinon-juniper woodland*. An hour's drive from Los Angeles, the canyon may be reached by heading south on Cheseboro Road from Pearblossom Hwy. The *Joshua Trees* near the road support summering **Scott's Orioles**, resident **Roadrunners**, and **Cactus Wrens**. **Black-throated Sparrows** summer in the *sage* on the slopes, while **Black-chinned Sparrows** breed in the *pinon-junipers* above the dam, and **Rock Wrens** nest on the *cliffs*. **Costa's Hummingbirds** nest on the wide juniper flat in Santiago Canyon, reached by hiking upstream beyond the end of the paved road.

Out on the floor of the Antelope Valley, the *high desert scrub* harbors resident **Sage Sparrows** and **LeConte's Thrashers**, plus **Sage Thrashers** (in winter and migration). The *fields* of the valley are excellent for wintering **raptors**, including **Prairie Falcon**, **Merlin**, **Rough-legged**, and **Ferruginous Hawks**, plus huge flocks of **Long-billed Curlews**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, **Mountain Plovers**, **Water Pipits**, and **Horned Larks**. A search through the larks is likely to produce wintering **Lapland** and **Chestnut-collared Longspurs**.

9. Morongo Valley

(LOW DESERT-RIPARIAN)

The Morongo Valley Nature Preserve (elev. 2600') is a two-hour drive from Los Angeles. Enviably situated between the Lucerne and Coachella Valleys, it is renowned as an oasis for spring migrants and vagrants. Not only does the area attract all of the regular land bird migrants, but such lowland "Arizona" species as **Lucy's Warbler**, **Weid's Crested Flycatcher**, **Summer Tanager**, and **Vermilion Flycatcher** breed here, at or near the western terminus of their range. The spring-fed stand of cottonwoods hosts a healthy *riparian* community, including **Blue Grosbeaks**, **Bell's Vireos**, **Yellow-breasted Chats**, and **Long-eared Owls**, and the blend of coastal and desert influences is demonstrated by the presence of such species as **California Thrasher** and **Nuttall's Woodpecker** along with such typical desert birds as **Ladder-backed Woodpecker**, **Gambel's Quail**, **Phainopepla**, **Verdin**, and **Lesser Nighthawk**.

Bendire's Thrashers and **Scott's Orioles** may be found in the *Joshua Trees* along the road to Lucerne Valley, north of Yucca Valley, and **LeConte's Thrashers** inhabit the brushy *desert washes*.

To reach Morongo Valley, take I-10 to Hwy. 62. The Preserve is adjacent to Covington Park in the town of Morongo Valley.

10. The Salton Sea

(LOW DESERT-AGRICULTURAL-INLAND SEA)

The Salton Sea (elev. -235')—a 3-hour drive from Los Angeles—occupies a unique place among California birding spots, for it is an outstanding location for **shorebirds** and **waterfowl**, as well as a good area to find species characteristic of the *low desert habitat*. Created inadvertently in 1906 when the Colorado River flooded its banks, the Sea has witnessed a



gradual colonization by species from the Gulf of California, and it is principally the presence of this exotic southern element that has made the area a Mecca for birders—despite the challenge imposed by the punishing climate and often treacherous roads.

The itinerary that follows, numbered to correspond to the locations on the map, covers some of the best birding spots around the Sea:

The North End

Unlike the South End of the Sea, with its lush cultivated fields, the North End still supports some good stands of low desert vegetation. In the mesquite bordering the levee of the Whitewater River (1) such desert birds may be found as **Crissal Thrasher** and **White-winged Dove** (in summer), as well as **Gambel's Quail**, **Black-tailed (lucida) Gnatcatcher**, and **Abert's Towhee**. From Mecca, Lincoln St. leads to the left dike of the river. The *mudflats* at the mouth of the river are superb for shorebirds and from the end of the dike such normally inland species as **Black Brant** and all three **scoters** may be seen in the spring, en route north from the Gulf. In late summer the *rocky jetty* extending furthest along the Sea has produced both **Blue-footed** and **Brown Boobies** in an "invasion" year, and **Magnificent Frigatebirds** occur sporadically in summer. The extensive *marsh* where the river meets the Sea hosts such breeding species as **Clapper** and **Virginia Rails** and large numbers of herons. **American Bitterns** are common in winter, and **Least Bitterns** are plentiful in summer. Other birds to look for include **Gull-billed Terns** and **Black Skimmers** (in summer), **Laughing Gulls** (in late summer), migrant **Franklin's Gulls**, and large numbers of **Black Terns** (spring and summer).

Salton City (2), while disappointing as a residential development, is a good spot for migratory shorebirds and

unusual wintering gulls, hosting in summer the largest concentration of the distinctive **Yellow-footed Gull**—officially a race of the Western Gull, but widely regarded as a distinct species.

The South End

Though more extensively agricultural than the North End, the South End of the Sea attracts even larger numbers of birds. When *flooded*, the open *fields* hold thousands of wintering shorebirds, as well as resident **Cattle Egrets** and **White-faced Ibis**; and in winter the *fallow fields* may host **Mountain Plovers** and **Sandhill Cranes** (Harris Rd., between Brawley and El Centro). **Common Ground Doves** frequent the *farmhouses*, and the trees of the ranchyards are good for migrants.

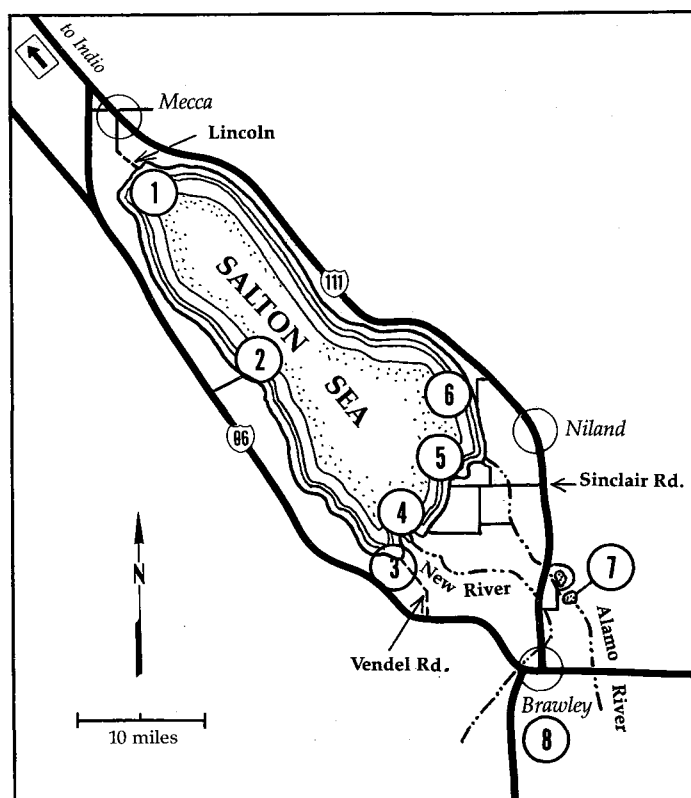
Unit 1 of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge (3) is a good place to find **Stilt Sandpipers**, a Salton Sea specialty normally found nowhere else in California. In summer **Wood Storks** are abundant, and **Roseate Spoonbills** occasionally occur as post-breeding wanderers. At the mouth of the New River (4), **White Pelicans** may be found, as well as occasional **Little Blue Herons**. The *fields* near the Refuge Headquarters at Rock Hill (5) hold large flocks of wintering **geese** (largely **Snow** and **Canada's**, with small numbers of **Ross'** and migrant **White-Fronted Geese**).

The Wister Waterfowl Management Area (6) is exceptional for migrating shorebirds. **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, casual elsewhere in the State, occur regularly here in the spring. Finney Lake (7) is good for **Fulvous Whistling Ducks**. The *reedbeds* support abundant **Yellow-headed Blackbirds**, as well as the highly local **Black Rail**, and the surrounding *desert scrub* hosts **desert land birds** and **migrants**. In the *tamarisks* by the lake (and along the Alamo and New Rivers) a few **American Redstarts** and **Yellow Warblers** winter. The **Gila Woodpecker**, a species nearly extirpated from California, is resident at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Brawley (8).

Much of the appeal of the Sea is its perennial potential for the unexpected, and every year new birds are recorded—including out-of-range land birds like **Pyrhuloxia** and **Curve-billed Thrasher**, vagrant shorebirds like the **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, and **Rufous-necked Stint**, plus such unprecedented pelagic species as **New Zealand** and **Sooty Shearwaters**, and both **Least** and **Leach's Petrels**.

Other Areas

The preceding selection can offer little more than a sample of the many fine birding locations in Southern California, and a number of other spots deserve special claim to distinction. Among these are **Mt. Palomar** (for owls), **Upper Newport Bay** (for rails and wintering Sharp-tailed Sparrows), the **Colorado River** (for cuckoos and rails), **Goleta**, **Point Loma**, and the **Tiajuana River Valley** (for coastal migrants and eastern vagrants), and the **northeastern desert oases** (for eastern vagrants). All of these areas together contribute to the exciting adventure of California birding. 🐦



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Shumway Suffel

Looking for Owls



robably no family of our native birds is as little known or appreciated as the owls, a situation for which the owls themselves are at least in part to blame. For all but one of our eleven local species are largely nocturnal—the exception being the Burrowing Owl—and almost all would have to be considered uncommon or rare. Finding these birds is a sizable challenge, though the effort is richly repaid; for the owls have a special niche in the natural community, and many fascinating attributes of their own.

Short-eared Owls are partly diurnal hunters of the salt marshes and open meadows, occasionally seen flying at dusk or dawn at such places as Playa del Rey (Ballona Creek), Upper Newport Bay, More Mesa in Santa Barbara, the Salt Works at the south end of San Diego Bay, and the Tijuana River Valley.

Somewhat similar habitat appeals to the **Barn Owl**, especially open fields with large trees. In wild areas, cavities in cliffs or trees serve as nesting sites, while in outlying residential areas the owls may nest in barns and old buildings.

The once-plentiful **Burrowing Owl** is another bird of open habitats, with a preference for bare ground and dry, rolling hills. Though declining everywhere in our area, these diurnal, terrestrial owls are still fairly common around fields and drainage ditches on the coastal plain (e.g. Ballona Creek) and are commonly seen in the Antelope and Imperial Valleys.

Long-eared Owls are birds of the rapidly-disappearing riparian woodlands. Formerly fairly common along the coast, they are now largely restricted to the desert oases, occurring at such sites as Mojave Narrows (near Victorville), Morongo Valley, and Tamarisk Campground in Anza-Borrego State Park.

Among the species of the open woodlands, **Great Horned Owls** are the best known and most conspicuous, for their calls are heard not only in the foothills and mountain canyons, but in the residential areas of the cities.

The **Screech Owl** is another species that favors open oak woodlands on the coastal plain, as well as the lower mountain canyons. In addition, several races of these small, eared owls occur locally in the eastern deserts, though extensive habitat destruction in the Imperial Valley and along the lower Colorado River has greatly reduced these populations.

One of our four "highland" owls, the **Pygmy Owl** occurs at sea level from Santa Barbara Co. north, though in our area it inhabits wooded foothill canyons and the mixed forests bordering Transition Zone meadows. The best time to look for this tiny, long-tailed owl is just before or immediately after dusk.

The comparatively rare **Spotted Owl** is a bird of dense forests, nesting in the oak-filled lower canyons of the mountains as well as the conifers of the Transition Zone.

Dense mountain forests are also the home of the diminutive **Saw-whet Owl**, a bird occasionally recorded as a transient or winter visitor in the eastern deserts.

Unlike the species mentioned so far, all of which are year-



Saw-whet Owl

round residents, the **Flammulated Owl** is strictly a summer visitor, nesting in the Yellow Pine forests of the Transition Zone. On occasion this small, dark-eyed owl is also noted during migration on the desert.

All of the mountain owls are very locally distributed within their range, but the following are some of the places where they may be consistently found (especially between April and June, when the birds are calling):

1. **Mt. Palomar:** Fry Creek Campground has Spotted and Saw-whet Owls, while Pygmy and Flammulated (summer) may be found on the slopes above Doane Pond.

2. **San Jacinto Mts.:** Lake Fulmor has Pygmy and Spotted Owls, plus occasional Saw-whet Owls and Whip-poor-wills (summer).

3. **San Bernardino Mts.:** Upper Arrastre Creek has Pygmy Owls, plus a chance in summer for Whip-poor-wills; and the wilder areas between Fawnskin and Hanna Flats Camp have Spotted, Saw-whet, and summering Flammulated Owls.

4. **San Gabriel Mts.:** Santa Anita Canyon has Spotted Owls, and Switzer Picnic Area has reported both Pygmy and Spotted Owls.

One final owl should be mentioned to complete the Southern California list. This is the tiny **Elf Owl**, a typical desert species that favors saguaros and wooded oases. A rare summer visitor to the Needles area and possibly one or two other sites in the eastern desert, this owl is in immediate danger of extirpation as a result of destruction of the groves of desert cottonwoods.

Tracking down owls, even in optimum habitat, is an art in itself. A strong spotlight is a necessity (surprisingly, the light doesn't seem to bother the owls), and patience is a must. Tape recordings of calls should be used with discretion, as some of the shyer species may be driven from their territory by excessive use of tapes. If your owl seems to be retreating, you may be overdoing it. Try moving away slowly, and hope that the owl follows, thinking he's driving you off. The calls of Pygmy and Screech Owls are particularly easy to imitate, but remember that most owls are quiet, and loud imitations (or tapes) should be avoided.

For those who wish to explore the habits and ecology of our owls in more detail, Alan W. Eckert's *The Owls of North America* is highly recommended. Stunningly illustrated, it is an exhaustive study of all the species and races which occur on the continent. 🦉

Jon Dunn/FIELD NOTES

The *Endomychura* Murrelets

The genus *Endomychura* is one of those groups about whose taxonomy ornithologists differ. Though at various times in the past Craveri's Murrelet has been considered to be no more than a race of Xantus' Murrelet (notably by A. J. van Rossem), the A.O.U. Checklist Committee has consistently treated the two as distinct species, with Xantus divided into two races.

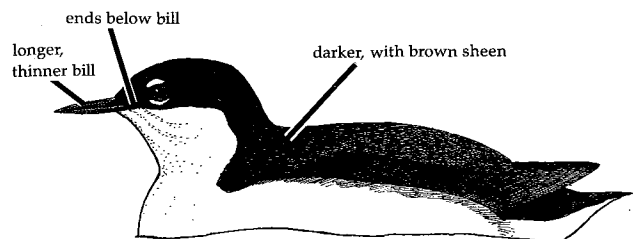
Recently Joseph R. Jehl (1975) studied the area around the San Benito Islands, off central Baja California, where Craveri's and both races of the Xantus' Murrelets nest (see map). His studies have led him to the conclusion that the Craveri's is indeed distinct from the Xantus', and that the two races of Xantus' may in addition be full species—though pending conclusive studies of the degree of overlap between these forms, he recommends that the A.O.U. continue to regard the two types of Xantus' as races. Since all three types breed sympatrically on the San Benito Islands, this area obviously holds the key to the question.

At least for the time being, though, we may consider the *Endomychura* complex to consist of the Craveri's Murrelet (*E. craveri*) and the two races of the Xantus' Murrelet (*E. hypoleuca hypoleuca* and *E. h. scrippsi*). Craveri's Murrelet is the most southerly type, breeding throughout most of the Gulf of California and north along the Pacific coast to the San Benitos. The northern (*scrippsi*) race of the Xantus' Murrelet (our local breeding race), breeds from San Miguel Island south to the San Benitos, while the southern (nominate *hypoleuca*) race of Xantus' nests on Guadalupe Island as well as the San Benitos. After the breeding season there is a general northward dispersal of all three types, and the *scrippsi* race has been recorded on a somewhat regular basis north to the Canadian border (though it is scarce north of Monterey). The Craveri's Murrelet moves north into Southern California offshore waters in late July and is fairly common through September (recorded sporadically north to Monterey, with one recent record for Oregon). The southern (*hypoleuca*) race of the Xantus' only occasionally wanders northward into California, though its movements from year to year are irregular. During the fall of 1976 this race was almost common off the coast of Southern California, with a single bird recorded off Monterey—the first Northern California record.

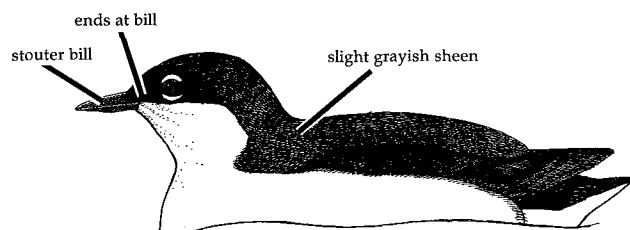
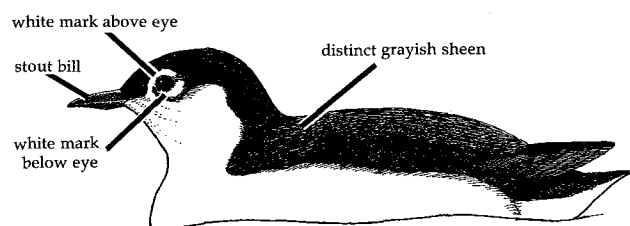
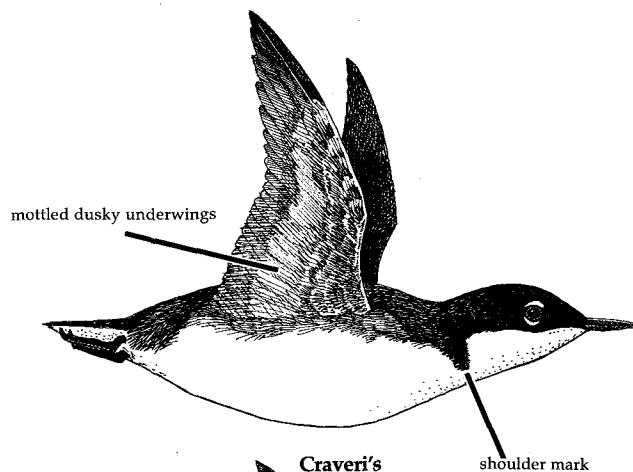
The Craveri's Murrelet is the commonest form off the coast of Southern California in the fall, as *scrippsi* has, by then, moved north. During this season *hypoleuca* and *scrippsi* are about equally likely to be encountered. While decidedly uncommon, *scrippsi* is the only *Endomychura* murrelet as yet recorded off Southern California in the winter (Craveri's, by then, having moved south).

Identification

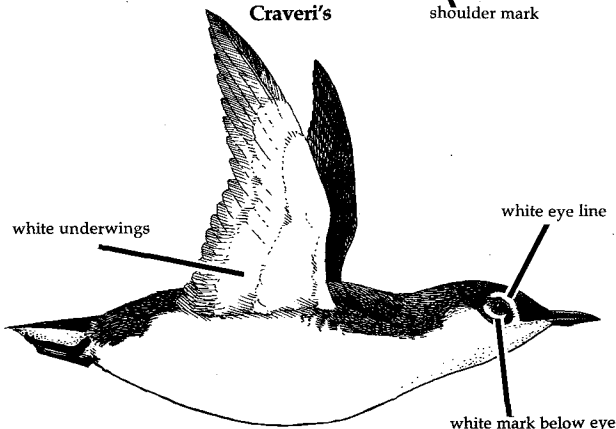
The most difficult problem of identification presented by these three murrelets is between Craveri's and the *scrippsi* race of the Xantus'. When viewed on the water the Craveri's appears slightly darker on the upperparts, with a chocolate brown rather than a grayish sheen. The darkness of the crown on the Craveri's extends down to just very slightly below the bill, whereas on the *scrippsi* the dark coloration extends only to the middle of the bill. This mark is difficult to observe, but



Craveri's

Xantus' (*scrippsi*)Xantus' (*hypoleuca*)

Craveri's

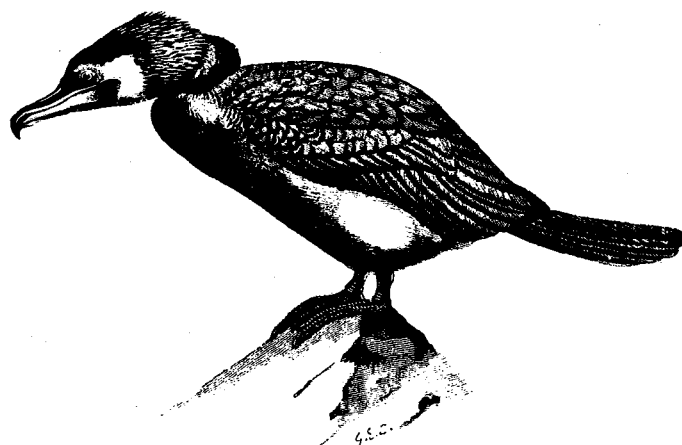
Xantus' (*hypoleuca*)(note: underwings of *scrippsi* similar)

diagnostic when noted. The Craveri's Murrelet also has a *longer and thinner bill* than either race of the Xantus'.

It is in flight, however, that the Craveri's is most easily separated from the others—by the extensive *dusky mottling* on the underwings (see illustration). Both races of the Xantus' Murrelet have almost *pure white* underwings. However, since alcids often fly straight away from the boat, frustrating any attempt to observe the underwings, a better way to distinguish Craveri's in flight is by the *black shoulder mark*, extending onto the white breast. In both races of Xantus' this mark is lacking—though unfortunately the distinction is not apparent on swimming birds.

The *hypoleuca* race of the Xantus' Murrelet is especially distinct, for it displays a prominent *white line* above the eye, plus a broad white mark *below the eye*. This eye-effect is immediately obvious and gives the *hypoleuca* race an almost miniature winter-plumage Murre-like appearance. Apart from the eye mark, *hypoleuca* closely resembles the *scrippsi* form, though the upperparts are *paler*, with a more evident *grayish* cast.

When observing any *Endomychura* murrelet, it is well to take into account the time of year and the geographical location, for this information may alert the observer to those visual clues required to confirm the identification. ♀

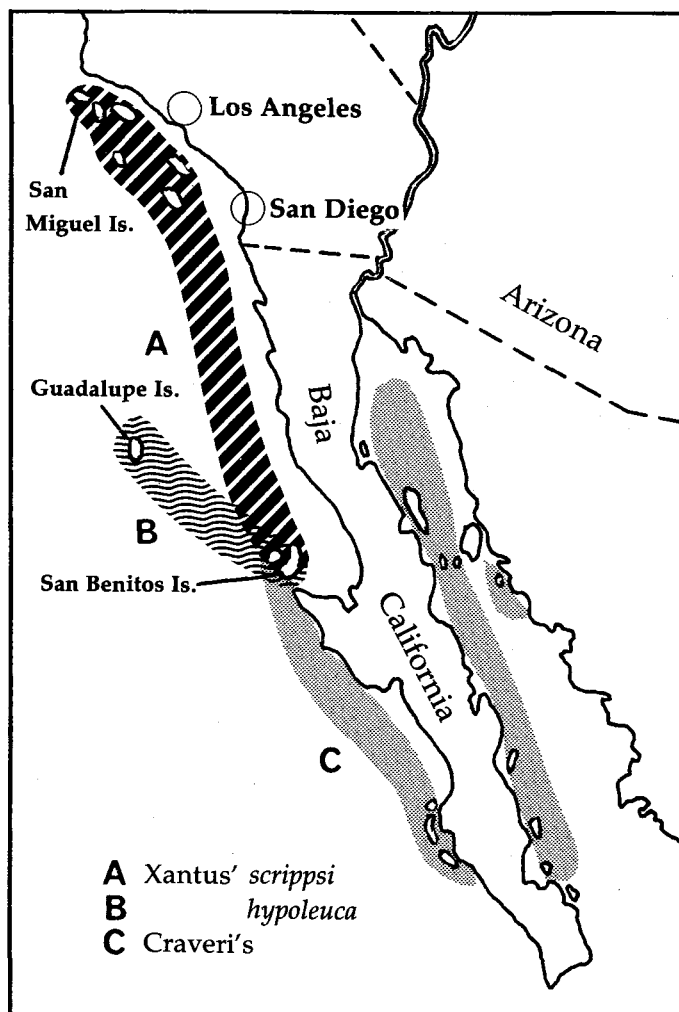


Alaska Countdown

At last, after years of discussion, investigation, argument, and soul-searching, the fate of this last wild frontier on the North American continent will soon be decided, as the massive machinery of Congress moves onto stage center to consider proposals to portion millions of acres of land between the State, the native populations, and a system of national wilderness areas. As of this writing the House Interior Committee has just reported out a strong bill (HR 39), providing for 95 million acres of new national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and wild and scenic river systems. By the time this WESTERN Tanager is in your hands, HR 39 should have gone to the full floor of the House. This, therefore, is the crucial time for letters to your congressman urging a strong stand in support of the great wild areas of Alaska.

There have been many attempts to weaken the bill, but the plan has been fortunate to have on its side many courageous supporters. Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus, at National Audubon's convention last year in Estes Park, spoke of Alaska as "the very last crown jewel in our custody," and in another speech he said, "Alaska is a rejuvenation for us as a country—a chance to preserve a major portion of our national heritage."

National Audubon is one of the prime movers of the Alaska Coalition—a confederation of leading environmental organizations working for maximum protection for this irreplaceable habitat—and the Board of Los Angeles Audubon has already written to our legislators in the name of the Society. We ask you to add your voices as individuals. *When the voter talks, congressmen listen.* **Write: The House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. In addition, ask our California senators, Alan Cranston and S. I. Hayakawa (Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510) to co-sponsor S-1500, the companion bill to HR 39.**



Probable breeding ranges of *Endomychura* murrelets

Terry Clark

BIRDS of the Season



Spring migration got off to a slow start during March and early April, with relatively small numbers of western migrants arriving, most of them according to schedule. A few birds, however, put in an unusually early appearance. On March 14 at Salton City, two **Gull-billed Terns** in full breeding plumage were sighted by Jon Dunn and Elizabeth Copper, 5 days earlier than the previous spring record; and the male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** observed by Richard Webster on March 25 was moving up the coast about the time one might expect the species' migration inland. In the Anza-Borrego Desert, Linda Delaney found a slightly early **Hammond's Flycatcher**, April 2nd, and two days later another was seen at the L.A. Arboretum by Terry Clark, with a third recorded on April 5 by Larry Sansone in his yard in the Hollywood Hills. Over in Topanga Canyon Lee Jones heard a **Western Wood Pewee** calling on April 3, about 10 days earlier than expected. When **Purple Martins** still nested in our lowlands they arrived in this area the last week of March, but now their movement through here begins toward the end of April. Therefore R.W.'s April 1st sighting of this rapidly-declining species was noteworthy.

Though no confirmed inland records exist as yet for **Red-throated Loon**, Jon Fisher found two of the birds March 11 on the New Lakes at Whittier Narrows—a locality intermediate between the interior and the coast. The rough winter waters off our northern coast keep many a birder on firm ground. But that's no way to find a **Laysan Albatross**—unless it's May 5 and you're driving through the desert on your way to see a Yellow-throated Vireo. At any rate, Arnold Small boarded a fishing boat out of Bodega Bay and braved the elements on March 21 for excellent views and outstanding photographs of this much sought-after bird. Three days later Herb and Olga Clarke followed in his wake. According to local fishermen Laysans were being seen almost daily in the area. The calmer waters off Ventura produced no albatrosses—but both **Tufted** and **Horned Puffins** provided ample rewards for those on the February 26 pelagic trip.

Some 350 **White Pelicans** bucked the unyielding winds above San Geronio Pass on April 1st (John McDonald), during their annual sojourn north to the fresh water lakes of the Great Basin, where they breed. **Roseate Spoonbills**, evidently, are not so particular about water quality: Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin found one on March 12 where the New River drains into the Salton Sea (only the second inland winter record). At the north end of the Sea, just off the Whitewater River dike, Guy McCaskie discovered about 125 resting **Black Brant** on April 1st—part of a phenomenon that occurs each spring, as migrating waterbirds trapped at the northern end of the Gulf of California push inland through the Imperial Valley—rather than backtrack around the Cape.

Though Ballona Creek's potpourri of floating pollution makes the New and Whitewater Rivers look good, **scoters**

seem as impervious to garbage as the spoonbill and the brants. Throughout March all three species of this sea duck could be found in the main channel, with up to seven **Blacks** and five **White-wingeds** present. Scanning the hundreds of **Surf Scoters** in search of the Canvasback-like profile of the White-winged or the slightly upturned Ruddy Duck-like profile of the Black provided stimulating exercise for restless birders awaiting the rush of spring migrants.

It's both incredible and incredibly sad to realize that less than 40 years ago a birder could expect to find nesting **Swainson's Hawks** in the Ballona Creek-Santa Monica area. Today it's necessary to trek out to the Anza-Borrego or the Antelope Valley during the first 2 weeks of April to see these slender-winged buteos heading north. On March 26, with a high L.A. County year list in mind, Fred Heath set out to search the Antelope Valley for soaring Swainson's. As it turned out he was a bit too early for the Swainson's—but not for a **Goshawk**. According to Paul Lehman, Santa Barbara's 3 **Broad-winged Hawks** were present during a good part of the winter. L.S. found an additional adult of the species on March 12 at Brock Ranch in the Imperial Valley. The **Merlin** which perched above the Queen Anne Cottage at the Arboretum for the past several months was seen as late as April 3 by Hal Baxter.

Another exciting inland record was G.Mc.'s **Black Turnstone** at Salton City, sighted March 12 and again April 1st. At the same spot, the **Glaucous Gull**, first discovered in late February, continued to be seen into April. The pale gray on the back, contrasting with the pure white flight feathers and the pale yellowish-olive body indicated a second year bird.

A **Ruff** was seen briefly on April 1st along the Ventura coast (R.W.) though it proved impossible to refind the bird the next day. In the same area R.W. had a **Northern Phalarope** (March 25-April 2)—a species which normally winters only around San Diego. There are very few records of the **Common Tern** wintering successfully on our coast, but this year a few undoubtedly wintering individuals were recorded. R.W. observed two at McGrath State Beach on March 5, and one was distinguished among 50 or so **Forster's** on March 18 at Playa del Rey (J.D.). Thus far every Common Tern recorded during winter has been an immature. The black leading edge on the wings of these birds—or the grayish underparts if the bird is an adult—should alert the observer to look for other substantiating marks. With all the inclement weather it would be logical to expect reports of pelagics blown close to shore, but except for Kimball Garrett's **Pigeon Guillemot** off Pt. Mugu on March 5, none were reported.

Western and **Cassin's Kingbirds** arrived in our area the latter part of March, and **Ash-throated** and **Western Flycatchers** also made an appearance by the end of the month. There were two reports of **Eastern Phoebe**s, both from Riverside Co.: one at Mayflower Co. Park, near Blythe (J.D., March 4), the other at Rubidoux Nature Center (Sylvia Ranney, March 11). The bird seen throughout February along the Highline Canal in Imperial Co. could not be located on March 12 (L.S.).

Terry Clark is filling in for Shum Suffel, who spent the last part of March birding in Baja California.

To all those who made the exhausting and ultimately futile journey to Eureka in quest of the **Blue Jay**, patience is advised. Speculation that this species is expanding its range west of the Rockies is given fresh impetus by Clyde Bergman's sighting of two of the birds at Incline Village on Lake Tahoe March 3-4. Though on the Nevada side, there is cause for optimism.

During the overlap period of late winter and early spring, clear distinction should be drawn between *wintering* and *migrating* birds. The movement of **Orange-crowned**, **Nashville**, **Black-throated Gray**, and **Wilson's Warblers**, for instance, which began toward the end of March, was clearly composed of migrants, their arrival conforming to a pattern well established over the years. Another pattern frequently noted is that males of migrating species tend to arrive first, presumably to establish territory before the courtship period. Thus at least two factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating the status of a non-resident bird in the early spring: the species' *migration schedule*, and its *plumage*. Applying these criteria, Ed Navojosky's **Yellow Warbler** along Casper Rd. at Pt. Mugu on Feb. 19 was almost certainly a wintering bird, and the "female-type" birds seen by T.C. March 26 at Placerita Cyn. and by L.S. on April 5 in the Hollywood Hills were also most likely wintering. **Western Tanagers** present another example of the case in point, for it appears that migratory adult males acquire breeding plumage sooner than local wintering adult males. Since migratory Western Tanager males do not arrive until mid-April at the earliest, it seems probable that any spring males showing only traces of breeding plumage are wintering individuals. Thus the 4 Western Tanagers seen through the first week in April at the Arboretum were most likely wintering rather than migrant birds.

J.D. and S.C. found a wintering **Cape May Warbler** at Finney Lake, March 5 (far too early for an Eastern vagrant), and J.D.'s **Townsend's Warbler** at the south end of the Salton Sea March 25 was another rare wintering record for the Imperial Valley. G.McC. had a **Varied Thrush** at Finney Lake, March 12 (3rd Imperial Co. record), with a male **Tricolored Blackbird** nearby—a first County record.

As March wore on more **Evening Grosbeaks** showed up in L.A. County. The count at the Claremont Botanic Garden rose to 15+ by the eleventh (Jerry Johnson), and Peppy Van Essen reported a similar total for Temple City. **Lark Buntings** had an even bigger flight year, though unfortunately the vast flocks favored the Arizona side of the border. About a dozen of the birds did, however, spill as far west as Ocotillo (off I-8, in the Crucifixion Thorns Preserve). Some of the males were showing extensive black by April 2nd. The **Chipping Sparrows** at the L.A. Arboretum were all in breeding plumage by the first week in April, making the lingering **Clay-colored Sparrow** a bit more distinctive. It's now the only *Spizella* without a rusty cap (Armand Cohen).

May is the month we've been waiting for, the optimum time for spring migrants. While it's possible that all the rain which turned our golden state into a realm of green will discourage a concentration of migrants at our favorite coastal birding spots, the desert oases—where most of the spring action is anyway—may still come through with some of the fantasies that got us through the winter. ♡

Accuracy in Bird Sightings

The Los Angeles Audubon Society's two vehicles for the recording and dissemination of bird sightings, the **Birds of the Season** column in THE WESTERN TANAGER, and the weekly recorded **Bird Report**, have evolved as important sources of information for local and visiting birders in quest of interesting species, while contributing at the same time to the scientific record of Southern California ornithology.

To preserve a high standard of accuracy in these reports, a **Bird Sightings Committee** has been established, charged with the responsibility of reviewing material submitted for inclusion in the **Birds of the Season** as well as the **Bird Report**. The Committee will examine details of all birds reported, and will dismiss those it considers questionable. Undoubtedly, valid sightings will occasionally be disregarded if details prove insufficient—but such critical review is necessary to insure that inaccuracies and misidentifications do not find their way into the record. It is to be hoped, in addition, that the Committee's review will encourage all birders to renew their efforts to record details on every unusual sighting, and to provide these details when reporting their observations.

The accurate reporting of bird sightings on the local level provides the basis for a broader understanding of patterns of bird distribution, and it is hoped that the new review policies will enhance our contribution to this cause. In addition to submitting records of sightings to L.A.A.S. through Shum Suffel and Jean Brandt, birders should send their observations to Guy McCaskie, Regional Editor of *American Birds* (954 Grove Street, Imperial Beach, Calif. 92032). This procedure will permit their inclusion in that publication's Southern Pacific Coast Region report, the primary summary of bird sightings for our area.

Subscriptions

The WESTERN TANAGER now reaches over 4000 readers a month. Subscriptions are available at \$4.00 per year (Third Class) or \$6.50 per year (First Class). As an added bonus, subscribers and LAAS members are entitled to a 10% discount on purchases at Audubon House Bookstore, the most complete natural history bookstore in the West.



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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, Tuesday through Saturday.

Audubon Bird Report—call 874-1318

Field Trip Reservations

For all trips, make checks payable to LAAS and send with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, your phone number, and the names of all persons in your party to Reservation Chairman, Los Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A., Calif. 90046. No reservations or refunds will be accepted within 48 hrs. prior to departure. To guarantee your space, make reservations as early as possible. Trips will be cancelled 30 days prior to departure if there is insufficient response.

THURSDAY, MAY 4—Executive Board Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Audubon House.

SUNDAY, MAY 7—Whittier Narrows Nature Center. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Nature Center parking lot. This will be a day of general nature study, including both flora and fauna, and will be a good opportunity to become familiar with the riparian and woodland birds that nest in the sanctuary. LAAS has given a great deal of support to the preservation and development of this area and this is a chance to see the result. Drive east on the Pomona Fwy. (60) to the Santa Anita off-ramp; turn south (right) on Santa Anita to Durfee Ave.; turn east (left) on Durfee to the Nature Center (1000 No. Durfee Ave., El Monte). Leader: Steve Bonzo, Staff Naturalist.

TUESDAY, MAY 9—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. **Jim Tucker**, founder of the American Birding Association and Editor of *Birding* magazine, will present an entertaining program on **The Aesthetics of Bird Songs**. Dr. Tucker, an educational psychologist with the Texas State Dept. of Education, will illustrate his program with tape recordings, pointing out clues to song identification and interpretation.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 13-14—San Miguel and Santa Rosa-Cortes Ridge. The *China Clipper* may be boarded in the Oxnard Marina at 9:00 p.m. Saturday for a midnight sailing, returning late on Sunday. There is a large galley on board with reasonable prices. No ice chests allowed. Bunk space is limited to 53 people. \$30.00 per person. Leaders: Lee Jones and Jon Dunn.

SUNDAY, MAY 14—Morongo Valley. This is one of the famous birding spots of the west, a trap for migrants funneling into the Pacific Flyway from the Sonoran desert. Vermilion Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Lucy's Warbler, and Wied's Crested Flycatcher are good possibilities. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the picnic tables in Covington Park. For those who wish to arrive earlier, a group will meet at the same location at 6:30 a.m. for some early birding and Barn Owl watching. Dry camping facilities are available in Joshua Tree National Monument and motels are located in 29 Palms and Yucca Valley. Take Interstate 10 east to 29 Palms Hwy. (62), 2.5 miles east of Whitewater, then go north approximately 10 miles. Leaders: Art and Jan Cupples, 981-4746.



SUNDAY, MAY 21—Malibu Creek State Park. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the entrance. Migrants and possible vagrants are good prospects at this time of year. Take Pacific Coast Hwy. (1) north to Malibu Canyon, turn right into the canyon, and go six miles. The park is on the left. Or take the Ventura Fwy. north, exit at Las Virgenes Rd., and go about a mile to the west. Leaders: Cathy and Bill Jacobs, 478-5017.

FRIDAY, MAY 26—Afton Canyon. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the bulletin board in the campground. Afton Canyon is a desert oasis under study by the BLM and should have many of the birds found in our more familiar desert oases, as well as the possibility of unusual vagrants. Take Interstate 10 towards San Bernardino, exit to Interstate 15 E. to Barstow. 36 miles past Barstow, exit at the off-ramp marked Afton Road. Turn right and drive 3.5 miles to the BLM campground. Leader: Mike Weinstein, BLM Research Assistant.

TUESDAY, JUNE 13—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m., Plummer Park. **Barbara and John Hopper** will present a slide program on the **Flora and Fauna of Australia and New Zealand**. The Hoppers are both Biology teachers, well known for their foreign travels as well as their local conservation activities.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10—San Pedro to San Clemente Island. The *Vantuna* will leave San Pedro at 6:00 a.m. to return at 6:00 p.m. Red-billed Tropicbird is a possibility. Cost: \$18.00 per person. Leaders: Jon Dunn and Terry Clark.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23—Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip. The *Miss Monterey* will depart from Fisherman's Wharf, Sam's Fishery Cruises, at 8:00 a.m., to return at 3:00 p.m. Price is \$15.00 per person. Leaders: Arnold Small and Shum Suffel.