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Birding in the Llanos

by Philip A. Silverstone

IN JULY, 1980, I returned to the United States after an adventurous 16 months teaching biology at the Universidad del Valle in Calle, Colombia. I took advantage of my stay to bird in several regions of this biological paradise.

One of these trips was to the *llanos* of northeastern Colombia, a region probably seldom visited by birders but well worthwhile for those whose interest is keen enough to endure long hours of traveling. The giant storks, the flocks of unbelievably brilliant scarlet ibises, the congregation of marsh birds, and the beauty of the empty open grassland with its distant gray strands of *morichales* can never be forgotten.

Used as cattle pasture, the *llanos* are a savannah, a gigantic plain of open grassland with broad thick patches or long strands of trees; these groups of trees are called *morichales* after the Moriche, a fan

palm of the genus *Mauritia*, which dominates them. In places, the grassland is studded with black cone-shaped termite mounds over a foot high.

It is the end of March, the turning point between dry and wet seasons in the *llanos*, when the heat is somewhat reduced but rains have not yet made the roads impassable. The trip is by bus: 12 hours from Cali to Bogotá, four hours from Bogotá to Villavicencio, 15 hours from Villavicencio to Santa Rosalía near the end of the route. Twice a week the bus travels to Santa Rosalía and twice a week back to Villavo, not over one road but over a series of unpaved anastomosing tracks, with the driver choosing the path least likely to entrap his bus.

The gray sky emits a constant drizzle as the bus plows over the shallowly flooded tracks, startling the roadside birds — Cattle Egrets, Wattled Jacanas, Southern Lapwings, Crested Caracaras, Yellow-headed Caracaras, and a long-legged Double-striped Thick-knee, who escapes by running into the grass. Large flocks of Fork-tailed Flycatchers fly low over the grass, hawking insects; one flock contains 53 birds.

At 7 p.m. on 30 March the bus reaches Santa Rosalía, a village of a few streets on the shore of the Río Meta. The two small hotels (*residencias*) and two or three restaurants are adequate for those willing to accept austere conditions, but a birding party of more than 10 persons might have difficulty finding sufficient accommodations in the town. The best *residencia* is in the rear of a grocery one block from the river; it has three double rooms with bare concrete floors and shallow beds draped with mosquito netting. A single separate bathroom boasts a flush toilet and a shower head leading from a tank of rainwater (refreshingly cold on a hot afternoon). The town's generator provides electricity four hours every evening.

The weather is clear and hot throughout the five-day stay in Santa



Scarlet Macaws

illustrations by Dana Gardner

Fork-tailed Flycatcher



Rosalía. Although a frequent breeze alleviates the heat, it is necessary to carry a canteen of water for an all-day birding excursion on foot. In and near the town are the Red-capped Cardinal, Yellow Oriole, Shiny Cowbird, Carib Grackle, Russet-throated Puffbird, Tropical Mockingbird, House Wren, Blue-gray Tanager, Scaled Dove, Saffron Finch, Blue-black Grassquit, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Pied Water-tyrant, Rufous-browed Pepper-

photographs by Herb Clarke



Jabiru

shrike, Buff-throated Saltator, Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Scarlet Macaw, and others, including a flock of Blue-crowned Parakeets breakfasting on a backyard guava. Some of the parakeets attack the attached fruit; others detach the fruit, prop it against a branch with one foot, and dig pieces from the top with their bill.



Crested Caracara

Extending from the outskirts of town upstream along the edge of the Río Meta (a tributary of the Orinoco) is a narrow, dense tangle of secondary gallery forest. From the river's edge, the Collared Plover and Pied Lapwing can be seen on sand dunes in mid-stream. In the landward edges of the forest and the edges of adjacent clearings are the White-fringed Antwren, Black-crested Antshrike, Barred Antshrike, Buff-breasted Wren, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Great Kiskadee, Lesser Kiskadee, White-tipped Dove and Violaceous Jay.

Outside the town, on the path to the gallery forest, is a small field with a pond frequented by marsh birds, but a much better area for these birds is a shallowly flooded section of grassland near a *morichal* about an hour's walk from the tower on the inland edge of town.

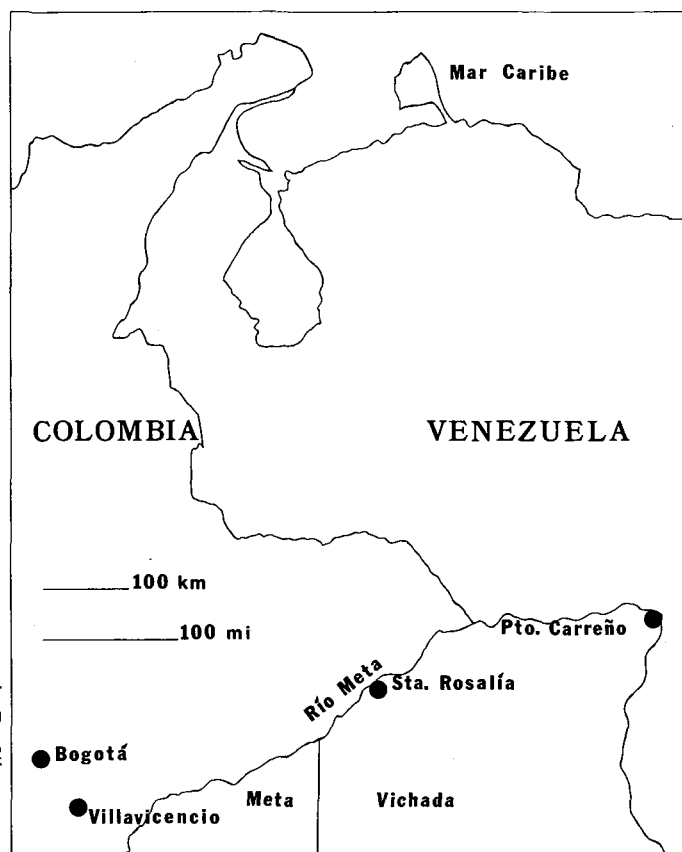
After a few minutes' walk from the tower you are in the *llanos*, walking between clumps of bunch-grass and black termite mounds, passing long stretches of grass grazed short by cattle who turn their heads and stare at you as if they have never seen a man. Grassland birds flush in front of you: Red-breasted Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Eared Dove, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Grassland Yellow-finch, Wedge-tailed Grass-finch, Yellow-browed Sparrow, and Short-billed Marsh Wren. Barn Swallows sail low over the prairie. From your right comes a muffled "uh-uh-uh-uh-uh" — a pair of Burrowing Owls stand by their hole staring warily. Two others emerge from the hole and bob comically up and down.

The *morichal* is farther than it looks. You turn and the town and tower are tiny; turn again and the *morichal* is still gray with distance. You are in a vast, grassy plain. As far as you can see

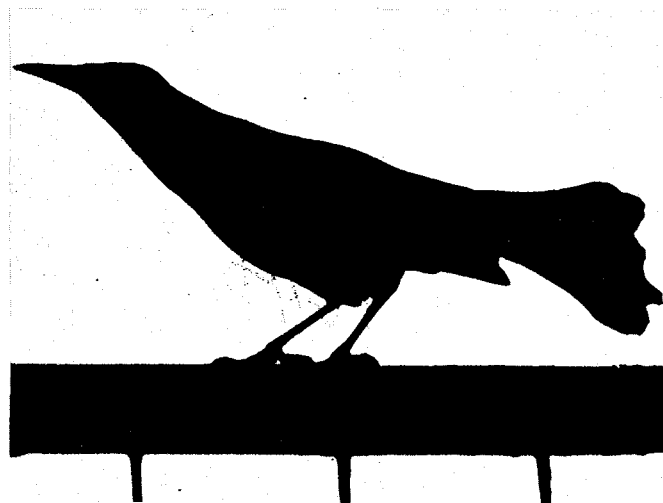
there is grass. Now, alone in the middle of it, far from the town and the road and the river, you can feel the *llanos*. The wind blows ripples in the grass and you feel the flatness and the freedom and the distance, a feeling you never have in a forest; here, you can sense the vastness of the earth.

You walk and the *morichal* comes closer until you see the individual palms scattering into the grassland on its edge. The field is full of hidden snipe; they flush fast one at a time and drop back into the grass. On a shrub next to a flooded area by the Moriche palms sit a two-toned pair of White-headed Marsh-Tyrants. An American Kestrel flies low with a teiid lizard in its talons; it perches on a Moriche stump and picks at the lizard with its bill. A Savannah Hawk utters a loud, plaintive, screaming whistle and stands straight-legged atop another stump.

You are on the edge of a fantastic aggregation of marsh birds. As you skirt them, trying to approach without flushing them, they walk ahead through the shallowly flooded grass, feeding, species after species after species in the infinite diversity of the tropics. The afternoon hours pass like minutes. Two huge white storks, nearly as tall as a man, lift their naked black necks above a flock of Great Egrets; they are Jabirus. Apart from the flock, among the scattered Moriches, stride four Maguari Storks, white with black flight feathers and bright red lores; frightened, they take flight, heads stooped down on extended feathered necks. A seemingly homogeneous group of black ibises suddenly resolves itself into two species — the Bare-faced Ibis and the larger, longer Sharp-tailed Ibis. Two Buff-necked Ibises fly in low to join the flock,



map by Dr. Silverstone



Carib Grackle

uttering a sharp double-noted call. Six adult Scarlet Ibises glow in the late afternoon sun, contrasting with the accompanying brown and white immatures. Cocoi Herons, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, and a Whistling Heron feed near large flocks of Brazilian Ducks and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. Five black Muscovy



Yellow-headed Caracara

Ducks, as big as geese, feed warily on the far edge of the flooded area, never allowing close approach. A very pale Pinnated Bittern seizes a snake, struggles with it a few minutes, then skulks off bent low to the ground, still holding its snake. Overhead passes a quintet of White-faced Whistling-Ducks, emitting three short whistles, followed by a slender, low-flying Fork-tailed Palm-Swift.

From the *morichal* issues a loud, weird growling — "cow-cow, cow-cow, cow-cow!" A cuckoo? You follow the elusive call among the ferns and Moriches until you see the bird — it is a Bicolored Wren, a relative of our Cactus Wren. As you walk through the *morichal*, a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl watches from a tree-branch, and a Pale-vented Pigeon sits quietly on a palm petiole.

You emerge again onto the *llanos*. The evening comes too soon, and you guide yourself back by the lights of Santa Rosalía. You have seen the *llanos*.



Wattled Jacana

Birding at Buena Vista Lagoon

by Alice Fries

BUENA VISTA LAGOON, a brackish body of water lacking a tidal surge, has been a fruitful bird observation area for many years. Even in the usually dull summer months of June and July there is interesting activity — *Black-crowned Night Herons* carrying nesting-sticks to the reed islands, *Gadwall*, *Mallard*, *Ruddy Duck* broods, *Coot* chicks, *Gallinules* and *Soras*, too. In the summer of 1979, *Cattle Egret* nested, a first record, and for the first time in many years there was a *White-faced Ibis* nesting occurrence.

The lagoon, located in the north coastal section of San Diego county, is easily accessible from I-5. It is bounded on the north by the city of Oceanside; the entire east side, including the estuary, has been usurped by a huge shopping mall. The south boundary is in Carlsbad, and the narrow western outlet is hemmed by the Pacific. For convenience of finding the accessible birding spots, the adjacent map indicates four separate areas of the lagoon.

Area 1, east of I-5 — take Vista Way off-ramp, turn right on Jefferson Street and almost immediately to the boundary road at the north side. Depending upon the season and varying water levels, this is the most productive section of the lagoon. Waders, migrating and wintering shore birds, terns, gulls and ducks are abundant. Some specialties in past years have been *Little Blue Heron*, *Buff-breasted* and *Stilt Sandpipers*. *Terns* feed here and rest on the sand spits — Black, Royal, Least, Caspian, Elegant and Common. A few records of *Wood Storks*, *Whistling Swans* and *Snow Geese* kindle expectations. Continuing beyond the turn-about is the reedy margin to the freeway. If water level permits, walk that portion for sighting of *Least* and *American Bittern*, *Green Heron* and scolding *Marsh Wrens*. Scan the skies for raptors; *White-tailed Kite*, *Osprey*, *Merlin*, *Peregrine Falcon*, *Red-tailed* and *Red-shouldered Hawks*, and, rarely, both *eagle* species have been sighted.

After returning to the turn-around, proceed back to Jefferson, turn right at the signal and pull up at the duck-feeding area. At the present writing, shore birds are numerous and teal are ploughing up the mud. *Blue-winged Teal* are quite frequent single visitors. Several species of gulls can be observed at close range in the winter months, affording close observation of eye, leg, mantle and bill coloring. In February 1980, a *Laughing Gull* joined the mooching ducks, gulls and coots for a handout — the first ever recorded for the area.

If you really want a big day, search the **eucalyptus grove** opposite the duck pond. In the spring months *Orioles*, *Shrikes*, *Chipping*, *Lincoln's* and an occasional *Fox Sparrow* are to be seen. Both *Black-tailed* and *Blue-grey Gnatcatchers* have been observed on the grove slopes, and during the nesting season you might find *Red-tailed Hawk* nestlings.

A short distance west on Jefferson just around the bend you can park and walk the margins of the lagoon to I-5. Passerines in the willows, cormorants and gulls on the pilings, and many species of ducks and grebes in the lagoon waters are just some of what you will see here. Each season has its own featured populations.

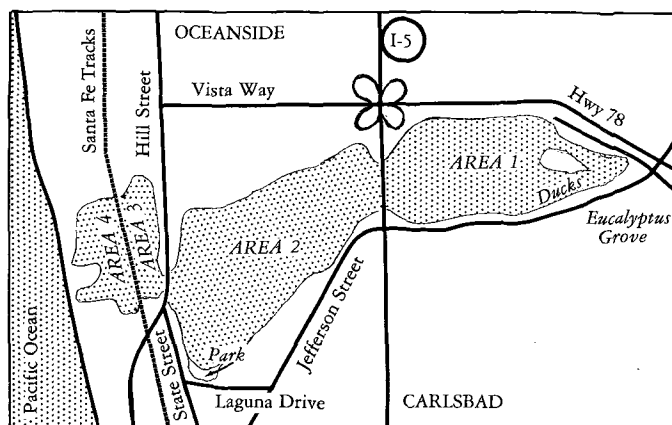
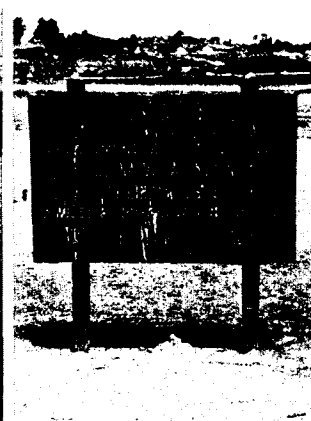
Area 2, the largest body of water of the lagoon, is the least productive, for the freeway on the east and private property on both north and south preclude bird observation, so proceed to Laguna

Street, turn right to its end, which is the State Street intersection. At this corner, the city of Carlsbad maintains an attractive little park with lunch tables. Examine the reed areas below the park edge bluff. This is a favorite habitat for the *Least Bittern* and in winter months a favorite hangout for *Canvas Backs*. Gulls and terns fly past; wrens, empids, warblers should be looked for on the banks descending the bluffs.

Area 3, west of Hill Street, at times harbors large duck, coot and grebe populations in winter, and *Snow Geese* and *Whistling Swan* have been noted there in the past. The margins can be walked.

Area 4 can be walked only on the south; private property on the north prevents walking, but the area has good visibility. There is access for parking on Hill Street just beyond a sewage disposal operation heading south on Hill and adjacent to the railway tracks.

A short walk along the margin usually arouses a squawking *Green Heron* or two, as you approach the ocean. Good views of the *Common Tern* can be had in the summer months, and it is intriguing to watch the rattling *Kingfisher* dive from its perch and bang its kill on the waters below. Complete the journey to the shoreline and scan the beach for the usual *Sanderlings*, *Willetts*, *Black-bellied Plovers* and *Godwits*. Perhaps you will see the *Red-breasted Mergansers*, *Lesser Scaup*, *Surf Scoters*, loons and grebes that bounce on the waves in the wintering season. ☺



NOTE: Areas 1, 2 and 3 make up a Wildlife Refuge operated by the Nature Conservancy and handed over to the State Fish and Game for management. There is no management currently because of lack of funding and Area 1 is in a sorry state of heavy siltation from development grading. Letters are needed to remedy this situation; write to William Craven, 38th District, State Capitol, Room 4048, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Rehabilitating A Peale's Peregrine Falcon

by Tim Gallagher

Last year, the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group (SCPBRG) successfully rehabilitated an injured peregrine falcon. The falcon, a sub-adult male Peale's peregrine, had been wounded by a shooter in Northern California early in 1978; though the bird healed, it was left permanently blinded in one eye.

When the falcon was brought to the SCPBRG three months after it was shot, there seemed little hope it could ever be released. Its equilibrium and depth perception were severely impaired, and it sat constantly with the head tilted to one side.

The falcon was released in a large flight chamber for two months to see whether it would improve if left alone. It soon became apparent that the bird was making no progress. It sat listlessly and rarely attempted to fly. A different method was needed.

Brian Walton, the coordinator of the SCPBRG, placed the peregrine with a volunteer to train the bird so it would become accustomed to flying with one eye. Walton had decided against trying to include the bird in the falcon breeding program at the University of California, Santa Cruz; wild caught or injured falcons are rarely of any use in such programs. Specially raised falcons that know no life other than the breeding chamber are the ones most likely to propagate in captivity.

Daniel Verrier, a volunteer worker at the SCPBRG, took on the difficult task of training the bird. Having studied and worked with birds of prey for well over ten years, Verrier was a good choice for the job. The falcon was understandably terrified of humans since the shooting incident, and it took Verrier several weeks of near constant attention to get the bird tame enough to be flown.

After the long initial taming period, the falcon was taught to fly to a lure — that is, a leather pouch with meat attached to it that is swung around on a long cord. Verrier borrowed an ancient exercising technique from falconry known as "stooping to the lure" to improve the bird's timing and coordination. The falcon was encouraged to dive at the lure as Verrier swung it, but each time the bird made a pass at it, the lure was snatched away. Whenever the peregrine made contact with the lure, the stooping exercise ended and the falcon was rewarded with a good meal.




photograph by Tim Gallagher

Stooping to the lure built up the peregrine's strength quickly and soon it was able to dive 30 times without becoming winded — many more stoops than would be necessary to catch most wild quarry. The falcon was flying so fast and hard at this time that it was difficult to keep the lure from it.

The bird was gradually becoming much more self-assured. It held its head upright and acted in every way like a normal falcon. It had learned to compensate for the blind eye, and while perched, the bird constantly looked back and forth so that no predator could approach it on the blind side. The peregrine was flown at pen-raised quail for several weeks, and became quite deadly. The time had come to release the bird.

The falcon was fattened up and taken to a wildlife preserve in Northern California. After the falconry equipment was removed, the bird ruffled its feathers and took off powerfully from Verrier's fist. Soaring away on a thermal updraft, the falcon soon became a tiny speck in the sky and then disappeared. The peregrine had successfully returned to the wild and now had a good chance for survival.

The SCPBRG hopes to continue rehabilitating injured peregrines as part of its program to bolster the sagging peregrine falcon population in California. This, coupled with releasing captive-bred falcons and manipulating wild peregrine nests, could be a big step toward the eventual recovery of the species. 

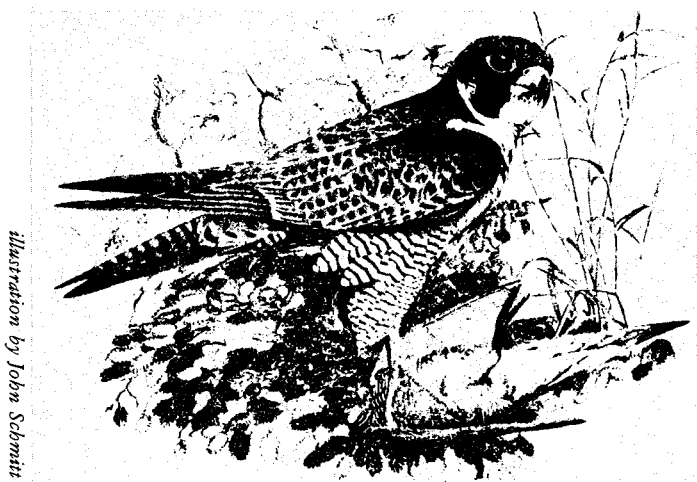


illustration by John Schmitt

Tim Gallagher is a journalist who has worked with predatory birds and who writes for *Western Outdoors*.

Groundwater Controversy Agitates Owens Valley

The Owens Valley is in trouble. The Los Angeles aqueduct captures the Owens River and most other surface flow and carries it to Los Angeles; most but not all of the valley land is owned by the City. A matter of controversy now involves how much groundwater, in addition to surface water, Los Angeles should be allowed to take. Vast areas of saltgrass meadows are dying; valuable spring habitats have been destroyed. There will not be enough rainfall to support any groundcover. The Concerned Citizens of Owens Valley have declared this a state of emergency. The Owens Valley is the place of water origin, and yet valley inhabitants are inheriting a dying valley and must pay exorbitant rates for essential water uses. To help out, write your Assemblymen and other representatives. For further information, contact Concerned Citizens of Owens Valley, P. O. Box 617, Lone Pine, CA 93545; P. O. Box 487, Independence, CA 93526; P. O. Box 304, Big Pine, CA 93513.

Topics of Conservation

Good News for Malibu Lagoon

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

IN THE sixties, Malibu Lagoon was a thriving gathering place for birds and birders. Egrets and herons hunted in the shallows. Shorebirds probed the mudflats. Rails and gallinules patrolled the tules. Terns dove after fish or collected in coteries on the sandbars. Gulls were everywhere. In the *salicornia* (pickleweed) marsh behind the Malibu Colony was a small pond where a few Pintail or Cinnamon Teal browsed. During migration and in the winter, it was a busy headquarters for hundreds of birds. Encounters with an unusual species added zest to Malibu. On occasion there were Brant, Snow Goose, Sabine's Gull, Rusty Blackbird, Piping Plover, Golden Plover, Palm Warbler, Little Blue Heron, Tropical Kingbird and more. The lagoon offered them food, open space and reasonable protection. The salt marsh was still moderately productive, with White-tailed Kites and Kestrels hovering. Belding's Savannah Sparrow may have still been nesting there. The willows in the creek above the bridge were full of Song Sparrows and Marsh Wrens, and in spring and fall, migrants flashed their bright colors through the greenery.

In 1969, a devastating flood roared down Malibu Creek carrying tons of silt and rubbish. It wiped out a retaining wall and nearly took out the Coast Highway bridge. Much of the vegetation above the bridge was washed away, but that was a normal, natural event. Like chaparral after a burn, willows and cattails grow back with astonishing speed. The real catastrophe was man-made. With no authorization, and in the dead of night, Caltrans dumped carloads of flood debris into the marsh. This raised its level several feet, prevented high tidal water from reaching the *salicornia* and so destroyed a large portion of the marsh.

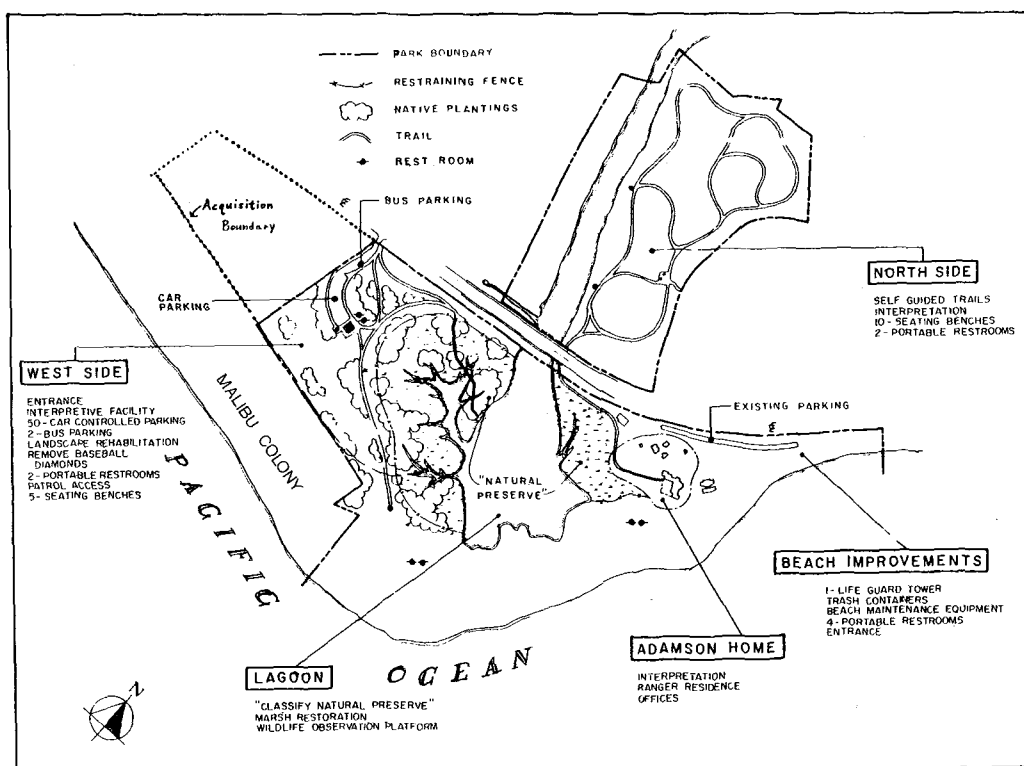
After that, it was all downhill. Two Little League fields were built in the marsh. A more incongruous use of wildlife habitat is hard to imagine. The burgeoning popularity of Surfrider's Beach brought a heavy increase in foot traffic that wore wide, dusty paths through the fragile vegetation. Motorcycles accelerated the erosion and horses bestowed their little gift packages here and there. Dogs found the birds irresistible. Most of the human harassment was inadvertent, but the mounds of litter hardly made the lagoon attractive.

The wonder of it all is that, even in this dreadfully degraded habitat, the birds are still there. Does this say something about the resilience and adaptability of many species? Or is it simply that beggars can't be choosers — with estuaries in short supply? Both, perhaps. There are decidedly fewer birds in Malibu today than there were twenty years ago. And some of the less tolerant, more wary species are rarely seen. Lloyd Kiff, in his exhaustive study of the Birds of Malibu Lagoon (276 species), estimates that six species that once nested there have been extirpated as breeding birds.

Lagoon Protection Hard to Come by

In 1951, the State bought the first 26 acres of the beach. Additional acquisitions over the decades expanded the area to its present size: 76 acres. They include: 1) the lagoon, 2) Surfrider's Beach, 3) the Adamson House and grounds (including a 98-car parking lot, 4) the marsh on the west (up-coast) side behind the Malibu Colony up to Cross Creek Road, 5) a 24-acre parcel along Serra Road, northeast of the Coast Highway, that includes large sycamores and good brushy areas, and 6) a narrow strip along the creek behind the market. Hardly another Morro Bay, but not bad for Los Angeles county. And the only wetland between Pt. Mugu and Playa del Rey.

Five or six years ago the State Parks Department was contemplating development of the marsh: picnic tables, fire-pits, a permanent rest-room and parking for several hundred cars. A meeting was called by the Department to inform the public of the proposal. Los Angeles Audubon was there and joined with Malibu residents in a horrified protest. The plan was dropped for "lack of funds." In 1976 a new era dawned. Herbert Rhodes, then Director of Parks and Recreation, authorized a series of meetings at the Malibu Civic Center to explore public opinion on the future of Malibu Lagoon. At the first meeting, veterans of the previous development controversy were extremely sceptical of the motives of the department. Were the big-shots trying to pull a fast one — asking for input and then doing just what *they* had decided in the first place? Every facet of the lagoon was explored: the water quality, the trash, the fire hazard to residents near Serra Road, the steelhead run up the creek, the algae bloom (and damn the Tapia sewage plant), the Adamson House, swimming in the lagoon, overnight camping, mosquitoes, and don't throw rocks at the cliff swallows. And so on, far into the night. After another meeting or two, the planners came up with three plans, graded from maximum to minimum development. Happily, in our Workshop, there was very little conflict over fundamentals. Those of us primarily concerned with wildlife values found natural allies in Malibu Colony residents



photographs by Lloyd Kiff



whose backyard was the marsh and the lagoon. Many of them agreed with our desire for a sanctuary; those not interested in wildlife could see the benefit to them of minimum parking, minimum crowds and minimum disturbance. To convince Sacramento that more than a tiny handful of birders were interested, LA Audubon drew up and circulated a petition calling for the plan that would restore the marsh, declare the marsh and lagoon a Natural Preserve, and provide protection. We distributed petitions to other southern California Audubon societies, to various UCLA science departments, to Giles Welch of the Malibu Township Council, and to our own members. Thousands of signatures poured into the Parks and Recreation Department. It is difficult not to believe that those signatures had an effect on the final choice.

In February 1978, the proposed plan for Malibu Lagoon State Beach was released. It was all we could have asked for. It called for removal of the Caltrans fill and the exotic weeds that had grown in it, for grading the area and digging channels so that tidal water could reach deeply into the restored marsh. The Little League fields were to be removed and relocated. A foot-path with wooden bridges over the channels would provide access for bird observation. A four-foot-high fence would keep out horses, motorcycles and (it is hoped) dogs. Native plants would shield the fence and some native water-loving trees were to be planted as roosting sites for raptors. It would be officially declared a "Natural Preserve." The Adamson House was to be made into a historical museum detailing the architecture and cultural life of southern California just after the turn of the century, and illustrating the lifestyle of the Chumash Indians before the European conquest. (There was a substantial Chumash settlement in Malibu and a rich archaeological site lies within the boundaries of the State Beach.)

Hoped-for Plan Hits Another Snag

By this time the suspicion that seemed prevalent at the initial meeting had dissolved and most of us had become convinced that — wonder of wonders — the bureaucrats were on the level! To our delight, on September 15, 1978, the State Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously approved the plan for Malibu Lagoon State Beach. We thought our troubles were over. But months went by and nothing happened. We had been told that the money had been allocated, and yet there was a strange silence in Sacramento. In January 1979, Los Angeles Audubon came up with another petition calling for "the implementation of this splendid plan for Malibu Lagoon." We said the plan "clearly represents the desire of the

people of Southern California for a wildlife sanctuary in the lagoon ..." and that if it "is put off this year there is a good chance it will never be set in motion." The response was surprisingly heavy. Then we discovered that the fallout from Proposition 13 had forced the restoration project out of the budget. Mr. Cahill, the new Director of Parks and Recreation, promised to make every effort to restore it to the budget for fiscal 1980-81.

Montage from an old movie of pages of the calendar torn off one by one. A chance call to Paul Priolo's office reached a sympathetic field representative, Susan Rossi. She was appalled by the delay that was frustrating the years of work and patience that had gone into this effort — with the goal almost in our grasp. Mr. Priolo, the state assemblyman for Malibu, introduced a bill in March 1980 (just at the yearly deadline for appropriation bills) "for restoration of the Malibu Lagoon and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately." We had promised to lobby hard for the bill when it reached committee and the assembly floor. We kept in touch with Ms. Rossi every few weeks but there was never a call for letters, telegrams or phone calls. Then to our astonishment we learned that the bill passed both houses of the legislature and was signed by the Governor in August! Just like that. Almost an anticlimax. And almost too good to be true. But it does seem to be true. 1.3 million dollars are earmarked by law for Malibu. The original plans seem to be ready to move from paper to pickleweed.

It would be wise for us, however, to keep in touch with the planners and the expeditors. After coming so far for so long, our discreet surveillance of the work-in-progress might benefit all concerned. We will certainly be consulted about the birds, and our advice and expertise will be solicited for a possible docent program. But let us rejoice in the glad tidings: a major victory has been won! Out of the garbage, the rusting shopping carts and the pornographic graffiti will emerge a reborn Malibu Lagoon for the killifish, the crabs, the mollusks, the clams and the birds. ♡



Special thanks must be given to: Tom Howell, Lloyd Kiff and Ed Tarvyd for their excellent educational work with the Park Department landscape architects; Giles Welch of the Malibu Colony who lobbied every relevant agency and politician here and in Sacramento; and Susan Rossi, a friend in need.

Birding As A Four-Letter Word

by Lee Jones

HERE comes a flock of TRBL!" Kimball exclaimed. "Over there on the fencepost — another LOSH for the list." On a pelagic trip you might hear, "MASH off the star-board bow!" "TUPU and MAMU dead ahead!" In Mexico you may overhear someone explaining to a novice birder the difference between a young HAHA and a young NOHA.

"What is all this gibberish?" you might ask. "I knew I shouldn't have missed Arnold's last lecture for *Bird Study 101*!"

Kimball scoffed. But a week later he called me up to tell me about the "WIPL at Pt. Mugu."

"Nonsense!" cried Jon. Several weeks later, while on a field trip to Upper Newport Bay, I happened to glance over his shoulder while he was writing up his field notes and there it was — ARLO, 7; EAGR, 18; WEGR, 4....

"Hooked another one," I mused.

The new jargon? I guess you can blame me for that. No, actually you should blame our space-age computer technology.

The new language is a four-letter computer code for birds. There are a number of bird codes in existence, each developed to fulfill a particular research need. I created this one to satisfy a computer program to conveniently store an otherwise unmanageable mass of data gathered by Dr. Jared Diamond and me on island bird populations. I subsequently found it expedient to use the code when writing up field notes as well. It is quite time-consuming to compile the day's "tally" of birds by writing out each species' full name, and unprofessional to use arbitrary abbreviations that some later peruser of your notes may not understand. Of course, in each field notebook where the four-letter code is used, a key to the code should also be included.

This four-letter code, though conceived independently, is remarkably similar to a code developed for bird banders by Kathleen Klimkiewicz and Chan Robbins at about the same time. My code was developed in July 1977 and theirs appeared in the January-March 1978 issue of *North American Bird Bander*. Their code is greater in scope, including most North American birds, with a code for obsolete as well as currently used bird names. My code, on the other hand, deals only with the 530 species found in California (I also have an additional code for 253 species found in Europe).

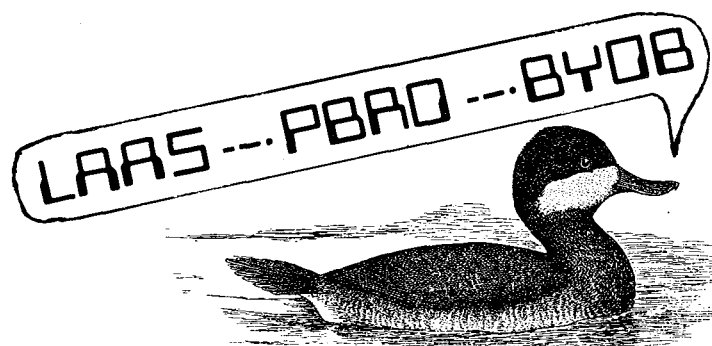
The advantage of these codes is their simplicity. They're easy to formulate and learn and can be adapted to fit your own preference if you like. The derivation of my code is as follows:

- If the bird name is only one word, then the code is the first four letters of that name. Examples: *Sora* becomes SORA, *Bushit* becomes BUSH.

- If the bird name consists of two words, the code is made up of the first two letters of the first name and the first two letters of the last name. Examples: *Savannah Sparrow* becomes SASP, *Turkey Vulture* becomes TUVU.

- For hyphenated words the first letter of each word part is used. Examples: *Brown-headed Cowbird* becomes BHCO, *Leach's Storm-Petrel* becomes LESP, *Black-crowned Night-Heron* becomes BCNH.

- If the bird's name consists of three words, then the code is formulated by using the first letter of each of the first two words and the first two letters of the last name. Examples: *Great Horned Owl* becomes GHOW, *Black-throated Gray Warbler* become BGWA (in such cases hyphenated words are treated as one word,




not two), *Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker* becomes BTWO.

- Thus the last two letters of the code are *always* reserved for the bird's last name. This is one area where my code differs from that of Klimkiewicz and Robbins. In their code, *Lesser Black-backed Gull* becomes LBBG (with only one letter used for the last name); whereas in mine it becomes LBGU. In theirs, *Black Storm-Petrel* becomes BSPE (with three letters used for the last name). In mine, it's BLSP.

As with any simplified code, there are some potential code duplications. In such cases one species, preferably the less common of the two, must be assigned a non-standard code. To avoid duplication the following twenty-two species codes do not fit the standard format and must be memorized:

Streaked Shearwater = SKSH (STSH is used for Short-tailed Shearwater)
 Least Storm-Petrel = LTSP (LESP is used for Leach's Storm-Petrel)
 Trumpeter Swan = TUSW (TRSW is used for Tree Swallow)
 "Harlan's" Hawk (a subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk) = HLHA (HAHA is used for Harris' Hawk)
 Blue Grouse = BUGR (BLGR is used for Blue Grosbeak)
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper = SHSA (STSA is used for Stilt Sandpiper)
 Heermann's Gull = HMGU (HEGU is used for Herring Gull)
 Blue-throated Hummingbird = BLHU (BTHU is used for Broad-tailed Hummingbird)
 Coues' Flycatcher = CUFL (COFL is used for Common Flicker)
 Bank Swallow = BKSW (BASW is used for Barn Swallow)
 Canyon Wren = CNWR (CAWR is used for Cactus Wren)
 Northern Shrike = NRSH (NOSH is used for Northern Shoveler)
 Black-and-white Warbler = BAWA (BLWA is used for Blackburnian Warbler)
 Prothonotary Warbler = POWA (PRWA is used for Prairie Warbler)
 Black-throated Blue Warbler = BKWA (BBWA is used for Bay-breasted Warbler)
 Black-throated Green Warbler = BTWA (BGWA is used for Black-throated Gray Warbler)
 Cerulean Warbler = CRWA (CEWA is used for Cedar Waxwing)
 Blackpoll Warbler = BPWA (BLWA is used for Blackburnian Warbler)
 Bronzed Cowbird = BZCO (BRCO is used for Brandt's Cormorant)
 Lark Bunting = LKBU (LABU is used for Lazuli Bunting)
 Sage Sparrow = SGSP (SASP is used for Savannah Sparrow)

The code can also be used for unidentified species and various species combinations as well. For instance, LOON is used for unidentified loon, PEEP for unidentified "peep," NLWO for Nuttall's X Ladder-backed Woodpecker hybrid as at Morongo Valley, HDL for Hammond's/Dusky type Flycatcher.

So the next time you're in the High Sierra with your friends, don't hesitate to scream "G-gow!" at your first glimpse of a Great Gray Owl. But don't be surprised if your friends retaliate with "No-go!" as you wheel around to see a Northern Goshawk disappearing through the forest. GD BRDNG! 

Good Birder Behavior

by Dorothy Dimsdale

*Leave nothing but footprints.
Take nothing but pictures.
Kill nothing but time.*

This gentle notice is in Maescwm, North Wales. It *could* say: No littering. No trespassing. No hunting. But the impact on the reader would be quite different, though in fact the basic message is the same. It seems to me that the gentle approach has a much more positive effect, and perhaps that's what we need. With the increasing numbers of people visiting our natural areas we *do* need something to encourage them to respect the habitat.

In our own area of birding there has been great concern for several years now about the destructive behavior of birders in the field. It's not just the occasional ignorant, well-meaning beginner. Often a seasoned birder, so intent on getting his or her 600+ bird, will trample on a fragile habitat and cause unnecessary havoc. Or an over-zealous photographer will cut away the protective branches from a nest to get a better picture. We've all heard these stories; suggestions for care and caution have come from National Audubon and the ABA, among others, who are deeply concerned.

At the risk of sounding like a British chauvinist, I am reporting on a set of rules drafted after consultation among the British Ornithologists' Union, the British Trust for Ornithology, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, the Wildfowl Trust, and the Editors of 'British Birds.' It applies


just as well here in the United States as it does in Britain. Here from the RSPB magazine 'Birds' are the ten points of their code, preceded by their introduction:

"Today's birdwatchers are a powerful force for nature conservation. The number of those of us interested in birds rises continually and it is vital that we take seriously our responsibility to avoid any harm to birds.

We must also present a responsible image to non-birdwatchers who may be affected by our activities and particularly those on whose sympathy and support the future of birds may rest.

There are 10 points to bear in mind:

1. The welfare of birds must come first. (Whether our particular interest is photography, ringing [banding], sound recording, scientific study or just birdwatching.)
2. Habitat must be protected.
3. Keep disturbance to birds and their habitat to a minimum.
4. When you find a rare bird think carefully about whom you should tell.
5. Do not harass rare migrants.
6. Abide by Bird Protection Laws at all times.
7. Respect the rights of landowners.
8. Respect the rights of other people in the countryside.
9. Make your records available to the local bird recorder.
10. Behave abroad as you would when birdwatching at home."

That seems to say it all. I would just add "Please!" 



PRBO Snowy Plover Count Continues

Volunteer participants all along the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California collected important information on the distribution and number of Snowy Plovers last winter and spring. In Los Angeles County alone, one hundred nineteen snowies were seen in six locations.

This summer, more adults and chicks were banded at Mono Lake and on Monterey Bay. PRBO researchers would like to continue the winter search for banded Snowy Plovers on an informal basis — if you find any banded birds or make any interesting sightings, PRBO would appreciate the details.

To help learn more about the snowies' wintering population, or to find out more about studies of this secretive inhabitant of California's beaches and alkaline lakes, please write Gary Page at Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.



A directory is being planned for birdwatchers and ornithologists who would like to exchange houses or apartments for vacations. For more information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Max Lazar
55 Grand Avenue
Rockville Centre, NY 11570

Christmas Counts Are Coming Up

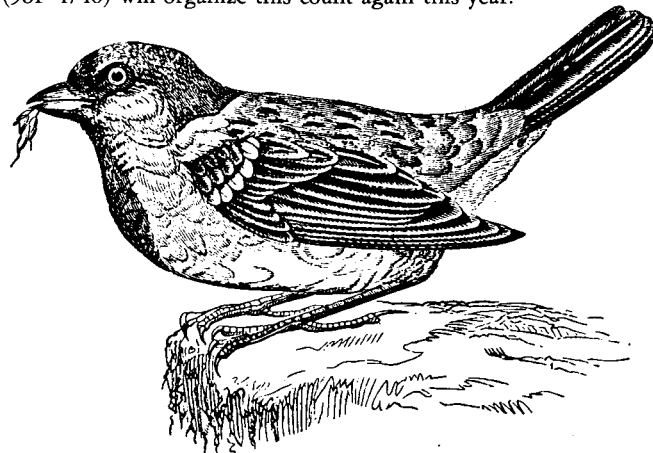
Here are the dates for upcoming Christmas Counts. Don't forget Christmas Counts mean dawn-to-dusk birding plus owling. Meet at Audubon House at noon for your sandwich and for preliminary results. Final results at dinner. To participate, contact people below.

Saturday, 20 December — Antelope Valley Count. Contact Fred Heath (828-6524) for details.

Sunday, 21 December — Malibu Count. Jean Brandt (788-5188) and Kimball Garrett (455-2903) are organizing this count.

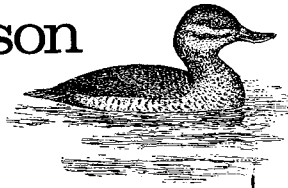
Saturday, 3 January 1981 — Santa Barbara Count. Call Paul Lehman (805/967-2450) for information.

Sunday, 4 January — Los Angeles Count. Art and Janet Cupples (981-4746) will organize this count again this year.



Birds of the Season

by Shum Suffel



By November the last of the fall migrants will be straggling through on their way to their tropical wintering grounds, but good birding is far from over, as newly arrived winter visitants are settling in for a four to six months' stay. Along the coast, look for incoming flights of loons, grebes, scoters and other sea ducks, possibly even Oldsquaws and Harlequins. Inland, there should be northern raptors — Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks and possibly Short-eared Owls. Then there are the late migrant or wintering passerines, some of which set up winter territories which they protect much as they do their nesting areas in the summer.

Late August and early September were dominated by the shorebirds, but by mid-September there was a good movement of western passerine migrants and a few vagrants. There was, however, little indication of a winter invasion of mountain or northern birds except on the deserts. Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett and Richard Webster found Mountain Chickadees and three White-breasted Nuthatches at oases in the Antelope Valley in September, and Bob McKernan reports Mountain Chickadees in numbers at all of the oases which he covered during September — Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Thousand Palms, etc. What this portends for Los Angeles County only time will reveal.

The early September pelagic trips were a sad story. The Western Field Ornithologists' trip out of San Diego on the 6th failed to find the much-wanted tropicbirds or Least Storm-Petrels. The twenty-four hour Davidson Seamount trip out of Morro Bay the next day was aborted at 4:00 a.m., and the boat was back at the dock by 8:30 a.m. The White Wagtail, which is still at the Watsonville Sewage Plant, was small consolation for several disappointed eastern birders. Then there was the second Davidson Seamount trip on 13 September which was so rough that not ten percent of the participants escaped prolonged seasickness. There was serious doubt that we actually reached the seamount as Brown Pelicans, which should not be found fifty miles offshore, were seen repeatedly, and we made the nine-hour journey back in six or seven hours. Despite this, there were many birds on the return trip — eight South Polar Skuas, ten Long-tailed Jaegers (including several full-tailed adults), 1500 Arctic Terns, and thirty Sabine's Gulls. The LAAS trip to Santa Barbara Island and the Osborne Banks on the 14th had calm seas, thousands of Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters, and little else. The best that can be said is that trips such as these make the good trips seem better.

Weary birders on the Davidson Seamount trip were greeted at the dock with the news that an immature Mongolian Plover (a first for California and only the third south of Alaska) had been found at the salt ponds at Moss Landing in Monterey Co. (Donna Dittmann and Carol Deuel, 13 September). Excitement reigned. Cars and riders switched, and most people spent another short, sleepless night on the floor or the porch of Don Roberson's house in Pacific Grove. Some fifty impatient birders gathered at first light on Sunday morning, but the plover could not be found. A search of other ponds and mudflats was unproductive. Those who persisted, with Donna's encouragement, found the plover about 12:30. Those of us who left to look for, and find, the Black-billed Cuckoo at Pt. Reyes (fourth state record — John Luther, 8 September) drove 3½ hours each way, returning to Moss Landing at about 4:00 p.m.

to find that the plover had been seen off and on during the afternoon but had disappeared again. Soon the indefatigable Donna relocated it well within binocular range. The cuckoo was so unafraid that it was photographed at less than six feet. After a week of shoulder to shoulder birdwatchers, it must have felt that birders were part of its environment.

Despite the fact that "there are no boobies at the Salton Sea this year," Hal Baxter and Ben King (author of "Birds of Southeast Asia") gave it a try on 16 September and found a single Blue-footed Booby with the gulls on the Whitewater River delta. The next day there were two Blue-foots there, and at the end of the week there were six (Bob McKernan). The Wood Stork which was originally found at the South Coast Botanic Gardens on 13 September 1979, visited Harbor Lake for about a month, and later stayed at the Whittier Narrows New Lakes until early March, was reported again along the river near Whittier Narrows by Mickey Long on 16 September. It did not, however, return to its old roost on the island at the New Lakes. California Condors were frequently seen from Mt. Pinos in late August — nine sightings of a probable six individuals was a high count (Isabel Ludlom, *et al*, 25 August). The presence of Red-shouldered Hawks (riparian habitat preferred) on the desert, as in eastern San Bernardino Co., at Desert Center, or in the Coachella Valley (Bob McKernan) is probably caused by the riparian-like habitat created by agriculture and settlement — date groves, tamarisk rows, etc. There are three or four previous sightings of Zone-tailed Hawks on Point Loma, San Diego, the most recent on 20 September, but no records of Turkey Vultures. Why this is the best place in the state for migrant Zone-taileds and the worst for T.V.s is a puzzlement. Peregrines were seen at the Ballona Wetlands in Playa del Rey (Jan Cupples, 28 August), overhead at Zuma Beach (Hank Brodtkin, 20 September), and at the north end of the Salton Sea (two on 18 August, Dan Guthrie). Hank also had two Ospreys at Zuma on the 20th.

Black Oystercatchers have been seen on the isolated (and unvisited) breakwater across the mouth of L.A. Harbor — three there on 12 September (Henry Childs) and eight there last spring (LAAS, 4 May) — but are they nesting? Both Black (50) and Ruddy (25) Turnstones were also on the breakwater. But turnstones are seldom seen inland; therefore, three Ruddys at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh (Kimball Garrett and Fred Heath, 31 August) are noteworthy. Solitary Sandpipers were solitary, infrequent, and widely reported from at least eight locations from the Santa Maria River mouth to the Mexican border. An adult Red Knot at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh (Kimball Garrett, 31 August) was unusual inland; a small number of juveniles were in the vicinity during September. Not many Pectoral Sandpipers were reported to 20 September, but Baird's (always early) were numerous, especially inland, with a high count of 27 in the Antelope Valley on 21 August (Jon Dunn). A juvenile Stilt Sandpiper at the Edwards marsh 27-31 August (Starr Saphir and Jan Cupples), and another at the nearby sewage ponds in Lancaster on 20 September (Larry Sansone, *et al*) were the only reports away from the Salton Sea where they are regular. Three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported on a sod farm at Pt. Mugu (Bob Doe, 13 September), and one on 19 September (Kimball Garrett, *et al*).

Jaegers are seldom reported away from the ocean, thus a Parasitic at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds (Larry Sansone, *et al*, 20 September) and twelve Parasitics at the Salton Sea on 12 September

were extraordinary. Almost unbelievable was the presence of two **Long-tailed Jaegers** at the Salton Sea the same day (Guy McCaskie, *et al*). **Laughing Gulls** are expected at the south end of the Salton Sea in summer, but are less common at the north end where one was seen on 18 August (Dan Guthrie). A **Franklin's Gull** was near Long Beach in early September (Brian Daniels). **Black Skimmers** sometimes wander north along the coast in fall, as was the case with seven at McGrath State Park near Ventura on 14 September (Bertha Raines and Roger Lindfield). Again this month alcids were found unusually far south — seven **Common Murres** in a tight flock off Dana Pt., Orange Co. (Shum Suffel, 31 August) and, 200 miles northwest, a hundred or more murres at Pt. Sal, along with at least nine **Marbled Murrelets** (Richard Webster and Paul Lehman, 12 September). A **Craveri's Murrelet** in a rocky cove near Marineland on 10 August was reported by Mitch Heindel.

A Gila Woodpecker reported near Aguanga, in Riverside Co. near the San Diego Co. line (Lester McClung, 13 September) was far west of the Colorado River where this species is common, and some ninety miles northwest of the nearest small population in Brawley. Single **Eastern Kingbirds** (always early migrants) were found in the Antelope Valley 30 August and 20 September (Jon Dunn) and near Zuma Beach, Malibu on the 21st (the Brodskins); up to six were at the bird refuge in Santa Barbara through September (Paul Lehman and Louis Bevier). Big Sycamore Canyon provided a good variety of flycatchers on 19 September — **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, **Western Wood-Pewees**, three or four **Willow Flycatchers**, an equal number of **Western Flycatchers**, and best of all, a single **Least Flycatcher** (Kimball Garrett, *et al*). A **Rock Wren** stopped by Tricia Glatz's West Los Angeles woodpile on 17 September, an unlikely spot for this species.

Vireos and warblers were found in increasing numbers as Sep-



Send any interesting bird observations to:
Shum Suffel, 1105 No. Holliston Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104



WESTERN TANAGER

EDITOR Mary Lawrence Test

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tember progressed. **Yellow** and **Wilson's Warblers** were the most common migrants throughout the area. Single **Red-eyed Vireos** were at Gaviota State Beach (Jim Greaves, 14 September), near Santa Barbara on 11 September, and at Pt. Fermin on 10 September (Matt Dinsmore); two more were in San Diego. A **Black-and-white Warbler** greeted Lee Jones and Kimball Garrett at their abode in Topanga Canyon on 18 September. A **Prothonotary Warbler** was below San Diego 17-21 September. **Virginia's Warblers** were found in the Antelope Valley (Jon Dunn, 4 September), just above the bridge at Big Sycamore Canyon (Richard Webster, 11 September), and at Zuma Beach (Jon Dunn, 21 September). **Lucy's Warblers**, almost unknown along the coast until a few years ago, were at Harbor Lake (an adult by Jon Atwood, 2-5 September), at McGrath (Richard Webster, 11 September), at Zuma Beach (Barry and Terry Clark, late September), at Gaviota on 12 September, and below San Diego (three in late August; Elizabeth Copper).

In central California there was a rare **Golden-winged Warbler** at Moss Beach, San Mateo Co., and several **Blackpolls** and **Chestnut-sideds**, a **Blackburnian**, a **Canada**, and a few **American Redstarts** on Pt. Reyes. Locally there was a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Newport Harbor High School (Sylvia Ranney, 14 September); a very early **Blackburnian Warbler** in Tapia Park on 1 September (Bill Carr); a **Blackpoll** inland (where they are less frequent than along the coast) at Tujunga (Pat Nelson, 18-20 September); **Northern Waterthrushes** in the South Coast Botanic Gardens (Dave Andres, 12 September) and at Harbor Lake (Jon Dunn, 17 September); and our only local report of an **American Redstart**, one at Morongo Valley (Bob McKernan, 10 September). A **Connecticut Warbler** at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley (Richard Webster, 20 September) was perhaps the best warbler of the season, rivaled only by a female **Mourning Warbler** which was uncharacteristically cooperative during its several days' stay along a creek in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara Co. (Paul Lehman and Richard Webster, 20 September). A **Canada Warbler** was on Pt. Loma on 7 September (Rich Stallcup).

Bonsall Road, just inland from Zuma Beach, produced a female **Orchard Oriole** (Terry and Barry Clark, 16 September), and a male **Summer Tanager** (Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin, 20 September). An immature male **Scarlet Tanager** (very rare here) was seen in Carpinteria (Louis Bevier, 21-22 September). A **Dickcissel** below San Diego (Guy McCaskie, 7 September) was the only one reported. A male **Indigo Bunting** stayed one day only at the Arcadia Arboretum (Barbara Cohen, 7 August). Everyone's favorite winter yard bird is the **White-crowned Sparrow**. There was a very early report of three in Griffith Park on 7 September (Justin Russell).

Special trips in November might include Upper Newport Bay for the high tides on 21, 22, or 23 November (8-9 a.m.) which should bring three species of rails, and possibly even **Black Rails** and **Sharp-tailed Sparrows** into view; the big field west of Dominguez Hills State College in Carson where three species of **pipits** and three species of **longspurs** have been found in the large flocks of **Horned Larks**; and, for a longer trip, Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley where **Rusty Blackbirds**, **Harris'** and **Tree Sparrows**, and **Lewis' Woodpeckers** are probable, with the possibility of something really rare — **Olivaceous Flycatcher**, **Streak-backed Oriole**, and **Varied Bunting** (at nearby Mesquite Springs) have been seen there in November. ☺

CALENDAR

Los Angeles Audubon Headquarters, Library, Bookstore, and Nature Museum are located at Audubon House, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046. Telephone: (213) 876-0202. Hours: 10-3, Tuesday through Saturday.

Audubon Bird Reports:

Los Angeles (213) 874-1318
Santa Barbara (805) 964-8240

Pelagic Trips

Starting immediately, LAAS is bowing out of the pelagic trip business north of Morro Bay. Arrangements for pelagic trips will be made through:

Debi Love Millichap

302 Oxford Way

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Tel: (408) 425-8111, after 6 p.m.

Scheduled trips out of Monterey Bay for fall and winter cost approximately \$19.00. Trips and leaders include:

Sun., Nov. 16 — Jeri Langham & Alan Baldrige

Sun., Dec. 7 — Bill Reese & Steve Bailey

Sat., Jan. 3 — Ted Chandik & Alan Baldrige

Sat., Feb. 21 — Ted Chandik & Arnold Small

Write for details. Space still available for all trips.



Announcing —

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The cost of *Birds of Southern California* after January 1, 1981 will be \$18.95. This price differs from what was printed last month because it has been decided to go with hard-cover binding for the book. However, until the first of the year, you can still order your copy at a 10% discount (with pre-payment) off the originally announced price. This amounts to only \$14.35. Make check payable to LAAS and mail before December 31 to "Southern California Birds" c/o Audubon House. Please add \$1.00 for postage and handling. California residents add \$.86 sales tax.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1 — Ballona Wetlands. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Ballona Creek Bridge at the north end of Pacific Ave. Emphasis on common and migrant shore- and waterbirds. Leaders: Bob and Roberta Shanman (545-2867, after 6).

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9 — Trippet Ranch in Topanga Cyn to look at chaparral birds and plants. Vagrants are possible. Meet at 7 a.m. Beginners welcome! Leaders: Jerry Haigh (455-1696) and George Davis.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11 — Evening Meeting. 8 p.m. Plummer Park. **Tom Keeney**, Terrestrial Ecologist, will speak on seasonal movements of migratory birds in the California deserts: desert resting spots, effects of topography, migration fluctuations and densities, and more.
Conservation Committee Meeting, 6:45 p.m. Do attend!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15 — Kimball Garrett and Arnold Small will present *Identification of California Birds*, A Saturday Workshop, Part I, through UCLA Extension. Program focuses specifically on coastal birds, shorebirds, diurnal raptors, owls and vagrant land birds. Cost: \$35.00. Information: (213) 825-7093.

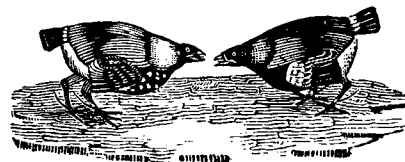
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23 — Come to the Antelope Valley to look for wintering raptors, work the fields for Longspurs and others. Meet at the Lamont-Odett Overlook on Hwy 14 at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Be prepared for any weather. Leader: Fred Heath (828-6524).

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29 — Spend the morning at Tapia Park and Malibu Lagoon with Art & Janet Cupples (981-4746). Beginners welcome! Meet at 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 — Ballona Wetlands with the Shanmans. 8 a.m. Same details as November 1st.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 — Evening Meeting. 8 p.m. **Dr. Ralph Schreiber**, Curator of Ornithology at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, will present a program entitled "Christmas Island: Problems in Paradise."
Conservation Committee Meeting, 6:45 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 — LAAS Banquet at the Sportsmans Lodge. Save the date!



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