

# WESTERN TANAGER

*Los Angeles Audubon Society*

Volume 46 Number 6 March 1980

## CONSERVATION



## UPDATE

photo by Lloyd Kiff

## Sandy Wohlgemuth

# CONSERVATION

**L**et's pause for a moment and see where we are in our conservation efforts in Los Angeles Audubon. In some areas we can afford a cautious optimism or even a mild "hooray;" in others we must lick our wounds. In still others the returns aren't in yet. Calling 'em as we see 'em, here are some of our more important concerns:

### Malibu Lagoon

The Malibu Creek estuary, despite continuing abuse over the years, is still a surprisingly vigorous birding habitat. It has survived floods, clandestine dumping of debris, construction of Little League fields, excessive beach traffic, water pollution, mosquito control and motorcyclers. The pickleweed (*Salicornia*) marsh is sadly degraded but somehow manages to hang in there. The lagoon is part of Malibu Lagoon State Beach and planning for its future has been in discussion for several years. Los Angeles Audubon and others have been actively involved in workshops and meetings over the long run. We have stimulated public involvement to the point where a splendid plan was developed by the State Parks and Recreation Department. The lagoon was to be declared a Natural Preserve, the Little League fields and the debris were to be removed, and the marsh replanted with tidal channels to restore its health. The plan was unanimously approved by the State Parks and Recreation Commission—as thousands cheered. Victory, unfortunately, was short-lived as the effect of Proposition 13 spilled over into a panicky economy drive that cut state expenditures across the board. The promise was made by upper echelons in the department that money for Malibu would be available in the 1980 budget. At the moment nothing is certain. There is talk of scrapping the hard-won plan, increasing parking threefold, and running a beach corridor through the center of the restored marsh instead of around the periphery. Rumors proliferate. A determined effort will be made to elicit the facts and then push vigorously for the original plan. It may be necessary to rally the troops once again to tell the power centers of the state that Malibu Lagoon is an essential wildlife habitat and must be preserved.

### Mono Lake

Check the news media to keep abreast of the Mono Lake saga; a monthly journal is out of date before the type is set. Efforts are afoot in the State Legislature to sponsor a five-year study of Mono Lake and then decide what, if anything, can be done to save it. This way lies disaster. In five years the lake will be about ten feet lower, nesting gulls will be as scarce as passenger pigeons, and Mono County will be choking on alkali dust.

(If you agree with this conclusion, write to your Assemblyman and ask him to oppose the Reuss Bill, AB 2182.) In the meantime, the DWP is successfully stalling the Audubon lawsuit against continued water diversions. The struggle goes on.

### Ballona Wetlands

The marshes and mudflats at Marina del Rey are the most productive wetlands in Los Angeles County. Christmas counts at the Marina usually turn up more unusual and spectacular birds than anywhere else in the city. Unfortunately this is not

public land but the property of Summa Corporation, which has plans for intensive development: hotels, shopping centers, office buildings, condominiums. The Friends of Ballona Wetlands, which L.A. Audubon has backed from its inception, is still in there fighting for the preservation of this magnificent open space. The Friends are running monthly bird walks to stimulate public understanding of the value of wetlands. They have confronted Summa before the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission and are prepared to continue the battle as long as necessary. At this writing we are watching and waiting. When the war heats up you'll hear about it.

### Whitewater River

The freshwater marsh at the mouth of the Whitewater River where it empties into the north end of the Salton Sea, attracts birders from all over the country. Nesting birds include Least Bittern, Yuma Clapper Rail, White-faced Ibis, and many common species. Rare White Ibis and Roseate Spoonbill have been seen there in recent years. In 1978, Los Angeles Audubon tried to get the local water district to guarantee a perpetual supply of fresh water to the marsh. Legal action was threatened and promises were made. Heavy flooding last July washed out the earthen plug that sent water through the marsh. The river, then, ran directly into the Sea and the passed-by marsh began to die. We appealed to the Corps of Engineers and a wetlands expert flew out from Washington to investigate. Unfortunately, the Corps is so involved with flood control at various points upstream, that it finds it impossible to justify emergency measures to protect the marsh at this time. The Salton Sea continues to rise and increase in salinity each year with agricultural irrigation in the valley. Even with more favorable circumstances it is questionable whether any measures could have ultimately saved the marsh. It looks like we lost one here.

### Sepulveda

A 2000-acre flood control enclave in the west San Fernando Valley owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, the Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area, has been relatively undeveloped for decades. It contains three golf courses, medium-sized Woodley Park, a model plane field, a meandering bicycle path and productive cornfields. All recreational facilities are maintained by the City Recreation and Parks Department under lease from the Corps. Though it is channelized, the Los Angeles River behind the dam supports a modest riparian growth with birds to match. The river and adjacent willows are excellent for nesting Blue Grosbeaks. Many of the Canada Geese that winter in the valley visit Sepulveda to browse in the grass and stubble fields. The list of birds over the years is close to 200 species. The pastoral ambience of green fields and open space—with mountain vistas north and south—is a delightful change from the hustle and clatter of the city.

After years of benign neglect, Sepulveda has suddenly been thrust into the limelight. The most ominous threat to its tranquility is the 1984 Olympics. Mayor Bradley and the Olympic Committee have been calling for an ambitious, expensive development of large permanent facilities: a covered swimming and diving stadium, a bicycle velodrome, archery

range, and a 2200 meter (1.36 miles) rowing course. The rowing course would cut through the heart of the Basin and, at the close of the Olympics, would remain as a fishing and boating lake. Also, there is a private proposal to create an Arts Park on 80 acres that would include restaurants, an art supply shop and a 2500-seat theater.

The Corps' Master Plan for the Basin projects an additional golf course, ten soccer fields, and many tennis courts. And—happily—it also labels a 50-acre section, "Wildlife Refuge." L.A. Audubon tried to interest Recreation and Parks in developing the area three years ago, but the Department showed little enthusiasm. The wildlife refuge was 96th on its list of priorities! Recently, the Corps has jumped into the picture with admirable energy and, with the encouragement and blessing of conservationists, is *getting things done*. Dr.

Hartmut Walter of UCLA has suggested a plan for a 7-acre lake with islands and mudflats that will attract waterfowl and shorebirds. An upland coastal sage/grassland is planned for songbirds and raptors. Native shrubs and trees (in a fairly treeless flatland) will be introduced, including cottonwoods, willows and sycamores. It may be possible to re-introduce small animals that have long disappeared from the site. An intermittent run-off ditch, which already supports cattails and tules, will be widened and enhanced as a riparian habitat. A small pond has already been created, and water plants for it are being readied at Whittier Narrows' New Lakes. A very exciting prospect. With hard work, intelligent planning, and the strong support of all of us, a genuine sanctuary for wild creatures will be created in Sepulveda. □

## Henry E. Childs, Jr.

# BIRDING LOCALITIES

**T**he southwest end of San Bernardino County is about one hour's drive from central Los Angeles and offers several interesting birding spots in the Chino area. The as-yet undeveloped Chino Hills attracts numerous hawks and eagles in winter. Lake Serranos provides good waterfowl birding. Prado Regional Park and the Prado Flood Control basin provide extensive riparian and old field areas for a variety of birds year round as well as a lake for waterfowl and waders. The presence of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in January, 1980 is perhaps an indication that this area deserves regular attention in the future.

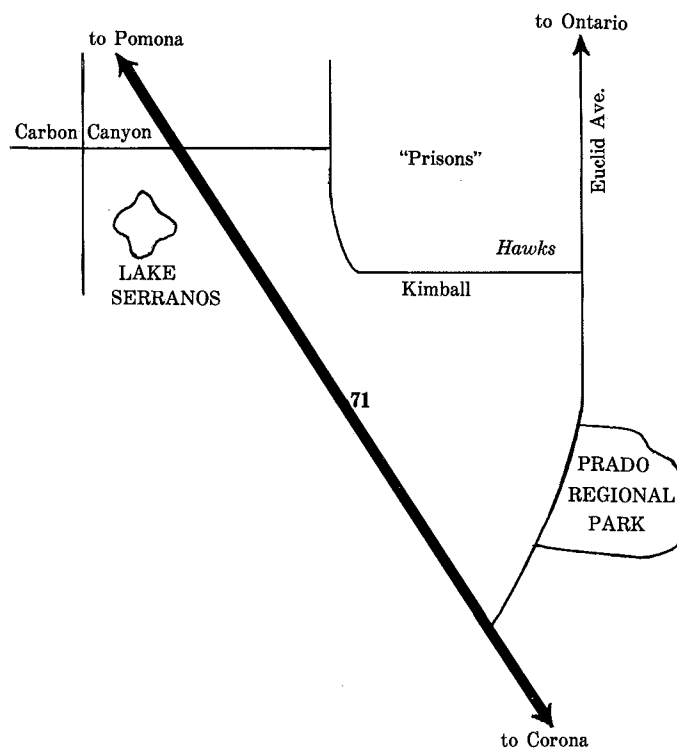
1. **Prado Regional Park** is reached by traveling south on Highway 71 or Euclid Ave. from Interstate 10. The man-made lake attracts many species of waterfowl and waders. Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plovers and Western Sandpipers are to be found among the other more common species. As many as seven Cassin's Kingbirds wintered here with the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Sparrows include the regulars plus Lincoln's, Vesper and a Swamp! White-tailed Kites are resident.

The best birding area is found by driving to the last parking lot and walking from there to the wild area below the spillway.

2. In the **fields to the west of Euclid and Kimball Aves.** during the winter a splendid variety of raptors are regularly present. Kites, Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks in both color phases and Golden Eagles, as well as Marsh and many Red-tailed Hawks can be seen with ease. Look also for Canada Geese, Burrowing Owl, Long-billed Curlew and sparrows. A Clay-colored Sparrow was seen in December.

3. Entrance to **Lake Serranos** should be obtained from the manager to enter this mobile home area, although good viewing is possible through the fence from the south side. Canada Geese may be seen on the lake and in the surrounding fields, sometimes as close as 50 yds. Around the lake may be seen Common Gallinules, Cassin's Kingbirds, a Turkey Vulture roost, Ring-necked Ducks, several herons and other birds attracted to the water and large trees.

All three of these areas are within five miles of one another, easily found, and can be covered in a half-day, leisurely. □



## CALIFORNIA LAND BIRDS STUDIED AT UCLA

"Identification of California Land-Birds: A Saturday Workshop," a UCLA Extension program focusing on vocalizations and behavior, shapes and postures, plumages and molts, of birds, will meet on Saturday, March 15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., in 2147 Life Sciences Building, UCLA.

Instructed by Arnold Small, author of *The Birds of California* and *Birds of the West*, and Kimball Garrett, vice-president, Los Angeles Audubon Society.

The fee is \$35. For additional information call (213) 825-7093.

## Kimball Garrett

# A CLOSER LOOK

**A**lthough now quite rare over much of its range, the **Bald Eagle** is a familiar symbol to red-blooded Americans and birders alike. The striking white head and tail instantly identify the adult, but there exists a confusing array of sub-adult plumages which will be the focus of this month's article.

Where does one go locally to be treated to this array of plumages? Big Bear and Baldwin Lakes in the San Bernardino Mountains host (between them) some 20-30 eagles in winter, primarily from December through March. Lake Matthews in Riverside Co. also has over a dozen wintering eagles, but these are less accessible to the public. Small numbers may also be found at Lake Cachuma, Tinnemaha Reservoir, the Colorado River, and elsewhere. Historically, the Bald Eagle nested in southern California (particularly on the Channel Islands), but it no longer does so.

Information on plumages comes primarily from field work in the Big Bear area, and from unpublished notes by Dave Shea. Remember that it's risky to put an absolute age on an individual: As in humans, there are "late bloomers" and "early bloomers;" protracted molting in the Bald Eagle also confuses the age question. Adult Bald Eagles up to 18 years of age have retained some brown in the tail. Below, then, I have merely presented some guidelines for aging Bald Eagles.

In their first year, Bald Eagles are almost entirely dark brown; there is much white in the wing linings, however, giving them a superficial resemblance to an adult California Condor.

This white extends slightly onto the sides, and there may be slight pale mottling in the tail.

In the second year, much of the lower breast and belly is mottled, with white, contrasting with the dark chest. There is also a distinct pale brown to whitish area on the upper back. In this plumage the tail has distinct light and dark zones.

Third year birds resemble those of the second year, but the head has lightened somewhat, leaving an "Osprey-like" dark eye-line.

The body and underwings darken considerably in the fourth year, and the head and tail (although still considerably marked with brown) are contrastingly whitish. Beware, though, as enough dark may be present on the head and tail to give these birds a resemblance to first year birds. Fourth year birds lack the white wing-linings, however, and have a pale bill.

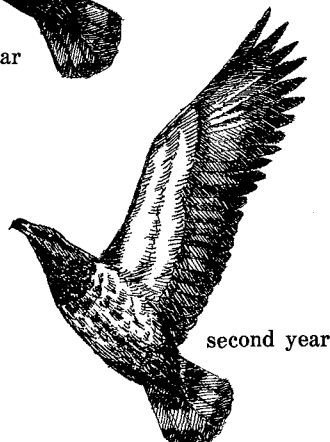
For one or two (occasionally more) years after the fourth year, limited brown smudging may occur on the head and at the tips of the rectrices (often forming a thin terminal band on the tail). A few white feathers often remain on the underparts and wing-linings. In subsequent plumages, birds will appear typically adult.

The beak and eyes lighten gradually. Both are blackish in first year birds. Eyes may be pale yellow (as in the adult) as early as the fourth year, and the beak is usually the yellow hue of the adult by the fifth year.

It is always a thrill to see a Bald Eagle. Perhaps the information above will help add to that experience. □



first year

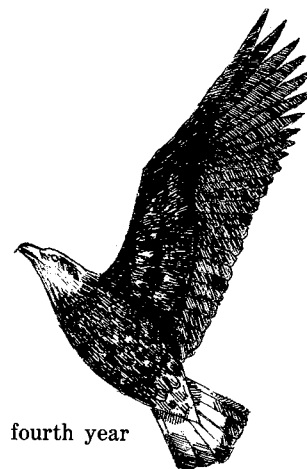


second year



third year

Osprey-like face pattern,  
light upper back



fourth year



fifth year

## Rona Parrot

# SQUAWK TALK

Well, your letters are beginning to trickle in—not quite the expected deluge of mail from the inquisitive and the outraged, but a start nonetheless. I know you're out there. Let's here from you.

Dear Rona,

I'm carpooling chairman for L.A. Audubon, and am having quite a bit of trouble understanding my own species at present.

In the November *Tanager* Jean Brandt, our president, stated the necessity for certain changes in field trip policy in the future due to escalating gas prices and asked for people to volunteer to registrar two trips a year. She explained that being a registrar entails "taking reservations, putting riders and drivers in touch with one another, and giving details of the trip."

Little enough to ask of people who go on trip after trip, year after year, wouldn't you say, Rona? NOT ONE PERSON RESPONDED TO JEAN'S APPEAL FOR HELP.

On the other hand, during the past weeks I have received a number of phone calls complaining about what people feel is a sharp decline in field trip services offered this season. When asked what they felt about Jean's statement concerning field trips, not one person knew what I was talking about—no one had read the column. When I explained and asked each if he or she would now be willing to registrar two trips a year, not one had the time, I was told.

It is true that a few are already putting in much time and effort on the Conservation Committee, but the others.... And these are the people who at least cared enough to pick up the phone and call me.

What about the hundreds of people who call the bird tape every week, those who attend meetings which offer them programs that are consistently informative and entertaining, and of course, those who want those field trips?

I cannot understand people who take and take, and give nothing in return. My first trip to Morongo Valley, my first trip to the Salton Sea, were L.A. Audubon trips. I wanted to make a downpayment on the considerable debt I owe to L.A. Audubon by helping to institute a carpooling program that would benefit the many who participate in field trips.

I feel frustrated, helpless, and angry because I'm getting nowhere due to what seems to be a largely apathetic, uncaring membership.

What is the answer?

Starr Saphir

As they say, "Charity begins at home."

Rona

Dear Rona,

How does a Long-billed Curlew get a morsel from the tip of its bill into its crop. Suck it up? Prehensile tongue? Toss and catch?

Yours truly,  
Puzzled Curlew-watcher

Dear Curlew Querist,

I seldom have the opportunity to observe curlews. As you know curlews and parrots live in very different neighborhoods and lead considerably divergent life styles! However, if memory serves me correctly, they play a game of toss and catch, opening the bill, jerking the head forward, re-grabbing the morsel a little farther up the bill each time until it eventually reaches the mouth. Sounds exhausting to me, but then I guess a curlew never had to crack a brazil nut.

Rona

Dear Ms. Parrot:

I am a mailman and for the past six months or so I have been seeing a flock of parrots along my mail route in West L.A. Where did they come from? Are they native to this area? Are they relatives of yours?

Curious Courier  
West L A

Dear C.C.

Boy was I glad to hear from you! At long last I have been reunited with my family. We last saw each other years ago when some unscrupulous members of the bird trade swept through our jungle and took us away. Since then we've all managed to escape and have successfully made it on our own in this new and unfamiliar concrete jungle, but we had not been able to track each other down until now. As you may have gathered from the above discourse, there are no native parrots in this part of the world, at least not north of Mexico. The native Carolina Parakeet of the Eastern U.S. went extinct in the last century and the Thick-billed Parrot, which used to wander north into Arizona, has not been seen north of the border in more than fifty years.

Therefore, any parrot you see winging its way around L.A. surely came from a cage. I've heard rumors that some species have been successfully breeding locally (if only I knew where!). If true, this would make them naturalized citizens of sorts—or, in birder lingo, "successfully introduced or established exotics." This is important, of course, because it would qualify them to be counted on one's life list. Those species most likely to be established in L.A. at present are the Yellow-headed (like my relatives) and Red-crowned Parrots from Mexico and Central America. □

## Costa Rica Natural History Tour

Dan Guthrie, Professor of Biology at the Claremont Colleges and President of the Pomona Valley Audubon Society, will be leading a natural history tour to Costa Rica, June 22-July 8, 1980. Among the more than 350 species to be expected are the Resplendant Quetzal, Scarlet Macaw, Jabiru Stork and about 15 species of tanagers. The price for 17 days is \$1200. For further information and a detailed itinerary contact Dan Guthrie, 285 Brook Street, Claremont, CA 91711, (714) 621-4000 (evenings) or (714) 621-8000 Ext. 2679 (days).

## Shum Suffel

## BIRDS of the SEASON

**M**arch can be a disappointing month for birders. It's obviously spring—the flowers are blooming, it's warmer now, and birders are overeager. What will they find? Some winter birds are still here; the earliest migrants are arriving, and resident birds are starting their nesting cycles. Primarily this is a month for first arrivals. Hummingbirds and some swallows are here already; kingbirds, Western Flycatchers, and Warbling Vireos are early migrants, and by month's end orioles and most western warblers will have been recorded. But, the flood tide of the passerine migration is still more than a month away.

January continued the excitement of early winter. The waterbird population was basically static, with one startling exception—murrelets, so widely recorded in late December, were only reported in the first week of January, and then in much reduced numbers. There were 20 **Marbled Murrelets** on the LAAS trip out of Morro Bay on 6 January versus 79 Marbled and 58 **Ancient Murrelets** on 30 December (see the last *Tanager*). A single Marbled Murrelet was in Ventura Harbor on 6 January (Hal and Nancy Spear). To finish the story, the Spears repeated their Morro Bay trip of 30 December on 26 January and found only one **Xantus' Murrelet** (no Marbleds or Ancients). Did they all leave, or was there a major die-off? If a die-off occurred, there was little evidence of it along our beaches.

**T**wo **Red-necked Grebes** were found—one in King Harbor, Redondo Beach (Hal and Nancy Spear, 1 January), and another in the Ventura Marina (Fred Dexter et al, 20 January). Both phases of the **Western Grebe** (discussed in the November *Tanager*) were present at Bolsa Chica, with the dark phase outnumbering the light phase about four to one (Hal Baxter). An adult female **Magnificent Frigatebird** (noteworthy any time here, but particularly in winter) stayed for an afternoon only at King Harbor (the Spears, 4 January). An immature **Little Blue Heron** (the only report this winter) roosted at McGrath State Beach but could not be found in mid-day (Jim Morris et al, 1 January).

The three **Whistling Swans** at Lake Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., were possibly the same three which have wintered there previously. A male **European Wigeon** was at Whalen Lake near Oceanside where one has been present for several winters. Up to eight **Blue-winged Teal** were at McGrath in January (Richard Webster) and at least five drakes were at Bolsa Chica again this winter (Stuart Warter et al). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** (very rare on our coast) was with a few **Common Goldeneyes** at Bolsa Chica in December (Stuart Warter); the Barrow's was seen again on 4 January (Doug Willick). Reports of **Black Scoters** increased, with a male at Bolsa Chica (Warter and Willick, 4 January), and up to three at Pt. Mugu and two at the Ventura Marina (Richard Webster). An albino scoter (all buffy) had birders scratching their heads at Bolsa Chica. Four **Oldsquaws** at the Santa Maria River mouth was an unusual concentration.

A **Red-shouldered Hawk**, usually a bird of lowland riparian woodlands, was wintering at 6700 ft. Baldwin Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains (James Wolstencroft and Kimball

Garrett, 12 December and 20 January). With us, **Broad-winged Hawks** are often seen in urban areas (as were the two reported last month); but this month's Broad-wing was on a rural stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway above Zuma Beach (Barry Clark and Donna Dittmann, 5 January). Open habitat for the larger **Buteos** is rapidly disappearing as suburbia spreads over the coastal plain; near Chino, however, the dairy farms and open fields harbored numerous Buteos including **Rough-legged Hawks** (light and dark phase) and **Ferruginous Hawks** (light and dark phase according to Henry Childs Jr. and Dan Guthrie. Closer to home a single Ferruginous Hawk was on the Hughes Airport in Playa del Rey (Phil Sayre and Jean Brandt, 21 January). A **Bald Eagle** was at Pt. Mugu on 5 January (Richard Webster); this has become a rare bird along our coast.

The status of **Clapper Rails** from Orange Co. north to Monterey Co. is little known; there is an occasional report from Morro Bay, but one at Pt. Mugu (Richard Webster, 12 January) was the first there since 1972. That "most-wanted-bird," the **Black Rail**, was glimpsed at Upper Newport Bay on 2 January by Starr Saphir and others. Several rare shorebirds near Pt. Mugu were Richard Webster's reward for his saturation coverage of Ventura Co. A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (our first winter record) and a **Ruff** were found in a rain-flooded field near Pt. Mugu on 19 January, and later another Ruff and a Reeve were found nearby (Donna Dittmann and James Wolstencroft). **Black-bellied Plovers** are abundant coastally, but one in the Prado Basin, Chino (Henry Childs Jr. and Gene Cardiff) was in an area where the species is mainly a rare transient. Although **Stilt Sandpipers** are regular at the Salton Sea, one wintering at Pt. Mugu was noteworthy (Richard Webster). The **Franklin's Gull** cited off Newport Beach last month in the last *Tanager* is now thought to be a **Laughing Gull** after an examination of photographs. Another **Laughing Gull** was at Buena Vista Lagoon in Oceanside 26-27 January (Claude Edwards, Guy McCaskie); these are among the very few records of this species along the coast. Bruce Broadbooks brings word that there was one or two previously unreported **Black-legged Kittiwakes** at King Harbor in December, and the Spears confirm their presence there in January.

**Burrowing Owls** are now rare on the coastal plain because of habitat destruction; one near Chino on 18 January (Henry Childs Jr., indicated that a few persist in that area. Another **Broad-billed Hummingbird** near Ventura (Richard Webster) brings our total to 15 in the last four years (vs. none in the preceeding ten years). A male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (of the eastern *varius* race) was in Garden Grove (Jerry Johnson, 5 January); this form may be a different species than our western sapsuckers (see the *Western Tanager*, April 1978).

**B**irding interest in January again centered on the flycatchers, many of which remained on their winter territories. The **Olivaceous Flycatcher** in Orange Co. was the most reliable "stake-out." The **Willow Flycatcher** in the L.A. Arboretum, Arcadia, was easy to hear but not to see, and the **Western** and both of the **Grays** there could be difficult to locate. The **Coues' Flycatcher** remained near the Merry-Go-



Round in Griffith Park, and a second Coues' was found at Leo Carillo State Beach on 16 January (James Wolstencroft and Donna Dittmann). While searching for the Coues' in Griffith Park, Kurt Campbell rediscovered the **Olive-sided Flycatcher** (second winter record) which had been found at the end of November by Ruth Lohr. Wintering **Cassin's Kingbirds** seemed more common and widespread than usual, with at least seven in the Prado Basin (Henry Childs Jr.), two near Puddingstone Reservoir (Dan Guthrie), and one at Upper Newport Bay. A **Tropical Kingbird** near Pt. Mugu was the only one reported this winter (Richard Webster). Although there were no reports of **Eastern Phoebe**s locally, they were present near Oceanside, San Diego, and Santa Maria. Not the rarest, but the most exciting flycatcher was an adult **Scissor-tailed** with the Cassin's Kingbirds below the Prado Basin Regional Park.

A **Bank Swallow** at Pt. Mugu (Richard Webster, 5 January) was not expected in mid-winter. A **Brown Thasher** at a feeder in Goleta was our only report, but **Bendire's Thrashers** were widely reported (see the last *Tanager*) with still another being near the north end of the Salton Sea (where they are just as unusual as they are along the coast). Much rarer was a **Curve-billed Thrasher** at a small oasis along the New River at the south end of the Salton Sea (Guy McCaskie, 18 December). A **Sage Thrasher** in the L.A. Arboretum (Chuck Hamilton, 27 January) may have been a very early spring migrant. The only recent local report of a **Varied Thrush** was one in Griffith Park on 19 January (Justin Russell). A single **Bohemian Waxwing** was in a flock of Cedars in Long Beach on 14 January (Jon Atwood). It was seen both perched and in flight.

Wintering warblers received a great deal of attention from birders. **Black-and-White Warblers** were seen in Oceanside (Rick Near, 27 December), in Carpinteria (Paul Lehman), and in Montecito (Richard Webster, Teri Eichholz). A few **Nashvilles** winter here, including one in the Arboretum (Mike San Miguel, 28 December) and several in Ventura Co. **Virginia's** were much rarer, with only one reported (at the Fillmore Fish Hatchery on 15 January—Richard Webster). One of the two **Lucy's Warblers** present at Harbor Lake in December was still there on 20 January (Mitch Heindel); another Lucy's was in a small riparian area near Ventura (Richard Webster). In the Imperial Valley, a **Northern Parula** was in Niland (Donna Dittmann) and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was along the Alamo River near Red

Hill along with several **American Redstarts** (Kimball Garrett). Two **Yellow Warblers** were in the willow clump on the west side of Harbor Lake (Mitch Heindel) and several wintered in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. The **Grace's Warbler** in Montecito (Louis Bevier, 6 January) was an unprecedented winter record, but was difficult to study in the tops of the tall pines. The first "**Yellow Palm Warbler**" in several years was found at McGrath State Beach (Kurt Campbell, 7 January). This more colorful race nests to the east of the our usual "**Western**" Palms and is much rarer here. "**Western**" Palms were at Cabrillo Beach, near Oxnard, and at Pt. Mugu.

Although there were few reports of wintering orioles in December, they were found in good numbers by mid-January. Three adult male **Orchard Orioles** were reported: At a feeder in Santa Monica (Kate Blacet), in Camino Real Park, Ventura (Richard Webster), and along Carpinteria Creek (Paul Lehman). Six "**Bullock's**" **Orioles** were at Harbor Lake (Mitch Heindel), and some twenty-two "**Bullock's**" and two "**Baltimores**" were seen in Ventura Co. (Richard Webster). Knowing the affinity of wintering orioles for flowering eucalyptus trees, Richard speculates that as flowering decreased in January, the orioles moved to lower trees where they were more easily found. A very dull female **Rusty Blackbird** was at the Carpinteria Sewage Plant.

At the Eldorado Nature Center in Long Beach Brian Daniels found a female **Indigo Bunting** and a **Clay-colored Sparrow**. Clay-colored are being widely reported now that their field marks are more generally known—at the Arboretum (Barbara Cohen), at the Nature Center near Anaheim (Doug Willick), and near Chino (Dr. Ray Wetrich). The **Swamp Sparrow** at the Arboretum was not seen after mid-January, but another was located in the Prado Basin (Brian Daniels, 18 January), and as many as fourteen were in Ventura Co. A **Red Crossbill**, one of the few reports away from the mountains, was in Montecito where it was seen flying the same path, but in opposite directions, in the morning (Paul Lehman) and afternoon (Starr Saphir). Several **White-throated Sparrows** were in Ventura Co. and Santa Barbara Co., but the only **Harris Sparrow** was wintering in Goleta.

**M**arch may be too early for the main passerine migration, but the coastal marshes and Salton Sea should provide excellent water and shore birding. If you go as far as the Salton Sea, another hundred miles will take you to the Colorado River above Yuma for Gila Woodpeckers, Crissal Thrashers, a chance at a Black Rail, and possibly a real rarity from Mexico. □



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Audubon membership (local and national) is \$20 per year (individual), \$25 (family), or \$13.50 (student or senior citizen), 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 \$6.00 per year (Third Class), or \$9.00 (First Class, mailed in an envelope). To subscribe, make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

### LAAS Annual Banquet a Huge Success!

The annual L.A. Audubon banquet, held at the Sportsman's Lodge in North Hollywood on February 5th, was one of the best ever. One hundred three people were present for Arnold Small's magnificent slide presentation on his recent trip to the Antarctic. Ruth Lohr received a much deserved award as a tribute to her many years of enthusiastic service to Audubon as registrar and membership chairman and recently as reservations chairman. John Boreman, in addition to receiving LAAS's annual contribution (\$2500 this year) to the Condor Fund, was the recipient of an additional award for his outstanding efforts to save the condors. Tom Howell, ornithology professor at UCLA, won the door prize, an original lithograph of an American Kestrel by Teri Matelson.

# 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 Reports:

Los Angeles 213-874-1318  
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## Pelagic Trip Reservations

To make reservations for pelagic trips, send a check payable to LAAS plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope, your phone number, and the names of all those in your party to the Reservations Chairman, Audubon House. No reservations will be accepted or refunds made within 2 weeks of 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. If you wish to carpool, please so indicate, and you will be contacted two weeks prior to the trip. There should be a separate check for each trip.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 11—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m.**  
Plummer Park. **Dr. Charles Collins**, professor at California State University, Long beach will present a slide show and film produced by the Canadian Film Board on the behavior and life histories of six species of North American grouse.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15—Beginners trip to Playa del Rey.** Basic birding skills taught in a local wetlands setting; novices are encouraged. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballona Creek bridge at the north end of Pacific Ave. (reached via Culver Blvd.). Leaders: Bob and Roberta Shanman, 545-2867 (after 6:00 p.m.).

**TUESDAY, APRIL 8—Evening Meeting, 8:00 p.m.**  
Plummer Park. We will be having a **forum** for the general membership. Got any gripes? Helpful suggestions? Come share your ideas with the board.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12—Antelope Valley.** Spring migrant landbirds and shorebirds with Scott's Oriole, Le Conte's Thrasher, Verdin, Swainson's Hawk and spectacular wildflowers all possible. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Lamont-Odett Vista Point along Highway 14 a few miles south of Palmdale. Leaders: Tom Frillman (456-8779) and Fred Heath.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 13—Pt. Dume Seabird Watch.** An afternoon focusing on observing and identifying spring migrant loons, brant, scoters, gulls, California Gray Whales, etc., from one of the most productive coastal promontories in southern California. Meet at 2:00 p.m. along Westward Beach Rd., just south of the Pacific Coast Highway at the south end of Zuma Beach. Leader: Kimball Garrett 477-5769.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 19—Santa Anita Canyon.** Dippers along one of our few major permanent mountain streams; migrants should abound as well. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Chantry Flat Picnic Area. From the Foothill or San Bernardino Freeways, take Santa Anita Ave. north to its end in the hills above Sierra Madre. Leader: Hal Baxter 355-6300.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 24—Pt. Dume Seabird Watch.** Details of time and place the same as for the **April 13** trip. Should produce even larger numbers of migrants because of the later date. Leader: Jon Dunn 981-1841.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 27—Land on Santa Cruz Island at Pelican Bay.** Departure at 7:30 a.m. aboard the *Sun Fish* from Island Packers Dock in Ventura Marina, returning at 5:30 p.m. Price: \$20 per person. Leaders: Ken Wiley, Shum Suffel, and Phil Sayre.

**SUNDAY, MAY 4—San Pedro to Osborne Bank Pelagic Trip.** Departure at 6:00 a.m. aboard the *Vantuna* from USC Dock at San Pedro, returning at 6:00 p.m. Price: \$18 per person. Leaders: Fred Heath and Ed Navojosky.

**SUNDAY, MAY 18—San Miguel Island and Out To Sea.** Departure 7:00 a.m. aboard the *Sun Fish* from El Capitan State Beach, Goleta, returning at 5:00 p.m. Price \$27 per person. Leaders Herb & Olga Clarke.

## Extraordinary Eagle Films to be Shown!

The Los Angeles Audubon Society, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, UCLA Extension and the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Assoc. will be sponsoring two extraordinary films, one on the Harpy Eagle of South America and a second one on the Monkey-eating Eagle of the Philippines at Dickson Hall, UCLA, 7:30 p.m., March 24.

These films will be shown by Neil Rettig (you may recall his fabulous article on the making of the Harpy Eagle film in the November 1977 issue of *Audubon Magazine*). At the last AOU meeting at Texas A & M the Harpy Eagle film received an unprecedented five minute standing ovation from this normally staid group of professional ornithologists! Admission is **free**. Donations, however, will be accepted, with all proceeds going to help protect the Monkey-eating Eagle.





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March 1980

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