

# WESTERN TANAGER

Los Angeles Audubon Society

Volume 47 Number 9 July 1981



## Guadalajara Surprise

by Virginia Ulfeldt

Squirrel Cuckoo

illustrations by Dana Gardner

**M**any folks, even birders, must visit Guadalajara, Mexico, unaware of the "exotic" birds which could be right under their noses, or over their heads, if they were lucky enough to be in the right spot. Part of the birding thrill I experienced in the first two weeks of April 1979 was due to the unexpectedness and ease of the birding bonanza I experienced. I thought I would have to join a strenuous expedition or travel to remote locations to see the birds of Western Mexico — not so, at least for a fascinating sample.

As we stepped from the car, a group of *Stripe-headed Sparrows* was making a sociable racket. A perky little bird was perched on an enormous dried umbel of seeds below the swimming pool — as beautiful as Mexico, as vivid as a folklorico dancer with different

shades of bright blue and red blending into a lovely plum purple. This beautiful *Varied Bunting* surely represented the bright spirit of Guadalajara and extended an invitation to explore further.

Our friends lived in a condominium perched on the crest of a hill overlooking a vivid green 18-hole golf course flowing as far down the valley as one could see, almost two miles. A line of gigantic old trees followed the almost dry stream bed on one side. The fairways were spangled with blooming jacaranda trees, numerous flower beds and striped with long choruses of young trees dancing in the breezes. The drab native brush, for it was the dry season, on the surrounding hills served as a foil for this lovely scene.

We wandered over the fairways and greens the next morning finding very few golfers but many birds. Some of them were spring

migrants — a small flock of *Rufous-backed Robins*, another gathering of *Blue Grosbeaks*, a plethora of all kinds of flycatchers: *Western*, *Cassin's*, *Tropical* and *Thickbilled Kingbirds*, the brilliant red *Vermillion Flycatcher*. Most vocal and highly visible of all the flycatchers were the *Great Kiskadees*, several of which were nest building in a very large old tree.

Near the condo, I saw some birds familiar to a Southern Californian: *Brown Towhee*, *Curve-billed Thrasher*, *House Finches* and *English Sparrows* also *Barn* and *Rough-winged Swallows*.

Our host and hostess were not birders and, of course, had some other entertainments in mind. But by getting up when the sun did I often got in several hours of birding before breakfast. It took three visits to get close enough to identify the big black birds which I at first mistook to be Boat-tailed Grackles. There was something strange about their loosely swinging tails. When I finally got a close up look at the enormously thick bills with distinct ridges I knew I was watching the *Groove-billed Ani*.

I saw *Unicolored Jays* and in the tops of the trees, migrating warblers some of which in a few weeks could be traveling through Southern California or the midwest states. Flocks of *Black-backed Lesser Goldfinches* were common on the grass, sprinkled here and

there with tiny *White-collared Seed Eaters*. There also were *Bronze Cowbirds* in with a few *Brewer's*. A well hidden *Ovenbird* called so clearly, "teacher, teacher".

The muted cooing of the *Common Ground Doves* was an almost constant theme from the brushy hillsides, punctuated by the calls of *White-winged Doves*. I soon discovered a little dirt road in the brush skirting the upper end of the golfcourse right below the condo which proved to be just as intriguing as the golf course. A rufous topped *Tufted Flycatcher*, an *Empidonax Flycatcher*, *Rusty Sparrow*, and a *Blue-grey Gnatcatcher* rewarded my first explorations. I often heard *Quail* which sounded like a California or Gambel's, but I never caught sight of them.


The next visit turned up a beautiful *Yellow Grosbeak*. I also heard a sad, very, very low-pitched single-phrased call. Several days later we sighted a large, pale green bird sitting quietly in plain sight and swinging its long tail back and forth like the pendulum of a clock. The russet crown and back quickly identified it as a *Russet-crowned Motmot*; we had found the producer of the low, solemn call.

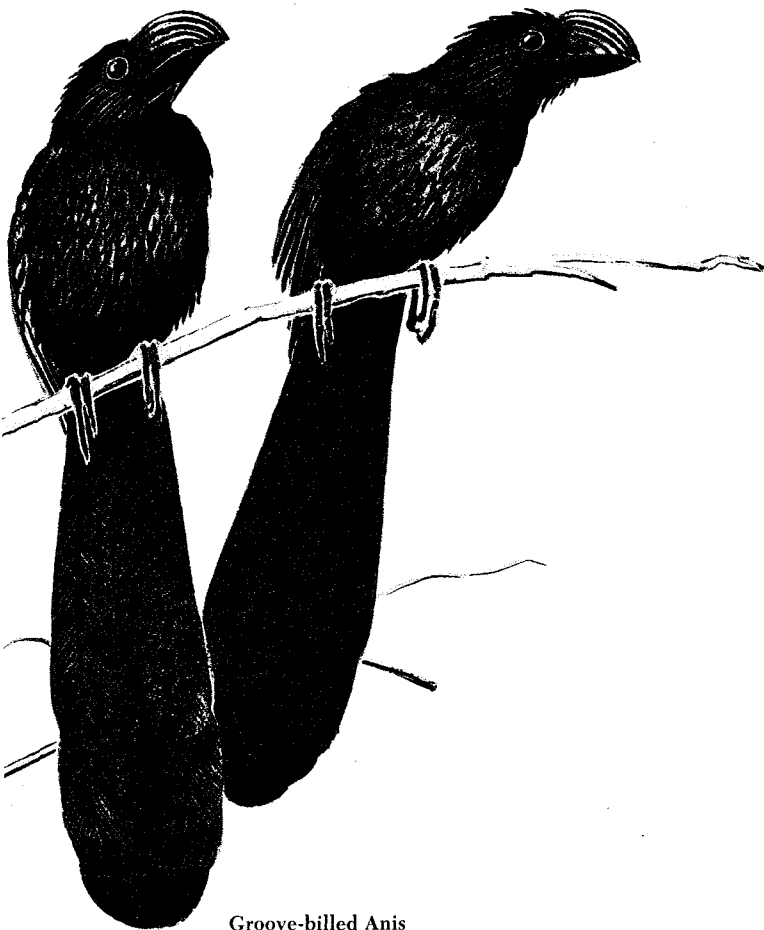
On another morning a really unexpected bird startled me by flying suddenly from the brushy ditch right besides the little dirt road — almost from under my feet. It had been camouflaged where it rested on the ground by its "dead-leaf" pattern when a sudden movement on my part had frightened it. It was a large, dappled brown bird. It fluttered about eight feet where it sat quietly in plain sight in a tiny dry gully while I admired the variegated grey and brown feathers and the clear buff collar around its neck: a *Cookachee* or *Buff-collared Nightjar*.

Well by this time nothing would have surprised me. I checked through my bird books for possible exotic birds and half expected to spot a 25-inch Magpie Jay. The next bird was unusually long all right — all of 17 inches. It was slim and surprisingly clever at slipping unseen through the foliage of the tall trees on the golf course, but its bright cinnamon back and upper tail often betrayed its presence. Very appropriately it was called a *Squirrel Cuckoo*. We saw several more as we walked along. We also saw *Streak-backed Orioles*, a few *Northern* and some *Hooded Orioles*. Arriving back at the condo for a swim (it was hot, over 90°F) what was preening its feathers in the brush just below but a *Blue-hooded Euphonia*, a tanager with a steely-blue sheen on back and face, a nice medium-blue crown and a light orangey cinnamon breast.

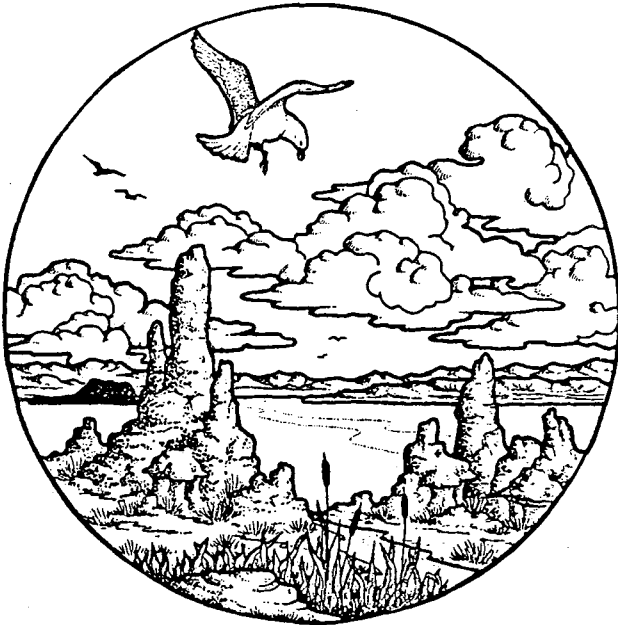
During the second week, the flycatchers weren't as numerous; instead almost every tree housed a few *Black-headed Grosbeaks* or a *Loggerhead Shrike*, undoubtedly also migrants. *Gila Woodpeckers* let us know they had arrived. *Common Nighthawks* skimmed over the condo roofs at dusk, and in the middle of the night I heard a *Screech Owl* bounce his musical ball.

I couldn't resist getting up at dawn for one last trip down the unused dirt road. At a tiny, dripping seep from the watering up above, a *Golden-browed Warbler* sipped and a *Violet-crowned Hummer* flashed in for a drink. Just above the green golf course in the brush along the stream where it issued from the hills a *Bar-vented Wren* turned its tail toward me. I had seen 21 life birds and a total of 52 species.

If you are visiting Guadalajara, travel about six miles north of Zapopan, a section of Guadalajara, into the countryside to the private San Isidro Country Club. The public is welcome to use the golf course but you should get permission to bird it. I was surprised at the very few golfers we saw. The course is a very short walk from the San Estaban Condominium. At the time we visited, they had a few units for rent out of the 30-some units. 



Groove-billed Ani



## 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.

## The Watt Line

Shortly after the Reagan administration took over, we got our first taste of the new Secretary of the Interior, James G. Watt. This column didn't like what it saw in the crystal ball and said so. There were a few objections: "We have to work with these people . . ."; "Give them a chance . . ." There is no satisfaction in saying, "I told you so." It is painful to read the almost daily reports of the latest outrageous assault of this man on the environmental achievements of the last ten years. This is not the place to enumerate the crimes; *Audubon Magazine* for May 1981 has an excellent dissection of Mr. Watt, past and present. To us, the most startling and disturbing part of his approach is the intrusion of his religious fundamentalism into his public functions. He has no doubts, he is a "true believer" who *knows* what's best for the country. This somehow coincides with what's best for the special interests that will profit by fast, maximum exploitation of our natural resources.

Petitions are circulating asking for the removal of the new Secretary on grounds of incompatibility. This is not likely to happen in the light of Mr. Reagan's philosophy and his other appointments, all equally hostile to the environment: Environmental Protection Agency, National Forest Service, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Council on Environmental Quality and so on. But a large number of signatures will have symbolic value that may remind the powers that be that the American people have consistently said they want the natural bounty of this nation preserved for this and future generations.

— S.W.



## Books

### Rare Birds of the West Coast

by Don Roberson (Woodcock Publications,  
P.O. Box 985, Pacific Grove, CA 93950).



This is an excellent book and a welcome reference for the seasoned birder or ornithology student. Among other things, it is a valuable compendium of data to compensate for some of the inadequacies and omissions in the regular guides, and it can be enormously helpful in the recognition of a rare specie. The book purports to cover every rarity from Alaska to California — nearly 300 species in all, and gives detailed and up-to-date identification discussions of all Siberian vagrants, difficult pelagics, *Empidonax* flycatchers, thrushes, pipits, fall warblers and more. The book has been carefully

reviewed by several experts, including Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett, who checked the accuracy of the text and illustrations.

The 11 color plates are explicit and provide excellent illustration; they are done by artists known to many of us: Donna Dittmann, Tim Manolis, Marv Reif, Ray Robinson, and TANAGER contributor (see lead article) Dana Gardner, who also did the book's cover. There are many maps, suggestions for further reading and appendices. The book seems well indexed. Some of the black and white prints are unclear, but as the author explains, he printed the best available.

**Rare Birds of the West Coast** will inevitably become outdated as reporting of rarities grows more frequent and thorough; it should nevertheless remain a useful record and reference. If you are serious about your birding, Don Roberson's book should be added to your library. (Not for sale at Audubon House.) Available from the publisher for \$24.90 plus \$1.50 shipping. California residents add \$1.50 tax. —D.D.

### A World Guide to Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises, by Donald S. Heintzelman, Tulsa, OK: Winchester Press.

According to the author: "this guide . . . is designed to provide sailors, mariners, sea voyagers, bird and whale watchers, and other persons who venture onto the oceans and seas of the world with illustrations and basic species information which will help them to recognize and identify most of the species of whales, dolphins, and porpoises they see." The author's own interest in whales, dolphins and porpoises began in 1974. In the six intervening years, Heintzelman has gathered the information to put together what must be the most complete guide to whales, dolphins and porpoises in existence.

Besides the general narrative chapters which include: Species Accounts; Whale-watching equipment; Watching and Identifying Whales, Dolphins, and Porpoises; Whale Migrations; Whale-watching Lookouts and Sanctuaries, there are also seven maps, 25 plates, checklists of whales, dolphins and porpoises, an appendix which lists whale conservation organizations, several whale-sighting report forms, and an extensive list of suggested reading. Use is also made of some photographs, but they are not always clear and are much harder to read than the very useful plates by Rod Arbogast.

Whaling continues to cause worldwide alarm among conservationists, and yet fewer and fewer whales survive each year. It is indeed hoped that this little guide can prove a useful tool in helping to save the gigantic and intelligent animals of the oceans.



LAAS Book Committee chairman, Fred Heath, wishes to reassure all of you who have already purchased the Garrett/Dunn book that it is at the printers and should soon be finished. For those of you who have not yet purchased it, keep your eyes open for it — at Audubon House bookstore soon. Thank you for your patience.

### Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Tour

The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is organizing an expedition to Christmas Island and Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii, 16-26 August 1981. Cost is \$1760.00. "Witness a frigatebird attacking a booby to steal its fish. Hear shrill calls of thousands of Sooty Terns as they swarm overhead, or the soft tapping of a Storm Petrel's feet as it traverses the surface of glassy lagoon waters." Christmas Island boasts 18 species of nesting birds: Sooty, White (Fairy), Grey-back and Crested Terns; Wedge-tail, Christmas Island and Audubon Shearwater; Phoenix and Storm Petrels; Brown, White-capped and Blue-grey Noddies; Red-footed, Blue-faced and Brown Boobies; Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds and the Red-tailed Tropicbird. For further information, contact Trans-Pacific Special Interest Tours, 10 East Pueblo Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105/(805) 682-6191.

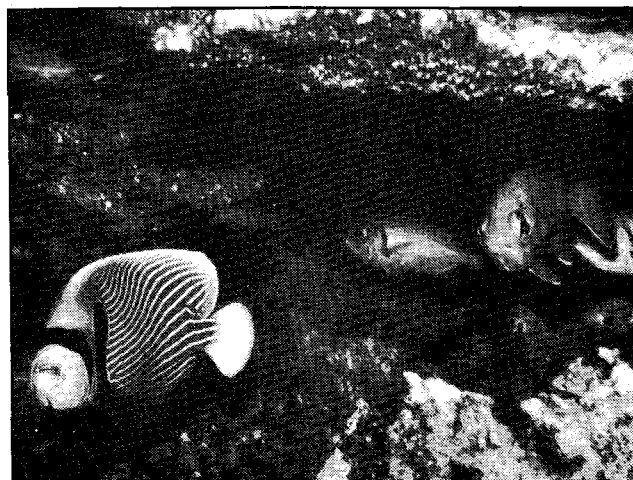


Photo by: Jim Moore

# Perpetuating the PMA

by Dorothy Dimsdale



I love Mondays, which is something I have in common with my late paternal grandmother. I have an epergne which was presented to her in 1910 by "Kirkdale PMA" The letters PMA — believe it or not — stand for Pleasant Monday Afternoons! Here I am, seventy years later, perpetuating PMA, except that I've added mornings as well. Monday is birding day!

Monday for Ruth, Barbara and me, is the high spot of the week. We are eager for the unexpected bird we may see, or any new bit of knowledge we'll absorb, or just for the freedom which comes from getting out to the more bucolic parts of the State.

There's so much to discover, as I keep repeating. Did you know that Common Loons have big feet? Did you know that the Common Loon has white soles to its feet? That's not as irrelevant as might first appear. Its belly is also white, so that while paddling in the shallows, its whole silhouette is minimized to avoid alerting its potential prey.

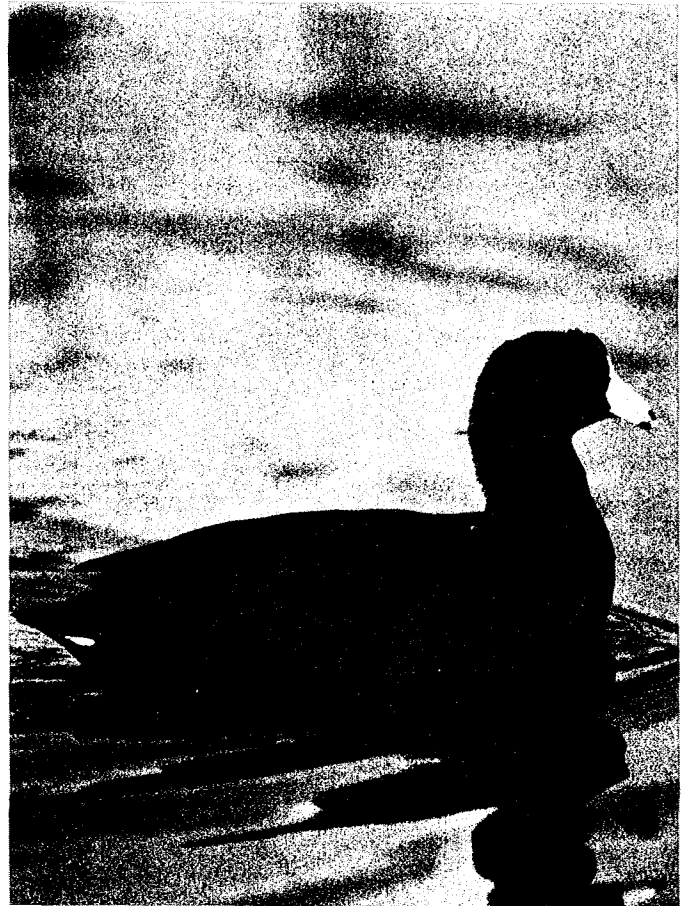
These were some of the points we learned from Kimball Garrett on a field trip to Point Dume one Monday. It wasn't a good day for numbers of species, but that proved to be fortunate for me, because Kimball was able to spend more time discussing the few species on hand. It always amazes me that he and Jon Dunn, both so young, can know so much. I never knew that much about *anything*.

Actually, this noble search for knowledge at the water's edge was prompted by an encounter with an English "twitcher" as bird listers are called in Europe. I've been carting gullible foreigners into the foothills to view our spring migration and avoiding the beaches with their look-alike peeps. It was to the foothills that we took Terence Box who is a serious birder and has photographed many of the rarities (mostly US birds) he has seen in Britain. In fact, he had the photos with him at Switzer Camp Ground where we were birding. I was happily strutting along by the stream having lucked in on a couple of "lifers" for Terry, when he brought out the snaps, saying he was sure I would be able to recognize them all, as they were US birds. To my horror, they were almost all Sandpipers! For a nightmarish five minutes I struggled with identification and failed to recognize *any* of them. Terry made generous excuses for me, remarking on the blurred quality of the photos and my unfamiliarity with some of the rarer peeps. I knew finally and irrevocably that I could no longer hide out in the foothills to block my ignorance. It was high time that I boned up on pelagic and shore birds. Kimball's field trip was a start. I was so eager to make up for lost time, I even carried my own scope to Point Dume.

Unfortunately, we didn't see any Sandpipers as it was the wrong time of year, so my ignorance prevails for the time being. We did however see two whales swimming close to shore, several sea lions, a few small lizards and four million red ants. But if nothing else, I learned to identify the Common Loon in flight — and we all have to start somewhere.



Of course birding in the field is not the only way to polish one's identification powers. One must read as well. Only this week I've discovered that the Kiwi has nostrils at the *end* of its long bill, how about that? Also that the Wilson's Petrel is probably the most numerous bird in the world — and I have yet to see one!



American Coot

photo by Lee Jones

How often have we in the US given more than a cursory glance at Coots on ponds, golf courses, in parks or on marshes? The English have been agonizing over what appears to be the first sighting of an American Coot. As I write, they are converging by the hundreds at a place called Alton Water in Surrey, where an immature American Coot is eating, preening and bathing, blissfully unaware of the turmoil it is causing. Never has a Coot had so much attention. To help resolve the doubts about the identity, an American Coot skin is being sent from a Liverpool museum to Surrey. This skin is of an immature bird with a pale yellow bill and a dark white shield — the same as the Alton Water bird.

By a curious coincidence, the British may be enjoying an invasion of American Coots, for the first Coot in the British Isles is sitting somewhere in Eire, also surrounded by birders, but this one has been positively identified. Eire has beaten England to the wire by a hair — or should I say, a feather!

The Coot was first seen on a Monday, which brings me back to my grandmother and the PMA. The epergne is filled with fresh garden flowers, as it was seventy years ago. I greet every Monday with delight, as she must have done seventy years ago. Some things don't change. It would be wonderful if the same could be said seventy years into the future — the flowers blooming, the Common Loons flying high — and somewhere, the American Coot giving pleasure to some birder of the year 2051. ♡

# Topics of Conservation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

**U**nlike the legendary neat and tidy Swiss, and other quaint folk, Americans are slobs. Wasteful slobs. Not all of us, to be sure, but more than enough of us to make our streets and countryside an ungodly mess. The cities and towns at least have sanitation departments that intermittently sweep the streets and pick up after us in parks and other public places. Outside the urban centers, our housekeeping tends to break down and the trash piles up.

Prominent among the debris figure beverage cans and bottles. The glass lasts forever, eventually gets broken, and is a perpetual menace to life and limb. It is estimated that cans and bottles are responsible for over 150,000 injuries a year in California at a medical cost of \$3 million. Steel ("tin") cans rust in a decade or two, but that's a cumbersome way of returning iron to the soil. And, as Justice Douglas said some years ago, "Aluminum cans have a half-life of 500 years." Perhaps more than most people, birders are connoisseurs of trash. In the pursuit of our odd obsession we probably step through and around more litter in one day than the average person does in a month.

In 1972, Oregon passed the first "bottle bill" in the United States which required a deposit on all beer and soft drink containers. The manufacturers, the retailers and the unions screamed to high heaven, predicting loss of jobs, prohibitive expense and utter chaos. None of these terrible things happened. More jobs were created than were lost and, in two years, can and bottle litter in Oregon was reduced 88 percent. Driving north from California across the border, even the most unobservant motorist notices the difference.

## Why California Needs a Bottle Bill

Other than the aesthetic consideration — which, heaven knows, is reason enough — why should we want a bottle bill? Lots of reasons, all of them good. Most of the reasons involve significant savings in energy and money.

1. With returnable containers, California would save the energy equivalent of 104 million gallons of oil a year — a lot of energy worth a lot of money.
2. Though it is hard to believe, trash collection is one of the most expensive of all municipal services. With returnables, solid waste would be reduced by six percent which would save the taxpayers millions of dollars a year. It would ease the pressure on landfills that are filling up at an alarming rate.
3. Though many aluminum cans are recycled today, a 5¢ or more deposit on them would make most can-tossers cut down on their careless habit. The big spenders who still threw them away would be followed by the thrifty ones snatching up the cans (and bottles) like cattle egrets grabbing bugs disturbed by shuffling cows. Although imported aluminum ore is zooming in price, the demand for it could be cut by as much as 80 percent. Aluminum takes astronomical amounts of water and electricity to produce from ore, it takes far less to recycle the metal, and so huge savings are possible there, too.
4. A reusable bottle may make ten or more round-trips from the bottler to the consumer. An enormous amount of glass, and the energy it takes to make it, would be saved if the throwaway bottle joined the button-hook on the curio shelf.

## Return to Returnable Bottles Urged

Before the advent of the disposable can and bottle, the beer and soft drink companies flourished, and there are still a fair number of returnable bottles in circulation today, and so this plan would not entail the revival of a lost art. It *can* be done. It *is* being done — successfully — in seven states. Why not in California, usually the most innovative state of all? Such a bill has been thought of here — every year since 1966 a bottle bill has been introduced into the State legislature. And, sad to relate, every year the industry lobby, with unlimited funds, has managed to defeat it.

In a fresh attempt to get a can and bottle law on the books, a new organization, Californians Against Waste, is starting early to get an initiative on the ballot in November 1982. This would bypass the Legislature and put the decision up to the voters. Recent polls, conducted by the State Department of Consumer Affairs and the State Solid Waste Management Board, indicate that 83 to 84 percent of the people of California favor a deposit on beverage containers. Some 300 groups and organizations have endorsed bottle and can legislation. So it would seem to be a sure thing, like voting for Mom's apple pie. Not so; when the time comes, the billboards, TV spots and full-page newspaper ads will blossom forth, dripping with money and promising disaster if Proposition 98 is passed. Keep it in mind for next year. If you want to know more about it, write to:

Californians Against Waste  
P.O. Box 289  
Sacramento, Calif 95802



## Three Condor Mated Pairs Studied

After a year in the field observing condors, researchers at the California Condor Research Center in Ventura report the existence of three mated pairs of California Condors: one pair in Santa Barbara county with an egg, a "new" pair, and a pair still caring for a yearling chick.

The pair incubating an egg seems, from all indications, to be the same pair whose chick died last year. Although they laid in February in 1980, they have laid this egg in May. It is speculated they may have lost an egg earlier this year; they abandoned their original 1981 nest site in March.

The "new" pair consists of an adult and a subadult bird which continue to exhibit courtship behavior but will probably not nest in 1981.

The third pair which successfully fledged a chick in 1980 continues to do well. The adults still feed the young bird, but the yearling condor frequently flies out of sight of the roost area not far from last year's nest during the day. It is not known whether the young condor is also securing its own food.





# Re: Mission Was Not for the Birds

(With Apologies to Jack Smith)

by Henry E. Childs, Jr.

**H**elen and I drove to San Juan Capistrano to watch the oft-heralded arrival of the swallows. It was St. Joseph's Day and we felt we couldn't miss. Never having been there on this day (I have an aversion to crowds), I nonetheless felt the need to check, in the plumage so to speak, the ambivalent attention given to the Capistrano myth in recent *Los Angeles Times* columns by Jack Smith.

The skies were overcast when we arrived at the Mission at 6:30 am (after a 4:30 rising and a long drive from Upland). "We should be able to see them better against the dark sky", I said to my somnambulant wife. "You'd see them blindfolded", she replied dutifully.

A small crowd had gathered at the Mission to maintain the vigil. Several persons had to have the differences between swallows and Domestic Pigeons, doves, Starlings, House Sparrows, Brown Towhees and Bushtits pointed out to them.

At 6:41 am, I pointed out the first flock of about 20 swallows overhead at 1500 feet. The crowd was not impressed. Binoculars

were not in evidence, but plenty of mini-cameras were at the ready. "What does he know?" someone asked, obviously not impressed with my San Bernardino Audubon and ABA (American Bowling Association) patches.

Surprisingly, birding did pick up as a Merlin flushed the mixed bag of pigeons and doves from their comfortable roost on the nave of the old Mission building. They returned shortly to their occupation of people-watching and waiting for the swallows.

By now the trip list had reached 11 species!


At 7:30 am, the CBS television crew arrived. When I pointed out a lone swallow in the distance, they said "Where?"

Now, the small, migrating groups of swallows were joined by White-throated Swifts. These birds, in contrast to Las Golandrinas, seemed generally interested in the Mission, coming in close overhead. And one actually came into the courtyard area.

Channel 50, the Associated Press and several newspaper reporters began arriving. One mistakenly asked me for comments; he'll probably be fired.

By 9:16 am, it was apparent that the swallows were ignoring the Mission and were headed for less populated and better feeding grounds. The list had swollen to 17 species, including a Prairie Falcon and seven Cattle Egrets. Over 256 swallows had been seen and about 50 swifts. No swallows had come into the Mission.

As we left the Mission grounds, Channel 4 and Bob Navarro arrived. I filled him in on the situation. "I've seen enough swallows today", I said, and he replied, "So have I".

And he hadn't seen any. 



*There's A Least Bittern Out There Someplace!*

Members of LAAS, San Bernardino Audubon, Chaffey College and Arnold Small's UCLA Class at the Salton Sea (causeway to Red Hill Rd.). Photo courtesy Henry E. Childs, Jr., by Dewey Henson.



# Birds of the Season

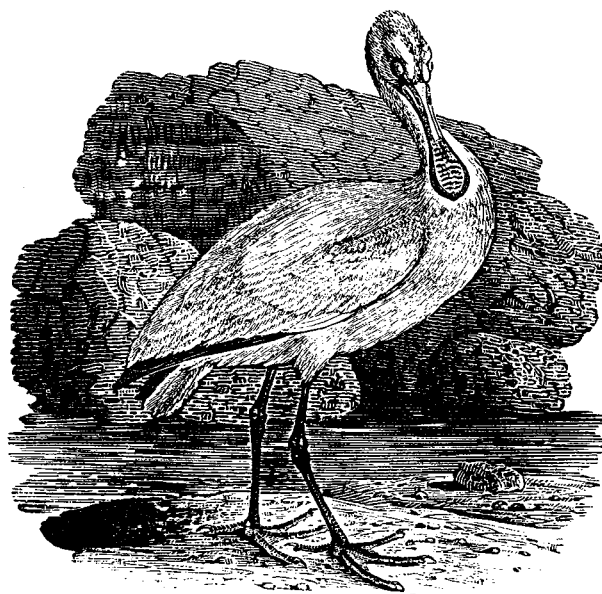
by Shum Suffel

This May, more than most Mays, was satisfying to active birders. The usual complaints ("Sure, there were a lot of good birds, but only a few people saw them", or "The migrants hurried through, and there were practically no vagrants this spring") were not heard. Because there were few birders who did not see a new Life, State, or County bird within a few miles of home — Keith Axelson's **Horned Puffin** (plus a breeding plumaged **Red-necked Grebe**) at the Santa Monica Pier 23-25 May, or Jacob Szabo's **White-eyed Vireo** in the willows above Malibu Lagoon 24-27 May. Earlier, and only one hundred miles away, was Gene Cardiff and David Hayward's singing male **Kentucky Warbler** at Morongo Valley for several days after 17 May.

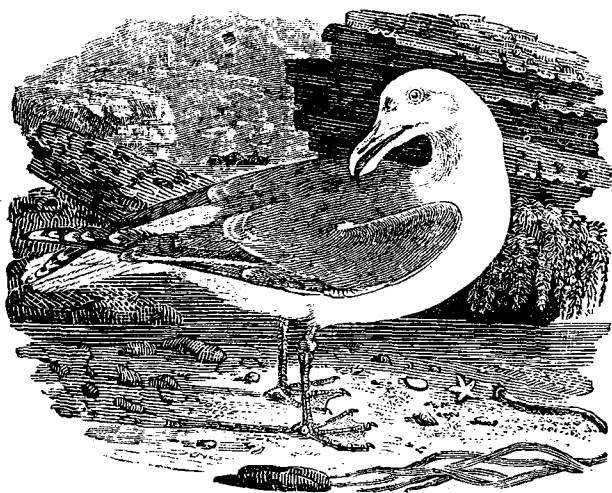
That was the frosting on the cake. What was the cake? One hundred percent pure Angelfood! Russ and Marion Wilson, who spend each spring making daily bird censuses at Morongo Valley, confirm the feeling expressed in the June *TANAGER* that the passerine migration this spring was the largest, or at least the most conspicuous, in their experience. In mid and late April their counts of most species were up, but **Warbling Vireos** and **Nashville Warblers** were up 300 percent over previous years. **Nashville Warblers** even exceeded **Wilson's Warblers**, an unprecedented situation. They also found three **Black-and-white Warblers** and four **Tennessee Warblers** (previously only about one per spring). Surprisingly, only **Nuttall's Woodpeckers** were identified . . . no **Ladder-backed**s. This previously was considered to be an area where their ranges overlapped. Unfortunately, the Wilsons left a few days before the **Kentucky Warbler** was found. On 20 May, Morongo was alive with late migrants — **Western Wood-Pewees** were abundant, **Willow** and **Western Flycatchers** and **Yellow** and **Wilson's Warblers** were common, and **Western Tanagers** were very common. Hal Baxter agreed that there were more birds than either of us had ever seen there.

Nearby, along the Whitewater River, on 9 May, Lee Jones heard a song he knew from his years as a North Carolinian, a **White-eyed Vireo**. Confirming the identification with binoculars, he headed for Morongo Valley where he found several recruits anxious to share his find. Unfortunately, the recruits left at 4:00 and Lee relocated the vireo at 5:00 p.m. Earlier in the month, Arnold Small's class saw a male **Indigo Bunting** at Morongo Valley, and on 20 May, Bob Doe found a nesting **Indigo** there. He also found a **Virginia's Warbler**. Mitch Hiendel's visit on 7 May produced a **Black Swift**, a rare migrant over our deserts. Carol Friedman's venture on 13 May produced a male **Chestnut-sided Warbler**. At Yucca Valley, ten miles beyond Morongo and a thousand feet higher, Bob McKernan found five migrating **Swainson's Hawks**, a **Northern Waterthrush**, and a male **Varied Thrush** on 24-25 April. Also at Yucca Valley, Jerry Johnson found a **Magnolia Warbler** on 23 May. Bob and Eleanor Parsons located a pair of **Summer Tanagers** and a male **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Mohave Narrows Park above Victorville on 10 May. In Placerita Canyon on 9 May, Jacob Szabo found a singing **Bell's Vireo** and a **Tennessee Warbler**. In the Antelope Valley, four **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh provided one of the few recent records for Los Angeles Co. (Kimball Garrett, Tom Howell, *et al*, 16-17 May). An all white hawk with small black spots on the upperparts at Jim Lott's ranch above Leona Valley (near Palmdale) in mid-May must have been a leucistic (partially albino) version of

one of our local hawk species. A **Thayer's Gull** at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh on 18 May was late and at an unusual locality (Jon Dunn), as was a **Sabine's Gull** at the same locality (Larry Sansone, 17 May). The **Sabine's** was later relocated at the nearby Lancaster Sewage Ponds. A singing **Gray Vireo** along Bob's Gap Road south of Pearblossom (Barry and Terry Clark, 16 May) was in the same area where Jan Tarble heard one on her breeding bird census.



Along the coast from Santa Maria south to Laguna the migration was good, but rarities were widely scattered. Five **White Pelicans** at Malibu Lagoon were unusual along the immediate coast (Stephine King, 21 April). A **Tricolored Heron** was with a flock of fifteen **White-faced Ibis** in the pond just east of the Santa Ana River below Hamilton Street on 29 April (Phil Swan). Two more **Tricolored**s were at the north end of the Salton Sea (Herb and Olga Clarke, 10 May). An adult **Little Blue Heron**, found in Santa Barbara on 6 May, moved to Goleta the next day (Larry Ballard *et al*). The **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** near McGrath State Beach on 29 April (Richard Webster) proved difficult to relocate. **Least Bitterns**, too, were on the move, with two in Santa Barbara after 28 April and one in the Arcadia Arboretum where there are very few previous records (Barbara Cohen, 8 May). The female **Oldsquaw** at the Ventura River mouth remained until at least 25 May, and another was at King Harbor, Redondo Beach, on 24 April (Hal and Nancy Spear). **Oldsquaws** have been known to summer coastally. A **Bald Eagle** at Lake Cachuma on 3 May was late. Although the **Peregrine Falcons** at Morro Rock are still laying thin-shelled eggs, their original clutch was replaced with viable chicks which they are now feeding enthusiastically. A **Merlin** at McGrath on 4 May was southern California's latest record (Richard Webster). Uncommon spring shorebirds included a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at McGrath (Richard Webster, 9-15 May); **Baird's Sandpipers** at McGrath on 29 April and near Santa Maria on 14 May; and **Semipalmated Sandpipers** at McGrath (3, 11, 17 and 20 May, Richard Webster),



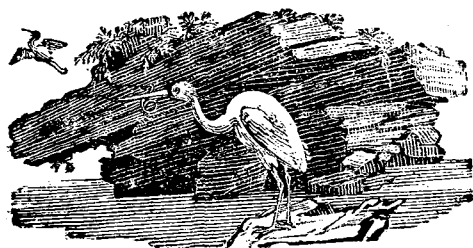
Goleta (5 May, Paul Lehman), and the Edwards Air Force Base marsh (18 May, Richard Webster). **Franklin's gulls** were mostly to the north of us, with one near Santa Maria on 6 May, and one or two at Goleta on 6 and 8 May. A well-described **Arctic Tern** at Marina del Rey seemed to be "disabled", as most inshore **Arctics** have been (Jacob Szabo, 17 May). Despite what the range maps show in some field guides, **Common Terns** are common terns along our coast in migration: over 100 were at King Harbor after mid-April (Nancy Spear). Single **Black Terns** were at Pt. Mugu (Richard Webster, 9 May) and King Harbor (the Spears, 5 May); these terns were numerous around the Lancaster Sewage Ponds and Edwards Air Force Base marsh in May. The previously mentioned **Horned Puffin** at the Santa Monica Pier was found dead on 26 May; while being prepared as a specimen at UCLA it revealed a fish hook in its stomach.

**M**any noteworthy landbirds were found coastally. Ten **Chimney Swifts** circled over Arcadia on 5 May (Mike San Miguel), and two were seen near the Burbank Studios where some fifty roosted every summer night in 1978 (David Koeppel, 29 May). Six or eight **Phainopeplas** in Griffith Park on 8 May (Bud Plochera) were undoubtedly part of the migratory movement referred to in Hank Childs' article in the June **TANAGER**. A **Yellow-throated Vireo** at Long Beach Recreation Park on 15-16 May (Brian Daniels) was a first for Los Angeles County; it was succeeded by a **Yellow-throated Warblers** (the second occurrence there; Mitch Heindel, 18 May). An unprecedented invasion brought at least five other **Yellow-throated Warblers** to the region: at Corn Springs, near Desert Center (Arnold Small, 25 April); in the mountains behind Goleta (Louis Bevier, 10 May); in Santa Barbara (Larry Ballard, after 11 May); in Northridge (Harold Swanton, 7 May); and on Bonsall Rd. near Zuma (Kimball Garrett, 27 May). All appeared to be of the expected race, *albiflora*. A singing male **Black-and-white Warbler** was on Figueroa Mtn., above Santa Barbara, after 23 April, and another was in the willow clumps at Marina del Rey on 17 May (Jacob Szabo). In these same willow clumps, Hank Brodtkin found a male **Magnolia Warbler** on 30 May and a singing male **Blackburnian Warbler** the next day to

climax a spectacular month. A **Northern Parula** at the Love Foundation in Santa Barbara was "showing an interest in the nearby **Yellow-throated Warbler**" on 11 May according to Paul Lehman. Don't read anything into the above; the foundation was named after Dr. Love, I am told. Another **Parula** was in Goleta the same day (Paul Lehman). A female **Black-throated Green Warbler** was in the giant sycamores along Bonsall Rd. on 27 May (Richard Webster and Kimball Garrett). The only report of a **Bay-breasted Warbler** came from San Diego on 25-26 May. An **Ovenbird** was on Pt. Loma, San Diego, and another probable **Ovenbird** was in the Marina del Rey willow clumps (Jacob Szabo, 18 May). A female **Hooded Warbler** above Laguna on 24 May was found by Jerry Johnson. Another "Hooded" was in Montecito on 17 May, and up to four were near San Diego this spring. A male **Summer Tanager** was a rare bird at the Arcadia Arboretum (Natasha Antonovich).



**T**he annual Memorial Day weekend at the desert oases of Inyo and Mono Counties drew more than seventy compulsive birders from as far away as San Francisco and San Diego. With saturation coverage of likely locations and an active information exchange, few rarities escaped observation. Furnace Creek Ranch was generally unproductive, except for the two most exciting birds — a **Le Conte's Sparrow** on 24-25 May and a **Mississippi Kite** which flew over on Sunday evening, roosted nearby, and flew on the next morning. There also were about ten **Lucy's Warblers** (which nest there), a male **Orchard Oriole**, a **Bobolink** or two, and a **Swamp Sparrow**. Disappointing to California listers was a **Kentucky Warbler** at Dyer, Nevada, just over the state line (Paul Lehman *et al*, 23 May). More productive was Oasis Ranch in Mono Co., where a **Least Flycatcher** and an **Ovenbird** were found on 22 May (Guy McCaskie); a **Northern Parula** and a **Philadelphia Vireo** followed on 23 May; on 24 May there was a male **Chestnut-sided Warbler** (David Koeppel); the 25th produced a male **Golden-winged Warbler**, a **Magnolia Warbler**, and a second **Philadelphia Vireo**; on the 26th there was a **Worm-eating Warbler** (Richard Webster); and later in the week a **Prothonotary Warbler** climaxed the week-long "weekend". Deep Springs Ranch, too, provided top-quality birding, with a **Yellow-throated Vireo** (Donna Dittmann) and two **Northern Parulas** on 22 May; a **Hooded Warbler** and a **White-throated Sparrow** on 23 May; and a male **Scarlet Tanager** on 25 May (Janet Cupples). At Tollhouse Springs there were nesting **Broad-tailed Hummingbirds**, **Red Crossbills** on their way to higher elevations, and a **Magnolia Warbler**. Scattered through the north deserts were approximately six **Black-and-white Warblers**, two **Northern Waterthrushes**, fifteen



American Redstarts, four Summer Tanagers, two "Baltimore" Orioles, fifteen Indigo Buntings and four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Hank Childs, returning from the Cooper Ornithological Society meeting at Lake Tahoe, found a very rare Upland Sandpiper about four miles north of Bridgeport. Diaz Lake near Lone Pine provided a Northern Parula for him on the way up to Tahoe. No wonder there were few complaints except from those of us who were not there.

Lest we seem to imply that all the rarities were in southern California, there were reports of a Black-tailed Godwit and a Thick-billed Vireo in Florida earlier this year, a Common Cuckoo on Cape Cod in early May, a Fieldfare in Ontario, Canada, and a pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers nesting below Tucson, Arizona. A number of Solander's Petrels (a large, dark *Pterodroma*) were found by a research vessel as near as 35 miles to the northern California coast in May. A boat trip was hurriedly planned out of Bodega Bay, north of San Francisco, to look for them on 31 May; the trip turned out to be a disaster. The sea was so rough that two men in the bow fell; one broke an ankle and the other was unable to stand. After two hours, the trip was aborted and the injured were rushed to a hospital for x-rays!

It's hard to be enthusiastic about July birding after these two fantastic weeks, but birding will continue nevertheless. Last month's suggestions are still valid, but add the Salton Sea for southern herons, Wood Storks, Laughing Gulls, Gull-billed Terns, and possibly frigatebirds and boobies later in the month.



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



## WESTERN TANAGER

EDITOR Mary Lawrence Test

Published ten times a year by the Los Angeles Audubon Society,  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

PRESIDENT Jean Brandt

1st VICE-PRESIDENT Fred Heath

2nd VICE-PRESIDENT Bob Shanman

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Carol Friedman

TREASURER Art Cupples

Audubon membership (local and national) is \$20 per year (individual), \$25 (family), or \$13.50 (student or senior citizen), including AUDUBON Magazine and THE WESTERN TANAGER. To join, make checks payable to the National Audubon Society, and send them to Audubon House. Subscriptions to THE WESTERN TANAGER separately are \$8.00 per year (Bulk Rate) or \$12.00 (First Class, mailed in an envelope). To subscribe, make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

## Peripheral Canal Opposed, con't.

al income. President Carter's review of the CAP in 1977 found it economically unjustified, and a more recent analysis showed that the public would realize less than 35 cents in benefits for each tax dollar spent.

Possibly the worst aspect of the CAP is its tremendous waste of energy. It pumps water 2100 vertical feet uphill. Its projected completion has caused the present clamor for the Peripheral Canal with the State Water Project pumping the CAP replacement water 4000 feet uphill (see illustration). The Colorado River aqueduct presently lifts water only 1600 feet. Thus the CAP-Peripheral connection will result in the combined consumption of billions of kilowatts of electricity to pump water more than ten times higher than the Washington Monument.

A free market exchange could prevent this waste of energy and be financially profitable to both states. All Arizona need do is sell California its share of Colorado River water presently being used by Southern California. It has been estimated that Peripheral water will cost \$300 per acre-foot and it was noted in Mr. Chapin's article that 800,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water is involved.

The net effect would mean California would save about \$120 million a year, while Arizona would realize an income of a similar amount. According to the National Water Commission, it is legally possible for two states to make agreements on the interstate transfer of water.

I have been told by Dr. Robert Witzman of the Maricopa Audubon Society that there are more than tax dollars and energy savings involved in stopping the Central Arizona Project. He says the dams of the CAP would destroy riparian lands which presently provide vital nesting habitat for the Beardless Flycatcher and Gray Hawk — thereby greatly reducing the opportunity for all Americans to view these birds in their own country. Most tragically, Orme Dam near Phoenix would destroy habitat for the world's only desert-nesting Bald Eagles, possibly sealing the fate for this tiny population.

*Frank Welsh is a Phoenix-based civil engineer with a doctorate degree in law. On occasion, he has been retained by the Maricopa Audubon Society for his water project expertise. Mr. Welsh is also Executive Director of Citizens Concerned about the Project, a long-standing taxpayer group critical of present water policy and especially the Central Arizona Project. He was formerly a civil engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers.*



## Condor Habitat Survey

A graduate student from the Geography Department of Michigan State University who is National Audubon Society intern at the Condor Research Center is conducting a study of livestock trends and land use patterns in Kern County, a prime feeding habitat for the California Condors.

It is expected that these studies will provide data on the recent patterns of land management in Kern County; it will prove a useful guide on how land use may change in the years to come. This type of information is essential before an effective program of habitat management can be designed for the condors.

# 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

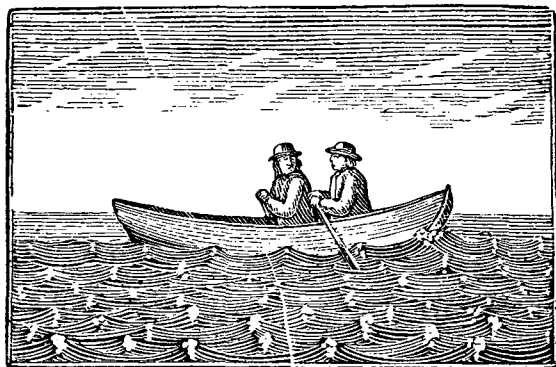
To make reservations for pelagic trips, send a check payable to LAAS, plus a self-addressed stamped envelope, your phone number and the names of all those in your party to: the Reservations Chairman, c/o Audubon House.

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, 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.

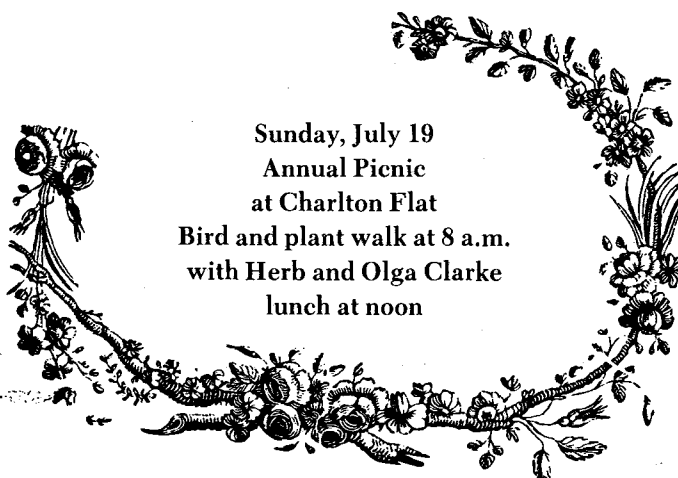


Sunday, July 19

Annual Picnic

at Charlton Flat

Bird and plant walk at 8 a.m.  
with Herb and Olga Clarke  
lunch at noon



**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.

Jean Brandt will lead her yearly trip to Mt. Pinos during the latter part of the month of August. Please call Audubon House for further details.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 —** Jerry Johnson will lead a day-trip to McGrath State Beach. Take Hwy 101 north to Victoria Ave. exit in Ventura. Pass under freeway and continue to Olivas Park Drive, then turn right. Then left at traffic light at Harbor Blvd. Park at bridge; meet at 8 a.m.

**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.

Los Angeles Audubon Society  
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Sherman Suter  
c/o 2209 Oakwood Dr., Apt. E  
Columbia, MO 65201

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 26974  
Los Angeles, CA.