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The Ospreys of Tiran

by Shalom Su-Aretz

On April 25, Israel returned to Egypt the rest of the Sinai peninsula, over which they had had jurisdiction for the last 15 years.

In addition to the political ramifications, this event also has an environmental aspect. During these 15 years, Israel has extended its strict preservation laws over this unique area. Significant achievements were made regarding both the understanding and preservation of the wildlife in the Sinai. With the return of the area, Israel will also hand over its wildlife, including a precious treasure of some 40 pairs of nesting ospreys.

We in Israel all hope that conservation efforts will continue under Egyptian rule and that our achievements will not be lost.

Shalom Su-Aretz, the author of this article, is Chief Ornithologist of the Israeli Nature Reserves Authority (equivalent of Fish and Wildlife here in the U.S.) and was a major force in the preservation accomplishments of the 15-year Israeli rule over the Sinai.

—Jacob Szabo

The island of Tiran, at the southern tip of the Gulf of Elat (Aqaba) near its junction with the Gulf of Suez was never inhabited, mainly because it lacks sweet water and rainfall is almost nil. However, this does not render the island lifeless: several kinds of birds seem to prefer it to other habitats for reasons which will be considered below.

At least ten species of birds nest on Tiran, although in some cases only a few pairs have been counted. How can these live on such a barren desert island under conditions of searing heat and the total lack of fresh water? Do all the birds nesting there succeed in raising their young?

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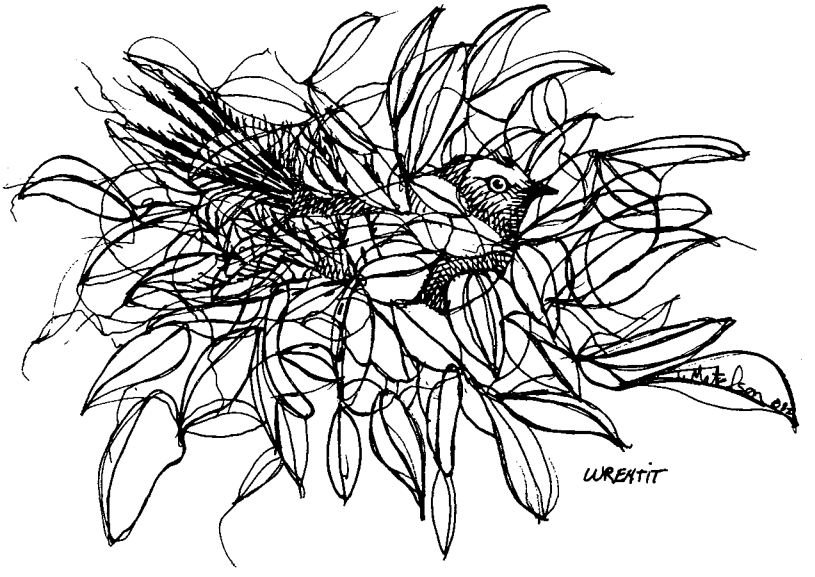

illustrations by Teri Matelson

Birding in Santa Barbara County

by Helen Matelson and Nancy Crawford

(Brad Schram wrote a comprehensive article, Birding In Santa Barbara, WESTERN TANAGER, Volume 43, May-June 1977, Number 8. This article is an update, with many changes, additions and a few deletions.)

Brad Schram stated simply, in the May-June 1977 WESTERN TANAGER, that the Santa Barbara region is an incredibly good area to bird. In this county, the birds still come flocking, from marsh to mountain. In 1982, Santa Barbara led the National Audubon Christmas Count, #1 with 212 species sighted. The Goleta Sewage Plant and the Santa Barbara Cemetery no longer welcome birders. Since 1977, however, concentrated birding has turned up many more productive areas to cover. Sites are geographically listed here from the northern Ventura County line (including one Ventura County hotspot) to the northerly San Luis Obispo County border (including one area in San Luis Obispo County).

VENTURA COUNTY

1. Santa Clara River Mouth. One of the best sea and shorebird areas around, where rarities such as Yellow-headed Blackbird (in spring), Red-necked Stint, Little Gull or Black Skimmers might shock the binoculars.

Exit Hwy. 101 at Channel Islands Blvd., turn left toward the ocean to Harbor Blvd., right on Harbor just past McGrath State Beach Park and the north side of the bridge. Park on the west side of the bridge. A trail leads from the road along the river mouth to the beach. Wear boots if you wish to explore the river mouth thoroughly.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

2. Carpinteria Creek. A fine year-round birding spot, and special for rare spring warblers, Orchard Orioles, Summer Tanagers, Winter Wrens and Lawrence Goldfinches.

Exit Hwy. 101 at Linden Street off-ramp, follow Linden towards the ocean to 6th

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Street, turn left and park at street's terminus. Boots are needed to venture into the creek, but one can walk along the west side of the creek to the bicycle path, a good vantage point.

3. Toro Canyon Park. Good oak woodland habitat. Wrentits are usually more visible here. At the far end of the parking lot, a dirt lane leads to the hills above the park, good for California Thrashers and one of the few places Ravens can be seen on the coastal side of the mountains. Phainopepla are possible along the road to the park.

Exit Hwy. 101 at the Summerland exit, turn right onto Via Real frontage road to Toro Canyon Road and turn left. There are two Toro Canyon Roads, turn right at designated Toro Canyon County Park sign and continue to park entrance.

4. San Ysidro Canyon Trail. An all-year creek harbors Dippers. The trail provides light hiking, good birding and wildflowers in proper spring season. (Rattlesnake Canyon and San Roque Canyon, not covered in this article, are excellent hiking and birding trails, found on any local map or in Santa Barbara Day Hikes publication).

To reach this trail, continue along Toro Canyon road which becomes East Valley Road, Route 192, for approximately 3.2 miles to Park Lane. Turn right on Park Lane to Park Lane West, veer left, continue to end of road and park in designated areas only. Follow the path along the east side of the creek. Down the path a short way a bridge over the creek is good for spotting Dippers. The path leading up stretches for a mile or so.

5. La Cumbre Peak. This is a paved but curving mountain road, excellent for Black-chinned Sparrows (spring), Townsend's Solitaire (winter), and Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows, Mountain Quail, and Canyon Wren all year.

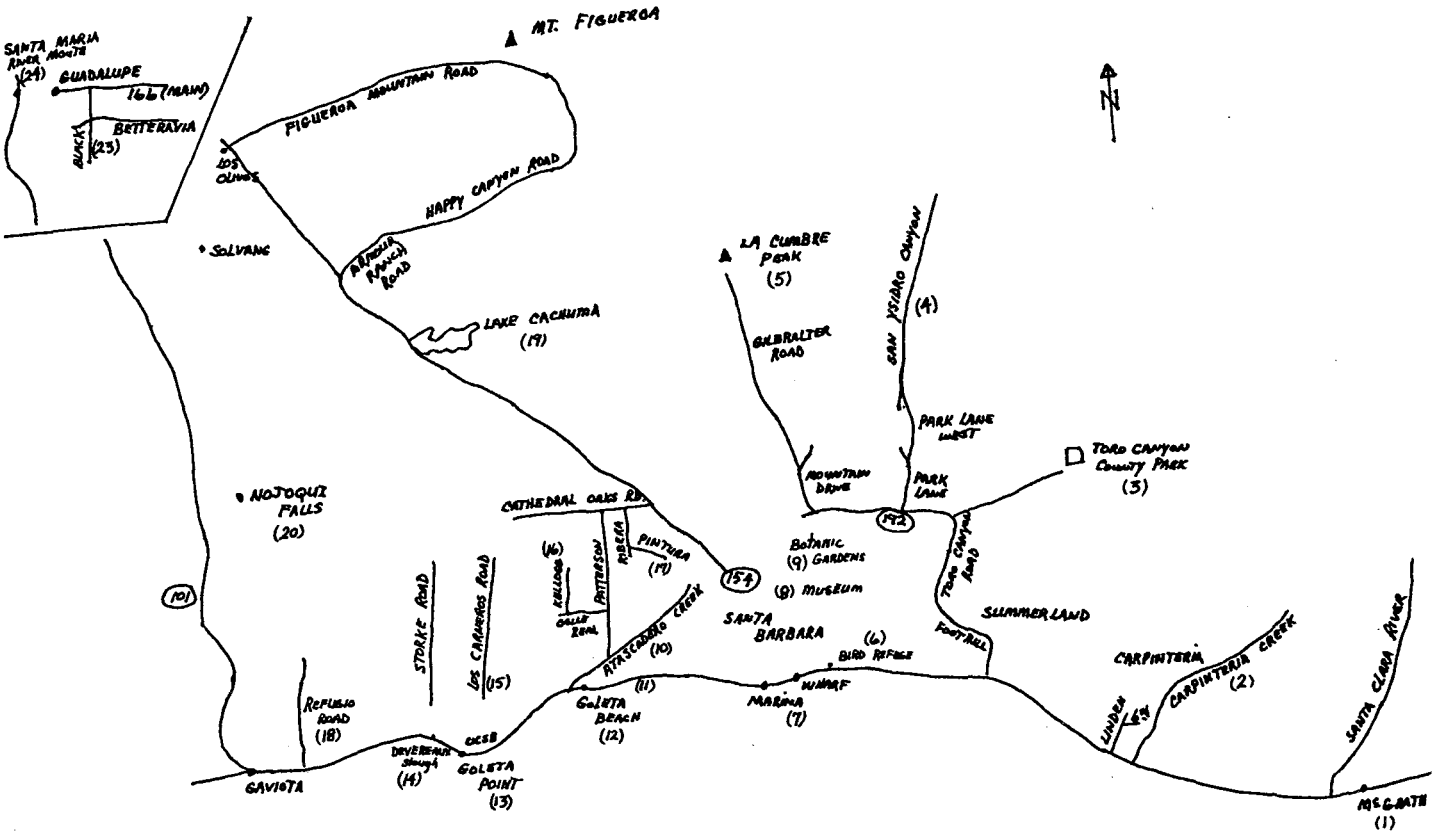
Follow Route 192 to Sheffield Reservoir at Mountain Drive, turn right to Gilbraltar Road, angle right and follow to top.

6. Santa Barbara (Andree Clark) Bird Refuge. Best in fall and winter months. Gulls can include Thayer's, Glaucous-winged and sometimes a Glaucous. Black terns have been seen; in spring black-head-plumaged Bonaparte's Gulls are good to see. Common Gallinule and Wood Ducks visit the lagoon. In 1981, Least Bitterns bred here for a county record. The foliage along the dirt road and railroad tracks usually have a few Eastern and Tropical Kingbirds each fall, and a Sage Thrasher has been recently spotted. Harris and Swamp Sparrows have been noted near parking lot vegetation. The islands on the lagoon are home for Double-crested Cormorants in winter, and provide nesting sites for Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons in spring and summer.

To reach the Bird Refuge, take the Hot Springs off-ramp from Hwy. 101, cross under the railroad tracks toward the ocean. The Refuge is just to the right as you pass under the railroad underpass.

7. Santa Barbara Marina and Breakwater. A pedestrian walk atop the breakwater where sea and shorebirds rest leads to a sandspit, which is not always there, depending on tides. On the east side of the marina (the east side of the parking lot) the Sports' Fishing pier area should not be missed. Gulls and terns are plentiful, alcids are sometimes seen in late summer/early fall; diving ducks, loons and grebes winter here, the latter often seen in spring breeding plumage. Black Turnstones turn up; Parasitic Jaegers are sometimes seen preying upon flocks of terns, and Frigatebirds have been here in summer.

To reach the Marina, take the Cabrillo/Beaches turnoff from Hwy. 101; drive along the beach past the Castillo intersection, turn left to the Marina and large parking lot. NOTE: The Santa Barbara Wharf, just east of the Marina, is open once again, with interesting shops and restaurants as well as good birding.



8. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. A good birding spot, where Rose-breasted Grosbeak occur occasionally in fall and winter. Migrating spring birds can be plentiful viewed from the bridge over the creek at the rear of the museum. A nature trail runs alongside the creek. In the parking lot, look for Spotted Doves. Visit the excellent book store, Bird Habitat Hall and Bird Hall.

To visit the museum, exit Hwy. 101 at Mission Street. In about 1.5 miles it makes a little jog at Laguna St. and continues as Mission Canyon Road. Just past the Santa Barbara Mission, the street leading to the museum is well-marked; turn left and follow signs.

9. Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens. Sixty-five acres of wildflowers, native plants, redwood trees and desert plant communities lure Winter Wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and perhaps a Pygmy Owl or two. California Thrashers and Wrentits are usually easy to find here.

To reach the Gardens, continue along Mission Canyon Road from the Museum a short distance to Foothill Blvd., turn right a short distance on Foothill and again pick up Mission Canyon Road, turning left. About a mile up the road on the left is the entrance to the Gardens.

GOLETA

10. Atascadero Creek. A good birding area, particularly in fall, regularly producing Bobolinks, buntings (including Indigo), maybe a Dickcissel or Waterthrush, numerous warblers and sparrows, and sometimes a White-winged Dove.

To reach, proceed south from Hwy. 101 on Patterson off-ramp, continuing toward the ocean until you reach a bridge. Park and proceed on foot down the bike path to the west, birding the creek bottom and vegetation on its banks.

11. More Mesa. This grassland is winter home to a Short-eared Owl, usually seen late in the day, and good for sparrows and White-tailed Kite.

Same directions as Atascadero Creek, exiting the freeway Patterson, continuing past the bridge, about a mile, to a sharp curve in the road. Park on the dirt on the north side of Patterson, walk past the metal gate and along the dirt road leading to the meadows. This is a large mesa, so count on some walking.

12. Goleta Beach. Diving ducks and the usual wintering sea birds are found at the pier and the mouth of the slough. A Yellow-billed Loon was a spectacular wintering bird in 1982.

To reach the beach, take the UCSB turn-off from Hwy. 101 and follow Sandspit Road (approximately ½ mile *before* the university campus) and follow signs to Goleta Beach.

13. UCSB/Goleta Slough. The slough, fenced in and part of the Santa Barbara Airport, produces fall migrants and wintering shorebirds, ducks (Blue-winged Teal in winter) and wading birds. Check the freshwater lagoon facing the beach. On the farthest southern point next to the lagoon, walk through the gate to top of the bluff, where Campus or Goleta Point is a fine spot to view the spring migration of birds heading toward their northern breeding grounds, mid-March through mid-May. Loons, cormorants, Sooty Shearwaters, Black Brants, scoters, Bonaparte's Gulls, and terns are seen in great numbers. Surfbirds and Wandering Tattlers pause in rocky places. Alcids and other pelagic species are occasionally seen here during periods of onshore winds in late winter/early spring.

Ask directions and get a UCSB map from the kiosk on entering campus. (There is a charge for parking.) The slough is viewed from the UCSB bluffs on the north off Mesa Road, just west of the campus police station.

14. Devereux Slough. The slough is good for wading and shorebirds from late summer through spring. In winter it supports many species of ducks as well, and is easily birded. Each fall a number of Baird's and Solitary Sandpipers are reported. The grassy wooded areas across from the slough can be productive, harbored a Brown Thrasher in winter of 1981-82, and a migrating Calliope Hummingbird spring of 1982.

To reach Devereux, take the Storke Road off-ramp from Hwy. 101, proceeding toward the ocean until the road makes a right-angle turn to the left. Take the small road that goes slightly to the right, park on the dirt area across from the kiosk. From here, just bird the road to the sea — a scope is helpful.

15. Lake Los Carneros. The lake was formed by diverting and trapping mountain springs for irrigation and now serves as good habitat for ducks and grebes in winter. Sora, Virginia Rail and American Bittern are resident. In 1982, a Least Bittern made an appearance. Stow House and Museum are located here and flowering trees near the house attract warblers, flycatchers, orioles and tanagers. A leisurely stroll around the lake in winter can produce Whistling Swan, Snow Goose and Common Gallinule. A resident Barn Owl can sometimes be seen in the palm trees. The old *Goleta Train Depot* has been moved to this location for preservation, and will house the Santa Barbara Audubon Society Headquarters.

Leave Hwy. 101 at the Los Carneros off-ramp, follow the road north towards the mountains until shortly you will reach the entrance on the west side of Los Carneros.

16. San Jose Creek. The willow riparian habitat here is great for warblers and tanagers (including Scarlet and Summer), plus rare sparrows and Bell's Vireo.

To reach, exit the 101 Hwy. at Patterson; turn left on Calle Real, north on Kellogg Avenue to Somerset, turn right to Berkeley, park at end of road. Bird the trail here. Then continue north on Kellogg to public tennis courts on west side of the road, along the creek, as well as good paths located north of Cathedral Oaks Road.

17. Upper Maria Ygnacio Creek. Another excellent willow riparian habitat luring many migrants in spring and winter. The Red-naped Sapsucker has been spotted here.

Exit Hwy. 101 at Patterson, continuing north to Cathedral Oaks Road, turn right to Riberia Drive, then left (south) to Pintura and park, birding the west side of creek.

18. Refugio Road. Famous as the site of the Reagan Ranch; birds enjoy the riparian area just up the road from the highway (the stream usually crosses the road) where migrants flock in spring, including the Yellow-breasted Chat. The road narrows a bit in places, but is generally good to the top, with Lazuli Buntings, Purple Finches and Chipping Sparrows at the top where the red-barked Madrone trees grow. The road continues into Santa Ynez, but is not paved.

Leaving the city of Santa Barbara, follow Hwy. 101 to the Refugio Road off-ramp (about 16 miles), turning right on Refugio, towards the mountains.

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

19. Lake Cachuma. This area is best birded from late fall until early summer. Along Hwy. 154, San Marcos Pass, to the right, watch for the upper end of the lake. Stop your car on the old section of highway on the left side of Hwy. 154 opposite the lake. Be careful crossing the highway, and view with scope the east end of the lake to see Osprey, Whistling Swans, Bald and Golden Eagles, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and Canada Geese. Proceed further on Hwy. 154 and follow the sign pointing to the Bradbury Dam Observation Point, where occur wintering species of diving ducks including Common Goldeneye.

20. Nojoqui Falls Park. This park (pronounced Nah'-ho-wee) is the year-round headquarters for the Yellow-billed Magpie. Purple Martins and orioles nest here in spring and summer, and Spotted Owls have been seen on the path to the falls.

The park can be reached from Hwy. 101 past Gaviota; watch carefully for a very small sign designating the road to the right to the park. Or from Solvang, take Alisos Road toward the ocean for approximately fifteen minutes to reach the park.

21. Happy Canyon/Figueroa Mountain. Figueroa Mountain is the most accesible location for montane birding, producing Mountain Quail, Townsend's Solitaire, White-headed Woodpeckers, Rufous-crowned sparrows, Purple Finches and Poor-will in season, at dusk.

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There are two ways of reaching this area. From Hwy. 154, cross over the Santa Ynez River bridge and turn right on Armour Ranch Road. Pause along this stretch to see Yellow-billed Magpie, Lewis Woodpecker (winter), Phainopepla, Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle. A short distance along this road, turn right on Happy Canyon Road. Follow the road past Cachuma Campgrounds (Pygmy and Spotted Owls have nested here). Past the ranger station at the three-way intersection, a wide area with a dirt road blocked off to car travel is a good area to bird for the solitaires, White-headed Woodpeckers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees. This is 3.4 miles *before* reaching Figueroa Mountain summit. Continue along the road to the sign designating Figueroa Mountain Summit. The dirt road to the summit is frequently in disrepair, and if closed, park off the road and walk up, about two miles to the top. The birding can be just as good along the road as at the summit. Continue down Figueroa Mt. Road to Los Olivos and Rte. 154.

Heavy rains can cause the Happy Valley Canyon Road bridges to wash out and close the road to vehicles from Rte. 154. Figueroa can also be reached by continuing on Hwy. 154 to Los Olivos, where, just across from Mattie's Tavern, make a right turn onto Figueroa Mountain Road, which leads to the same areas from the opposite way.

SANTA MARIA

22. San Antonio Creek. Part of Vandenburg Air Force Base and one of the few riparian habitats where you can view Blue Grosbeak (some summers they are also found off of Hwy. 101 at and up Cat Canyon Road), Yellow-breasted Chat, and Roadrunner (in the drier areas). Bird the area from the road, watching for fast-moving cars.

Take Hwy. 101 north to Los Alamos, exit freeway to Rte. 135 to San Antonio Road (follow Vandenburg Air Force signs) until you reach the riparian area, Barca Slough.

23. Betteravia & Black Road. This is privately-owned ranch land, *not to be trespassed,* but, again being watchful of speeding vehicles, you can bird from the roadsides. In winter, Ferruginous and Broad-winged Hawks are common, and in some fields, Burrowing Owls co-exist with ground squirrels, American Golden Plovers join the Black-bellied Plovers, Snipe, shorebirds, and maybe a Ruff will show up.

Again, do not trespass this property, which can be reached by continuing on Hwy. 101 to Santa Maria, exiting at the Betteravia exit, continuing west to Black Road. Scan fields in entire area from the road.

24. Santa Maria River Mouth. This windy, rough-surfed beach area is great for sandpipers, waterfowl, gulls, terns, and has had visiting Black Skimmers. Snowy Plovers nest here, although off-road vehicles are a problem.

To reach, continue on Black Road to Rte. 166 (Main Street), turn left, drive through the town of Guadalupe to the ocean and river mouth. Blowing sand sometimes covers portions of the road here, so take care.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

25. Shell Beach. In winter, Surfbirds, Oystercatchers, turnstones and pelicans enjoy the beautiful rocky shores. In summer, Pigeon Guillemots breed on the cliffs, easily seen from the shore bluffs. Brant's, Pelagic and Double-crested Cormorants should all be seen.

Proceed to the Pismo Beach area, exit Hwy. 101 at the Shell Beach exit. Turn left, proceed under the freeway to the frontage road. Turn right and continue to Cliff Street, turn left and follow Cliff Street a short way past the curve to the right. Park on the dirt area on the left side of the road. Observe the cliffs and a large rocky area just off the bluffs for the guillemots.

This article must end, but the birding areas go on and on. Do not forget the Carrizo Plains for wintering Sandhill Cranes, Mountain Plovers and Mountain Bluebirds, the Mount Pinos area in late summer for California Condors, Green-tailed Towhees and Williamson's Sapsuckers.

The Birds Come Flocking, a Field Guide to Santa Barbara County for Birders by the Matelsons, and *The Birds of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California* by Webster, Lehman and Bevier are both helpful for birding these areas. If you really want to be expert on what to find and when, get *Birds of Southern California, Status and Distribution* by Garrett and Dunn.

For up-to-the minute information on birds in the Santa Barbara area, call the Santa Barbara Alert, 805-964-8240.

The Ospreys of Tiran

I was sent out to Tiran island by the Israel Nature Reserves Authority in order to seek out the birds and their way of life in an attempt to answer these and other questions.

What Price Peace?

After several years of work on Tiran, my colleagues and I began to understand the underlying cause of this curious phenomenon: precisely those conditions that keep man from Tiran induce the birds to settle there. The lack of water and the remoteness of the island assure peace and quiet. The lack of water is not really a problem, since most birds obtain adequate liquids from their food. But what about their diet?

Eight of the species, osprey *(Pandion haliaetus),* spoonbill *(Platalea leucorodia),* reef heron *(Egretta gularis),* white eyed gull *(Larus leucophthalmus),* Caspian tern *(Hydroprogue tschegrava),* lesser crested tern *(Sterna bengalensis),* Kentish plover *(Charadrius alexandrinus),* and white-cheeked tern *(Sterna repressa)* feed on various creatures living in the sea and along the shore, mainly in the numerous coral reefs of the area. Another species, the brown-necked raven *(Corvus ruficollis)* can eat virtually anything, sometimes even marine creatures cast up on the beach or abandoned by other birds.

Only one species, the sooty falcon *(Falco concolor),* does not feed on marine life. The few (two or three) pairs living on Tiran probably subsist on small birds that stray onto the island in the course of migration, and on local lizards and large insects.

Things therefore seem to be well-balanced, with each species able to meet all its requirements. But the actual situation is quite different. There are factors that disturb the birds. Foremost among these is man —although he usually acts without any evil intent.

Deadly Swoops on Prey

Most of us are unfamiliar with the osprey, since it is rare in the north of Israel. Here and there, a few birds are glimpsed, winging through the country on their migration route. Some ospreys, however, winter in Israel. These belong to the osprey populations that usually nest in northern Europe and spend the winters in Africa and in southern lands.

About two years ago, a dead osprey was found in Tirat Tzevi and another one in HaMa'apil, both bearing bands that testified to their place of origin — Finland.

Ospreys are found all year round in the southern part of Sinai and are quite common along the shores of the Gulfs of Elat and Suez. The osprey, about the size of a herring gull, usually spends long hours standing on a rocky crag on the beach or in the sea, on a pole or some other prominent object, or even on the beach itself.

When hunting for food — usually in the mornings or the afternoons — ospreys hover and fly tens of meters above the waves, preferring areas rich in coral reefs. When a suitable fish is sighted that can be taken, the bird sweeps down at tremendous speed, its wings folded, until it is almost in the water. It then suddenly spreads its wings to brake the fall, and thrusts its feet forward, "plowing" into the sea.

An instant later, the great wings beat the air once again, more heavily this time; a large fish, struggling hopelessly, dangles from the bird's feet. To break the strong grip of the osprey's four powerful toes, with their long, sharp claws is impossible. Often fish are caught with both feet at once.

The osprey consumes its prey at leisure, generally choosing the same site, not far from the sea. Holding the fish down firmly, the osprey bends its head, its curved, razor-edged beak biting into the flesh. Only the brown-necked raven and the white-eyed gull dare intrude; both are more agile and "clever" than the osprey, and try to create diversions in order to snatch bits of the hunter's meal.

Bombed Soldiers

In December and January, when winter is at its height in the north of Israel, the Tiran ospreys make the most of the mild desert climate for their major task — rearing the younger generation. When courting, both male and female at first display their skill in flight, the male performing more spectacularly to define his territorial rights as well as to prove his fidelity to his mate.

Courting also includes choosing a nesting site: generally on one of the many old nests already existing in their territory. The male fetches the building materials — branches, twigs, and anything suitable cast up on shore — while the female usually receives and arranges the material. Nests can reach tremendous size, as much as 1.5 meters in diameter, with heights varying according to the number of years they have been in use.

Some soldiers told me once that they had been attacked by an osprey and "bombed" with sticks when they inadvertently disturbed it while it carried material to its nest. The agitated bird let a stick fall — onto the heads of the soldiers. Ospreys carry food and nesting materials, not in their beaks but with their claws, as do all raptors.

Once the nest is more or less ready, the female's activity becomes more intense. She begins to bring materials for lining the nest — mainly algae and sponges cast up on shore. At this point the ospreys mate.

The Enemy Sun

The ospreys of Tiran have different nest-building habits than their relatives in the north where they generally nest on tall trees and cliffs. The Tiran birds usually build their nest on low bushes almost at ground level, as well as on out-croppings of rock on the beach or in the sea.

Egg-laying takes several days. Generally three light-toned eggs, speckled reddish brown are laid. The female usually sits on the eggs, but sometimes the male takes a turn in addition to guarding the nest and its vicinity against intruders — chiefly other ospreys.

Among the enemies of the osprey are seagulls and ravens: these exploit the slightest relaxation of watchfulness of the parents to attack eggs as well as chicks. But the deadliest enemy of the ospreys on Tiran is the sun. Although nesting takes place during the last months of winter (February-March), the sun is already very hot, and can be dangerous at noon. The parents must therefore provide shade for the eggs to prevent them from overheating.

Fishy Tid-bits

After about 35 days the eggs begin to hatch. If all are fertile, within two or three days the nest will contain three tiny, utterly helpless chicks covered with thin down. They grow very rapidly at first, and soon bear their first feathers. Two months must pass before the nestlings can spread their wings for their first hesitant flight.

Until then, and to a certain extent afterwards as well, the young are absolutely dependent upon their parents for an incessant supply of food. At first the chicks are fed on tiny chunks of fish prepared by the parents. As the nestlings grow older, they are given whole fish and gradually develop a tendency to find their own food.

Population Dynamics

As stated, the osprey population of southern Sinai is permanent, the birds being found in the area all year round: probably one of the largest and southern-most osprey populations in the world today. We tried to determine whether this population is increasing or waning, or whether it is numerically stable.

To this end we had to find out how many eggs are hatched in each nest, the number of young each pair of parents succeeds in raising, the number of young birds remaining in the area, the number of adult birds which disappear annually due to death or other causes, and to answer other questions that arose in the course of our work.

The ospreys had to be banded and observed. We did not catch adult birds, since this might have caused them to leave the area — a risk we could not run. Therefore, only the young birds were banded before they left their nests. This too constituted a disturbance of sorts, but was not detrimental when done properly and at a suitable time. We succeeded in banding nearly all the young birds (80) that hatched during the years of our survey.

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Topics of Conservation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

Water: a miraculous substance, composed, as any high-school kid can tell you, of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. It is a chemical we are entwined with every day of our lives. Before we're born and after we die. The developing fetus is cushioned by a sea of amniotic fluid. And in the grave, as Denmark's sardonic gravedigger said, "... your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body." The remains of Tutankhamen have survived 3000 years primarily because of the dessicating climate of Egypt. Most of us take water for granted, yet we can live no more than five days without it.

It is supposed that life on earth arose in the ancient seas that covered most of the earth about two billion years ago. Simple amino acids developed over the eons under the eternal sun, combined to form more complex proteins and then primitive one-celled entities with the unfathomable property of life. The warm broth of the sea with its elementary nutrients enveloped these bits of protoplasm. Through the unimaginable depths of time simple plants and animals took shape. One-celled creatures gave rise to many-celled — always within the protective vehicle of the waters over the earth. In a poetic leap of the imagination scientists speak of the internalization of this maternal liquor, the warm salty bloodstream that provides all our cells with oxygen and food, enabling us to exist on dry land.

When primitive man became tribal man he made camp near water-courses or springs. The Chumash established their villages beside streams and estuaries like Malibu Lagoon where there were steelhead and shellfish and drinking water. Rich archeologic sites are scattered along the creeks that drain into the lagoon. Cities were built near lakes and rivers; roads, and then trains, paralleled river valleys.

Rivers and harbors have always been polluted. In Shakespeare's time, slops were thrown out the window and, if they missed the passersby, found their way into the Thames and the ocean. It was a very aromatic age. The Industrial Revolution and the birth of the Chemical Era marked a radical change in the character of pollution. Heretofore most wastes were natural in origin: garbage, human and animal excreta, simple manufacturing discharges — all biodegradable. As the 19th century moved into high gear, new industries spewed out new kinds of poisons into the air and water. People in large cities choked on the smoke and fumes and drank the poorly treated water. The 20th century compounded the problem with thousands of exotic synthetic wastes that never existed before and whose effect on the land and living things was scarcely known. Communities downstream from a polluting plant were drinking river water loaded with lethal substances. Wastes were dumped into landfills and seeped into the ground, contaminating wells tapped for household use.

Before the '70s there were few legal protections against this kind of chemical insult. The environmental decade burst upon us when the American people woke up one morning and realized that their health was under attack. They complained out loud and their men in Washington got the message. A savory stew of environmental laws began to be served from the Congressional kitchen.

In 1972, the Water Pollution Control Act —popularly known as the Clean Water Act —was passed; it called for protection of "the chemical, physical (and) biological integrity of the Nation's Water." One of its fundamental aims was to encourage industry to reclaim and reuse the chemicals it was pouring into the nation's waterways. It set 1985 as the date to end all such discharges. As one commentator put it, "the right to pollute was repealed." The Act directed the Environmental Protection Agency to develop standards and enforce rules to keep waters "fishable and swimmable" by 1983. It has been a gigantic task. Though there have been delays in implementation of the goals of the Act there has been steady progress since 1972. Water quality *has* improved and several large rivers are in far better shape than they were a decade ago.

The Act decrees reauthorization every five years. In 1977, Congress not only reauthorized it but gave it added muscle. In the normal course of events, 1982 would see stricter standards for industrial discharges and the arrival of previously set deadlines for compliance. Instead, the nation is faced with an unholy alliance of polluting industries with an administration eager to weaken, if not destroy, the Act and all other laws protecting the environment.

A few specifics: **1.** The majority of industrial polluters dump their wastes into municipal sewage treatment plants. EPA studies show that some 93 chemicals have been found in these plants, including many extremely toxic substances. These plants are geared for treating ordinary residential wastes and perform well for that purpose. But toxics may pass right through the plant and produce the same damage as if they were pumped directly into a river or lake. They may also ruin an expensive plant by killing the bacteria that digest the ordinary wastes as well as corroding the plant's equipment. Toxic gases generated in these treatment plants endanger the health of those who work there. Congress ordered a program of pretreatment of industrial wastes before they enter the municipal plants. After much delay, the EPA issued standards for pretreatment and set the ground rules for states and cities. When Reagan's deregulatory hit list was issued, the whole program stalled. EPA is mandated to set national standards, approve state standards and permits and *enforce* the Clean Water Act. Now the Chemical Manufacturers (CMA) and EPA together propose the elimination of almost all pretreatment standrds for toxic wastes. This would leave the job to the cities, most of which possess neither the expertise nor the police power to do it effectively. EPA would offer nothing but "guidance".

2. The Act includes special standards for new pollution sources. Because it is more economical to plan for and build in the most up-to-date equipment in a new plant, pollution standards for new plants ought to be the most stringent. EPA and CMA want this sensible feature of the Act eliminated.

3. Under the current Act, industries discharging wastes directly into streams and lakes must install the Best Available Technology by 1984 to treat toxic wastes. Those using sewage treatment plants must meet pretreatment standards by 1983. Both CMA and EPA are proposing four and five-year delays, with the possibility of further delays whenever a company decides the technology is infeasible.

It is interesting that CMA, the Chemical Manufacturing Association, has been running a series of full-page ads in some of the slick magazines. They show a handsome young engineer (with a couple of kids carefully posed with him) saying, "My wife and I grew up in this town. Now I'm working to keep it safe for our children. ... Our main

job is keeping the environment clean. That includes managing our waste products with the latest and safest techniques." Has CMA told this ingenuous environmentalist where it stands on revision of the Clean Water Act?

The nation is heading for a confrontation of classic proportions. Giant corporations see a glorious opportunity to batter down all the laws of the last decade that have inhibited their exploitation of our land and resources. It is difficult for most of them to resist the lure of huge short-term profits and endorse most modest long-term growth. With the Administration not only supporting the attack, but *leading* the way with Watt and Gorsuch, the only obstacle is the people.

And here, happily, the polls indicate that the American hunger for a clean clean place to live has not diminished. It is as intense as ever. The eminent pollster, Louis Harris, testified recently in Washington about the Clean Air Act. Eighty-six percent of the people had said they wanted the Act upheld, regardless of the cost. When John Dingell (D-Michigan), an unfortunate hostage of the auto industry, who is frantically seeking to turn the Clean Air act into a "Dirty Air" act, questioned Harris, he got this answer: "I'm saying to you just as clear as can be that clean air happens to be one of the sacred cows of the American people, and the suspicion is afoot, however you slice it, that there are interests . . . who want to keelhaul that legislation." Harris feels that Americans consider water pollution an even more serious problem than air pollution. "When you obtain such lopsided majorities on an issue," he says, "it is evident that there is a broad and deep consensus across the land."

Joe Stalin once asked, when told of the moral power of the Pope, "How many divisions has he?" In a civil democracy the divisions are people. Thomas Jorling was minority counsel to the Senate Committee on Public Works when the Clean Water Act was written. He says today, "The decade of the '70s was a decade of effective change in our national attitude toward the environment . . . the '80s promised fulfillment of our commitment to present and future generations. The gnawing fear now is that the Reagan administration's intentional or benign abandonment could prevent one of the most noble efforts of our government from succeeding just as it stands on the threshhold of such success. If the people speak, Congress will again listen and the legacy of the '70s, and our environment will be preserved."

A postcard or letter to your senators and congressman telling them you want no weakening of the Clean Water Act is appropriate. (Alan Cranston and S.I. Hayakawa, Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510. House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515 for your congressman. Call your local library if you don't know who your representative is or, if it's closed because of lack of funds, call the County Registrar of Voters at 725-5890.)

Where Have All the Young Ospreys Gone?

It is now clear that all the young ospreys leave the island shortly after becoming fully independent, at about four months. Only one banded osprey was so far observed among the adult population — probably a young bird that supplanted a mature osprey.

We do not yet know the fate of the young birds, nor whether the permanent osprey population will continue to lead a normal, balanced existence. For the present, we can only assume that the return of the young birds depends on the sites or territories vacated by adults.

Sportsmen and Gourmets

It is, unfortunately, impossible to conclude without casting some shadow over this bright picture. True, on Tiran there are no carvivores such as foxes and jackals to harass the osprey; nor can these animals reach the island on their own. It is man who poses the gravest threat to the birds on Tiran, for he can — and indeed does — come to the island. The dangers presented by man are of two kinds: unintentional or unwitting; and deliberately harmful.

Intentional dangers are posed by "sportsmen" and by people who are keen to eat the eggs, and will not even balk at chicks. This has recently been known to happen: Bedouin fishermen came ashore for a rest and a snack! We are forced to apply deterrent measures against such acts, for the perpetrators cannot be persuaded and often cause irreparable damage.

Other man-made dangers, at times just as serious, are caused unintentionally — although there is scant comfort in this.

Beware the Curious

Suppose you are wandering about the island (in the line of duty, or otherwise). Out of curiosity, or for any other reason, you approach nests containing eggs or young chicks. The sun is hot, you linger by the nest for some time. The result? Disaster!

With the prevailing daytime temperatures on Tiran, a moment's absence of the adult birds (they fled when you approached) is sufficient to roast the eggs. The parents, unaware of the castastrophe, will continue to incubate the eggs — to no purpose — and the breeding season will have been a total loss. In the evening, when the breeze blows cool, the chicks are in equal danger. This time the threat is that of heat loss in the absence of the parent's body heat.

We are trying to fight these dangers through educational activities but also by posting signs and on-the-spot supervision. Often we succeed not only in preventing disturbance and threats to the birds; but even to gain the sympathy and assistance of the very people who might unwittingly have caused the dangers.

Thus, even creatures on a remote desert island are not safe from the harm inflicted by man. It is up to us to do everything in our power to protect them against these dangers.

Monterey Bay Problem: Seabirds in Gill Nets

There has been an increase in bird mortality in the last two years because of a proliferation of gill netting activity in Monterey Bay. Vietnamese fishermen have been fishing close to shore with nets that are up to a mile and half in length.

The fishermen's target are croaker and halibut; the birds are not after the same fish —they are not in competition with man and the bird kill is accidental. Twenty-two thousands birds have been killed over the past 11 months, it has been estimated.

Senator Henry Mello has introduced State Bill 1475, co-authored by Assemblymen Farr and Thurman; this bill would restrict the use of gill and trammel nets to outside the ten-fathom (60-foot) line. SB 1475 follows the recommendation of the Department of Fish and Game which has conducted a year's study of the problem. This bill represents a minimal restriction which is only an attempt to reduce the impact on birds.

The following is a statement by Senator Mello regarding SB 1475: "Although we feel that the closure of the entire Monterey Bay to gill net and trammel net fishing would be the best solution to the massive bird kills of recent years, the proposed legislation SB 1475, which is a very minimal restriction, is an acceptable alternative at the present time.

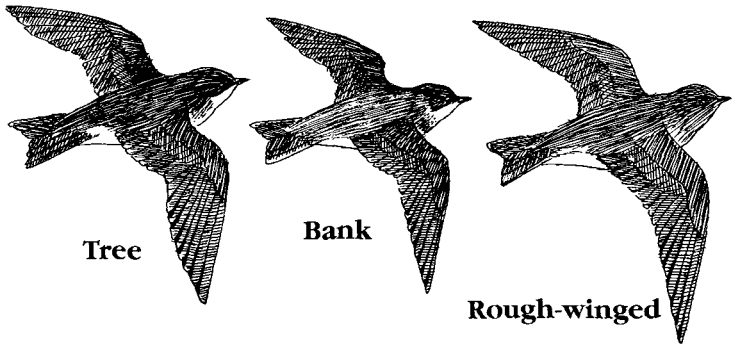
"This restriction, together with adequate enforcement and extensive on-water monitoring by qualified individuals for the next year, should give us an indication as to the effectiveness of the closure. We expect that if the monitoring indicates that the bird mortality is still too great, further measures will be immediately forthcoming.

"Compliance with these requirements may help alleviate some of the problems with this fishing method."

Concerned citizens are hopeful that this legislation will solve the problem of bird mortality. You can help — write to your senators and assemblymen now (%State Capitol, Sacramento 95814) and ask them to support SB 1475.

Field Notes: Tree, Bank and Rough-winged Swallows

by Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett



drawings by Kimball Garrett

Southern California's seven swallows generally present few identification problems when seen well, but their rapid and erratic flight styles may challenge even the most experienced observers. All of our swallows are highly migratory; most have a rather complex winter status in southern California, and some have declined markedly as breeders. It becomes especially important, therefore, to master swallow identification in order to examine their fascinating patterns of nesting, wintering and migration strategies. This article will discuss the status (briefly) and identification of three of our swallows: Tree *(Tachycineta bicolor)*, Rough-winged *(Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)*, and Bank *(Riparia riparia)*. For a thorough review of the status and distribution of these species see Garrett and Dunn, *Birds of Southern California* (LASS, 1981).

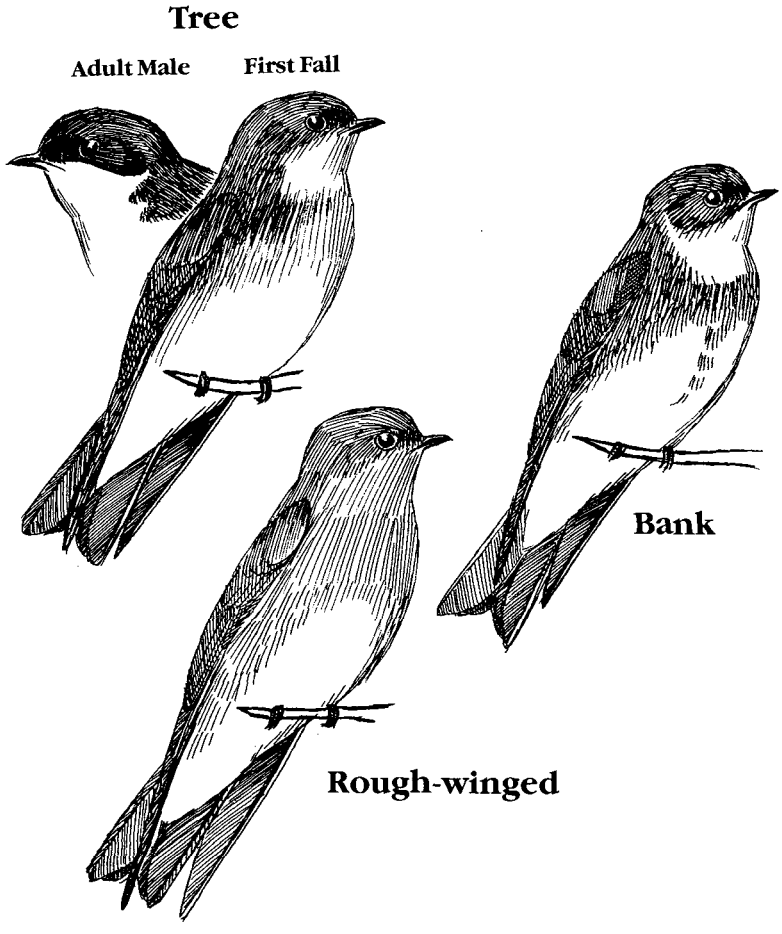
Tree Swallows are abundant migrants and locally common winter visitants (especially around the Salton Sea and Colorado River during the latter season); they have decreased to the point of near-total extirpation as a breeding species in southern California — this may be caused in large part by the elimination of suitable lowland riparian woodlands with the required tree cavities for nesting. Rough-winged Swallows (which derive their name from the hooklike projections along the outer web of the outer primary) are also common transients; they are rather widespread and numerous as breeding birds, seeking holes in dirt banks for nest sites. Rough-wingeds are quite rare in winter, except at the Salton Sea and along the lower Colorado River (where they may be fairly common, especially after November). Bank Swallows are easily the scarcest of the three species, and are the latest to arrive in spring (whereas the other two species are routinely encountered in February, it is unusual to see a Bank Swallow before early April). Bank Swallows probably no longer remain to breed in southern California; they formerly nested very locally in colonies in dirt banks or seacliffs. They are almost entirely absent in winter, occurring only casually (with most records for the Salton Sea). Bank Swallows are always more numerous in the interior than along the coast in migration.

Swallows are best identified by a combination of shape, plumage and flight characters. Usually we group Rough-winged and Bank Swallows together as our two "brown-backed" species, but observers should beware that young Tree Swallows appear brown-backed and can easily be confused with Bank Swallows. The following plumage notes may aid in identification.

The Rough-winged is the plainest of the three, showing little strong contrast anywhere in the plumage. All plumages of this species are basically similar, although juveniles do show pale cinnamon tips to the secondaries and wing coverts. The gray-brown wash from the throat through the breast does not contrast sharply with the white belly in any plumage. The upperparts are a very uniform brown color.

The Bank Swallow is much like the Rough-winged in plumage, but a contrasting breast band (of varying width and shape) is present in all plumages. Most birds also show some dark feathering down the midline of the lower breast and upper belly. The white throat contrasts sharply with the dusky breast band. The dusky-brown auricular (ear) patch is bordered behind by a whitish mark coming up from the sides of the throat. The back and rump have a slight grayish tinge and are slightly paler than the crown, wings and tail. As in the Rough-winged, juveniles have pale cinnamon tips to the secondaries and wing coverts. But juveniles show the same underpart contrasts (with breast band) as the adults.

Adult male Tree Swallows are easily told by their shiny steel-blue upperparts (with a greenish tint). The dark lores and auriculars contrast sharply with the white throat. There is usually a hint of a partial collar at the extreme sides of the breast. Adult females are similar to adult males, but slightly duller. The white flanks sometimes appear to extend up to the sides of the rump, so beware of confusion with the Violet-green Swallow (which has white sides to the rump, but a very different face pattern, dorsal color, shape and



Out with the Old, in with the New

by Lee Jones

If you haven't picked up your new, updated checklists *(LAAS Field List of the Birds of California, LAAS Field List of the Birds of Los Angeles County),* be prepared for more than a few changes. If you have purchased them and if, like Jean Brandt, you couldn't find a few familiar species, let me attempt to explain.

Much of the "new look" can be attributed to the American Ornithologists' Union, that venerable organization known to most of us as the AOU. The last edict published by these disciples of avian taxonomy is now 25 years out of date and the AOU is on the brink of publishing its next (6th) edition. My curse is that I was privy to the working drafts of this 6th edition. Realizing the many, changes from the 5th edition, changes in English names, listing sequences, family relationships and species limits ("lumps" and "splits"), and realizing that there would be more changes before the final draft was completed, I was faced with a dilemma.

Kimball Garrett, Arnold Small and I were appointed the task of updating and publishing the California Bird Records Committee's (CBRC) "official" list of California birds. We didn't want to use the same format followed in preceding lists knowing of the many changes that were forthcoming. Nor could we use the format of the preliminary drafts of the next AOU checklist knowing there would be additional changes. We decided to compromise. We adopted those changes that were already generally accepted by the taxonomic community, anticipated a few additional changes, and used the old format where AOU changes appeared tentative, unique or not widely accepted.

There were hazards. Garrett and Dunn (1981) placed the loons following the auks and murres, near the middle of their book, only to learn that the AOU has had a change of heart and plans to return them to the beginning of the list, at least until the 7th edition is published sometime in the next century! Fortunately, there is a precedent for placing the loons in the middle of the list (see Robert Storer's chapter, "Classification of birds" in *Avian Biology* (Farner and King 1971); thus Garrett and Dunn are off the taxonomic hook, so to speak. In the California and Los Angeles County field lists we have adopted the format of the CBRC's "Checklist of the birds of California" (*Western Birds* 12 (1981):57-73) which should closely approach that of the AOU's 6th edition of the *Check-list of the Birds of North America* due out next year.

So, what are these changes? The most visible changes are the reshuffling of species and families. The loons, alas, are back at the beginning. The sequence of species in many families is nearly the reverse of what you may have grown accustomed to (eg herons, gulls and tyrant flycatchers). Several families have been merged and others split off from existing ones. The jaegers have been placed in the same family as the gulls and terns. On the other hand, the Verdin and Bushtit now enjoy families of their own (the Remizidae and Aegithalidae for the technically-minded). Such seemingly strange bedfellows as the kinglets, gnatcatchers, thrushes and wrentits have been placed in the catch-all family Muscicapidae (that's the old world warblers, thrushes, babblers, etc.). Likewise, the tanagers and most of the finches have been merged with the wood warblers to form the cumbersome Emberiziadae family. The AOU may well toss in the orioles and blackbirds as well! There are sound taxonomic reasons for all this, of course. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine the Brown Towhee, Scarlet Tanager and Yellow Warbler as avian cousins. As unfamiliar as all this may be, a quick perusal of your European field guides will show that old-world birdwatchers have had it this way for years.

New English names may be the next thing you'll notice in the revised checklists. Some, such as Tricolored (Louisiana) Heron, Neotropic (Olivaceous) Cormorant and Bay-winged (Harris') Hawk, have been adopted by most authors of neotropical field guides in recent years and may already be familiar to you. Others may not. Examples are the Tundra Swan, adopted when the non-whistling Bewick's Swan was merged with the Whistling Swan, and the Black-shouldered Kite, adopted when our White-tailed Kite was merged with the old-world Black-shouldered Kite and other similar kites, all having black "shoulder" patches in common.

Other new names are easy enough to trace. The Rock Dove, never a dove but a pigeon, is now the Rock Pigeon. But I hear rumors that, because of overwhelming demand (outrage?), the AOU is going to renege and perpetutate the misnomer Rock Dove a while longer. And just when I was beginning to like the name Rock Pigeon!

And now, the moment you've all been waiting for. "What species am I going to lose?" "And will I gain some new species to offset these losses?" Well, as you may have guessed, there is some good news and there is some bad news. The bad news first. The Gray-headed Junco, Yellow-green Vireo, Black Rosy-Finch and Bewick's Swan have gone the way of the Audubon's Warbler and Bullock's Oriole of yore. The good news? We now have a Yellow-footed Gull which can be seen at the Salton Sea — it's no longer "just the yellow-footed race of the Western Gull". The sapsuckers have been juggled around more than bowling pins in a circus act. The result (for now) is a compromise for bird listers — two species instead of one or three. The eastern Yellow-bellied and its similar western counterpart, the Red-naped Sapsucker, have been merged, but the distinctly marked Red-breasted Sapsucker has been resurrected once again and gains full species status. The Williamson's Sapsucker has wisely kept itself out of this taxonomic turmoil. And there may be more good news to come for you world travelers! Latest word from the AOU has the Western and Eastern Screech-Owl, the Northern and Southern Rough-winged Swallow (that's North and South America, not northern and southern US) and Least and Little Tern — but, alas, nothing for stay-at-home Californians.

Still confused? If so, may I suggest the numismatic field — an immutable passtime if ever there was one.

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flight). Especially confusing are first-winter female and all juvenile Tree Swallows; these may appear uniformly dusky above with a light dusky wash across the breast. Some birds even have a rather distinct partial or near-complete dusky breast band; in this plumage they can be easily mistaken for Bank Swallows. Note the following differences: dorsal color is flat dusky in Tree, gray-brown in Bank; Tree never has the breast-band complete and distinct across the center of the breast; shape, flight and calls differ (as discussed below).

In shape, both Tree and Rough-winged Swallows appear rather long-winged (with the latter also appearing relatively Broad-winged). Bank is the smallest of the three species, and has the shortest wings (both relatively and absolutely). Rough-wings have a rather slow and floppy flight, with wings folded well back against the body on the backstroke. Tree Swallows also have a swept-back wingbeat, but their flight is stronger (less floppy) than the Rough-winged. The shorter-winged Bank Swallows have more rapid, shallow wingbeats.

The calls of the Tree Swallow are liquid and usually distinctly one or two-parted. Banks and Rough-wings give low, unmusical "prrrrrt" notes, perhaps more drawn-out (less buzzy) in the Rough-wing.

*Recent studies have suggested that our "Northern Rough-winged Swallows" are specifically distinct from the southern *ruficollis* group.

Birds of the Season

by Shum Suffel

Southern California birders seldom speak of "waves" of migration, thinking perhaps that this is a phenomenon of the East coast — a brief period when every tree and bush is alive with singing migrants, followed by a quiet time with little migratory activity. Forget those provincial notions. Those of us who rushed the season in early April know how quiet it was, but those who were in the field between 15 and 18 April experienced a wave of migrants both coastally and on the deserts. Then, again it was dull until the 23rd when a second wave hit, and this time it brought a few bonus birds —our first eastern vagrants.

Morongo Valley was the center of activity as usual in spring, because of accessability, excellent habitat, and daily censusing by Russ and Marion Wilson. Migrant passerines, of course, received maximum attention, with Bob McKernan, who does nocturnal census studies, reporting migrants in abundance on the nights of 15 and 22 April. The weekend group confirmed his forecasts, but by the 20th, only one or two **Wilson's Warblers** could be found, partly because of the north wind at midweek.

By the weekend of the 24th, migrants were abundant again and a few early vagrants appeared — an **Orchard Oriole** and a rare **Yellow-throated Warbler** were found on Friday by the Wilsons; the warbler stayed to delight the Saturday morning birders. A **Northern Parula** was found by George Helmcamp on Saturday, and a Parula was seen on Sunday; some observers reported it as a different bird, possibly even male and female. Mysteriously, the **Lucy's Warblers** that returned in late March or early April were not found by the Wilsons between 11 and 24 April, possibly because the mesquite was late in leafing out. At least 14 species of warblers, and three **vireos, Solitary, Bell's** and **Warbling,** were seen on the weekend of the 24th. In addition, **Western Tanagers** were common and two male **Summer Tanagers** were newly arrived, as were **Black-headed** and **Blue Grosbeaks** (Onik Arian, *et al.).* Both **Cassin's** and **Western Kingbirds** were present on the 24th, but the Brown-crested (Wied's) Flycatchers are not expected until early May. (Rumor has it that they returned on 30 April.)

A few **Olive-sided Flycatchers** and **Western Wood-pewees** were there in late April, along with a **Gray Flycatcher** and several **Western** and **Hammond's Flycatchers.** One pair of **Vermilion Flycatchers** were conspicuous in Covington Park. While searching unsuccessfully for Le Conte's Thrashers in Windmill Wash (five miles north of Yucca Valley), Hal Baxter and Shum Suffel found two **Bendire's Thrashers.** They have nested in the area before. It was unfortunate that no one could locate this pair again, although Le Conte's were seen there later.

Non-passerines, too, were in migration. David Richardson observed 150 to 200 **White Pelicans** flying north over the Morongo Valley oasis on 27 March, and Onik Arian reports that on the 24th he "missed by minutes seeing the resident **Red-tailed Hawk** drive off an immature **Broad-winged Hawk,** which then soared high out of sight over the oasis." This is the only report of a Broadwing since last fall. The pond at Morongo silted up a few winters ago, but it still provides marsh habitat for a **Green Heron,** and **Virginia** and **Sora Rails.** The Virginias nested early; Brian Keelin saw a family with small chicks on 1 May.

At one time, both **Nuttall's** and **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** were thought to nest at Morongo; in fact, there was even talk of hybridization. But recently the Wilsons have identified only Nuttall's there. Thus, the two **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** there on the 24th may have been visitors from the surrounding desert woodlands. A delayed report from Bob McKernan tells of three **White-headed Woodpeckers** wintering at nearby Yucca Valley; one was still present on 16 April. Jerry Johnson reported an unusual flock of **Steller's Jays** flying over the highway near Morongo on 17 April, and nearby he found a female **Cassin's Finch.** At Yucca Valley (1000 feet higher) Jerry saw all three finches together — **Cassin's, House** and **Purple.**

Elsewhere, there were many noteworthy reports. The **Yellow-billed Loon** at the Goleta pier was found dying on 12 April; it was probably the victim of a fisherman's hook. A **Red-necked Grebe** (the second record for Orange Co.) appeared briefly at Bolsa Chica on 24 April (Doug Willick). Dan Guthrie's birdathon (135 species on 25 April) found eight **Brown Pelicans** at the north end of the Salton Sea (NESS), *fide* Bill Grant. A pair of **Least Bitterns** was seen at the New Lakes, Whittier Narrows Nature Center, where they nested last summer (Natasha Antonovich, 2 May). They were also seen again at Harbor Lake, San Pedro.

A single **Swainson's Hawk** was fighting the head-winds in San Gorgonio Pass on 30 March (David Richardson), and a pair of Swainson's was at Oasis, Mono Co., on 26 April (Bill Wagner). They have nested there in the past. A **Zone-tailed Hawk** was seen over Corn Springs, near Desert Center, on 23 April, by photographers Herb Clarke and Arnold Small, and the Zone-tailed at Mt. Palomar was still there on 25 March.

Four reports of **Golden Eagles** near, or in the foothills of, the San Gabriel Mountains, were unprecedented in recent years; an immature was below the mouth of Eaton Canyon, Altadena (Bill Grant, 18 April); another immature, or perhaps the same one, over the Arcadia Arboretum (Barbara Cohen, 20 April); and two in Cucamunga Canyon on 24 April (Henry Childs). Three **Ospreys** flying west over the Eaton Canyon Nature Center in a 20-minute period on 18 March were obviously migrating, as there is no fishable water in the area (Pat Sullivan and David Bell).

A **Black Rail** at the NESS was photographed by Bob McKernan who was on a dike directly above it. The only early reports of **Solitary Sandpipers** came from the San Luis Obispo County coast — at Morro Bay (Greg Smith, 6 April), and at Cayucas (Tom Edell, 15 April). **Wandering Tattlers** were at the peak of migration during late March to early May; two or more were seen on the beach or mud flats at three places on the Orange Co. coast on 27 April (they are usually rock birds). They were common on both Santa Barbara and Catalina Islands, as expected; on the isolated LA Habor breakwater there were about 20 tattlers, including a flock of about 15 birds (LAAS trip, 2 May). A first spring record for the region was an adult **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** in colorful breeding plumage at the Edwards Air Force Base marsh from 5-7 May (Jon Dunn). This is also a first for mainland Los Angeles Co.,so update your brand new LAAS checklists!

A **Pectoral Sandpiper** near Santa Maria on 24 April was the only report this spring (Louis Bevier and Paul Lehman). A **Franklin's Gull** at SESS, on 13 April, was early (Dan Guthrie). The first local report of a **Least Tern** was a single bird at Harbor Lake on 14 April (Becky Belkin and Carol Friedman). Others were at McGrath on 17 April (Henry Childs) and in the San Diego River channel on 21 April (Onik Arian).

Early were 15 **Vaux's Swifts** in Palm Canyon on 6 April (Bill Wagner). This year's only report of a **Broad-billed Hummingbird** comes from Agua Caliente, on the desert of eastern San Diego Co. It was seen from 15-20 March, a late date for this

rare species (Dave Dewey). **Calliope Hummingbirds** are seldom seen in migration, but there are five reports — in Altadena, on 5 April (Lois Fulmer); on Pt. Loma, San Diego, from 18-25 April (Richard Webster); two at Yaqui Wells, San Diego, Co., 14 and 16 April (Bill Wagner); one at Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., 19 April (Curtis Marantz); and in Topanga Canyon in early April (*fide* Lee Jones).

Lewis' Woodpeckers were widely reported during the winter; a few were still here in early May. The Arrastre Creek area of the San Bernardino Mountains produced four species of *Empidonax* flycatchers on 24 April — a few **Hammond's,** one **Dusky,** several **Grays,** and a **Western** (Brian Keelin and Hugh McGinnis). **Gray Flycatchers** were seen in the lowlands in late April — two at the Arcadia Arboretum on 18 April (Barbara Cohen, *et al.*); two near San Diego on 20 and 27 April (Richard Webster); one at Morongo on 30 March (David Richardson); one near Irvine, Orange Co., on 20 April (Doug Willick); and three in San Luis Obispo Co. between 18 and 20 April (Jim Royer and Curtis Marantz). **Dusky Flycatchers** were also found in Placerita Canyon on 17 April (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre) and near San Diego on 22 April (Richard Webster).

The earliest report of a **Western Woodpewee** was on 10 April at the Turtle Rock Nature Center, in Irvine, Orange Co. (Hal Baxter and Shum Suffel); another was near San Diego the next day. Other than the wintering **Olive-sided Flycatcher** near the LA Zoo, early migrants were found near San Diego on 12 April (Richard Webster); in Santiago Oaks Nature Center, east of Villa Park, in Orange Co., on 16 April (Doug Willick); and above Pasadena on 18 April (Jim Halferty). It is surprising that the only **Bank Swallow** report comes from Laguna Lake in San Luis Obispo Co., on 7 April (Curtis Marantz). Add to last month's **Purple Martins** — a male flying north toward the Edward's Air Force Base in the Antelope Valley on 28 March (Mickey Long), and a pair near the mouth of Santa Anita Canyon on 17 April (Mike San Miguel). The only report of a **Gray Catbird** for a year or more comes from the Santa Maria River mouth (John Deacon). Early **Swainson's Thrushes** were in Santiago Oaks Nature Center on 17 April (Tom Wurster), and at the SESS, the same day (Richard Webster). Two **Townsend's Solitaires** and a **Green-tailed Towhee** (both mountain nesters) were in Cottonwood Springs Oasis, Joshua Tree National Monument, on 22 April (Onik Arian).

Bell's Vireos, increasingly scarce in our area, probably because of Cowbird parasitism, were seen near Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo Co. (Jim Royer, 24 March); in Casper Park, Orange Co., on 4 April (Wanda Conway); in Palm Canyon, Riverside Co., on 6 April (Bill Wagner); and at Morongo Valley on 28 April (Doug Willick). Rare and early was a **Yellow-throated Vireo** in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo Co., from 22 to 24 April (Don Sterba).

Western migrants, particularly **warblers** seemed to come in waves along the coast too. A small, early wave was on 28 March, when several **Nashvilles, Black-throated Grays** and **Orange-crowns** were at Eaton Canyon Nature Center, where none had been before (David Bell). Another wave was noted at the Arcadia Arboretum on 17 April (Barbara Cohen), and in Placerita Canyon the next day (David Koeppel). With these groups of western migrants a few vagrants were found. On Pt. Loma, Richard Webster found two **Black and White Warblers** on 3 and 4 April and an **Ovenbird** on 5 April.

There was a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in Evey Canyon above Claremont (Henry Childs, 24 April), a **Bay-breasted Warbler** in Goleta (Eileen Gray, 10 April), a **Palm Warbler** in Huntington Beach Nature Center (Doug Willick, 14 April), a male **American Redstart** in the South Coast Botanic Gardens (Mitch Heindel, 3 May), a **Painted Redstart** at Corn Springs, near Desert Center (Bob McKernan, 9 April), and an **Orchard Oriole,** in Goleta (Louis Bevier, mid-April).

A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was seen in San Diego from 11 to 21 April (Elizabeth Copper) and a female **Rose-breasted** stayed at Turtle Rock Nature Center from 12 February to 30 March (Doug Willick). A **Black-throated Sparrow,** with the Chipping Sparrows at the Arcadia Arboretum (Barbara Cohen, 17 April), was far from its preferred desert habitat. Olga Clarke's thrill of the season was an adult **White-throated Sparrow** at her Glendale feeder on 22 April.

The LAAS trip to Santa Barbara Island and beyond found the expected **Sooty** and **Pink-footed Shearwaters,** mostly widely scattered singles, a few **Pomarine Jaegers,** and small flocks of **Northern Phalaropes,** but five species of alcids in large numbers were surprising. There were about ten **Common Murres,** 20 **Pigeon Guillemots,** 40 **Xantu's Murrelets,** 30 **Cassin's Auklets** and eight **Rhinoceros Auklets** (all in non-breeding plumage).

Thanks to all of you who passed on your bird sightings during April. I regret that the volume of reports was so great that not all of them could be used. Those wishing suggestions for the month of June should consult previous years' TANAGERS, as such forecasts run much the same from year to year.

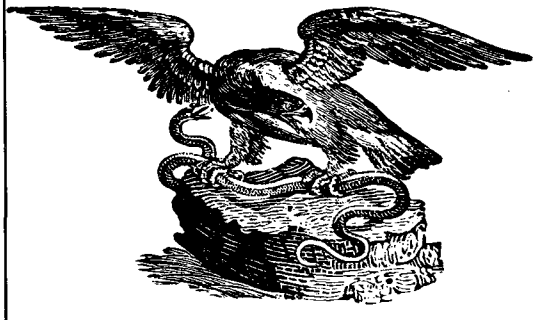
Send any interesting bird sightings to Shum Suffel, 1105 No. Holliston, Pasadena, California 91104.

The Lammergeyer of Ladakh

by Elizbeth Fleming Rhodes

The Lammergeyer,
Soaring Buddhist wheel,
Circles the glaciers
Of the High Himal
Climbing far above
The Zanscar Valley
Where women in winged hats
Studded with turquoise
Cut the yellow grain
Handfull at a time.
The bird glides above
Fields of blue gentians
Gold leaves and berries
Red as Lamas robes.

In the dark gompa
Where yak-butter lamps
Light the Buddha's feet
Lamas are chanting
To deep toned drums
And whir of prayer wheels
As the great eagle
(Wings a hundred span)
Rounds the wind
In silence.



CALENDAR

LAAS Pelagic Trips

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-Petrals; Craveri's Murrelet. Cost: $49.

SUNDAY 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-Petrals; 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)

Call the tape the Thursday before all scheduled trips for changes or verification.

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).

NOTICE: Starting 1 June 1982, the first class mailing rates for LAAS members wishing to receive the TANAGER via first class mail will be raised to $5.00.

Audubon Bird Reports:

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

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.

WESTERN TANAGER

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LAY-OUT CONSULTANT Dana Gardner

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TUESDAY, JUNE 8 — Dr. Jared Diamond of the UCLA School of Medicine, Department of Physiology, will speak at the evening program on "The Rediscovery of New Guinea's Long-Lost Bowerbird." Audubon House at 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19 — Join **Fred Heath** in a day-long exploration of **Charlton Flats.** Meet at 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch and water.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, JUNE 25-27 —Join **Jon Dunn** and **Bob Barnes** for a 2-day field trip to the south fork of the Kern River and the Green Horn Mountains. Bus will leave Fri. night and return Sun. Camp or stay in a hotel. Call Audubon House for details.

SUNDAY, JULY 11 — **Kimball Garrett** will lead a group around **Big Bear and Baldwin Lakes.** Meet at 7 a.m. at the Big Bear dam (at the west end of the lake). Plan to see Pinyon Jay, Williamson's Sapsucker, Hepatic Tanager, Common Nighthawk, and other forest and shore birds.

SUNDAY, JULY 18 — **LAAS Annual Picnic.** Meet **Fred Heath** for a bird walk at 8 a.m. Bring lunch and soft-drinks, baseball bats and frisbees. Walk will meet at the south end of Upper Franklin Reservoir; picnic in **Franklin Canyon Park** (off Franklin Canyon Drive).

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14 — Bob and Roberta Shanman (545-2867, after 6) will begin their monthly walks around **Ballona Wetlands.** They will lead these morning trips every second Saturday of the month throughout the fall and winter. 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.

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