

WESTERN TANAGER

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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Birding the Palo Alto Baylands and Flood Control Basin Refuge

by Dan Murphy

Palo Alto Baylands Refuge and the nearby Flood Control Basin are excellent birding sites the year round. The attractions here are seasonal visitors and permanent resident birds which can be seen in good numbers even during summer when birding slows down elsewhere in the Bay Area. It is not uncommon to find 50 to 60 species during the winter and 25 or more during the summer months.

From any point in the Bay Area go to Palo Alto via Hwy. 101 and exit on Embarcadero Rd. East. Drive East .6 mile to the end of the road, turn left and continue past the airport to the duck pond on the left (.9 mi.).

#1. The pond is a good place to look for common ducks and gulls. This is an especially good area to study Ring-billed Gulls in all plumages. Mallards, American Wigeons and American Coots dominate the water-fowl flock but Gadwall, Common Golden-eye, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler and other ducks may also be seen. Be sure to scan the back shore of the pond for gulls, including Western, Glaucous-winged, California and Thayer's, assorted shorebirds and waders. Circle to the right behind the pond. Check the trees and shrubs to the left for blackbirds — Red-winged, Tricolored and Brewer's — Common Yellowthroat, Savannah and Song Sparrows. Rails can sometimes be found in the marsh areas. Western and Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Canvas-back, Ruddy Duck, Pintail, Bufflehead and a variety of other ducks frequent the open water. The mudflats are used by many waders and shorebirds including Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Marbled Godwit, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Dunlin and both dowitchers.



From the Sidelines

by Harold Swanton

The arrival, somewhat tardily, of the Supplement to *Birding*, Volume XIII No. 5, dated October 1981, has ended a period of agonizing suspense. It's over now, and we all know where we stand.

The *Supplement* is the official compilation by the American Birding Association, Inc., of lists. There are Life Lists, State and Provincial Lists. There are Canada Lists and Mexico Lists, Central and South America Lists. There are Western Palearctic Lists and A.B.A. Area and Lower 48 Lists, Big Day Lists, Decade Lists, Back Yard Lists (by acreage) and more. The record holders are listed in order of achievement down to what they call the Threshold; below that are the faceless birders with no rank worth mentioning.

Our own Arnold Small marches triumphantly in fifth position on World Life Lists. He would have been fourth except for a dark

horse from Australia who came roaring down the stretch like Phar Lap of legend and breasted the tape with a staggering total of 6150 — 68.3 percent, says the A.B.A., of all the known species of birds on earth. The Aussie had kept his numbers secret until somebody leaked to the *Bird Bonanzas Newsletter*.

A good friend of mine, Stokeley Froog, a retired screenwriter who lives in Guadalajara, has fired off a letter of protest to the A.B.A., calling them to task for leaving his list out. Stokeley claims Number One on the Mexican Species Seen through the Bottom of a Beer Glass List at 72, all of them authenticated by A.B.A. procedures.

I know how he feels, since they have ignored my list, too. It's small, but very selective — Montane Species Seen through the Half Moon in an Outhouse Door: three.

From the Sidelines

Hammond Flycatcher, Mountain Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

The Listing Syndrome, alas, is not only alive and well; it is burgeoning. The American mind tends more often than not to be quantitative rather than qualitative. We are brought up on numbers. Our grades in college are usually based on percentiles; we understand batting and fielding averages, Nielson ratings, golf scores and box office grosses much more readily than the *quality* of things. It is hard to quantify the grace of one athlete as compared with another, or the emotional impact of a work of art. Numbers permit direct comparison, which in turn permits competition, and competition is as American as apple pie.


You can't put numbers on the simple joys of birdwatching, on the excitement of the search, the finding, the focussing, the listening, and finally the naming of the darting little wraith in the twiggery or the soaring raptor hanging over a distant ridge. You can't

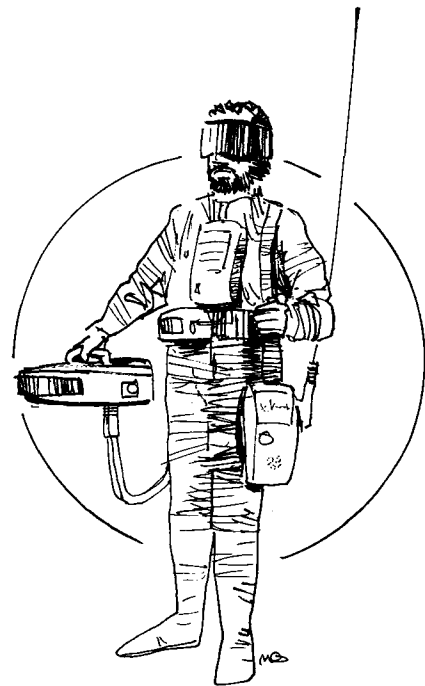
tote up in figures the fun of it all, the rapport with wild things, the companionship of others of like heart and mind, the fresh smell of the fields or the woods on a damp morning in spring.

Most important of all, you can't put numbers on the experience, the expertise, the skills involved in field identification. No quotients exist for sharpness of eye, acuity of hearing, familiarity with haunts, habits, flight patterns and the myriad bits of evidence the first-rate field birder calls upon in a difficult identification.

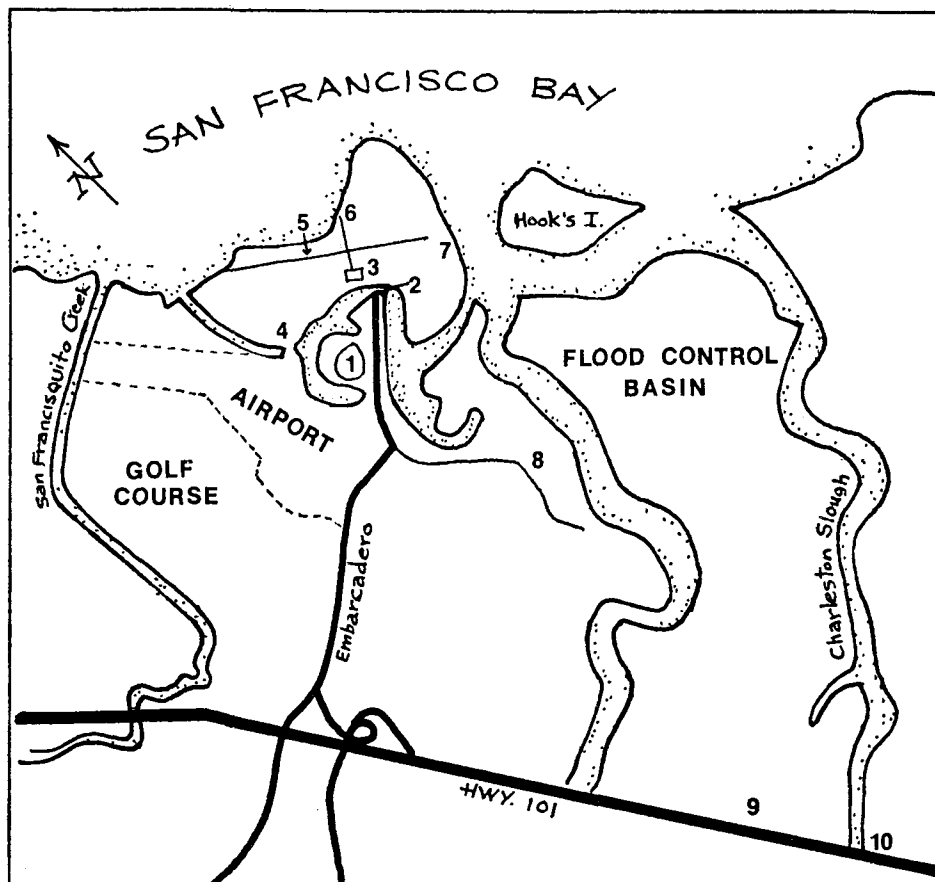
Still, you have to find numbers. After all, without them how can you compete?

So the listers go forth and conquer and endure in the musk of Attu and pray for a howler of a Siberian storm to blow some Asiatic vagrants into their laps so they can move a notch or two past their fellows in the 700 Club.

And I and the rest of the faceless ones will continue to watch from the sidelines. 



Palo Alto



Check the flock of gulls for Thayer's Gull which may be found here in winter. Blue-winged Teal can usually be found at the southeast end of this area across from the east end of the pond. Look for Burrowing Owl and Ring-necked Pheasant along the edges of the airport, though the former have declined recently and may be extirpated by this time. Go east to the parking area just past the Yacht Harbor (.2 mi.).

#2. Check for Horned and Western Grebes, Common Goldeneye and gulls between the boats. A few Least and Western Sandpipers may be seen along the shore here. Walk to the north along the dike which passes the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center.

#3. Great and Snowy Egret, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, Northern Shoveler and Green-winged, Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal may be seen in the marsh. Marsh Hawk and White-tailed Kite may be seen flying low or hovering over the area. Common Snipe are uncommon but Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers should be seen and heard.

#4. When you reach the large culvert at the end of the marsh, check the edges of the airport for Burrowing Owl, Common Snipe, Killdeer and other birds. The shrubs along the ditch are good for Anna's Hummingbird, House Finch, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and there are a few records for Swamp Sparrow. Walk north along the dike at least to the end of the airport run-

way. Check the open water for European Wigeon and the previously mentioned ducks. Greater Scaup may be seen toward the end of the marsh. Return to the Interpretive Center and walk out toward the Bay on the boardwalk. Watch for Glaucous-winged, Herring, California, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls, as well as Forster's and Caspian Terns. Perpendicular to the main boardwalk is another walkway without handrails. If the winter tide is high (especially if it exceeds 6'), this is an excellent area to look for Clapper Rail, Black-crowned Night Heron, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat and the endemic "Salt Marsh" Song Sparrow. The rare Black Rail and Sharp-tailed Sparrow may be seen during such winter tides. The most productive part of the boardwalk for birding is between the first and second tower to the north of the gate.

#5. High tide may flood parts of the boardwalk and may cause extensively muddy conditions on the dikes, and so it is wise to wear waterproof boots or slip-proof shoes which will not be ruined by salt water.


#6. If the tide is low go to the end of the boardwalk, and check the shoreline for shorebirds. Rafts of ducks sometimes come in with the tide. Upon returning to the parking lot drive to the right (south, .2 mi.) and check the open water from the parking lot at the end of the road.

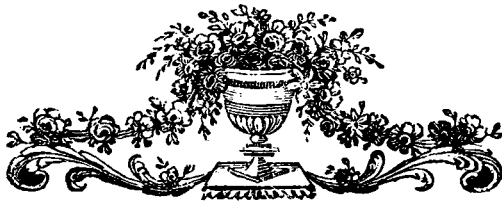
#7. Ducks and a few shorebirds or waders may be seen here. If you are interested in gulls drive back to Embarcadero Rd. and continue south to the refuse area.

#8. Thousands of Glaucous-winged, Herring, Western, California and Ring-billed Gulls can be seen here. There are also a few records for the rare Glaucous Gull. Drive back to Embarcadero Rd., go east to the last intersection controlled by a stoplight before the freeway (East Bayshore Rd./Frontage Rd.) and turn left. As you drive south check the first large field for Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels. Continue south to the next large open area; just south of the large pond you can park by a chained access road (1.2 mi.).

#9. Check the pond for all previously mentioned ducks as well as Gadwall and Red-head. After checking the pond, walk east on the access road into the marsh. Marsh Hawks, White-tailed Kites, Burrowing Owls and Short-eared Owls may be seen flying in this area. In the weeds there may be Loggerhead Shrikes, Western Meadowlarks, House Finches, Lesser Goldfinches, Savannah, White-crowned and Song Sparrows. As you walk along the roads be sure to check each open water area for European Wigeons among the large numbers of American Wigeons. Return to your car and continue to drive south (.2 mi.) to the end of the marsh.

#10. Park off the pavement just before the bridge and walk out along the dike next to the building. If access is blocked here walk around to the right and go through the parking lot to El Camino Kennels where access may be available. Check for Common Gallinule along the edges of the tall marsh growth. Pied-billed Grebes nest here in summer. Walk past the kennels on your right, continue over the hikers' gate and bird Charleston Slough, the large open waterway on the right. The rare Little Blue Heron has been recorded here with some regularity since the mid 70s. Snowy Egret, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron should be seen here. Most of the previously mentioned ducks use this area as well. During the summer look for Caspian, Arctic and Least Terns, White Pelicans and early shorebirds. A Black Skimmer was observed in this area in late July, 1978. Be prepared to walk about a mile on the dike before returning to your car. This area is presently under development so landmarks may change fairly rapidly. The staff of the Baylands Interpretive Center are quite knowledgeable and will probably be aware of any changes in the area. They also provide interpretive programs including nature walks, children's programs, workshops and films.

Reprinted from THE GULL, publication of Golden Gate Audubon Society, January 1982. 



Lake Serranos Closed to Birders

The following sad note arrived early in March from TANAGER contributor Henry E. Childs, Jr.

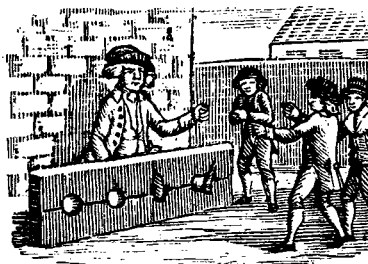
"Because of some unfortunate behavior on the part of some individuals, the management of Lake Serranos Mobil Home Park in Chino is now refusing to allow birding on their property. This action is understandable. Although it is plainly posted that it is private property and that visitors must check in at the office, a number of people haven't been bothering to do so. They also refused to be recognized when challenged and destroyed a flower bed of one of the residents. Property and persons were insulted.

"So, now the locality where the only Tropical Kingbird resided this winter, along with the resident Cassin's Kingbirds, a male European Wigeon, Ross' and White-fronted Geese, plus hundreds to thousands of

Canadas, Common Gallinule, a colony of Tricolored Blackbirds, a roost of 75 Turkey Vultures overwintering, and hundreds to thousands of other waterfowl is now off-limits to birders.

"This is a crying shame."

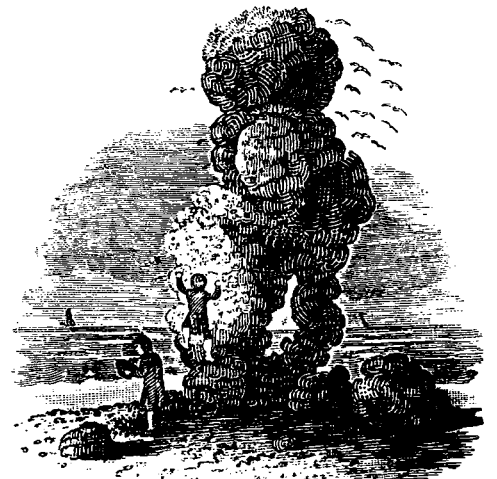
THE WESTERN TANAGER seconds this opinion. Perhaps it is time for all of us to review in our minds our behavior and to mind our manners when we're out birding.



Flock Dynamics

by Elizabeth Rhodes

Programed
by a celestial computer?
Or does the myriad
dip and turn,
flash and wheel
in unison
to an aerial waltz?

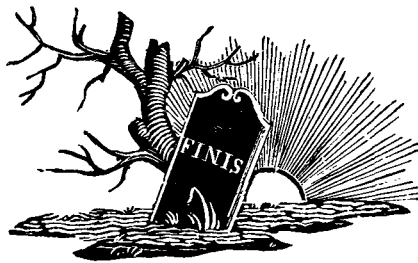
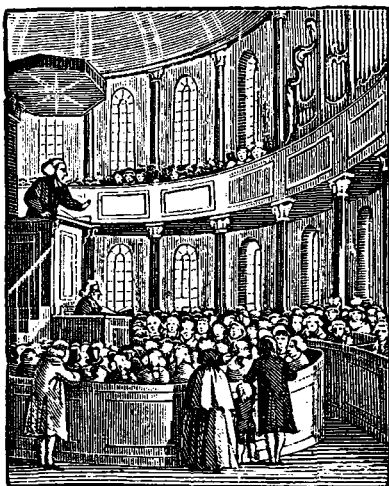


Topics of Conservation

by Sandy Woblgemuth

The Endangered Species Act is most assuredly endangered. Led by Mr. Reagan's gallant Regulatory Relief Task Force galloping under the banner, "Get Government Off Our Backs", the knights of Free Enterprise & Boondoggle are charging across the field, lances poised to impale the hapless statute. The 1973 Act was a landmark achievement. Congress forthrightly declared that many animals and plants had become "extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation." When the Tellico Dam promised the demise of the snail darter, amendments to the Act were passed permitting the completion of this project, a dam widely considered an unnecessary, ill-advised waste of tax dollars.

Why should anyone care about obscure, sometimes ridiculous-sounding species like the snail darter or the Furbish lousewort? There are many answers to this question, most of them dealing with economic and medical benefits to man. New life-saving wonder drugs may be discovered in heretofore inconspicuous fungi, insects and invertebrates. New, harder strains of food products may be developed from wild stocks of animals and plants. Late-producing plants, rich in hydrocarbons, are already being grown in Japan to replace fossil fuels. Loss of biological diversity is a serious world problem. Undersecretary of State, James L. Buckley, addressing a scientific conference in November, said, "... the needless extermination of a single species can be an act of recklessness. By permitting high rates of extinction to continue, we are limiting the potential growth of biological knowledge. In essence, the process is tantamount to book-burning; but it is even worse, in that it involves books yet to be deciphered and read."



The most compelling argument for saving species, to my mind, is an ethical one. What right have we — *Homo sapiens* — to hold the power of life and death, to play God with a plant or an animal. It is only at our peril that we consider ourselves masters of the earth rather than fellow members of the community. Whether they have economic value or not, every living thing has what Aldo Leopold calls a "biotic right" to exist. In these hazardous eighties, our rampant technology is making even Man — the pinnacle of evolutionary development — an endangered species. For, if by accident or design the button is ever pushed, then goodbye snail darter, goodbye lousewort, goodnight sweet ladies, we're heading for the last round-up. But since this is not our day to think the unthinkable let's return to the Endangered Species Act.

The Act has a noble, sweeping purpose: to preserve all species of plants and animals threatened or in imminent danger of extinction in the United States *and the world*. Evaluation of the biological status of species is made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. When it has been determined that a species is threatened or endangered it is listed in the *Federal Register* as such. At the same time the Secretary of the Interior must identify and describe the critical habitat of the species, the area necessary for its shelter, food and reproduction. The process of listing is complex and cumbersome and moves at a glacial pace. This is almost inevitable because of the enormous biological detail involved. It may take years before a plant or animal that is proposed as a candidate is listed. Since 1973, 756 species have been declared threatened or endangered worldwide; of these, 61 plants and 227 animals occur in the United States. Under consideration, though not yet *proposed* to Fish and Wildlife, are some 3000 plants and 225 animals. To the concerned layman, it seems as if the process is in perpetual slow motion and that some species might vanish before they are even studied.

During 1979 and 1980, an average of 46 species were listed annually. In 1981, however, only three plants and a Hawaiian snail were added to the list and these were already in the works before the new administration took over. The present Interior Department

has listed no species at all; it says it wants to concentrate its efforts more on species already listed rather than evaluating new ones. Many experts are critical of this decision. They feel that listing, even without an active recovery program, will let developers and agencies know that their land is indeed critical habitat. Listing alone, they believe, will afford considerable species protection.

Once a species achieves the magic list it gets a lot of perks. Legally, it cannot be killed or collected or injured in any way. It cannot be bought or sold interstate or in foreign commerce. Plants cannot be sold but may be collected. The Act directs the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a recovery plan for each listed species. The plans include habitat preservation scientific research and law enforcement. The Condor Recovery Plan is one of 44 plans now in force for American species with another 49 draft plans in the offing. Since 1967, 70,000 acres costing \$46 million have been acquired — for about 30 species. This leaves some 250 species to go, an enormous backlog. Of course it is impossible to buy all this land. The Department of the Interior could investigate other means, such as voluntary landowner management and environmental easements. Also, some species may not require habitat acquisition but strict enforcement of the law forbidding collecting.

Once listed, all federal agencies must take no action that will in any way jeopardize the existence of a species or its habitat. In fact, the agencies must use their authority actively to conserve endangered species. Many states have their own endangered species laws and the Act authorizes matching federal funds for these programs. It amounted to a miniscule \$4 million for the entire country in 1981. The Reagan administration has cut off all matching funds in 1982 which will mean the end of many of these vital programs.

The Endangered Species Act must be reauthorized by Congress by October 1, 1982. Development interests are out to gut the Act in every possible way. Doctrinaire ideologues have declared war on "Regulations" and the Act means nothing without rules and penalties. It is reasonable to suppose that James Watt's Interior Department will show no more sympathy for wildlife than for wilderness. Though a recent poll found that 73 percent of the U.S. public believes that endangered species must be protected even if the costs of commercial activities are increased, there is no guarantee that reauthorization will be easy. Twenty-five environmental organizations, including National Audubon, have banded together to work for reauthorization of the Act. With a generally unsympathetic administration and a conservative-led Senate, this coalition is trying to fertilize the grassroots. It is asking for letters

and phone calls to members of Congress and administration officials. Shall we join them? Senators Cranston and Hayakawa work at the Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510; your Congressman can be reached at the House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515. If you don't know his or her name your local library will tell you.

Harvard biologist, Edward O. Wilson, gave it to us straight when he said, "The one process ongoing in the 1980's that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us." ♡



Take a Course through UCLA Extension

UCLA Extension, in their sciences department, is offering several courses of interest to LAAS members this spring. On Saturday 24 April, Dr. Hartmut Walter of UCLA and Michael Cunningham of the LA Zoo will offer an all-day class on **Birds of Prey of the U.S.** The class will be conducted at the zoo. Another all-day Saturday offering is on 22 May. In their **Workshop**, Arnold Small and Kimball Garrett will examine specific bird identification problems, focusing on plumages and molts, vocalizations and behavior — migrant land birds, hummingbirds, pelagic birds, eastern vagrants and shorebirds. This very popular class will be held on the UCLA campus, as usual.

Tuesday evenings from 1 April through 17 June, Arnold Small will be offering his popular **Birds of the World**. He will discuss the principles of avian systematics, evolutionary relationships, and patterns of bird distribution. The class is held at UCLA. From 23 June to 27 June, Kimball Garrett will be once again leading 20 people to the Southwestern Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History in the **Chiricahua Mountains** of Arizona's southeast corner. Emphasis is on the identification and ecology of birds in habitats ranging from desert grassland through pine-oak woodland to fir forest and mountain meadow.

For further information on these classes and others, write or call UCLA Extension, PO Box 24901, Los Angeles 90024. (213) 825-7093.

Attend the Fiesta de la Ballona

The Friends of Ballona Wetlands will feature best-selling author Edward Abbey as their guest speaker at the first annual Fiesta de la Ballona, on Friday 23 April, 1982, at 7:30 p.m. at Marina del Rey.

Abbey, whose new book, **DOWN THE RIVER**, has just been published, is author of **THE MONKEY-WRENCH GANG**, **FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN**, **DESERT SOLITAIRE**, and other popular works. He is a renowned environmentalist.

Fiesta de la Ballona will feature door prizes, Mexican food, beer and wine, dancing and mariachi music. Tickets are \$15 per person and are available by reservation. To reserve your places, send check or money order and self-addressed, stamped envelope to Fiesta Tickets, Friends of Ballona Wetlands, 6953 Trolley Way, Playa del Rey, CA 90291. If you want more information on the event, call 821-7695.

Visit Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory: Learn about Bird Research

At a close distance you can see the eyering of a flycatcher, hear a bird's heartbeat, and feel the stiff tail feathers of a woodpecker. Learn about research on resident and migratory landbirds. Banding and long-term research take place daily in the spring, summer and fall at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Landbird Research Station. Every Saturday at

11 a.m. Bob Yutzy, education director, presents an activity about aspects of bird behavior. You are invited to visit us and observe banding from sunrise to noon. For more information contact PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970, or phone education coordinator at (415) 868-1221.

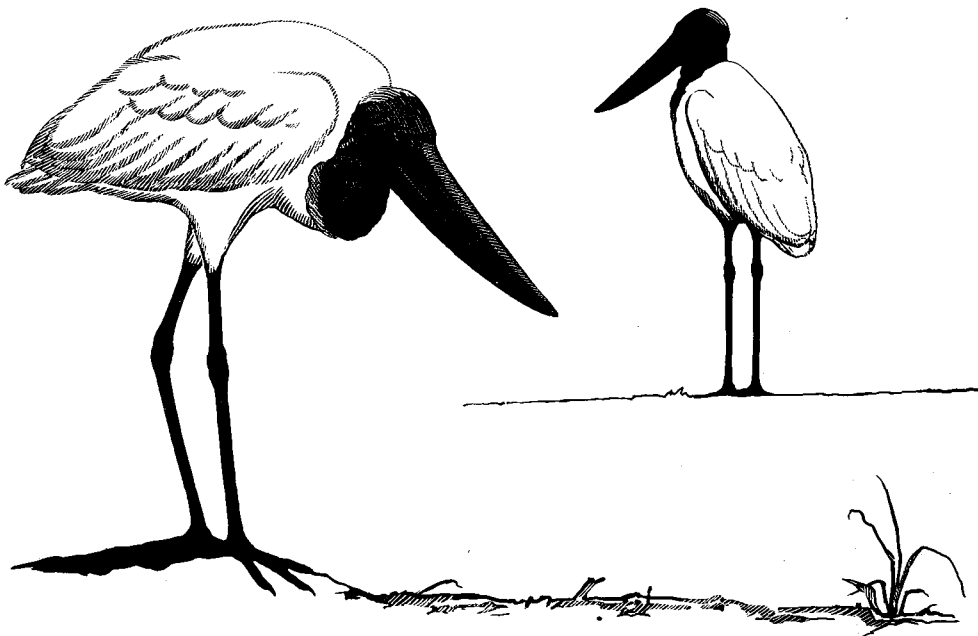


illustration by Dana Gardner

Birds of the Season

by Shum Suffel

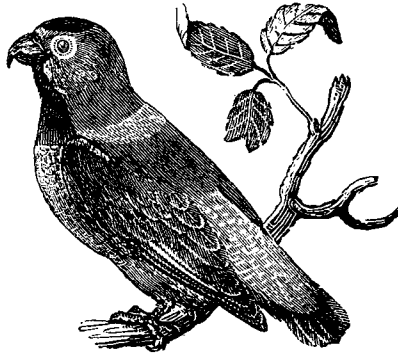


If March was as dull as predicted in the February **TANAGER**, there will be no place to go but up in April. We're building to the best birding time of the year — spring migration. Don't expect a flood of migrants until at least mid-April, as there will be only a gradual increase until the peak of migration about May first. Even now, late February, a few *Selasphorus* hummingbirds and small numbers of swallows are being reported. These are the earliest arrivals, but by late March most western migrants will have been seen.

We close the books on a winter of rarities, found particularly (as cited in the last issue) in Central California, where it was possible to see California's first **Smew** below San Francisco, a **Yellow-billed Loon** at the Berkeley Marina, our only **Skylark** at Pt. Reyes for the fourth winter, and California's second **Gyr-falcon**, all in one long day. If you don't believe it, ask Dan Guthrie. In addition, there were **Glaucous Gulls**, including the state's second adult, at the Davis dump; both a **Black-headed** and a **Little Gull** at the Stockton Sewage Plant for at least four winters; a "**Bewick's**" **Swan** at the Woodland Sugar Ponds; a staked-out **Saw-whet Owl** near Hayward (south of Oakland); and a **Great Gray Owl** at Prairie Creek Park in the north-west corner of the state. Elsewhere, there were three tropical herons near San Diego, cited last issue, plus a **Reddish Egret** at the south end of San Diego Bay (Claude Edwards, 19 Feb.), and the three, rare wintering warblers in the Long Beach/San Pedro area (see the February **TANAGER**).

With such a galaxy of wintering birds, February reports were rather routine. Outstanding was a widely-seen **Yellow-billed Loon**

at the Goleta Pier, Santa Barbara County, after 24 Feb. (Jon Dunn) and a **Red-necked Grebe** at McGrath (Henry Childs, 11 Feb.) which could not be located later in the month. Whale-watching trips in the San Pedro Channel gave us several reports of pelagic birds: 300 **Black-vented (Manx) Shearwaters** (David Koeppel, 5 Feb.); 30 **Pink-footed** and three **Sooty Shearwaters**, plus 40 **Fulmars** (Henry Childs, 30 Jan.). Henry also found several alcids (not inshore where they were last winter, but offshore where they belonged); ten **Common Murres**, ten **Xantus' Murrelets**, five **Cassin's Auklets**, and one **Rhinoceros Auklet**. But on 27 Feb. he revisited the same area and found no alcids, except five murres, and few other birds. Given a strong north-west wind and a little rain, pelagics could even be



seen from the Newport Pier, where 40 **Black-vented Shearwaters**, 20 **Fulmars**, two **Parasitic Jaegers**, and 25 **Common Murres**, were sighted on 20 Jan. (Loren Hays, *et al.*). He also saw about ten "Rhinos" off San Pedro on 22 Jan. **White Pelicans** are uncommon along the coast in winter, except at the large bays (San Diego and Morro); thus, five at the Buena Vista Lagoon, Ocean-side, after 23 Jan. were of interest (Loren Hays, *et al.*). A **Wood Stork** at Whittier Narrows during the last week of January was probably the same bird that roosted there for a time last year.

The number of **Whistling Swans** at Irvine, Orange County, reported originally as being 20, was reduced to 12, as pictured later in the LA TIMES, and observed by dozens of birders through February. Charlie Collins' annual pilgrimage to the Salton Sea Refuge on 13 Feb. revealed a surprisingly large percentage of **Ross' Geese** with the "**Snows**" — possibly as many as 40 to 50 percent —

making a total of 800 **Ross'** there. A **Fulvous Whistling-Duck** at the most southerly of the Legg Lakes, El Monte (Shum Suffel, 17 Feb.) was not banded but nevertheless was probably an escapee, as they are commonly kept in waterfowl collections. A female **Hooded Merganser** at the nearby Whittier Narrows Nature Center was devotedly following, beak to tail, the only male **Ring-necked Duck** on the lake — sort of a waterfowl singles club.

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** near Brawley, Imperial County (Richard Webster, 7 Feb.) was only the second record south of the Salton Sea. As mentioned previously, all **Bay-winged (Harris) Hawks** in California are probably escaped or introduced birds. Even the pair that attempted to nest near Niland, Imperial County, in 1976, were found to have been released near there. Thus, unfortunately, one near Covina (Barbara McIntyre, 11 Feb.) falls into this category. Lake Mathews, Riverside County, is the best low-land place for eagles. There were four **Golden Eagles** and one **Bald Eagle** there on 24 Jan. (Henry Childs). He also saw a single **Osprey** at the Upland gravel pits on 29 Jan. A **Merlin** flew overhead at the Arcadia Arboretum on 28 Feb. (Hal Baxter and Shum Suffel). The LAAS trip to Upper Newport Bay at high tide (6.6 ft.), on 6 Feb., found four species of rails, including a **Black Rail**, which ran across the road.

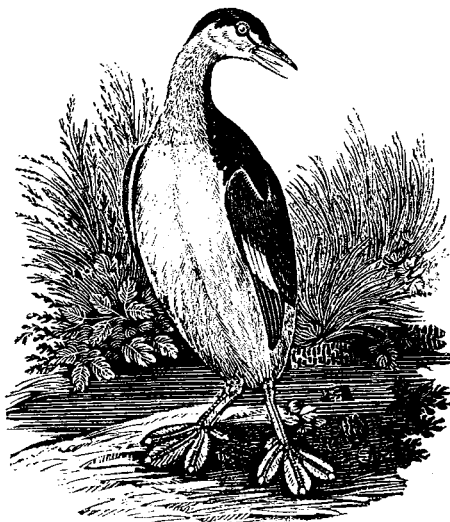
At least four **Lesser Golden Plovers** of the *fulva* race wintered at Seal Beach (Doug Willick, *et al.*). Although **Ruddy Turnstones** are uncommon migrants at the Salton Sea, one found on 7 Feb. (Richard Webster) was



probably a first winter record. A report of a **Ruff** there on 20 Feb. (Gene Cardiff, *vide* Richard Webster) was only a second record for the Sea. On 19 Feb. Richard found two **Glaucous Gulls** in the evening gull concentration at McGrath. As many as five **Laughing Gulls** at Finney Lake, Imperial County, was a very high count in winter. Forty or 50 **Black-legged Kittiwakes** wintered at King Harbor, Redondo Beach (Nancy Spear) and small numbers were reported offshore. There were a few reports of **Royal Terns** north of San Diego, with one at Cabrillo Beach, San Pedro (John Ivanov), two at Doheny Beach, Orange County (Doug Willick, 9 Feb.), and two off Long Beach (Henry Childs, 27 Feb.). Numbers of **Short-eared Owls**, locally, have decreased, probably because of loss of habitat. The only reports are of one at Marina del Ray (Jacob Szabo), and another at Bolsa Chica (Loren Hays, 17 Jan.)



Early *Selasphorus* hummingbirds include a male at Big Sycamore Canyon on 31 Jan. (David Koeppel); another male, identified as an **Allen's** at Malibu (Jacob Szabo, 10 Feb.) and a female at the Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, Claremont, on 13 Feb. (Natasha Antonovich). Harold Ericsson, who visits Indian Ranch at the north end of the Panamint Valley, due west of Furnace Creek Ranch, reports two probable range extensions: a **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** on 27 Dec. and 24 Feb.; and two **Verdin**s at various dates from Aug. 1981 to Feb. 1982. Despite the abundance of **Western Kingbirds** in summer, there is only one previous, acceptable winter record; thus, one near San Juan Capistrano (Brad Schram, 10 Feb.) is of exceptional interest. Additional reports of wintering **Cassin's Kingbirds** include: two at Lake Serranos with the **Tropical Kingbird**; two near the Sand Canyon Reservoir, Irvine (David Koeppel, 6 Feb.); one nearby at the Orange County Raceway (Loren Hays, 19 Jan.); and another near Mojave Narrows Regional Park, San Bernardino County, in the desert where their winter status is uncertain (Rick Clements, 20 Feb. **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, considered casual along the coast in winter, were near Santa Barbara, and in Whittier Narrows Nature Center (Mickey Long, 9 Feb.). The previously mentioned **Eastern Phoebe**s remained through February, and one more was at the Villa Park Dam, Orange County, (Doug Willick, 5 Jan.).



The earliest swallows arrived in late January, but it is difficult to tell the few earliest migrants from the few wintering individuals, particularly in the Imperial Valley where most species have been seen in winter. Early sightings included one **Barn Swallow** at the south end of the Sea on 7 Feb. (Henry Childs); ten **Tree Swallows** at Malibu on 10 Feb. (Jacob Szabo); a **Rough-winged Swallow** there on 18 Feb. (Jacob Szabo and Jean Brandt); and eight or more **Cliff Swallows** at Whittier Narrows on 14 Feb. (Natasha Antonovich). A **Yellow-billed Magpie** in the Holy Cross Cemetery, Inglewood (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre, 28 Feb.) was probably the same bird seen there several years ago, and was considered an escapee at the time. The only report of a **Brown Thrasher** comes from Goleta, where one could be found with difficulty on the hillside east of Devereaux Slough (*vide* Paul Lehman).

Enormous flocks of **Robins** were widely reported, even rating a story in the LA TIMES and causing news photographers to invade the Eaton Canyon Nature Center, much to the chagrin of Mickey Long, as no large flocks could be found there. Two recent reports of **Varied Thrushes** were received from the desert at Hesperia Lake (Rick Clements, 20 Feb.) and near the coast at Turtlerock Nature Center, Irvine (Doug Willick, 27 Feb.) This was also a good winter for **Cedar Waxwings**. There were a few reports of Townsend's Solitaires in the lowlands, at the Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, Claremont (Natasha Antonovich, 13 Feb.) and in Alta Loma (Henry Childs, 19 Feb.). With only two previous records of overwintering **Warbling Vireos** (Garrett and Dunn, p. 303), the three or four sightings this winter are truly remarkable. One or two were in the Arcadia Arboretum, and one each was in San Diego and Irvine. Most of the warblers cited last month stayed through February, but the much sought after **Mourning Warbler** at Harbor Lake disappeared, possibly into the jaws of one of the feral cats there.

Additional oriole reports were of a **Bullocks** at Switzer's Picnic Area in the San Gabriel Mnts. (David Koeppel, 21 Feb.). This is near, but lower than, the "Red Box" (elevation 4500 ft.), where one was reported last month. There was a female **Baltimore** in Griffith Park (Doug Willick, 28 Jan.) and another **Baltimore** in Santa Barbara. The **Rusty Blackbird** at the Arcadia Arboretum since 31 January was not reported after 19 February. Two **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were near Santa Barbara, and a female **Rose-breasted** was in the Turtlerock Nature Center, along with an unusual concentration of 150 **Lawrence' Goldfinches** and a **White-throated Sparrow** (Doug Willick, 27 Feb.).

In response to comments on the lack of northern birds this winter, we have a long-delayed report of a flock of 30 **Evening Grosbeaks** at a water tank in Table Mountain Camp, just west of Wrightwood, in the San Gabriel Mnts., but don't hurry up to see them — the dates were 25 Oct. to 1 Nov., 1981 (Rick Clements). Another previously unreported bird was the **Red Crossbill**. There were two flocks, one of seven and one of eight, in the Santa Barbara area. Also near Santa Barbara were two **Harris Sparrows**, the only ones reported along the coast.

In April and early May, almost any place with water and vegetation will host its share of migrants, but the desert oases, and the coastal parks and canyons, will be the best. In the southern desert, Morongo Valley and adjoining Covington Park are the best, as the habitat is excellent, the trails are good, and you are welcome to roam anywhere you like. Ten miles further on is Yucca Valley. Try the east and north sides of the golf course (but not the course itself) and another 20 miles brings you to Twenty-Nine Palms, and the native palms of the Visitor's Center there. In Imperial County, Finney Lake, Brock Ranch (east of Holtville) and the Colorado River above Yuma can be rewarding. Eastern San Diego County also has several good oases which you can do on your own.

Along the coast the same parks you've birded this winter will be even better, and the canyons along the Malibu coast — Tuna, Malibu Creek and Tapia Park, Leo Carrillo, Big Sycamore and La Jolla will be very productive. Don't be discouraged if you hit a dull day, as migrants go through in waves. Tomorrow or next week end may be the best of the year.



Send any interesting bird sightings to Shum Suffel, 1105 No. Holliston, Pasadena, California 91104.



CALENDAR

LAAS Pelagic Trips

SUNDAY, MAY 2 — San Pedro past Santa Barbara to Osborne Banks. 5:30 am to 6:30 pm. 44 spaces plus 2 leaders: Fred Heath and Bruce Broadbooks. Take the *Vantuna* (coffee and tea available, no galley) approximately 45 miles out to sea and up the coast. Among the birds to be seen at this time of year: Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Sooty, Black-vented Shearwaters; Red-billed Tropicbird; Sabine's Gull; Horned and Tufted Puffins; Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets; Common Murre. Cost: \$23.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 22-23 — Oxnard Marina to San Miguel Island and Cortez Ridge. 9:00 pm Sat. to 4:00 pm Sun. Sail at 1 am Sun. 48 spaces plus 2 leaders: Fred Heath and Larry Norris. Take the *Ranger 85* (galley) approximately 50 miles out to sea up the coast. Among the birds to be seen this time of year: Black-footed Albatross; Shearwaters; South Polar Skua; Jaegers; Black and Ashy Storm-Petrels; Xanthus Murrelets; Puffins; Sabine's Gulls; Artic Terns. Cost: \$49.

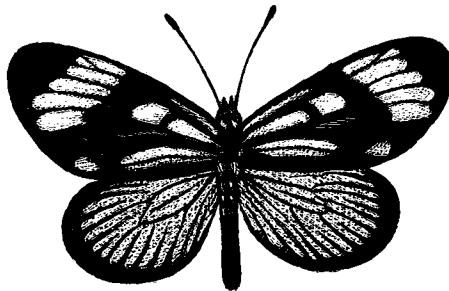
SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, AUG. 28-29 — Oxnard to Cortiz Ridge. Departure and details the same as the 22-23 May trip. Leaders: Herb and Olga Clarke. Among the birds to be seen this time of year: South Polar Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger; Shearwaters; Red-billed Tropicbird; Least and Black Storm-Petrels; Craveri's Murrelet. Cost: \$49.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 — San Pedro to San Clemente Island. 5:30 am to 6:30 pm. 44 spaces and 2 leaders: Phil Sayre and Olga Clarke. Take the *Vantuna* (coffee and tea available, no galley) approximately 30 miles out to sea along the southern coast. Birds to be seen this time of year include: Long-tailed Jaeger; Shearwaters; Least and White-rumped Leach's Storm-Petrels; Red-billed Tropicbird; Craveri's Murrelet. Cost: \$25.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21 — San Pedro to Santa Barbara Isl. 6 am to 5 pm. Take the *Vantuna* approximately 45 miles along the Coast. Leaders to be announced. Birds to be expected include: Albatross, Black-vented Shearwater; Alcids. Price: \$20.

All prices are tentative and subject to fuel cost increases. Reserve spaces early. To take part in these pelagic trips, send your reservations with the names and telephone numbers of all members of your party along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Reservations c/o Ruth Lohr
Los Angeles Audubon Society
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 876-0202 (Tues-Sat, 10-3)



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WESTERN TANAGER

EDITOR Mary Lawrence Test
LAY-OUT CONSULTANT Dana Gardner

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SATURDAY, APRIL 3 — Day trip to Pt. Mugu Base. Group will be led by Ron Dow, base biologist. Make reservations with Ruth Lohr at Audubon House; only 25 will be allowed on the base. Meet at 8 a.m. outside Gate 2. No cameras. Bring lunch, binoculars, scopes.

SATURDAY, APRIL 3 — Last birding trip of the season to Ballona Wetlands with Bob and Roberta Shanman (545-2867, after 6). Meet at 8 a.m. at the Pacific Ave. bridge. Take 90 West (Marina Fwy.) to its end at Culver Blvd. Continue west on Culver; turn north onto Pacific Ave. and continue to bridge.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13 — Dr. Charles Collins, professor of biology at the California State University, Long Beach, will give an illustrated program on "Field Study of Tropical Swifts: A Bander in Paradise". 8 p.m. at Plummer Park.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17 — Make a half-day trip to bird Franklin Canyon with Fred Heath. Meet at 8 a.m. Meeting place to be announced on tape.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24 — Bird the Antelope Valley with Jon Dunn. Bring lunch and water, and meet at 8 a.m. at the La-mont-Odet Overlook.

TUESDAY, MAY 11 — Evening program at 8 p.m. at Plummer Park. LA Audubon's own **Herb Clarke** will give a slide show on "The Birds of the San Gabriel Mountains."

SATURDAY, MAY 22 — Day trip to Starr Ranch. Make reservations with Ruth Lohr at Audubon House to participate. Meet at 8 a.m. at the entrance to the Casper Wilderness Park off Ortega, 8 miles south of San Juan Capistrano. Bring lunch.



If you would like to lead a field trip to your favorite birding locale, call Ian Austin to make arrangements (879-9700 or 398-9390).

Miss Ruth M. Price
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Huntington Beach, Calif. 92646

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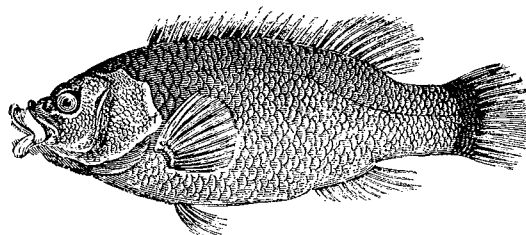
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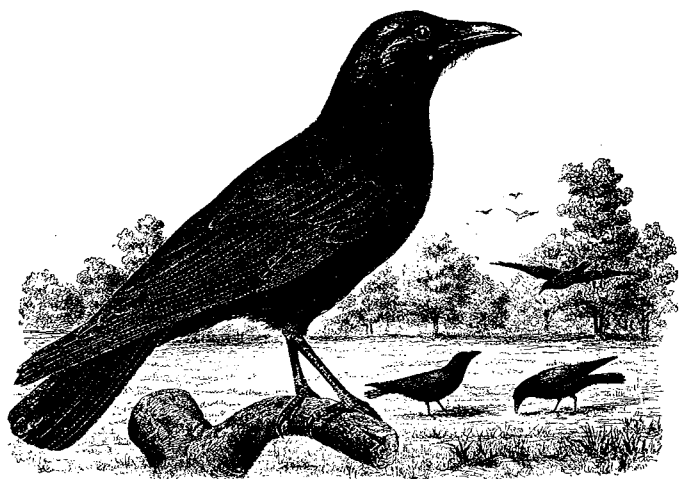


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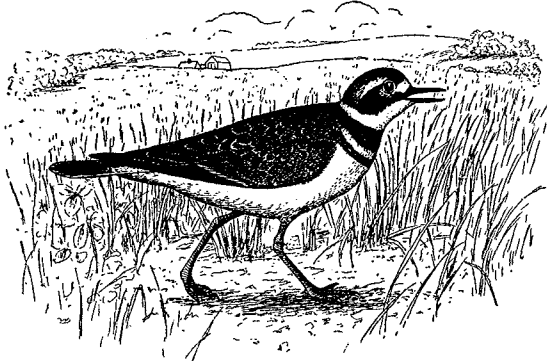
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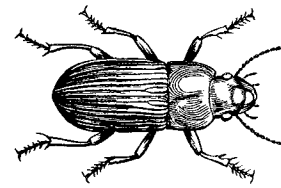
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