

# WESTERN TANAGER

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## Birding the Society Islands

by Ed Tarvyd

**F**rench Polynesia is poor in numbers of species of birds represented but the birds are spectacular nonetheless. About 90 species have been recorded for all of French Polynesia combined, and 59 species are known from the Society Islands.

Each August, my wife and I lead an adventuresome group of students on a study tour of a portion of French Polynesia. The "Natural History of Tahiti" class makes its circle island tours of Tahiti and Moorea, investigating biological, cultural and historical aspects of these seven-million-year-old islands. Amidst the trips to the coral reefs, museums and *maraes* (ancient stone, sacrificial temples), we always site interesting groups of birds. Shorelines along both islands reveal foraging Reef Herons (both grey and white color phases). These are fairly common in the shallow water

lagoons, along the beaches, and in the rivers and swamps where they seem to constantly be foraging for their meals of small fish and invertebrates.

Frigatebirds and White Terns are often seen in the harbor area of Papeete. Two of the world's five species of frigatebirds breed in the Society Islands; these are the Lesser Frigatebird and the Great Frigatebird. Both are well known for their clemptomaniac behavior of stealing fish from boobies and terns. Out at sea, the presence of frigatebirds was always a sign that fishing was potentially good. Yet, as in Hawaii, the presence of frigatebirds close to land meant that bad weather was imminent, for storms had driven them from the open sea. Over this century, frigatebirds have been used as message carriers between various tropical Pacific islands, carrying written messages inserted in tied bamboo slivers attached to their feet. The pterodactyl-like silhouettes of frigatebirds are a familiar sight, hang-gliding over the shores and seas of the islands of Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora and Tetiaroa.

Wading along the rocky shorelines are the frequent Wandering Tattlers, bobbing and probing the sands for buried invertebrates. Valleys on eastern Tahiti and the airport on Moorea always seem to provide magnificent sitings of the Australian Swamp Harrier (introduced from Australia in 1885 to control rats) whose impressive wingspan is up to four feet. This is Tahiti's only falconiform. It presently subsists on rodents, but in the past it probably greatly contributed to the decline of many lowland avians.



"Tiare" (gardenia), the national plant of Tahiti



Hibiscus, the traditional plant of Polynesia

photographs by Tish Aaron



With all of Tahiti's and Moorea's marvels, it is Tetiaroa that magically beckons us back each and every year. This small atoll is the supreme queen of French Polynesia. In addition to its other attractions, this atoll houses the largest breeding colony of seabirds in the entire French Societies. Tetiaroa is located some 35 miles north of Tahiti. It is composed of some twelve small isles, or *motus*, surrounding a central placid lagoon. Protecting its fragility, a barrier reef encloses the entire complex from the open sea. At its widest points, the atoll measures seven km. by seven km. It is bathed by approximately 80 inches of rain annually and nowhere is land elevated any higher than ten feet above sealevel.

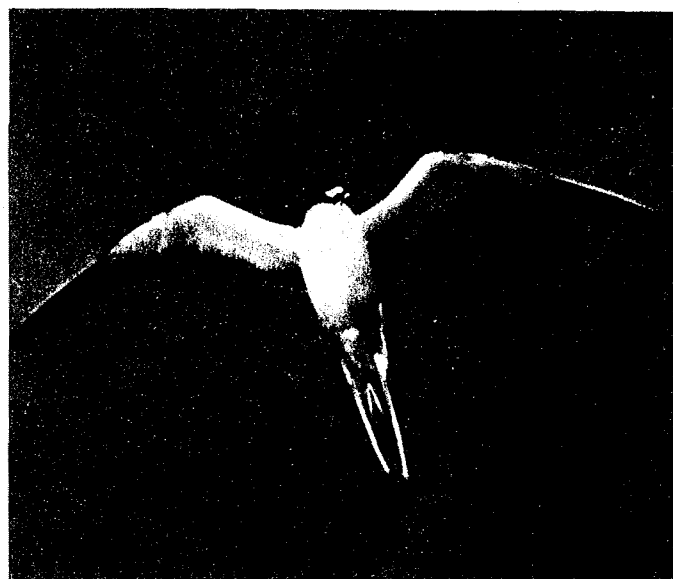
Historically, Tetiaroa was a refuge for Tahitian royalty during times of war. During periods of peace, it served as a vacation spot for members of the royal Pomare dynasty. The daughters and sons of the royal family went to Tetiaroa prior to their marriages. Light colored skin and an obese figure were considered signs of royalty, so while on Tetiaroa, the young men and women would recline in a covered area and be hand-fed by servants. Presently it is owned by Marlon Brando, whose Tahitian family operates a small resort on the most leeward *motu*, Onetahi. The atoll is a last refuge for the incredible coconut crab which, because of its size and delicious flesh, is non-existent on the major French Polynesian islands. Sea turtles still use the atoll for laying their egg clutches in buried sand nests.

"Bird Island" or Tahuna Rahi, supports the impressive avian breeding colony. This is a small sandy isle composed of blinding white decomposed coralline sand and a few dozen species of tropical plants. Its location is about a twenty-minutes' run by

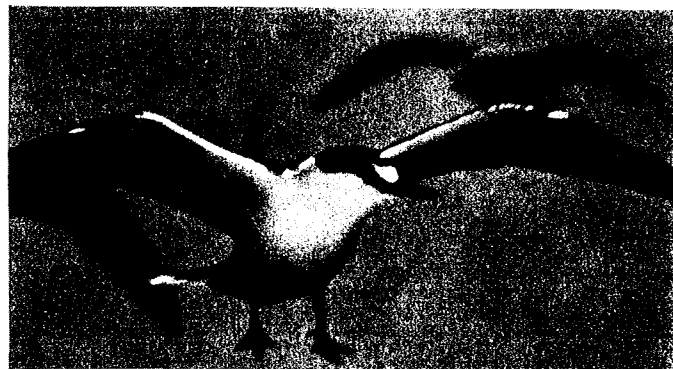
motor launch across the lagoon from Onetahi. Between June and mid-September this small speck of Polynesia supports a nesting population of Red-footed Boobies (the most common bird of the open-sea), Brown Boobies, Crested Terns, White (Fairy) Terns and noddies.

Depending on the size of our group wishing to visit "Bird Island" on a given day, either one or two motorized launches transport us across the lagoon to this unique birding site. While in transit, we are rewarded with glimpses of occasional birds in flight over the lagoon surface or sometimes groups of up to ten noisy Crested Terns perched on the solitary elevated coral pinnacle positioned in the center of the water-way.

As the craft nears "Bird Island", it anchors approximately 100 yards away in shallows about two feet deep. From here, we wade the rest of the way toward the *motu*. At first everything appears as a myriad of circling birds. Then we begin to discern the individual

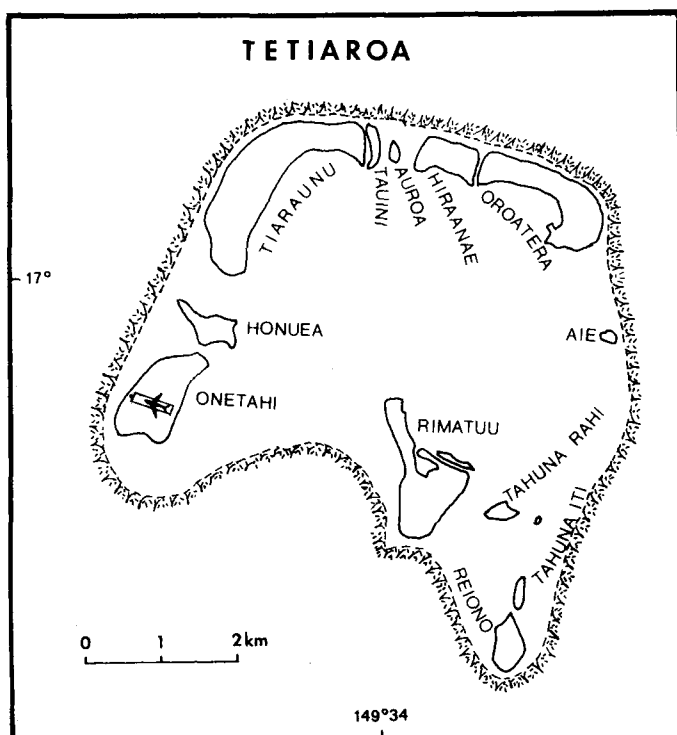


*Crested Tern in flight*



*Crested Terns in flight*

Ed Tarvyd is Professor of Zoology at Santa Monica College. Every summer he leads classes of students to Hawaii and Tahiti. This coming summer he will lead "Field Studies in the Natural History of Tahiti, Moorea and Tetiaroa," 15-30 August, and "Field Studies in Natural History and Marine Biology of Hawaii," 3-13 August. For further information or to enroll, contact Dean Rocky Young, Coordinator of Travel Studies, Santa Monica College, (213) 870-5150, ext. 209, or Ed Tarvyd (213) 870-2548, evenings.



species. To the north end of the isle rests a dead tree with its grey branches reaching out to the blue sky. On it rest the noddies and Crested Terns facing into the tropical wind for an easy escape.

Upon scanning the zone of heliotrope trees located just inland from the compact sand beach, one begins to make out the various booby nests situated in the spreading branches. The upper canopies house nests occupied by either white, downy Red-footed Booby young or the incubating parents. The shaded undersurface contains the occupied nests of the Brown Boobies. The leaf-littered, well shaded ground under neighboring shrubs supports the nest of the Crested Terns with their newly hatched, cryptically colored young standing about frozen in their defensive postures.

Further inland we encounter the coconut palms and the various stands of *Casuarina* trees. Focusing our binoculars into the lower branches, we see the White Terns carefully balancing their single eggs, laid on a bare branch.



*Red-footed Booby on nest*



*Brown Boobies on egg*

By slowly but carefully wandering about this enchanted retreat in French Polynesia, multiple aspects of bird behavior and ecology begin to unfold before our eyes. We wonder what duration of time the adults spend away from their nests fishing, and which species and quantity of fish are being caught by each nesting species of bird. As the thermoregulatory gular flutters of perched boobies go on, we wish we had brought along a stop watch. Prey-predator relationships come to mind as land crabs are suddenly discovered climbing in the trees at six-foot elevations. The same crosses our mind when a carcass of a ground nestling is found half dragged into the burrow of a land crab. We ponder the quantity of nitrogen added to these barren sandy soils by the sea-bird population.

Before we realize it, hours have slipped by in a flash. Suddenly it's time to disembark from this small piece of paradise for the voyage back to Onetahi. Yet the indelible impressions from this visit will remain with us and our students for a life time. 🐦



*Noddy Terns on branch*

photographs by Lynne Tareyd

#### *Suggested Readings:*

*Birds of Tahiti*, J.-Cl. Thibault and Cl. Rives (English Version by D.T. Holyoak) Les editions du Pacifique, 1975

*Birds of French Polynesia*, Phillip L. Bruner, Pacific Scientific Information Center, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1972

*South Pacific Birds*, John E. du Pont, Delaware Museum of Natural History, Monograph Series No. 3, 1976

#### *Fauna and Flora Mentioned:*

*Cocos nucifera*, coconut palm

*Casuarina equisetifolia*, beef-wood or AITO

*Messerschmidia argentea*, tree heliotrope

*Sterna bergii*, Crested (Swift) Tern or TARAPAPA

*Anous stolidus*, Brown Noddy or OIO or OA

*Gygis alba*, White (Fairy) Tern or PIRA'E or 'ITATA'E

*Sula sula*, Red-footed Booby or UA'AO

*Sula leucogaster*, Brown Booby or A'O

*Cardisoma carniflex*, land crab or TOURLOUROU

*Birgus latro*, coconut crab

*Fregata* spp (two species: Lesser Frigatebird, *F. ariel* and Great Frigatebird, *F. minor*), Frigatebird (Man o' war) or OTAHA

*Circus approximans*, Swamp Harrier or MANU'AMA MO'A

*Egretta sacra*, Reef Heron or OTU'U

*Heteroscelus incanus*, Wandering Tattler or 'URIRI

# Research in Review

by Kimball Garrett

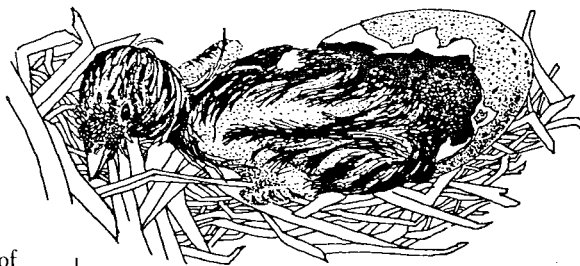


The nesting season is upon us, and the hints of courtship and nest-building from our resident species (such as Great Horned Owls and California Thrashers) will soon give way to a torrent of breeding activity from residents and summer visitants alike. This seems, then, like an appropriate time to begin a consideration of local studies of nesting birds. The facets of avian breeding biology which have aroused the scientific curiosity of ornithologists are varied. Much attention has been paid to the adaptive strategies of breeding birds: their nests (structure, placement, insulation, and spatial relationship to areas where other activities take place), their eggs (clutch size, physiology), their incubation behavior (schedules of nest attentiveness, adaptations to harsh climates), their breeding seasons (timing of nesting in relation to resource availability or other factors), their strategies of care for the young, and so forth. Community ecologists are interested in knowing which types of breeding birds can coexist in an area and what factors limit the number of ecologically similar species which breed in an area. Taxonomists may be hard at work in the breeding season looking for evidence of interbreeding of similar forms or trying to elucidate the mechanisms which prevent or reduce interbreeding. Conservationists and management-oriented ornithologists look forward to each breeding season as an opportunity to assess population trends (of common species as well as sensitive or threatened species).

Future articles will deal with specific approaches to some of the problems listed above, but let's concern ourselves this month with efforts to answer the most basic question about breeding biology of birds: Which birds nest where? A number of large-scale attempts to answer this question are repeated annually in North America; these efforts vary greatly in their approach and methodology, and are briefly described below. We'll close with a tempting proposal to initiate a local study of breeding bird distribution.

The most basic method of contributing to our knowledge of breeding birds involves simple record-keeping. All observers should make a habit of recording, in their field notes, every active nest observed (along with as much information as can be obtained — through time, preferably — without causing significant disturbance to the birds). Nest structure, nest location, clutch size, hatching and fledging success (and the relevant information on species, locality and date) should be noted when possible. Efforts to compile the nesting information obtained by individual amateur observers have been led most successfully by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology with their Nest Record Card file.

Qualitative reporting of breeding distribution of birds is found in every summer season issue of *American Birds*; of special interest to the regional editors of this journal are range extensions and contractions, and significant population trends. A more quantitative analysis of breeding bird distribution is presented in the January "Population Studies" issue of *American Birds*; 219 breeding bird censuses were published in the last issue alone. These breeding bird censuses are of value not only because they involve absolute counts of breeding pairs on a given study plot, but also because such counts are presented along with a detailed (and often quantitative) description of the habitat. These plots are typically several dozen acres in area, and are censused repeatedly to ensure accurate absolute totals. Most plots are censused year after year so trends through time may be assessed.



A quantitative study of breeding distribution of birds is sponsored annually by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This is the "Breeding Bird Survey" (see *WESTERN Tanager*, April 1980). This survey involves a 24.5-mile roadside census, with three-minute stops every 0.5 miles; as such, it serves as an index of bird breeding populations, rather than an absolute count. The surveys (over 100 were conducted in California alone last year) are repeated year after year under similar conditions, and therefore provide an excellent index of population trends. I've run my route along the Angeles Crest Highway high in the San Gabriel Mtns. since 1971, and am impressed both by the general consistency of results from year to year and by the few surprising changes that pop up every year. Because of the standardization of methods, I can say with confidence, for example, that the Whip-poor-will colonized the Big Pines area of my survey route in 1977 (with calling birds present every year thereafter); I can also say that small but regular summering populations of Hermit and MacGillivray's Warblers occur along my survey route, a fact which was not well documented previously. (Anyone interested in getting involved in the Breeding Bird Survey program should contact the Southern California coordinator, Lee Jones.)

This brings us to perhaps the most ambitious investigation of breeding bird distribution that can be attempted: The breeding bird atlas. These atlases (detailed maps of breeding distributions based on breeding bird searches of quadrats in a grid that covers a desired geographical area such as a county, state, or country) require tremendous observer effort, and have been successful thus far only in areas (such as Britain) where birdwatcher densities are high. Exemplary (and downright mind-boggling) is "The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland" which was compiled by J.T.R. Sharrock for the British Trust for Ornithology and Irish Wildbird Conservancy. It was estimated that some 10-15,000 field observers took part in this monumental five-year study, combing every one of the 3,862 ten-kilometer squares of the grid. Evidence of breeding was sought for each species occurring in each of the grids and, ultimately, a map could be generated showing which of the squares were occupied; with nearly 4000 squares, the maps were indeed detailed. Other atlas projects have been conducted in Europe, but North America has lagged sadly behind (there simply aren't enough birdwatchers). Some initial attempts have been made in North America, and atlas projects are likely to flourish in the coming years. In 1976 the Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory and Marin Audubon Society initiated a three-year Marin County atlas project, using 220 2.5-km quadrats. The results greatly enhanced the knowledge of breeding bird distribution in the county and provided a baseline for assessing future trends.

Allow me to make a modest proposal. Los Angeles County harbors a large number of field birders. It also embraces the extremes of urbanization and wilderness (and the inevitable conflict between the two). Bird diversity in the county is high (over 420 bird species have been recorded, and many of these breed locally). Perhaps the county is ripe for an atlas project of its own (or maybe the entire state of California is ready). So ambitious a project must be planned with great care and foresight, but the time is approaching when we should think seriously of attempting it. Keep your eyes open for the beginning plans for such a project.



# Those Sociable Woodpeckers

by Henry E. Childs, Jr.

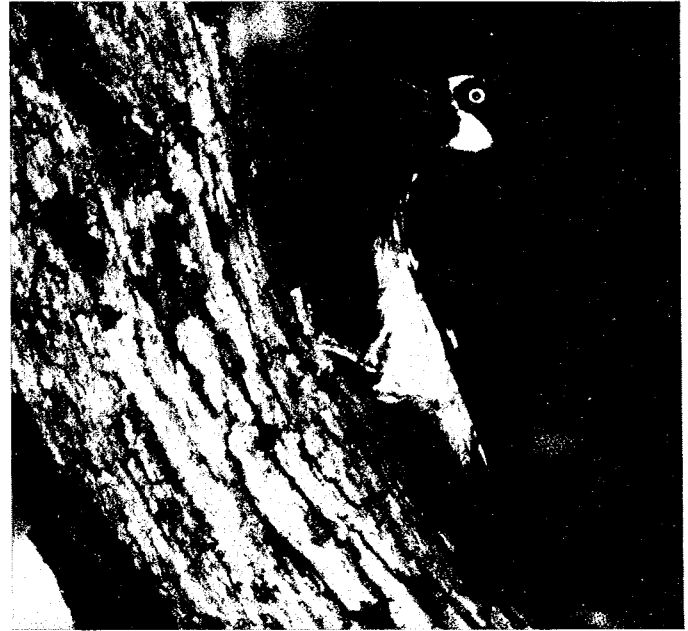
Those clowns, those splendid, formally dressed clowns, the Acorn Woodpeckers, are familiar to even the most lackadaisical bird watcher. Their antics, as they chase and call around a tree or post used as a granary for their acorn storing, provide an easy opportunity for the observation of bird behavior. These birds are noisy, colorful and obviously sexually dichromatic — females have black between the white forehead and the red nape. These birds are also audacious and not easily disturbed by patient observers. They are nonmigratory and so they can be observed on their territory all year round.

Much is known about the natural history of this species whose distribution includes much of the Western United States and Central Mexico. *The California Woodpecker and I* by W.E. Ritter (published in 1938) summarizes knowledge of the bird to that date. Recently (1976), Michael and Barbara MacRoberts published *Social Organizations and Behavior of the Acorn Woodpecker in Central Coastal California*, and it is mainly from this monograph that this report is derived, and to which interested readers are referred.

Perhaps the first observation you might make is that you rarely see only one Acorn Woodpecker; there are always others around for this is a cooperative species. Groups averaging six individuals occupy one territory, and these groups consist of individuals of all ages. Territories range from 3.5 to 9 hectares, and banded birds at the Hastings Reservation in the Carmel Valley have lived at least six years.

Activities of the group are oriented around one or more granaries where as many as 5,000 acorns may be stored. Each granary is the creation of many generations of woodpeckers, constructing new holes each year and reusing old ones. These are activities which constantly occupy the woodpecker's attention. (This storage activity can present a problem when shake roofs are used as granaries. I remember once when an attic was almost filled with acorns when a hole went all the way through!) The acorn is carried to a special place — an anvil — to be eaten; here the acorn can be held and cracked open easily.

Spring and summer find their diet shifting to insects, and the birds spend considerable time "flycatching." A less well-known component of their diet is sap, which is obtained in much the same way as their relative, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, does it. But the spacing of the woodpecker's sap holes is not linear, but more like the acorn holes in a granary.



photograph by Herb Clarke

“...you rarely see only one Acorn Woodpecker.”

Acorn Woodpeckers breed cooperatively. That is, like the Florida Scrub Jay, other members of the group are “helpers at the nest.” Generally, there is only one nest per group at any given time, and most of the group assist in the incubation, brooding and feeding duties at this nest. After the young have fledged, the older birds continue to feed them for several months, and in some cases this dependency continues for almost a year.

It is interesting that the reproductive rate of these woodpeckers is low. Only 60 percent of the groups studied bred and only 40 percent produced fledglings. This results in the group's being composed of older birds which represent mainly closely related family units. Immigration as a method of group recruitment occurs in only a small percentage of cases.

Thus the Acorn Woodpecker is a remarkable bird. Through time, it continues to modify and improve its territory by increasing the granary capacity and sap holes, utilizing the predictable but variable acorn crop as a base. It cooperates in the raising of the young. It maintains a stable population by limiting reproductive activities within the group. We could learn a lot from this bird!

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at LAAS  
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If you are interested in helping out on Wednesdays, call Carol Niles at Audubon House (876-0202), or Olga Clarke (249-5537).

# Topics of Conservation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

**T**he king is dead, long live the king! Politics, politics. A tax-exempt organization is supposed to be above the political battle. We can't ask our members to vote for or against anyone running for office, no matter how strongly we feel. The Internal Revenue Service takes a dim view if we do and our tax status gets the axe. But we're allowed to speak our mind after the election. So what happened to the environment on November 4th? As of this moment (early February) not much has transpired. We're holding our breath, however, to see what the honeymoon will bring.

The last four years, though a disaster according to the electorate, have been pretty fair for the environment. Jimmy Carter's heart was in the right place. The Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the President's Council on Environmental Quality and even the reluctant Bureau of Land Management were pointed toward protecting our health and saving our remaining wild areas from uncontrolled development. Most of the agencies were staffed in large part by people with a genuine concern for public welfare, and a lot of good was accomplished. Early in his administration, Mr. Carter, perhaps naively, compiled a "hit list" of notorious pork-barrel water projects around the country. The reality of the political process forced him to give in on many of them, but he won a few battles and demonstrated his disapproval of environmental damage paid for by the taxpayers for the benefit of special interests. Though his conservation inclinations were sincere, the overwhelming energy problem made him falter. In a frantic search for a solution, the administration embraced the idea of an Energy Mobilization Board that would have by-passed State and local environmental safeguards in siting large power plants. And the \$88 billion Synthetic Fuels Corporation still threatens to strip-mine huge chunks of the western states in search of shale oil and coal.

Carter's conservation hallmark was the appointment of one of the best Interior Secretaries this country has ever had. Cecil D. Andrus, the former governor of Idaho, worked long and hard for what he called "the crown jewels" of America, the vast, unblemished wilderness of Alaska. Thousands of people worked for many years to preserve this last great primitive frontier in North America. With the powerful support of Interior, Congress fought off an economic land-grab to pass the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. This act doubled the size of our national parks and wildlife refuges and tripled the size of the Wilderness System; it protects an area as large as California. It encompasses wetland nesting grounds for millions of waterfowl, dozens of wild rivers, coastal areas teeming with fish and marine mammals, and some of the most spectacularly beautiful scenery on earth.

Andrus seemed to be aware of the magnitude and breadth of environmental problems and he almost always came out on the side of the angels. He designated the California North Coast Rivers as parts of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, thus protecting them from clamoring agribusiness and real estate developers who want to divert water to Southern California. He ordered the Birds of Prey National Conservation Area along the Snake River be withdrawn from agricultural intrusion. This will save the nesting and foraging area of the largest concentration of raptors on the continent. Some years ago, when reports surfaced

that Andrus might issue permits to shoot Golden Eagles purportedly taking lambs, Los Angeles Audubon, among others, wrote to him in protest. He wrote back that "the issuance of kill permits is not a viable management tool" and that he had no intention of issuing them. He made a splendid speech to an enthusiastic audience at the National Audubon convention the following year, indicating his intense concern for the environment. Acting for the administration, Andrus supported and implemented the Surface Mining Act to minimize the effects of strip-mining. The Redwood National Park was enlarged to a realistic size that prevented further logging of the watershed. In short, he embodied the accepted, traditional role of a Secretary of the Interior: the protector of our natural resources.

**P**rince Hamlet said to his mother, "Look here, upon this picture, and on this," comparing his noble father, murdered, with his step-father, the suspected murderer. Let us hope that history disproves this fanciful metaphor; but the contrast between Cecil D. Andrus and James G. Watt is dramatic and ominous. Mr. Reagan's Secretary of the Interior has an interesting dossier. He was the founder and head of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a "public interest" law firm representing land developers, oil and mining companies, cattlemen, bankers and others. His firm has vigorously fought all attempts to reduce over-grazing on public lands or prevent development in potential wilderness areas. Watt and his foundation supporters say they are environmentalists who simply want a better "balance" in the way land is managed; the rest of us are extremists who want to lock up the land for elitist recreation. Mr. Watt has asked, "What is the real motive of the extreme environmentalists, who appear determined to accomplish their objectives at whatever cost to society: Is it to simply protect the environment? Is it to delay energy development? Is it to weaken America?" Does anyone hear an echo from the late, unlamented Joe McCarthy?


Mr. Watt grandly agreed not to participate in any actions involving his firm when, at his Senate confirmation hearing, he was accused of an inherent conflict of interest. When he took over the department he immediately fired over twenty top officials. His choice for the top legal job in Interior is a lawyer for Montana Power Company, one of the clients of the Mountain States Legal Foundation. As the *Los Angeles Times* headline put it, "Watt Purge Paves Way for Development-oriented Agency." The fox is guarding the hen house.

And what about President Ronald Reagan? A palpable shudder could be felt in the environmental community when Mr. Reagan was elected. His public utterances had blossomed with bouquets bristling with thorns: when you've seen one redwood, you've seen them all; conservation means being hot in the summer and cold in the winter; trees create 80 percent of nitrogen oxide pollution. Is this the kind of sensitivity and intelligence the nation is crying for? This is the man who says, "I am an environmentalist." Mr. Reagan wants to get government off our backs. His friends in industry complain bitterly about intolerable regulations that are reducing productivity, increasing their costs and preventing expansion of the free market. Do we scrap the EPA and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and let Hooker Chemical Company give us another Love Canal? Do we plunge on blindly with more nuclear plants and pray that somehow we'll get no more

Three Mile Islands? What about pesticides and sterile farm workers, power plant pollutants and acid rain? There is no doubt that the new administration is determined to launch a head-on assault on most of the environmental laws and the agencies that administer them. If we "unleash the private sector" all our troubles will be over. No one denies the economic morass we've fallen into, but must we be rescued by a blanket of carcinogens or by strip-mining all of Wyoming?

Mr. Reagan has many eager helping hands. The Senate, Republican at last, has militant anti-environmentalists in key positions. James McClure is now chairman of the Senate Energy Committee. He voted against the windfall profits tax for the oil companies and is gungho for more nuclear plants and the even more dangerous breeder reactor. He voted to weaken strip-mining laws. He favors a re-evaluation of the National Parks system which he says has been "overloaded in recent years." Senator Ted Stevens is the new Majority Whip; he almost single-handedly sank the Alaska Lands Bill a year ago and says that National Wildlife Refuges "should not ... be closed to mining ... a different direction must be set." Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada is one of the organizers of the Sagebrush Rebellion that would hand over Federal land to the states and so ease the road to maximum exploitation. Laxalt is a personal friend of and trusted advisor to the President. Mr. Reagan is an enthusiastic supporter of the Rebellion and calls himself a fellow Rebel.



**T**he next four years will be difficult but probably not fatal. Those of us who treasure the wild places and our health will have to work harder. In their own words, our adversaries are going to play hard ball. We will have to sharpen our own batting eye and bear down with the old fast ball. We'll have to be more alert to challenges to the Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act and all the other hard-won legislation of the past ten years. We will have to rally our friends to oppose the kind of "progress" that destroys our living space for the short-term profit of a few large interests. Our biggest asset is the powerful desire of the American people for a decent environment. Every opinion poll reveals that the great majority wants to preserve what we have and make it better. And is willing to pay for it. They're in the bleachers now waiting for us to go to bat. Let's give them a grand-slam home run. 

## Chaparral Fire Claims Starr Ranch

Almost the entire 3,800-acre Starr Ranch National Audubon Sanctuary, located in Orange County, was blackened by one of the 11 fires which raced through the tinder-dry scrublands of the Southland in the fall of 1980.

Starr Ranch Manager, Jeff Froke, reports that the 23 November fire destroyed several barns, out-buildings and well pumps, but spared the facility's main buildings. Jeff cites the heroic efforts of the fire-fighting team rushed in from the Stanislaus National Forest for saving the major ranch structures.

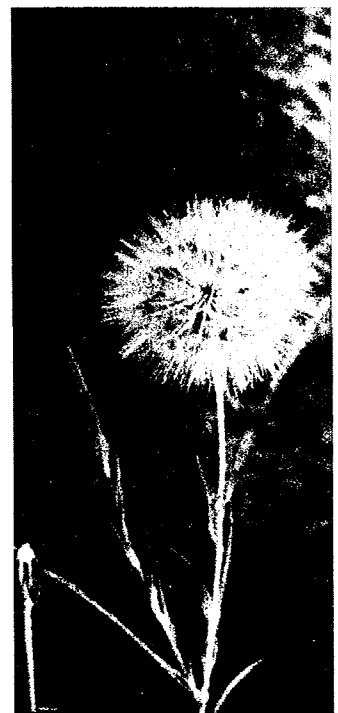
### Wildlife Losses Not Catastrophic

Even though the fire burned 90-95 percent of the sanctuary's plant cover, wildlife losses do not appear to be catastrophic. It is thought that most animals probably escaped the blazes by fleeing to safer adjacent areas, or by hiding in deep underground burrows. In surveys conducted since the fire, Jeff has found a variety of small birds and mammals dead in the ashes; they probably died from suffocation. More impressive than the animal mortality, however, Jeff reports, was the large number of animals that became distracted during the fire. Many deer, bobcats, badgers and woodrats were observed wandering around in the daylight, apparently confused by the sudden lack of cover.

### Fire to Exert Positive Influence

Now that the smoke has lifted, Jeff predicts the fire will have a positive influence on the ecologic character of the sanctuary. Chaparral scrub ecosystems have evolved with fire as a key environmental factor, and a healthy recovery of most species is expected within five to ten years.

While brush fires in Southern California are common, the opportunity to study post-fire succession on protected lands is rare. With this new research challenge at Starr Ranch, National Audubon should be able to make a significant contribution to knowledge of wildlife-fire ecology.



# On Coping with Non-birders

by Dorothy Dimsdale



birders spouse leads a lonely life. A birder can bird *anywhere* as long as the outdoors can be seen; almost every other hobby is limited to either specific time periods or to particular localities, or both. From another viewpoint, one could say that a birder can be a pain in the neck 24 hours a day! The following exchanges must have taken place countless times between any given birder and non-birder spouse traveling by car.

*Birder:* Look! Sitting in the road! Must be two feet tall, with bright orange wings and a crest!

*Spouse:* Oops, sorry! I couldn't stop. Was it a new one? It must be a mile away by now. Ah, well, I expect there'll be *lots* more!

*Birder:* On the wire! It's a Mot Mot, but I can't tell what kind. Can you slow down a bit? It's hard to see when we're doing 75.

*Spouse:* I think we'd better get on. The restaurants get crowded by noon.

*Long silence. Then, 15 minutes later:*

*Spouse:* Would you like me to go back?

*Spouse:* (*casually*) What has a long forked tail, is sort of black and white, maybe yellow, with blue or perhaps grey on its back?

*Birder:* Where is it?

*Spouse:* Oh, it was on the verge of the road about two miles back. I couldn't stop with this truck on my tail.

*Parked on the road edge:*

*Spouse:* When you've looked at that bird, come quickly, there's one over here you should see.

*Birder:* Thanks! Oh, it's a House Finch.

*Spouse:* I *thought* I'd seen it before.

If any of these exchanges sound familiar, you are one of many birders who have partners with a minimal interest in birding. Frustrating it may be, but do you ever consider what a drag you are to your partner?

Lugging binoculars and bird book(s) everywhere — and I do mean everywhere. For instance: a shriek of rapture was heard coming from inside a rest-room in the San Gabriel Mountains when a Western Bluebird was discovered to be nesting there. Another time, through the window of a church during a funeral, a Long-spur species was sighted. The specifications were not noted as the binoculars were wrenched from the birder's hands by the indignant spouse.


I've found, however, that it's a good idea to carry binoculars everywhere, so that a bird can be examined quietly, even while you carry on a conversation on quite another subject. I remember in Galway, Ireland, I was helping to repair an old stone wall above Loch Corrib and I was discussing with my non-birder friend the problem of keeping sheep out of the vegetable garden, when a Yellow Wagtail came and perched 20 feet away. I gazed at it with my heart pounding and my mind yelling "Yippee! Another lifer!" But I managed to keep my voice on an even keel, continuing to discuss the sheep and heft the stones.

Another time, in Dorset, England, I was feeding an orphaned lamb from a bottle. It's a job that requires all one's attention. When suddenly, through the barn door, I had my first sighting of a Greater Spotted Woodpecker. It landed in an apple tree at a suet feeder. Trying to balance the lamb and the bottle in one hand and binoculars in the other was proving too much. The farmer's wife, who was "mucking-out" a stable, looked up and said: "Be that ol' Woodpecker back again? He's only just come from going — been at it all mornin'." Well, I thought, if he's just come from going, it was likely that he'd come from going again. Not having any choice, I finished feeding the lamb, then took my time looking at the woodpecker and accepting a compliment from the farmer's wife, that "most townies don't know t'other from which, when it comes to birds."

There is, quite obviously, a *je ne sais quoi* about birding. I love my creature comforts and yet on a recent Monterey pelagic, there I stood, up forward, facing a cold wind and a driving fine rain. Feeling seasick, cold and wet, having sat (accidentally) in a puddle of seawater which had thoroughly soaked my nether regions, I then stood under a pipe which sloshed out more sea water, this time down the back of my neck. I was not happy.

I gazed out across the drizzle and shifting fog on an empty sea and swore I would never again set foot on a boat. Almost immediately, a black blob appeared not 150 yards from the boat and someone called "Get that bird!" The engines slowed and there, bobbing up and down before us was a Tufted Puffin. A life bird and my 400th State bird! Suddenly I was *wildly* happy. I felt no cold, no wet and I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else in the world, right at that moment. Try to explain that to a non-birder and they give you a sideways look.

The big problem for me with a non-birder has been finding an adequate answer to the question: "When you've seen the bird and identified it, what then?" Unwittingly, my long-suffering husband provided the answer: we were birding around Chichen Itza in Yucatan, an area rich in unfamiliar species. After about two hours (for a non-birder my husband is wonderfully tolerant, and an excellent spotter) he said: "I've noticed that when you're birding, a sort of peace of mind takes over and you seem utterly content."

He couldn't have been more right. For me, *that's* what it's all about. 

## Lee Jones to Lead Two Summer Tours

### The Unseen Greek Islands: 24 June — 11 July 1981

Spend 17 days sailing among thirteen Greek (and one Turkish) Islands in the Aegean Sea, aboard the 85-foot m/y *Viking of Kos*. The tour is designed for a maximum of 21 people; cost is \$2275 from Los Angeles, \$2025 from New York. This is not an intensive birding tour; emphasis will be on the culture and natural history of the islands.

### The Birds of Ecuador: 8 — 25 August 1981

Ecuador boasts more species of birds per square mile than any other country in the world. The itinerary of this intensive birding tour was chosen after careful evaluation of previous birding tours of Ecuador, and this one should be the best one yet. It includes visits to all the best birding spots — Tinalandia, Rio Palenque, the Andes, Coca Falls and a canoe trip down the Rio Napo to the famous Flotel and Limoncocha. The cost is \$1995, all inclusive.

For further information, contact Lee Jones, 604 South Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, CA 90290; (213) 455-2903.

## UCLA Extension Offers Courses

This spring, the UCLA Extension will once again offer courses of interest to Audubon members. Arnold Small (with the expert field assistance of Herb and Olga Clarke) will continue his **Field Studies of California Birds** in five Wednesday lectures and four Saturday field trips. The class begins 1 April and costs \$150.

Hartmut Walter, PhD, is offering a seminar in **Advanced Raptor Biology** which includes six Monday lectures and two Saturday field trips. Special focus will be placed on the study of falcons, the Bald Eagle and the California Condor. The first meeting of the class is on 6 April and the cost of the class is \$115.

Saturday 9 May, UCLA presents **Identification of California Birds: A Saturday Workshop, Part III**. In this popular workshop, Arnold Small and Kimball Garrett will discuss migrant birds, hummingbirds, pelagic birds and eastern vagrants, in lectures and discussions well illustrated with slides by Arnold Small. The cost for this workshop is \$35.

For further information on these Extension classes and others, contact the Department of Sciences, UCLA Extension, at (213) 825-7093.

## Bird Texas with Golden Gate Audubon

Golden Gate Audubon Society is sponsoring a spring birding trip to Texas, 18-30 April. This is a repeat of the popular 1978 GGAS trip which recorded more than 280 species.

This trip will include the lower Rio Grande Valley, the coast, plus an optional trip to Big Bend National Park (until 3 May). Trip leaders are Kenn Kaufman and Mike Wihler.

For information and reservations, write or call Mike Wihler at 2445 Vicente Street, San Francisco, CA 94116, (415) 665-6567, mornings.

## Great Blue Herons Return

The Great Blue Herons will begin arriving at Audubon Canyon Ranch, on Highway One in Stinson Beach, during February. By March first, the opening day of the Ranch season, their nesting activities — displaying, vocalizing, presentations, nesting repair and building — will be well underway in the redwood trees of Schwartz Grove.

The Ranch will be open to the public on week-ends and holidays, 1 March through 4 July, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There are telescopes set up at the Overlook and a naturalist will be on hand to help you enjoy the birds' activities.

This year Audubon Canyon Ranch is also offering a series of spring Seminars in natural history at nominal fees; for further information, write to Volunteer Canyon, 4800 Highway One, Stinson Beach, CA 94970. Seminars will include:

- 13-15 March — Illustration of Intertidal Life
- 20-22 March — A Week-end of Basket Weaving
- 3-5 April — Exploring the Bolinas Estuary
- 13-15 April — Small Animal Safari (A Family Program)
- 1-3 May — Secrets of Seashore Flowers
- 15-17 May — Waders and Wetlands

Audubon Canyon Ranch was created to protect and foster the breeding and feeding areas of Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. If you are headed anywhere in the San Francisco area this spring, don't fail to visit this impressive sanctuary and enjoy one of our State's most picturesque wetlands.

## Spring Birdathon Planned

National Audubon will hold its first annual Birdathon this spring. It is suggested that Birdathon counts be held either Saturday 25 April or Sunday 26 April (J.J. Audubon's birthday, 1785), but a different date may be set if local bird migration patterns, weather or other factors make that week-end unsuitable.

**Here's how Birdathon works:** A Birdathon is like a walk-a-thon or a jog-a-thon. Persons (counters) solicit pledges from sponsors who pledge a contribution of a specific amount for each different species of bird the counter spots during a given 24-hour period. Sponsors can sign up for any amount — from 1¢ to \$100 a species, or more! (Sponsors should be told about how many species a counter expects to see.)

The counter then goes out birding on Birdathon week-end and carefully notes each species he/she sees on the contest form. The total number of species is then tallied at the end of the day and the counter calls or writes each sponsor as soon as possible to collect pledges. It is a nice idea to provide your sponsor with a list of all the birds you managed to spot, especially if your sponsors are birders themselves. In other Birdathons, counters have actually written up an account of the excitement of the day so that sponsors can enjoy the whole event.

**Here's what Birdathon funds will do:** One third of the proceeds of a Chapter's Birdathon will be kept by the Chapter. One-third will be kept in the region (in our case Western Regional) to support such activities as lobbying at the State level, monitoring and shaping Federal projects, and holding workshops, training sessions, conferences and State councils. A final third will be contributed to nationwide programs of National Audubon — nature centers and sanctuaries, ornithologic research, wildlife films and lectures and endangered species programs.

Contestants will be eligible for regional and national prizes in two categories: one for the greatest number of species, and one, which includes the Grand Prize, for the most money raised. Chapters will be eligible for a special award to the unit raising the most money per member. LAAS won a Bushnell telescope in the Western Regional Birdathon last year. It is being auctioned off at this year's banquet, and the proceeds will go to Mono Lake. This is just another example of how Birdathon money can keep rolling in if we all figure out ways to participate.

Birdathon offers special benefits for chapters. But, individual birders can conduct their own counts. Members who do not wish to participate themselves can sponsor the Birdathon chairman, Roger Rory Peterson. *Los Angeles Audubon will sponsor our own team of well-known super-birders*, for those of you who are thinking of trying to win the prize for the most money contributed. LAAS is also sponsoring the House itself — that is each species of yard bird that regularly enjoys the seed handed out by the staff will be counted (prepare for ten, 11 or perhaps even 12 species!) for those of you who don't want to miss out on the fun.

However you participate, Birdathon is a way for all birders and non-birders too to make substantial contribution to the Audubon cause, and to the local chapters, where funds are always greatly appreciated. Last year, the Western Regional Birdathon raised \$38,000 for the Mono Lake Fund. According to Mono Lake Committee Chairman, David Gaines, the Point Reyes Bird Observatory Birdathon this year took in \$15,000 for Mono Lake. So, as David says, the idea of a Birdathon on a national level is obviously a "good thing, and it promises to be fun, too."

Save the week-end of J.J. Audubon's birthday — 25-26 April 1981 for Birdathon!

# Birds of the Season

by Shum Suffel

What can over-eager birders expect in March? Probably disappointment. We're tired of winter and ready for spring migration. Spring weather we'll probably get, but major migration is still a full month away. Some of our summer resident species are already here — hummingbirds and swallows — and most of the rest will arrive this month to take advantage of favorable local conditions for nesting and raising young. However, migrants bound for northern breeding areas, or the mountains, instinctively "know" that there's no need to hurry when winter still reigns in their traditional nesting areas.

Most January reports were of wintering birds previously seen in December, or of those found on Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). New, however, was a **Red-throated Loon** at Legg Lake, El Monte, our only inland report (Mickey Long, 3 February), and a drab immature **Red-necked Grebe** discovered in the Ballona Creek Channel, Marina del Rey, on 4 February (Bob Shanman). There were no reports from pelagic trips, but a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** was seen inside the isolated breakwater at Marina del Rey during the storm on 23 January. Jacob Szabo's description included the distinctive white rump with a dark line down the middle. Both the **Reddish Egret** and the **Tricolored (Louisiana) Heron** were at Seal Beach on 1 February (Jerry Johnson), and another **Tricolored** was on the mudflats south of Ballona Creek during the latter part of January. Three reports of **Ross' Geese** on the coastal plain in late January were more than expected: at Pierce College with a large flock of **Canadas** (Brian Daniels, 11 January); at Legg Lake, El Monte (unconfirmed); and in El Dorado Park, Long Beach (Roger Lindfield, 1 February). The male **Eurasian Wigeon** stayed at Malibu Lagoon; another was found at Legg Lake, El Monte; and three more were in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. A pair of **Common Goldeneyes** appeared at Bolsa Chica in the final days of January, and the **Oldsquaw** at Marina del Rey was apparently wintering there. There were two pairs of **Hooded Mergansers** at Malibu Lagoon in January, *vs* a single pair there in December.

Twenty-one **Turkey Vultures** circling over Morongo Valley on 1 February were typically early for this species (Ed Navojosky). Ed also had a **Rough-legged Hawk** in San Geronio Pass on 31 January. The only **Broad-winged Hawk** (there are often two or more wintering along our coast) was found by Larry Norris at Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley. A dark **Peregrine Falcon** was at the Pt. Mugu NAS (Richard Webster), and another was near Marina del Rey on 23 January (Brian Daniels). A single **Sandhill Crane** and a **White-fronted Goose** at Seal Beach flew inland with a flock of Canada Geese to a feeding field opposite the entrance to Leisure World (Donna Dittmann and the Brodskins, 25 January). Dorothy Dimsdale, Ruth Lohr and Barbara Elliott joined the fortunate few who have seen **Black Rails** at Upper Newport Bay. Their lucky time was the high tide on 19 January.

About a dozen **Lesser Golden Plovers** of the bright *fulva* race were at Seal Beach on 19 January (Doug Willick and Tom Wurster), and one or two were on the mudflats at Playa del Rey. Six **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Bolsa Chica was a large number in winter, as they are chiefly migrants with us (Lee Jones, 11 January). A dead **Hudsonia Godwit** was found by Dan Guthrie at the north end of the Salton Sea (NESS) in October. Although in rather bad shape, the skeleton and enough of the skin for identification purposes will be saved. A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** at

Bolsa Chica on 17 January flew over Chuck Bernstein and Hal Ferris so low that they could distinguish the sharply divided, fleshy and black bill. This may have been the same individual reported in the harbor at nearby Belmont Shores. An addition to the "small gull saga" cited last month, was an immature **Little Gull** near the mouth of the Santa Ana River in mid-January (Elizabeth Copper). The earlier **Little Gull** there was an adult. Although **Black-legged Kittiwakes** are scarce along our coast this winter, Guy McCaskie had one at NESS and Vincent Mowbray in Nevada reports eleven in the Las Vegas Wash. Vince also had a **Red-necked Grebe** nearby (both species are very rare inland). A **Common Tern** at Bolsa Chica (Paul Lehman and Richard Webster, 25 January) was one of the few winter records. **Common Ground-Doves** in La Verne (Dan Guthrie) were of interest to LA Country listers, as they are unaccountably rare here. A **Burrowing Owl** flying across Ballona Creek, Playa del Rey (Hal Baxter, 13 January) was one of the few survivors of encroaching urbanism. According to Starr Saphir, an **unidentified nightjar**, possibly a **Whip-poor-will**, has remained near Bernard Wilet's home in Pacific Palisades since last March.

A non-descript, female-plumaged hummingbird just inland from Bolsa Chica, originally thought to be a **Black-chinned** (see the last **TANAGER**), created great excitement soon after its discovery. Later critical studies, including comparison of its vocalizations, suggested that it might be a **Black-chinned X Anna's hybrid**, or possibly a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (virtually unknown west of the Rockies). There were three male **Allen's Hummingbirds** in the same area on 11 January (Lee Jones). A male **Rufous Hummingbird** at Bill Wagner's Glendora feeder on 14 January was possibly a new arrival, as they are very early migrants. Our only **Tropical Kingbird** this winter, at Goleta, stayed through January, as did the two **Eastern Phoebe**s in Huntington Beach, and the **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and **Greater Pewee (Coues' Flycatcher)** in Griffith Park. A **Western Flycatcher** in the El Dorado Nature Center was erroneously reported as a **Gray Flycatcher** last month; five **Westerns** in the Santa Barbara area overshadowed our local winter records. The **Vermilion Flycatcher**, reported at Morongo Valley on 2 November, was still there on 1 February, despite 27°F night temperatures (Jeff Zuckerman).

First reports in January are difficult to classify. Are they really newly arrived migrants, or are they first sightings of wintering individuals? Some fifty **Tree Swallows** at Pt. Mugu NAS on 22 January were probably wintering, as the four or five **Violet-green Swallows** with them may have been (Ian MacGregor). A single **Barn Swallow** there on 30 January could have been a new arrival (Richard Webster). This winter **American Robins** were seen singly or in small groups in contrast to their usual thousands. A partly-albino robin with a shiny white cap was at Big Bear Lake on 11 January; what was likely the same individual was seen there with a wintering robin flock on 30 January 1980 (Kimball Garrett). The only new report of a **Varied Thrush** was one near Bonsall Rd., Zuma Beach, on 18 January (Jerry and Laurette Maisel). To most of us a view of a **Townsend's Solitaire** is choice in itself, but there were 200 solitaires on the Big Bear CBC (in response to a bumper crop of juniper berries)! **Cedar Waxwings**, like the robins, were almost unknown this winter.

A **Bell's Vireo** along a small stream above Santa Barbara was a first winter record for that area (Richard Webster and Paul Lehman, co-authors, with Louis Bevier, of "Birds of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties"). A "**Plumbeous**" **Solitary Vireo** was in Mohave Narrows Park near Victorville on 23 January (Doug Willick). The **Grace's Warbler** was often seen in the large pines (not

cypresses, as previously reported) in Montecito, but neither the **Worm-eating Warbler** (Santa Barbara CBC) or the **Cape May Warbler** (Malibu CBC) could be relocated. The **Northern Waterthrush** at the South Coast Botanical Gardens (Jim Halferty, 30 January) may be the same one that was there last fall. Other waterthrushes were in a tiny marsh at the entrance to Doheny State Beach (Brad Schram) and at Pt. Mugu NAS (Richard Webster). **Townsend's Warblers** in small numbers and a very few **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were reported from several local areas.

This has been a good winter for **orioles**, probably because of better coverage of favorable areas (flowering eucalyptus trees); both "**Baltimore**" and "**Bullock's**" were widely reported, but strangely only two **Hooded Orioles** were found: one near Santa Barbara and another along Bonsall Rd., Zuma Beach (Hank Brodtkin, 18 January). **Western Tanagers**, too, wintered in small numbers; a recent concentration was four in Huntington Beach's Central Park (Doug Willick). The only recent **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were two near Santa Barbara. A **Swamp Sparrow** was in the El Dorado Nature Center (Brian Daniels), and several more were in the counties to the north of us.

Further to the north, there was a **Dusky-capped (Olivaceous) Flycatcher** near Santa Cruz, an unconfirmed **Wilson's Plover** at nearby Moss Landing, and, at Kodiak, Alaska, a wintering **Black-tailed Gull**. The last is a second record for North America, as one was seen on Attu last summer (and the old San Diego record is now considered to have probably pertained to a ship-transported bird).

**T**o repeat, March is primarily a month for first reports of arriving migrants, but there is still a lot of birding to be done. It's the last chance for most winter birds, and an early chance for spring migrants. Late March or early April is the best time to see the Sage Grouse strutting on their leks north of Bishop; California Fish and Game may know local snow conditions, which can determine your success. It's a little early for the desert oases, but West Pond above Yuma on the Colorado River has **Black Rails** which will respond to taped calls in March. Coastal bays and estuaries will have migrating waterfowl until the last brant comes through in May.

*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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## Malibu Christmas Count--1980

*by Kimball Garrett and Jean Brandt*

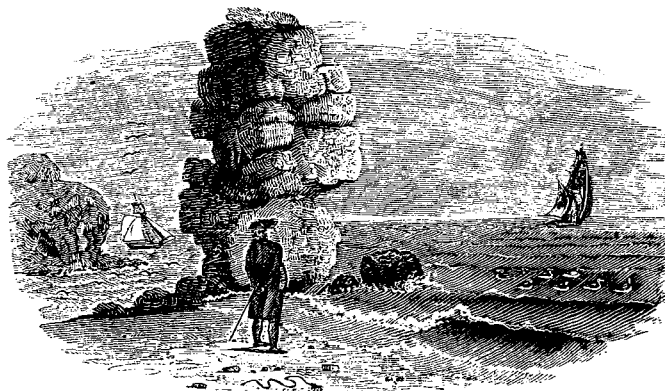
Seventy-one observers in thirty parties spread out over the Malibu area on 21 December. The inland parties enjoyed ideal counting weather: clear and calm. By contrast, the shoreline parties spent much of the day groping through some of the densest fog ever recorded in the area. The effects of the fog, and the clouded spirits of the coastal observers, were reflected in markedly reduced totals for most seabird and shorebird species. Our total of 26,321 individual birds was about 6,000 birds shy of our five-year average. Still, the 161 species recorded falls close to our recent average, and the total includes six species new to the count.

The adverse effects of the fog (on the counters, not the birds) are clearly demonstrated by our gull totals: 952 individuals (of nine species) were counted this year, compared with 4,478 in 1979 and 6,346 in 1978. Bonaparte's and California Gulls were especially undercounted; these low totals are not necessarily indicative of population declines. It was a poor count for montane species (no Red-breasted Nuthatches this year, 53 last year!), although four Mountain Chickadees were found. Shorebird numbers were also low, not surprising since most of Malibu Lagoon was invisible through the day.

The six new species for the Malibu count were **Eurasian Wigeon** (present since early winter at Malibu Lagoon), **Allen's Hummingbird** (one was positively identified by Richard Webster near Malibu Lagoon; eight other unidentified *Selasphorus* were probably of this species — unidentified Rufous/Allen's type hummingbirds have been found on previous counts), **Black-and-white Warbler** (present for weeks along Bonsall Rd. in Zuma Canyon), **Yellow Warbler** (one was found by Jon Dunn near Malibu Lagoon, and another was found on Pt. Dume by Paul Lehman), **Cape May Warbler** (a dull immature was well-studied by Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin on Bonsall Rd.), and **Summer Tanager** (also by the Brodtkins on Bonsall Rd.). Needless to say, the Brodtkins walked away with all of the top honors and prizes, including the coveted "Roadrunner Trophy." Incidentally, they also added the count's first "**Baltimore**" Oriole.

Among our regular species, record high counts for White-tailed Kite (15) and Barn Owl (8) were encouraging. Four species of owls tied a count record: besides the Barn Owls, we counted 42 Great Horned Owls, a Common Screech-Owl (Topanga), and the count's second-ever Burrowing Owl (found by Les Wood in Big Rock Canyon).

As compilers, we once again thank all of the participants and invite participation in our next count (Sunday 20 December 1981).



# 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

## LAAS Pelagic Trip Reservations — 1981 Schedule

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, c/o Audubon House.

No reservations will be accepted or refunds made within two 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. *Please send a separate check for each trip!*

*Important:* Because of the rapidly rising cost of motor fuel, all listed trip prices are subject to change. Please bring an extra five dollars in one dollar bills to cover possible fuel surcharge. Boats will not leave port until trips have been paid in full, including any surcharge.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 26 — San Pedro to Osborne Bank.** 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Cost: \$18 per person. The *Vantuna* departs from San Pedro (44 spaces plus two leaders). This is an LA County trip! Leaders: Fred Heath and Shum Suffel.

**SATURDAY, MAY 30 — San Miguel Island and out to sea.** *Ranger 85* (with galley, no ice chests) departs from Oxnard Marina at 2:00 a.m. Board after 9:00 p.m. Friday 29th. Return 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. Cost: \$38 per person. 54 bunks plus two leaders. Leaders: Fred Heath and Lee Jones.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 28 — Anacapa Island and out to sea.** This is a beginners' trip — come look for the American Oystercatcher! Cost: \$22 per person. *Sunfish* departs Ventura Marina 8:00 a.m., returns 5:00 p.m. 43 spaces and two leaders. Leaders: Olga Clarke and Art Cupples.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 — San Pedro to San Clemente Island.** The *Vantuna* departs San Pedro at 5:30 a.m., returns 6:00 p.m. Cost: \$25 per person. 44 spaces plus two leaders. Join leaders Shum Suffel and Phil Sayre in the search for the Red-billed Tropic Bird.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 29 — San Miguel Island and out to sea.** Cost: \$38 per person. Boat departs Oxnard Marina; board the *Ranger 85* (with galley, no ice chests) after 9:00 p.m. Friday 28th. Return at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. 54 bunks and two leaders (to be announced). This boat will go to Cortez Ridge.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7 — Bird Ballona Wetlands** with the Shanmans (545-2867, after 6). Meet at 8 a.m. at the Pacific Avenue bridge. To get there, take 90 west (Marina Fwy.) to its end at Culver Blvd. Continue west on Culver, turn north on Pacific Avenue, straight to the bridge.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7 —** Spend the morning at Harbor Lake. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Boat House to bird the area with Tom Frillman (456-8779).

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10 — Evening Meeting.** 8 p.m. Plummer Park. **Dean Hector** will describe his work with the Aplomado Falcon and will discuss its habitat, its range (formerly into the US), as well as other raptors in the region. **Conservation Committee Meeting,** 6:45 p.m.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 17 —** Join Sandy Wohlgemuth to bird **Tapia Park and Malibu Lagoon.** Meet at Tapia at 8 a.m. Beginners welcome.

**MONDAY, MARCH 23 —** Explore **Tapia Park and Malibu Lagoon** with Ruth Lohr. Meet at Tapia Park at 8 a.m. Beginners welcome.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28 —** Join the Antelope Valley Christmas Count organizer, Fred Heath, to bird the Antelope Valley. Meet at the Lamont Odett Overlook on Hwy 14, just south of Lancaster, at 8 a.m. Bring lunch and extra water; be prepared for all types of weather.



**SATURDAY, APRIL 4 —** Your last chance this season to bird **Ballona Wetlands** with Bob and Roberta Shanman (545-2867, after 6). Same details as March 7.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14 — Evening Meeting,** 8 p.m. Plummer Park. **Pete Bloom** of California State University, Long Beach will speak on the ecology and current status of the Swainson's Hawk.

**TUESDAY, MAY 12 — Evening Meeting,** 8 p.m. Plummer Park. **Mark Hoffman** of Santa Monica College will discuss "everything you have always wanted to know but were afraid to ask about the reptiles and amphibians of California." Before this talk, members of **Friends of Ballona Wetlands** will show their new multi-image slide presentation. Before 8, the Plant Sale. Watch for details.