

WESTERN TANAGER

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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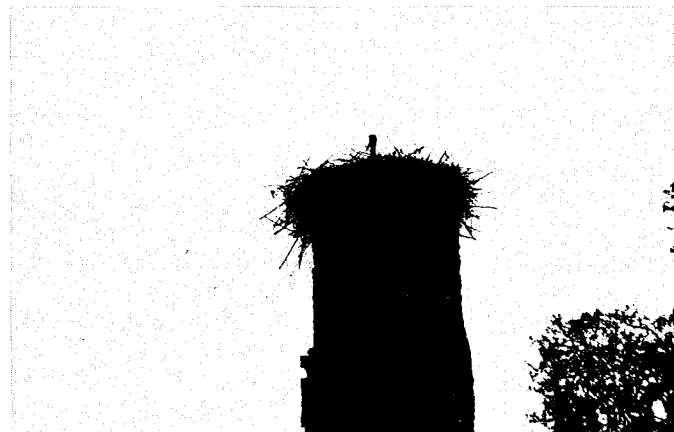
White Storks of Morocco

by Mary Lawrence Test

In almost every part of the country, in spring-time, the White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) spiral in the blue skies, alternately flapping their wings and soaring — neck outstretched, legs trailing behind. They circle in stately groups; they sail singly and in pairs off towards a large platform of twigs and sticks, in trees or, more often, perched atop any vertical structure — mosques and minarets. In these great nests both parent storks incubate their young.

On the ground, the storks with their black flight feathers stand out from the ubiquitous Cattle Egrets; sometimes you are surprised to find a group of them descended on a dead cow, like a flock of vultures. Where ever they are, you cannot mistake the sound of their red bills clattering with excitement.

Storks are bearers of good luck, the Arabs say. They are the bearers of babies, too, the Europeans think. It is a good omen if a White Stork builds its nest on your roof. And so, although their population is diminishing because of habitat destruction, no one tampers with the nesting White Storks themselves. The children eagerly await the return of the storks every year, their return from France which (they are told) is the bird's *real* home; it would be too hot for the storks to spend the summer in North Africa!



Topics of Conservation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Wallace Stegner has written, "... the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, all of them the product of a growing alarm among intelligent people sensitive to the American threats against what the American experience has taught us to love." For us here — in this place — it is Ballona Wetlands, Lake Sherwood, Malibu Lagoon, Bolsa Chica, Madrona Marsh, the Santa Monica Mountains, Stoney Point, the Sepulveda Basin. The same kind of people in every part of the country have their own endangered ecosystems, unspoiled woodlots, unpolluted streams to defend. Who are these people, how did they get that way, and why do they care?

Impossible to generalize about this; we can only guess. Many are the products of small towns or farms and ranches; they grew up with dirt between their toes. They split the firewood, drove the tractor, milked the cows, fished in the creek, dipped in the old swimming hole. They got a .22 single-shot rifle for their tenth birthday and popped away at woodchucks and squirrels before they were old enough to go after deer. They breathed clean air and took it for granted. They sucked in a love for the woods and the wild freedom of aloneness, of elbow room.

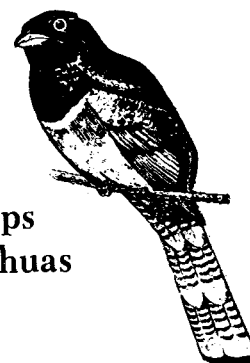
Some were city-bred with an intimate knowledge of asphalt and concrete, of stick-ball in the streets, of auto traffic and neon lights, of survival in over-crowded schools, of six-story walk-up apartment houses. They may have discovered a city park or even gone to a summer camp for a couple of weeks and become enamored of the outdoors: trees, flowers, snakes, gophers, crappies, spiders, birds. A teacher or a camp counselor may have planted a seed. Later, perhaps, Wordsworth's golden daffodils or Shelley's West Wind introduced the Romantic view of nature.

A visit to the Big Trees, a glimpse of New England in the fall, a flight of Canada Geese, the spouting of a migrating whale — these can all be the triggers for a lifelong attachment to the natural world. The step from the larger pattern of true wildness to a small, living canyon surrounded with condominiums is a natural progression. This canyon or this miniscule remnant of marshland is close to home. It is a taste of the great awe-inspiring wonders of Yosemite or the Everglades. This pale sample of wilderness, despite the trash and the rumble of traffic, is still something to preserve and defend against oblivion. Miraculously, it is still habitat for small things: birds, flowers, mammals, insects, reptiles. So the nature lover takes his vacation once a year (if he can) to the spectacular places and spends most of his free time enjoying the local scene. If he has a place to see purple nightshade and phacelias blooming after the winter rain, see a Townsend's warbler flashing through the new leaves of a cottonwood, he is a lucky man. His urban enclave is to him what John Muir's mountains were to the bearded prophet of the Sierra: a refuge from the clatter of the modern world, a therapeutic balm to soothe the fraying spirits.

The inexorable pressure of population and the exquisite seduction of profits have put all open space in jeopardy. Those who truly prize what is left rise to its defense. They burden themselves with committees, petitions, letters, hearings,

MONEY: all the unwieldy tiresome paraphernalia of the conservation struggle. They know that if they stand idly by "progress" will win the day. They look ahead and see the dangers of zoning changes and short-sighted land-use policy that will leave us with mighty little greenery and a great deal of unlovely architecture.

Most of us are busy making a living and filling up our free time with personal concerns. Most of us would "rather not get involved". But those of us who take pleasure in the outdoors can no longer ignore the accelerated disappearance of our birding places, our hiking trails, our elbow room. We can no longer leave the solutions to our grandchildren; the Silent Spring is almost with us already.



Two Groups to Chiricahuas

The Pasadena Audubon Society is offering an eight-night trip to Southwest Arizona, beginning in Tucson on 27 June. Cost is \$285; for further information call Paul Carlton at Unitrex, (213) 681-3708.

Kimball Garrett is also once again leading his UCLA Extension class during the Summer Quarter (29 June to 3 July). This trip includes five days at the Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahua Mountains; emphasis will be on the identification and ecology of birds in habitats ranging from desert grassland through pine-oak woodland to fir forest and mountain meadow. Birds typical of our Rocky Mountains and the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts of Mexico are all to be seen in this fascinating region. Cost is \$235 excluding transportation; for further information or to enroll, call UCLA Extension at (213) 825-7093.

LA Audubon thanks those of you who read and responded to our small notice in last month's *TANAGER* which stated that National Audubon is asking a \$2.00 donation from every member to go towards saving Mono Lake. This month we'll state it more prominently. Just think, if everyone in National Audubon sent \$2.00 to save Mono Lake . . . help make this real! Send your \$2.00 donation to LAAS today!

Not Much Scope

by Dorothy Dimsdale

I love scopes — yours, his, hers — anybody's but mine. The truth is, I'm an inept scoper and the lightest tripod is a burden to me. I trip over the legs and never seem to set the feet on solid ground; then just as I'm focusing, one of the leg clips starts to slip and the scope sinks sideways. When I at last get the bird into focus, I generally find a shimmering haze clouding my view. On top of that, peering through one eye is not my idea of a good time. After three or four minutes, the eye starts to water and then refuses even to open, no matter what rarity is stamping the ground at the other end of the scope.

I'll agree it can be helpful to scope a marsh, particularly if one can lean comfortably against a car while doing so. Too often though it entails hard labor. I've watched in admiration as birders with heavy tripods and scopes clomped through the marsh at Edwards' Air Force Base, first crossing narrow, wobbly planks over fast running streams, then plodding gamely on in the sweltering heat, traversing the desert in the hope of finding a rarity, lugging their scopes for perhaps a mile to a small oasis and finally, if they're lucky, spotting a tiny Semipalmated Sandpiper, or whatever.

More admirable and even *amazing* is what follows. They can't wait to say, "Come and look at it through my scope!" Thus, lazy, good-for-nothings like myself are spared all the agony of carrying the cumbersome object and even of having to focus the bird. Just a quick "Thank you!" from me and then they're left to dismantle and drag the whole caboodle all the way back. In the early days, small guilts would cause me to offer to shoulder the scope for the homeward hike, particularly if its use had been my only opportunity to get a life bird. To my surprise and delight, I was told, "Oh, no. Everyone should carry his own equipment. I brought it in, and I'll carry it out!" This attitude is held by most birders, and it is my earnest hope that it will prevail!

One has to be careful, though, not to become too pompous or patronizing with other peoples' scopes. I do remember one occasion when I had galloped across a hill to a stand of scopes, all aimed at an Anhinga (in California!) and the first eager scoper urged me to take a look. I did so gratefully and then equally ungratefully I yelled, "That's not the Anhinga! It's a Double-crested Cormorant!!" And I moved on to the next scope, leaving a red-faced, ashamed scoper, anxiously trying to correct his mistake. That was tacky behavior on my part; I was too impatient to see the bird, and I *could* have whispered.

My birding companions, Ruth and Barbara, *always* take their scopes when we go out birding together. They aim at opposite ends of the marsh, or lagoon, or wherever we're birding, and call the birds as they scope them, finally meeting in the center. This takes a good deal of concentration, and so having exclaimed at the start that it would be silly for me to take my scope when there are already two in use, I spend the time eating a sandwich and waiting for the good calls. Anything less unusual than a Blue-winged Teal




illustration by Jim Workman

is not worth raising my binoculars for. Neither Ruth nor Barbara has ever complained about my selfish attitude, and I had assumed, naturally, that it was because of my lovable nature. More likely it's because they are spared silly questions from me such as, "Is this a Yellowlegs or a Sanderling?"

There *are* times, of course, when I feel *obliged* to take my scope, and so I carry it to the spot. I set it up. Then I forget it. No one notices. They're all too busy focusing. I wait for the inevitable, "I've got it very clearly. Want to have a look?" All that is required from me is a simple "Thank you!"

Occasionally, by some ghastly miscalculation, I find myself in a crowd of eager birders and I am the only one with a scope. There's only one thing to do; I turn to the nearest person waiting to see the fruits of my efforts and say, "Wouldn't you like to see the field for yourself?" Then, when their eyes are watering and the bird is in focus, I take over and say, "Very nice!"

Sometimes the best scoping in the world won't help. I have vivid memories of a trip to the peak of Mt. Pinos. Having carried my paraphernalia bravely in the rarified air to the overview, I was sitting on a rock, scoping the horizon (eyes watering profusely) searching for Condors. At this point, I heard a shout from another birder. I looked up in time to see a Condor shadow pass over my head, but I had only a glimpse of the bird as it glided across the peak into the trees. It couldn't have been more than fifteen feet above me, and it had appeared seemingly from nowhere, as they very often do. All I could do was to hurl some rarified language into the rarified air.

The newest trend in scopes is towards Celestron or even Questar. The way they're going, you'll soon be able to stand in your back yard in Los Angeles and scope the Serengeti Plain in Africa. I see the day when, with my luck, I'll be viewing Magnificent Riflebirds in New Guinea through my (yet to be invented) Super, Dooper Questar 2000, when I'll hear, "Look, right here in the yard, a Limpkin! In L.A.!! Oh, you missed it." When that day comes, I'm just going to have to broaden my scope. 



Mono Lake Stages Summer Events

The Mono Lake Committee is sponsoring a series of summer events. Once again, every Saturday and Sunday from 13 June to 13 September, they will be organizing *free, half-day field trips*. This is your chance to spend a day exploring the geology, botany, zoology and human history of the Mono Basin; learn first-hand how water diversions are affecting this irreplaceable natural treasure. Trips leave from the Mono Lake Committee Visitor Center in Lee Vining at 8:30 am and include stops at Mono Craters and lakeside for a swim and lunch.

Also to run throughout the summer are *Friday and Saturday night slide shows* (12 June to 12 September), free to the public at the Mono Lake Visitor Center in Lee Vining; show begins at 8:30 pm.

Week end field courses will be offered in limnology, entomology, botany and natural history of the Mono Basin at a cost of \$40 per person. For further information, contact the Mono Basin Research Group at (714) 647-6483 or the Davis Audubon Society at (916) 756-0509.

Individual day events include a *picnic fundraiser on Angel Island* on Sunday 9 August. Chef Paul of the Cercle de L'Union will be preparing a delicious luncheon; guests will sail across San Francisco Bay and enjoy lunch, wine and music on the island. For reservations, send a donation of \$25 per person to Grace de Laet, 37 Calhoun Terrace, San Francisco 94133, (415) 398-6744.

Tuesday 1 September will mark the opening day of the *second annual bikeathon*. Last year twelve riders scooped water from the reflecting pool at downtown LA DWP headquarters and carried it 350 miles north to Mono Lake. For information on this year's ride, contact bikeathon coordinator David Heine, 15053 Indian Springs Road, Rough and Ready, CA 95975.

Cyclists will meet with Bucket Walkers on the *third annual bucket walk* on Sunday 6 September to dump their water into the Lake. To participate in the bucket walk, bring a water container to the Old Marina site at the bottom of the hill one mile north of Lee Vining, between 9 and 11 am.

Hunt the Dump

by David White

During the past few years, the US Environmental Protection Agency has identified many chemical substances as being toxic or hazardous to health. Some of these materials had been routinely used in consumer products or industrial facilities, and are now being removed from the market or phased out of use. Others are inevitable byproducts of industrial processes which will continue to be used. In either case, many of the materials were previously discarded, without serious consideration of possible toxicity, in convenient landfills. Now, thanks to Environmental Protection Agency regulations, all classified hazardous materials must be disposed of by approved methods, in approved locations.

Ironically, however, the attention of federal, state and local authorities to problems of toxic and hazardous waste disposal has contributed to an apparent increase in illegal dumping. Before, most landfills and dump sites accepted almost anything with almost no questions asked; now, there is only one approved hazardous waste site (the BKK Corporation landfill in West Covina) in all Los Angeles County. Therefore some producers of hazardous materials are deciding that it is too difficult or too costly to arrange for legal disposal, and they are dumping their wastes along rural roads, in ravines, or anywhere that seems inconspicuous enough for them to get away with it. Illegal dumping often takes place at night or during the early morning hours, when few people are likely to be around to observe the activity.

The situation is almost certain to get worse before it improves. No one wants a hazardous waste dump in the neighborhood, and attempts to establish new dumps or to keep existing dumps open are encountering serious opposition, nationwide. Although Mayor Bradley has established a special committee of federal, state, county and city officials to study hazardous waste problems in Southern California, there are many jurisdictional issues of substantial legal complexity which must be solved. In the meantime, illegal dumping will continue.

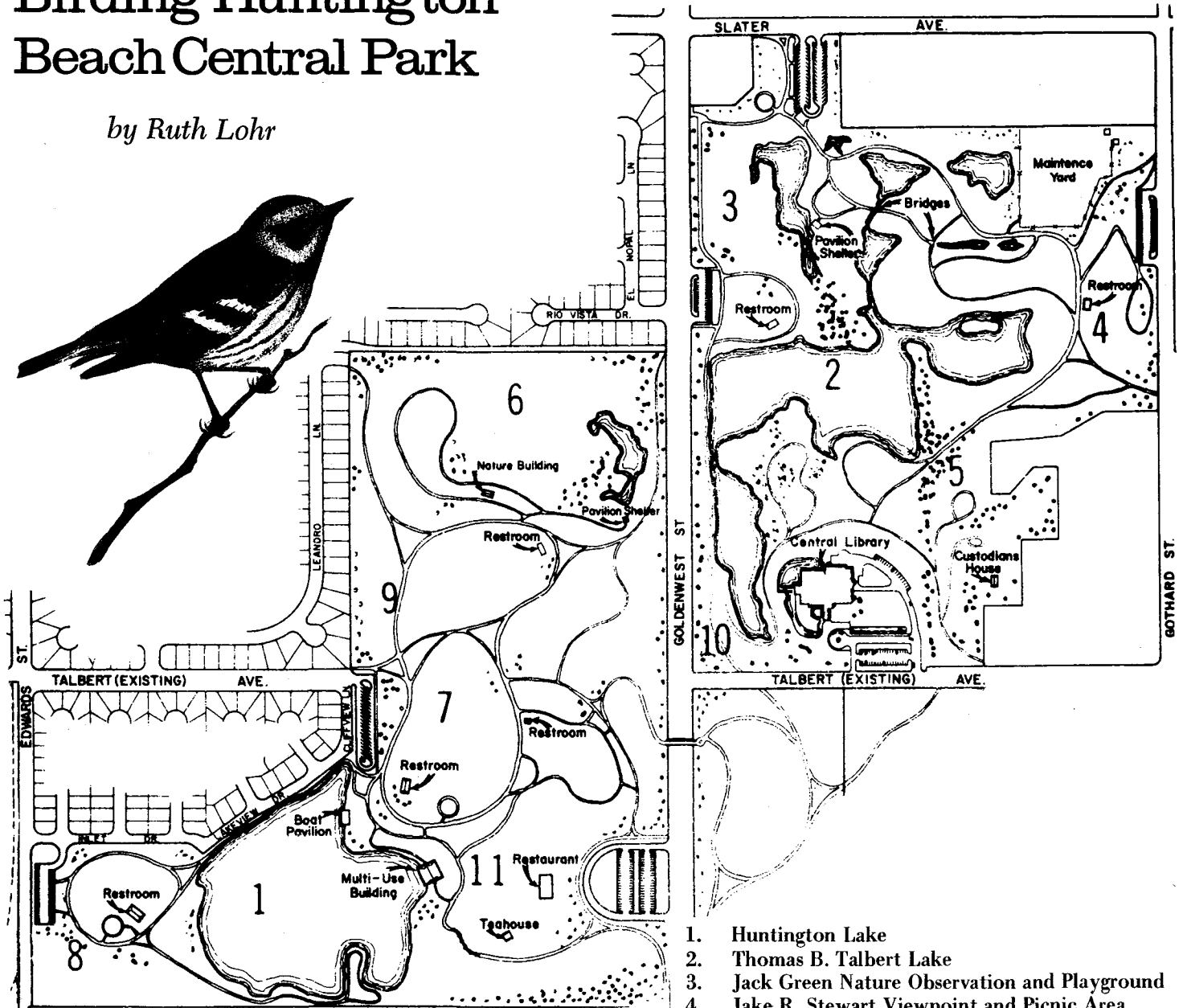
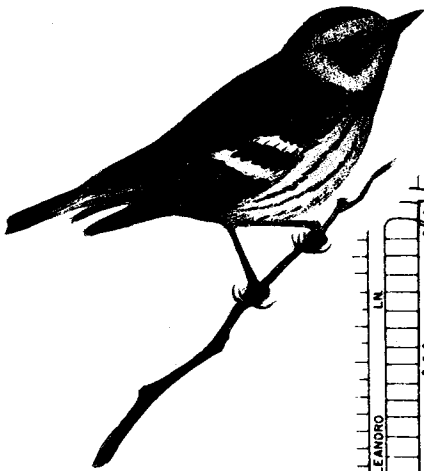
Birders can help. There is probably no other category of people more likely to go wandering around at odd hours of the day or night in places where ordinary folk are seldom seen.

What to do: If you should happen to observe someone in the act of dumping liquids, metal drums or other substances which you suspect might be hazardous, *do not interfere*. Illegal dumping is a criminal activity, and attempted intervention might well inspire the dumper to take action against you. If it is possible to do so safely, *do* use your binoculars to get a good description of the people involved, and their vehicle (including the license plate number). This information should be phoned to the nearest available law enforcement authorities as soon as possible. Also, report any suspected hazardous waste you find to Mr. Davis Wong of the Hazardous Materials Management Section of the California Department of Health Services, at (213) 620-5274. You should carefully note the location of the waste material so it can be relocated, and describe the material as precisely as possible. *Do not* handle suspected hazardous waste or take samples!



Birding Huntington Beach Central Park

by Ruth Lohr



1. Huntington Lake
2. Thomas B. Talbert Lake
3. Jack Green Nature Observation and Playground
4. Jake R. Stewart Viewpoint and Picnic Area
5. Alvin M. Coen Group Campground
6. Donald D. Shipley Nature Center
7. George C. McCracken Meadow and Playground
8. Henry A. Kaufman Playground and Picnic Area
9. Norma Brandel Gibbs Trail
10. Henry H. Duke Trail
11. Jerry A. Matney Mesa



Huntington Beach Central Park, near Bolsa Chica in Orange County, is located close to us in Los Angeles, but it is not a particularly known birding site. It offers, however, a full variety of riparian habitat, some grassy area, marsh and fresh-water ponds. This past winter, a pair of Eastern Phoebe were resident there, as were a White-throated Sparrow, Townsend's, Orange-crowned and "Audubon's" Warblers, Green-winged, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Green Heron, Sora, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Kingfisher, California Quail and Hermit Thrush. Coyotes and Cottontail were both seen in the northern area which is also good for birding, as is the Nature Center area. Huntington Lake had Double-crested Cormorants and Gulls, but it is a more public, open area.

In the spring, migrating Warblers should be found as well as both Orioles, Vireos, Western Flycatchers, Hummingbirds, Swallows, Wrens, Goldfinches and Downy Woodpeckers. The Nature Center (area 6) is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Public parks tend to prune too much; it is to be hoped that some sections of this park will be left undisturbed, as underbrush is necessary for our shyer species, and for nesting.

Phainopeplas . . . They Are Unique

by Henry E. Childs, Jr.

Most birders familiar with the avifauna of Southern California readily recognize the Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*). In the field, the male's black plumage, white flashes in the wings and the crest contrasts with the female's grey plumage. The Phainopepla's flight is easily recognized; they fly with a falling motion. Birders rapidly learn to associate them with mistletoe whose berries provide their food and whose foliage provides them a nest site. What day in the field would be complete without at least one sighting of this species?

Among other of the unusual aspects of this species is its taxonomic status; their relationship to other birds is unclear. Some authorities place the three species of Phainopeplas in the family Ptiligontidae; others include them with the waxwings in the Bombycillidae family. On the basis of similarities of egg-white proteins, Sibley (1973, "The relationships of the Silky Flycatchers" *Auk* 90:394-410) relates them to the Solitaires (*Myadestes*) and suggests a close relationship to the Thrushes (*Turdidae*).

Phainopeplas are unique in many ways, and therein lies my tale. They are especially unique in their breeding and social behavior. What other bird nests in two different localities in one year and changes its territorial behavior between localities? Most Phainopeplas winter in the Sonora Desert, where, in March and April, they raise their first brood. In May to July, birds move to coastal woodlands and semi-arid woodlands to the north where they produce a brood — presumably a second brood! No other bird is known to do this.

Also unusual is the change in the type of territory maintained in the two areas. In the Colorado Desert, rather large territories (0.40 ha) are defended for courtship, nesting and feeding. In the Santa Monica Mountains, much smaller territories (0.03 ha) are maintained and are used only for courtship and nesting. Foraging is carried out socially, with other nearby pairs, at some distance from the nest site.

Other differences occurring in the two habitats include breeding behavior, clutch size and daily energy expenditures. Desert birds find all their requirements within the limits of their large territory. The first clutch size is almost always two, while nearly 50 percent of second clutches contain three eggs. Yet the number of fledged young is about the same in both areas.

In coastal woodlands, the territory may be only the tree used for nesting, and this territory may be part of a small colony made up of four to 15 pairs. The birds obtain food, usually Buckthorn (*Rhamnus crocea*), from the chaparral on the hill-sides, sometimes 300 feet or more above the riparian areas where they have their nests. Food gathering is obviously a greater cost in energy (50 percent) here than in the desert. Phainopeplas also, of course, utilize flying insects as a source of food protein.

All this is information which makes birding more interesting. For those who want even more information on the species, and there is more, you are referred to the paper upon which this article was based: "Brood size and the use of time and energy by the Phainopepla" by Glenn E. Walsberg, published in 1979 in *Ecology* 59:147-153. ♡



Phainopepla

illustration by David Mooney



BOOKSTORE CATALOGUE UPDATE

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Olga L. Clarke, Sales Chairman

June 1981

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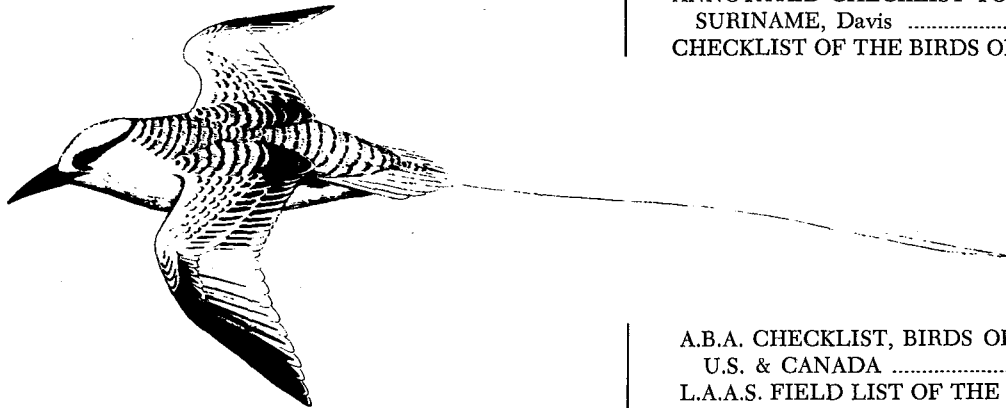
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Birds of the Season

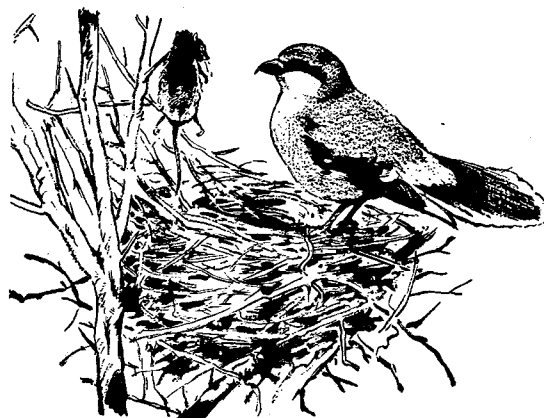
by Shum Suffel

Early June brings to a close the activity of spring migration — winter birds leaving, summer residents arriving and (superimposed over all) migrants passing through on their way to northern or montane nesting areas. Still in the first ten days of the month there will be excitement for those hardy few who visit the desert and the Salton Sea (despite the heat), the coastal promontories and valleys (where it's delightful but almost birdless), and the mountains (where nesting activity is already underway). These "hardy few" are seeking vagrants, lost birds sometimes thousands of miles off course and therefore late. This is the time for Mississippi Kites (all six southern California records are from late May to mid-June), for rare sandpipers (White-rumped and Semipalmated have been at the Salton Sea), and vagrant passerines. But, vagrant hunting is a "needle in a haystack" proposition. If you find one, it's a great day. If you find more than one, it's a miracle.

White Pelicans, because they are conspicuous, are well-documented each spring; 400 at Lake San Jacinto, Riverside Co. (Hank Childs, 14 March), and 85 flying northwest over Altadena (Lois Fulmer, 5 March) were recent reports. Four southern herons graced our shores during the spring. A **Reddish Egret** was located by Fish and Game personnel in Camp Pendleton in mid-April, and was perhaps the same bird that wintered to the north in Orange Co. An adult **Tricolored Heron** stopped by Malibu Lagoon briefly on 3 May (Bill Johnston); it may have been the bird that was seen the previous day in Ventura Co. A **Little Blue Heron** was at Mission Bay in early March (Guy McCaskie). And finally, a subadult **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was found by Richard Webster at McGrath at the end of April. At Lake San Jacinto two **Wood Storks** (out of range and out of season) were a surprise for Hank Childs on 14 March; they were not there on 21 March. Geese were mostly gone by mid-March except for single **Snow Geese** at Doheny Beach and McGrath. In addition to the several **Eurasian Wigeon** found last winter, a male hybrid **American X Eurasian** was at McGrath in late April. A pair of **Wood Ducks** at the Whitewater River Hatchery, Riverside Co. on 19 March was unusual on the desert side of the mountains (Bill Wagner).

Reports of two rare hawks could not be confirmed. Eleanor and Bob Parsons' detailed description (white tail with a narrow black band near the tip, etc.) of a **White-tailed Hawk** below Indio on 5 April is intriguing but, representing a first state record, requires confirmation. "Birds of Arizona" cites several old records, including nesting, in that state. Similarly, a **Zone-tailed Hawk** (like a Turkey Vulture with a prominent white tail band and a hint of a second band) at Big Sycamore State Park (Abigail King and Joan Mills, 22 April), while not a new state record, is a northerly sighting. **Ospreys** were seen at Lake San Jacinto (Hank Childs, 21 March) and flying over King Harbor, Redondo Beach (Hal Spear, 3 March). One of the most distant state birds for southern Californians is the **Rugged Grouse**. The Cupples and the Brodskins found them drumming on 18 April at Dry Lake, east of Crescent City, practically on the Oregon border. About 100 **Sandhill Cranes** were observed and heard flying north over the north end of the Salton Sea (NESS) on 5 April (Bob McKernan). Sandhills winter in the Imperial Valley, but usually in smaller numbers.

Two **American (Pied) Oystercatchers** at Pt. Reyes, north of San Francisco, in March were far to the north of recent sightings

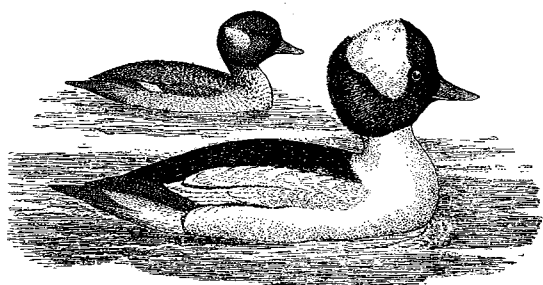


(Donna Dittmann). Most wintering shorebirds stayed into April, but the only rarer spring migrants were an early **Solitary Sandpiper** at Baldwin Lake in the San Bernardino Mtns. (Kimball Garrett, 3 April), and a **Ruff** (thought to be a migrant) at Pt. Mugu (Richard Webster, 11 April). An early **Wilson's Phalarope** was at the Salton Sea on 5 April (Bob McKernan). Many **Northern Phalaropes** and at least one **Red Phalarope** were seen on the LAAS trip to Santa Barbara Island on 26 April, and at least ten **Pomarine Jaegers** were sighted. Two Pomarines near the Redondo Beach pier were somewhat unusual, as our normal inshore jaeger is the Parasitic (M. Takahashi, 11 April). Of interest was the sighting of a jaeger and a skimmer working over San Diego Harbor in the moonlight at 12:30 am (John DeModena, 11 April). The all whitish immature **Glaucous Gull** remained at the Otay Valley dump below San Diego until at least mid-March. Adult **Franklin's Gulls** at the mouth of the Ventura River on 15 March (Richard Webster) and at Baldwin Lake on 21 March (Kimball Garrett) were early for transients. **Laughing Gulls**, very rare along our coast, were below San Diego (Guy McCaskie) and near Los Osos, San Luis Obispo Co. (John McDonald); another, an adult in full plumage, flew past Richard Webster at Pt. Mugu on 2 May and then stayed briefly at King Harbor, Redondo Beach, the next two days. This was a poor winter for **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, with only a handful at King Harbor where dozens often winter (Nancy Spear), and one over the breakwater at LA Harbor (LAAS trip, 26 April).

The wrap-up on the **Black-headed Gull** saga in southern California is confusing. Richard Webster saw an adult along the Santa Ana River on 30 March which he thought was "probably a different bird from the one seen November through February, based on dark bill and legs, but hard to be sure" (the bill and legs of the original bird were bright red). Then on 3 April, Jim Halferty studied an immature at Malibu Lagoon which, it was thought, might be the same immature which was last seen at King Harbor on 31 March. But, the King Harbor gull was seen again in late April. Since these are our only Black-headed Gulls, all we can be certain of is that there were at least two and possibly four of them.

An early **Gull-billed Tern** was at the Salton Sea on 17 March (Bob McKernan). Two **Least Terns** at Marina del Rey on 23 April constituted the first local report (Starr Saphir). Twenty-four **Elegant Terns** at the lagoon in Doheny State Beach, Orange Co. on 4 April (Shum Suffel) was a large number for this early date (they usually do not arrive on the coast above the San Diego area until mid-summer). Two **Elegants** were at McGrath on 7 April (Richard Webster). Three early **Black Terns** were at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh on 18 April (LAAS trip), just four days after the Space Shuttle landed nearby. They are scarcer on the immediate coast,

but one was at King Harbor on 5 May (Hal Spear). **Black Skimmers** are common below San Diego, but not north of there; thus, three at McGrath on 17-18 April are of interest (Jerry Friedman and Richard Webster). The LAAS trip on 26 April found numerous pairs of **Xantus' Murrelets** on the ocean near Santa Barbara Island, and **Pigeon Guillemots** were scattered singly in the calm water sheltered by the island. Although three dead **Rhinoceros Auklets** were found on the beach at Redondo in late March and early April by Mark Kincheloe, none was identified on the LAAS boat trip; but one was below the bluffs at Pt. Dume on the 3 May field trip (Monica Schwartz).



The **Spotted Owls** at Switzer Picnic Area did not reuse the nest which they occupied in '78-'79, but one owl was found in the oaks downstream (Dorothy Dimsdale, 6 April). Pairs of Spotted Owls were also found in San Antonio Canyon above Pomona (Hank Childs) and in Millard Canyon northeast of Banning (Bill Wagner). The **Whip-poor-will** which has wintered for two years in Pacific Palisades has not been heard since 17 March, which was about the time it left last spring. Five species of hummingbirds (**Anna's**, **Costa's Rufous**, **Black-chinned** and **Calliope**) on one day at an Altadena feeder, Easter Sunday, was a feeder-watcher's dream (Lois Fulmer). The Antelope Valley is one of the few places where it is possible to see a male **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** and a male **Nuttall's Woodpecker** drumming on adjoining telephone poles, as Kimball Garrett did on 21 April.

The **Tropical Kingbird** in Goleta remained into early May (exceptionally late). It is possible that there were two **Gray Flycatchers** in the Arcadia Arboretum, the one which has wintered there for three years, and a transient found in a different area on 24 April (Barbara Cohen). Another **Gray Flycatcher** was in the South Coast Botanic Gardens on 15 April (John Ivanov). Good news comes from O'Neill Park northeast of El Toro in Orange Co. At least four **Purple Martins** are there and hopefully will nest despite the starlings, as they have in the past (Doug Willick, 27 April). Ron Jones writes from Trona that the **Bushtits** in the Argus Mtns. (on the extreme western edge of the Great Basin) where he lives may show the black cheek mark of the "Black-eared" Bushtit (now considered a morph of the "Common" Bushtit, appearing at increasing frequencies farther south). Pat Mock and Bryan Obst report a pair of **Dippers** near Switzer Picnic Area where they are not often seen. Let's hope the tiny stream lasts the summer out in this dry year. They also sighted a **Townsend's Solitaire** there. A **Brown Thrasher** near San Diego in mid-April was the only one noted this year (Dave Povey). Since Brad Schram moved to Capistrano Beach he has discovered several areas in the coastal sage scrub which still provide habitat for the endangered coastal race of the **Black-tailed**

Gnatcatcher. This has been a poor winter for **Cedar Waxwings**, which makes the observation of three resting flocks of about 40 birds each in Franklin Canyon, West Los Angeles, of special interest (Dorothy Dimsdale and Barbara Elliott, 27 April).

Two "waves" of western migrants were noted in April. On 8 April "there were more warblers in the oaks" than Doug Willick remembered in his years at the Oak Canyon Nature Center in Anaheim, and the next morning at Eaton Canyon Nature Center in Altadena the oaks were alive with early flycatchers, vireos (including Solitary of the "plumbeous" race), and five species of western warblers (Hal Baxter and Shum Suffel). On the tenth there were still many migrants at Oak Canyon, plus two very early **Olive-sided Flycatchers**. April 29 turned out to be very windy and hot in Pasadena and in Morongo Valley. Among the hundreds of migrants at Morongo were ten species of warblers including the summer resident **Lucy's** and **Yellow-breasted Chats**, and another "plumbeous" **Solitary Vireo**. That evening in Pasadena the weeping birches outside our front windows had ten or more actively feeding vireos and warblers.

Space limitations make it necessary to simply list our early migrants. Even though a very few flycatchers, warblers, etc., winter here, the following were thought to be migrants:

Vaux's Swift, 8 April, east of Lancaster (Jon Dunn)

Black-chinned Hummingbird, 22 March, Glendora (Bill Wagner)

Western Kingbird, 19 March, Westchester (Bruce Broadbooks)

Cassin's Kingbird (3), 15 March, Pt. Mugu (Richard Webster)

Wied's Crested (Brown-crested) Flycatcher, 25 April, Morongo Valley (Charles Collins)

Ash-throated Flycatcher, 15 March, n. of Cabazon (Bill Wagner)

Hammond's Flycatcher, 1 April, Oak Canyon Nature Center (Doug Willick) and Bolsa Chica (Louis Bevier)

Dusky Flycatcher, 20 April, Antelope Valley (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre)

Western Flycatcher, 10 March, Topanga (Kimball Garrett and Lee Jones)

Western Wood-Pewee, 20 April, Antelope Valley (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre)

Olive-sided Flycatcher, 9 April, Oak Canyon Nature Center (Doug Willick)

Bank Swallow, 13 March, Lopez Lake, San Luis Obispo Co. (fide Richard Webster)

Swainson's Thrush, 22 April, Antelope Valley (Jon Dunn)

Solitary Vireo, 27 March, Whitewater (Bob McKernan)

Warbling Vireo (2), 28 February, Chantry Flats (Chuck Bernstein)

Nashville Warbler, 28 March, Morongo (Bob McKernan)

Lucy's Warbler, 28 March, Morongo (Bob McKernan)

Yellow Warbler (2), 29 March, Ojai (Richard Webster)

MacGillivray's Warbler, 27 March, Whitewater (Bob McKernan)

Hooded Oriole, 3 March, Santa Barbara (Paul Lehman)

Scott's Oriole, 8 March, Palm Canyon (Bob McKernan)

Summer Tanager (2), 4 April, Palm Canyon (Bob McKernan)

Black-headed Grosbeak, 29 March, Arcadia (Barbara Cohen)

The **Virginia Warbler** which wintered in the Newport Beach Ecology Park stayed until April, and another was found below the falls in La Jolla Canyon, Pt. Mugu State Park by Guy and Louise

Commeau on 20 April. Two "eastern" warblers to the north of us also stayed into April: the **Black-and-White Warbler** in Carpinteria and the **Northern Waterthrush** at Pt. Mugu. The Northern Waterthrush at Doheny Beach was last seen in late March (Brad Schram). A **Tennessee Warbler** in Greystone Park, Beverly Hills, on 26 March was a good find for Jacob Szabo from Israel.

Two local observations of **Great-tailed Grackles** — at Seal Beach (Arthur Howe) and at Pt. Fermin (John Ivanov, 15 April) — renew the speculation that, having spread across Arizona and into the Imperial Valley, they may now be moving to the coast. LAAS President Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre, now a medical student, birded the Antelope Valley successfully on one of their rare days off (20 April), finding both **Dusky** and **Hammond's Flycatchers**, **Western Wood-Pewees**, many warblers, and a female **Indigo Bunting**. A male **Indigo** and a male **Lazuli** were seen together in the South Coast Botanic Gardens on 21 April (Charles Osborne). One of the most wanted birds by easterners is the **Lawrence Goldfinch**, and it is also one of the most difficult ones to pin down. Reliable places include Covington Park in Morongo Valley and Little Rock Dam near Palmdale, but Carol Smith, of catbird fame, found three Lawrence's in Lime Kiln Creek Park in Northridge. Let's hope they're regular there (it's closer). Another notorious wanderer, the **Red Crossbill**, was found in triplicate by Bob McKernan at Yucca Valley on 18 April.

June birding requires a change of locale. The Colorado River above Yuma is hot but productive with **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** in "Shantytown" above Laguna Dam, and **Black Rails** at West Pond, west of Imperial Dam. There are also **Gila Woodpeckers**, **Lucy's Warblers**, **Summer Tanagers**, **Great-tailed Grackles** and possibly **Bronzed Cowbirds** there. The San Bernardino Mtns. provide **Black Swifts** at the falls near Fallsville, **Whip-poor-wills** below Camp Angelus, possible **Hepatic Tanagers** at Arrastre Creek, and both **Gray Flycatchers** and **Gray Vireos** near Round Valley or Rose Mine Pass.

It's almost vacation time. Let's go where the birds are!

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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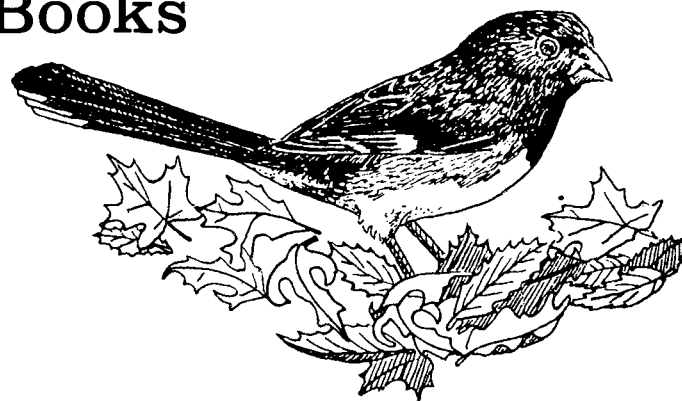
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Books



The Audubon Society Handbook for Birders by Stephen W. Kress (Charles Scribner's Sons)

This book is both delightful to read and useful to own. It provides the where and how to answer questions which all but the most experienced birder could ever want answered. It deals clearly with basic identification tips, books to read, available periodicals and bird-related organizations. It gives help in choosing scopes and binoculars, where to bird, how to bird, bird photography and bird-song recording, plus keeping records. It explains how to participate in research programs and where to register for educational programs, credited and uncredited. It gives addresses for worldwide birding tours — and there's very much more!

The layout is beautifully done and the text is interesting and informative on absolutely everything. The drawings are simple and very clear and the photographs illustrate perfectly the points for which they were taken.

Stephen W. Kress deserves high praise for this handsome and comprehensive book. (Not for sale at Audubon House.)

— D.D.



The two day plant sale at Audubon House (9 and 12 May) was very successful. LAAS wishes to thank "The Tropics," 7056 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038, for donating many lovely plants. Proceeds from the plant sale will go to Mono Lake.

Sunday, July 19

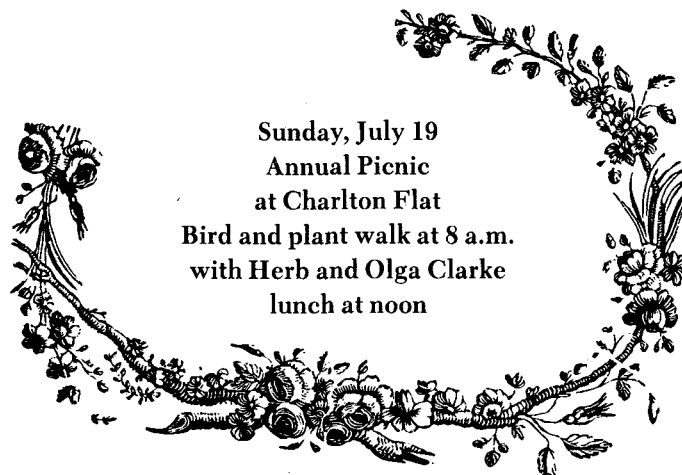
Annual Picnic

at Charlton Flat

Bird and plant walk at 8 a.m.

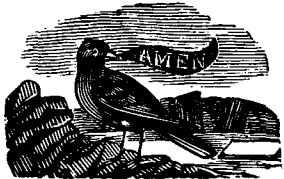
with Herb and Olga Clarke

lunch at noon



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.

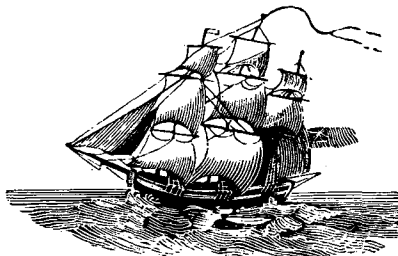
No reservations will be accepted or refunds made within two weeks of departure. *To guarantee your space, make reservations as early as possible.* Trips will be cancelled 30 days prior to departure if there is insufficient response. If you wish to carpool, please so indicate, and you will be contacted 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, 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.



TUESDAY, JUNE 9 — Evening Meeting, 8 p.m. Plummer Park. Speaker will be **John Ogden**, from National Audubon, who will present a program on "The Wood Storks of the Florida Everglades."



SUNDAY, JUNE 14 — Bird Mt. Pinos with Ed Navojoski (938-9766). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at intersection of Cuddy Valley and Frazier Park Roads in Lake of the Woods. (North on I-5 to Frazier Park off-ramp; west past town of Frazier Park to Lake of the Woods.) Look for Brewers, Lark and Fox Sparrows, Olive-sided and Dusky Flycatchers, Calliope Hummingbird, White-headed Woodpeckers and CONDORS.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20 — Join Kimball Garrett (455-2903) at the dam at the west end of **Big Bear Lake** at 7:30 a.m. Group will spend the entire day searching for such San Bernardino Mtn. specialties as Williamson's Sapsucker, Pinon Jay, Gray Vireo, Gray Flycatcher, Calliope Hummingbird, Hepatic Tanager, Vesper Sparrow, etc.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27 — Meet Fred Heath at 7:30 a.m. at the entrance to **Charlton Flat** picnic area, along the Angeles Crest Hwy. Montane breeding birds to be seen in the San Gabriel Mtns. include Mountain Quail, White-headed Woodpecker, Dusky Flycatcher. Bring lunch and binoculars. Group will bird from **Charlton Flat to Buckhorn**.

MONDAY, JUNE 29 — Bird Switzer's Camp in the San Gabriel's with LAAS President, Jean Brandt. Meet 9 a.m. in parking lot.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 — Bob and Roberta Shanman (545-2867, after 6) will start their birding tours of **Ballona Wetlands**. 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 bridge and parking area.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 — Jon Dunn will conduct a **shorebird workshop in the Antelope Valley**. Meet at 7:00 a.m. on Hwy. 14 at the Lamont Odett Overlook. Group will proceed from there to Edward's Air Force Base Marsh and the Lancaster Sewage Ponds. Emphasis will be on ageing shorebirds as well as identifying species present. The pace will be leisurely; however, bring wading gear, an extra pair of tennis shoes, etc. Group will more than likely spend some time knee-deep in water. Also bring lunch and drinking water.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29 — Meet Fred Heath at the Lamont Odett Overlook on Hwy. 14 at 7:00 a.m. to bird the **Antelope Valley**. Bring water and lunch. Group will look for and at returning shorebirds.