

WESTERN TANAGER

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The Identification of Thrushes of the Genus *Catharus*

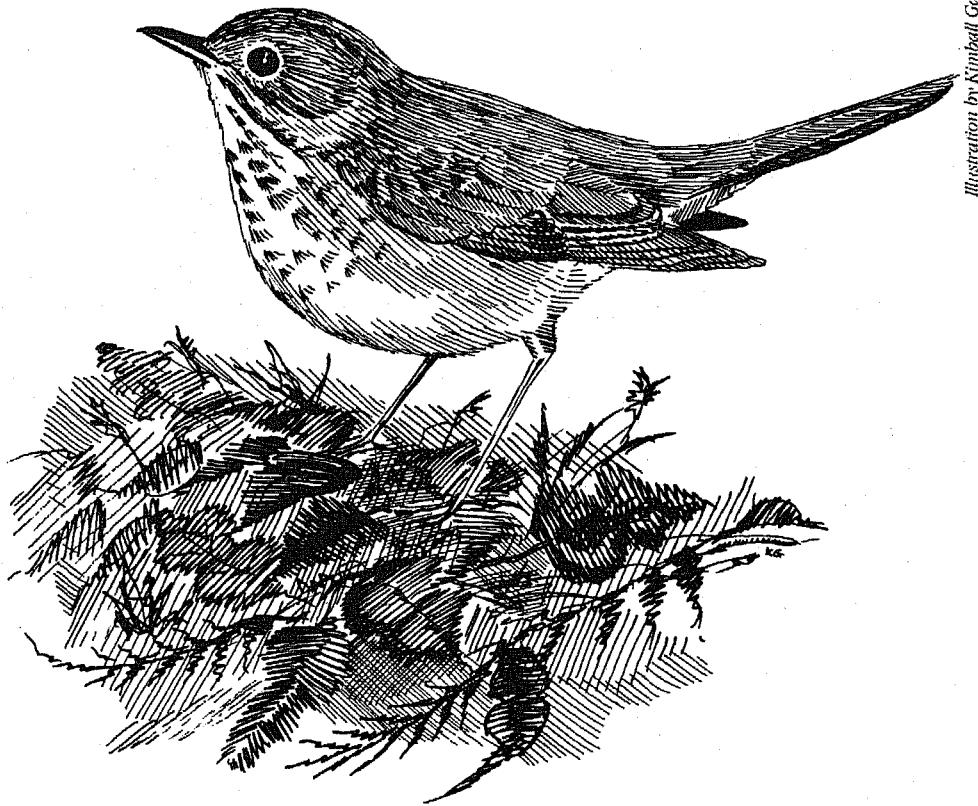
Part One: Introduction

by Jon Dunn¹ and
Kimball Garrett²

Note: This is the first installment of a four-part series on the identification of our "spotted" thrushes of the Genus *Catharus*; the series will treat Hermit, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, and the Veery. It is a complete revision of the three-part series authored by Jon Dunn in the September-November 1977 issues of the *Western Tanager*. As additional knowledge of identification techniques is acquired, we anticipate the revision of several past *Western Tanager* identification articles (this is not to say that past articles have been grossly inaccurate, but merely to indicate that our knowledge is constantly improving and evolving).

Our primary reason for revising the *Catharus* series is to present a more thorough discussion of geographical variation within species, especially the Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes. A number of key plumage characters that separate species also vary substantially within species; these characters include the color tone of the upperparts, the shape, darkness and distribution of breast spots, and the color of the flanks. Therefore, an appreciation of the geographical variation in each species is fundamental to the development of identification skills. Within the genus *Catharus*, certain species-specific characters involving vocalizations, behavior, and, interestingly, face patterns do not vary appreciably within species.

As always, Allan Phillips (in *Birds of Arizona*, 1964) has presented a readable and straightforward discussion of geographic variation in our polytypic thrushes, notably the Hermit and Swainson's. While our present article has relied heavily on Phillips' contributions, we have chosen to work with the



subspecies breakdown of the 1957 A.O.U. Check-List rather than adopting the somewhat altered taxonomy employed in *Birds of Arizona*. We strongly recommend a careful reading of Phillips' accounts of Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes (and all other complex polytypic species). The following passage from *Birds of Arizona* (p. 127) is a good introduction to the geographical variation in *Catharus* thrushes:

"We have extolled certain species for showing great geographical variability, but in most cases they are sedentary — which indeed promotes isolation and distinctness among their scattered populations. But the utility of their races in the study of migration is thereby limited. The thrushes of the genus *Catharus*, on the other hand,

not only show consistent, marked racial variations, but those species breeding in the United States and northward are completely migratory — most of them going long distances. Preeminent in this variation is the Hermit Thrush. Who can fail to be impressed by the different sizes and shades of these birds, migrating through the Santa Rita Mountains, for instance? What a contrast between the tiny Alaskan birds wintering in our state and the large Rocky Mountain birds spending the winter on lawns beneath the pepper trees of the University of Mexico campus! And color is even more important than size."

Our *Catharus* thrushes undergo a com-

Continued next page

plete molt in fall, after which they appear somewhat richer in color. Their breeding plumage is then acquired through wear. Juvenile birds generally resemble adults but are faintly spotted with pale brown or buff on the crown and upperparts, and have small pale brown spots on the tips of most of the upper wing coverts. As the post-juvenile molt does not involve the upper wing coverts in most species, birds in their first winter are often distinguishable from adults by these pale tips to the coverts. True juvenile plumage is seen only around the breeding grounds, and thus will not be discussed in any detail in this series.

Our *Catharus* thrushes tend to be rather retiring, although males often sing from conspicuous perches when on their breeding grounds (in the morning and, especially, the late afternoon). Migrants and winter birds of all northern species prefer shadowy, often damp habitats such as thickets, woodland understory, and dense garden hedges. They hop about on the ground in an upright manner, or perch on low limbs almost motionlessly (or with a "nervous" flick of the wings and cocking and lowering of the tail in the case of the Hermit Thrush). With patience these thrushes can be viewed well, if a quiet approach is used; this patient approach is often crucial in correctly identifying individuals to species. Winter birds can often be watched to advantage as they repeatedly visit fruiting shrubs such as Toyon and Pyracantha.

The thrushes of this genus, and the Hermit Thrush in particular, are reknowned for their fine, flute-like songs with both clear and whispery passages which often spiral up or down on the scale. These songs are heard in true form only on the breeding grounds, but are occasionally performed (albeit with lesser virtuosity) in late winter on the wintering grounds. Most *Catharus* have from one to several common call notes, or "location" notes (again, the Hermit Thrush seems to be the most complicated). These will be discussed under the individual species in subsequent installments. They also give distinctive flight calls during their nocturnal migration; many readers will be familiar with the haunting "queeee?" note of night-flying Swainson's Thrushes overheard in migration.

As with any difficult group, it is essential to learn the basic geographical and seasonal patterns of distribution of the individual species (and subspecies) in order to get a firm handle on field identification; the reverse is clearly true as well. While the details of status and distribution of our thrushes will be presented later on a species-by-species basis, it is appropriate to conclude this introductory chapter with a brief synopsis of our four species in California.

Hermit Thrush: Breeds in forests of our higher mountains and the northern and cen-

tral coasts; common and widespread winter visitant (though somewhat variable in numbers from year to year), primarily west of the deserts.

Swainson's Thrush: Breeds in humid forests and riparian woodlands in the northern and coastal parts of the state (with recent declines noted, at least in the south); widespread migrant in spring, primarily a coastal migrant in fall. Only one documented mid-winter record (and that of a crippled bird).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: Vagrant, primarily in fall; all records to date are from the Farallon Islands and the Pt. Reyes area.

Veery: Vagrant; the two certain records are from southern California in October and November.

Closely related to the *Catharus* thrushes is the Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*); it has been recorded as a fall vagrant in southern California on five occasions (four of these records are for San Diego Co.); there is also a spring record for Bolinas, Marin Co., in northern California. It poses no identification problem and is adequately covered in the standard field guides.

Why are vagrant *Catharus* thrushes so rarely noted in California? The dearth of records may be due in part to the retiring nature of the various species, and perhaps also to the difficulty in distinguishing the Gray-cheeked Thrush and Veery from our common migrant Swainson's Thrush; it is hoped that this series of articles will help ease some of this difficulty or, at the very least, impress upon the reader that individual *Catharus* thrushes deserve very close scrutiny in the field. It appears, also, that thrushes in general may be relatively "good" (i.e. accurate) long-distance migrants, with a smaller proportion of migrants winding up "lost". The extent to which migratory accuracy (or, on the other hand, migratory scatter) is an evolved trait, related to ecological characteristics of a group or to the extent to which rapid evolution and adaptive radiation is occurring, must remain open to speculation. Nevertheless, the relative infrequency with which vagrant thrushes are noted does demand explanation.

Next month we'll begin a detailed discussion of the various species, starting with a look at the identification and geographical variation of the Hermit Thrush.

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A Tourist's Guide To Birding In Hawaii

Written and photographed
by R.L. Bailey

Hawaii. Just the name of these enchanted islands is enough to conjure images of a tropical paradise. Small wonder that most visitors to Hawaii go there for the beaches and not the birds. Even though I'm a birder, I must confess that my recent trip to Hawaii was to satisfy my wife's desire for a relaxing vacation. Of course, I couldn't let an opportunity to see some new birds slip by, and I managed to squeeze a few birding spots into the itinerary. Fortunately, several of the most beautiful areas in Hawaii are also the best areas to look for birds.

I tried to prepare for the trip by studying bird books and checklists. Despite my preparations, the birding in Hawaii was not what I expected. The biggest surprise was the overall scarcity of birds, particularly in coastal areas. I don't know if it was the time of year (September) or what, but during four days at different coastal locations on Maui, I saw seabirds a total of three times — one Brown Noddy, a Great Frigatebird, and four Ruddy Turnstones. In two days on the coast of the island of Hawaii, I saw a single Sanderling. Luckily, land birds were more plentiful. Introduced species such as the Common Myna, Japanese White-Eye, Zebra (Barred) Dove, and Spotted Dove were fairly easy to find on all the islands. However, the land bird endemics made the seabirds seem abundant. Don't expect to see any of the endemics in the lowlands where most of the tourist facilities are located. There are less than a handful of easily accessible locations in the islands where endemics can be found, and only one of them offered good birding during our trip.

In addition to the scarcity of birds, I was surprised by the absence of many familiar types of birds. In going over the checklists, I was concentrating on what I might see and didn't pay much attention to what wasn't on the list. It didn't take long once we'd arrived in Hawaii to notice what was missing. Can you imagine spending a day at the beach and not seeing a solitary gull? Hawaii's beaches are not only devoid of gulls, you won't find any loons, cormorants, grebes, alcids, or pelicans. Some of the other conspicuously absent groups of birds are sparrows, flycatchers, swallows, hummingbirds, wrens, woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, warblers, blackbirds, vireos, and tanagers. Several bird families are represented by only

one native species each such as hawks, crows, herons, and owls. Of course I suppose when you consider how far the islands are from the nearest land mass, it's amazing there are any native birds there at all.

What Hawaii lacks in the familiar, it makes up for in the unique. It has its own distinct family of birds found nowhere else on earth—the Hawaiian Honeycreepers. This family contains some of the most colorful and unusual birds to be found anywhere. In 1972, an entirely new genus of honeycreeper was discovered on Maui, the Poo-uli. Its dense tropical rain forests may even contain more species not yet discovered. Unfortunately, Hawaii also has the tragic distinction of having lost over twenty-three species and subspecies to extinction during the last 200 years. The rest of the United States experienced only five bird extinctions during the same time period. To make matters worse, thirty of the forty-seven remaining species and subspecies on Hawaii are endangered. The Kauai Akialoa with a decurved bill over half as long as its body was last seen in 1973, and may very well be extinct.

Hawaii's birds have suffered catastrophic losses for a variety of reasons—clearing of the forests for cattle ranches and lumber, predation by introduced rats and mongooses, competition from introduced birds, lack of immunity to introduced diseases such as bird malaria and avian cholera, and the inability to cope with disturbances. The fragile island ecology of Hawaii may already be doomed despite such efforts as the Hawaiian Goose (Nene) breeding program and the Kipahulu Reserve in Haleakala National Park. Notwithstanding these positive steps, habitat destruction continues, and introduced plants and birds are invading even the most remote rain forests.

There are several factors would-be birders in Hawaii should be aware of. Most of the rare and unusual birds are only found in dense rain forests where visibility is seriously impaired by the tangle of trees, shrubs, and vines. You may be able to hear birds in the upper canopy but not be able to see them. The dense vegetation is due to lots of precipitation. They're not called rain forests without justification. It rained every day when we were on the windward side of an island. Usually the rain lasted less than an hour although we spent a very wet night in our tent near Paliku. Another limiting factor is transportation. Since public transport is minimal or non-existent in Hawaii, tourists must rely on the rental car. Rental car contracts limit travel to well-maintained roads which eliminate whole portions of islands unless you rent a very expensive four-wheel drive vehicle. The following descriptions deal only with areas reachable by rental car.

Oahu

Chances are you'll have to visit Oahu considering almost all the airlines from the mainland only fly into Honolulu. Most of the people I know spend as little time there as possible before going on to another island. Oahu is crowded, and some of its residents are openly hostile to outsiders. Even so, it offers some interesting birding since it's the only main island which has several offshore islands with seabird colonies.

Honolulu Area

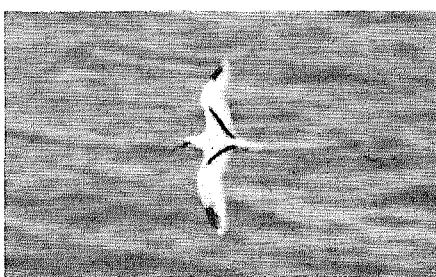
The parks in and around Honolulu are excellent places to look for introduced birds and escapes. Kapiolani Regional Park near Diamond Head and Ala Moana Park are the best known. There's no telling what you might find there, but some of the more common birds in the parks are Zebra Dove, Spotted Dove, Red-vented Bulbul, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Northern Cardinal, Red-crested Cardinal, and Common Myna. White Terns which are sometimes called Fairy Terns in Hawaii nest regularly at Fort De Russy next to Waikiki Beach, and they have nested at Diamond Head. I saw a pair sitting on a telephone line early one morning in downtown Honolulu. If you want to search for forest birds on Oahu, you might try the mountains behind Honolulu. The Aiea Trail in Keaiwa Heiau State Recreation Area, the Manoa Cliff Trail off of Tantalus Drive, and the Waahila Ridge Trail in Waahila Ridge State Recreation Area are all short drives from Honolulu.

Hanauma Bay-Koko Head

Hanauma Bay is a popular park best known for its underwater fauna, but it's also a good spot for birds. We saw Zebra Dove, Red-crested Cardinal, Spotted Dove, and Golden Plover there on Labor Day. Koko Head just adjacent to Hanauma Bay sometimes has seabirds, and White Terns have nested there in the past.

Windward Coast

The islands off the windward coast of Oahu are breeding sites for a wide range of seabirds including Sooty and Gray-backed Terns; Brown and Black Noddies; Red-footed, Masked, and Brown Boobies; Bulwer's Petrel, Wedge-tailed and Christmas Shear-



White-tailed Tropicbird

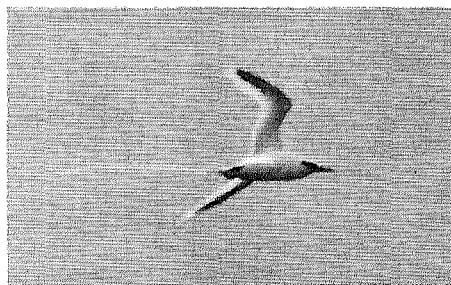
waters; White-tailed and Red-tailed Tropicbirds; Laysan Albatross; and Great Frigatebird. The largest colonies are found on Moku Manu and Manana Islands. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to get out to the islands. Probably the best vantage point for Moku Manu is Ulupau Head which is located on the Kaneohe Bay Marine Corps Air Station. Ulupau Head itself has nesting Red-footed Boobies. To get on the base, you must get advance permission from the base public information office which is only open during the week. Manana Island is visible off the coast near Makapuu, but it's too far away to discern anything with binoculars. Mokolii Island in Kaneohe Bay has had nesting White-tailed Tropicbirds.

Kauai

If you have only enough money or time to visit one island and you want to see native birds, go to Kauai. It is the least developed of the main islands and contains the best birding spots in all of Hawaii. Some of the birds that are only found on Kauai (if you're very lucky) are the Band-rumped (Harcourt) Storm Petrel, Small Kauai Thrush (Puiohi), Kauai Oo, Anianiau, and the Kauai Akialoa. Other species such as Black-Vented (Newell) Shearwater, Hawaiian Duck, Hawaiian Gallinule (sub-species of Common Moorhen), Hawaiian Owl (sub-species of Short-eared Owl), and Akepa tend to be more common on Kauai than the other islands.

Hanapepe Canyon Lookout

On the way to Waimea Canyon, you'll pass a pullout on the inland side of the highway almost fifteen miles from Lihue. If you stop, in addition to beautiful views of Hanapepe Canyon, you can expect to see White-tailed Tropicbirds soaring along the canyon walls.



White-tailed Tropicbird

Waimea Canyon

Waimea Canyon is called the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific." You wouldn't expect to find part of Arizona in the middle of the Pacific, but it's there. There are several signed overlooks along the Waimea Canyon Road. Each offers spectacular views of the red cliffs with White-tailed Tropicbirds gliding past. A short nature trail on the canyon side of the road provides a good introduction to some of the

native plants including the rare Iliau, a sunflower that looks like a yucca.

Kokee State Park

Beyond Waimea Canyon, the road climbs to Kokee State Park, the best place in Hawaii to find endemics. In contrast to the oppressive heat of the lowlands, the park is surprisingly cool, especially in the evenings. It's surrounded by the Kauai Forest Reserve and contains an extensive trail system. The rustic cabins at Kokee Lodge are very reasonably priced and come complete with Red Jungle Fowl. Our stay at Kokee was the most pleasant of the trip. The Halemanu-Kokee trail is the best easy trail if you want to sample the native forest and its birds, but even here you'll probably see more introduced plants and birds than natives. Native birds to look for are Apapane, Iiwi, Elepaio, Anianiau, and Common Amakihi. Introduced birds include Shama, Japanese White-eye, and Nutmeg Mannikin (Spotted Munia). Two other spots in the park worth visiting are the Kalalau Lookout and Puu Kila Lookout. The Kalalau Lookout has picture post card views of the Kalalau Valley with its waterfalls and the Napali Coast. Iiwi, Apapane, and Amakihi were abundant in this area right after a rain shower. Iiwi perched on top of Ohia trees calling to one another. At the end of the road is Puu Kila Lookout which also overlooks the Kalalau Valley. Anianiau were common in the roadside shrubs.

The Alakai Swamp

The Alakai Swamp is perhaps the most ornithologically fascinating area in all of Hawaii. It is also one of the most inaccessible. The swamp is situated on a large plateau on the side of Mount Waialeale, the wettest spot on earth with over 500 inches of rainfall annually. It can only be reached by foot trail or helicopter. It is still a relatively unspoiled wilderness although it has been invaded by introduced plants and animals. Only by topographical accident has it remained undeveloped. It's bordered on the northwest by the knife-edge ridges of the Napali Coast, on the southwest by the cliffs of Waimea Canyon, and on the east by Mt. Waialeale. Travel within the swamp is an unappetizing slog through mud that is often knee deep, and that's on the trails. Offtrail travel is prohibited and suicidal. My wife and I managed to penetrate a mile or so into the western edge of the swamp, but we didn't see anything we hadn't seen near Kokee. In fact we probably saw less because of the denseness of the vegetation. Nevertheless, the Alakai Swamp is the home of the Kauai Hawaiian Thrush, the Small Kauai Thrush, the Kauai Ou, Kauai Creeper, the Akepa, the Kauai Akialoa, the Nukupuu, and the Ou. These are some of the rarest birds in Hawaii, but you'd have to be a *very* dedicated birder to find them.



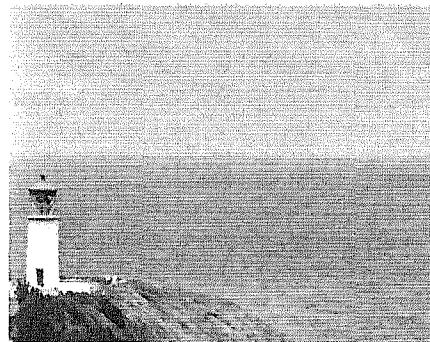
Joyce Bailey slogging through the Alakai Swamp Trail

Wailua River Overlook

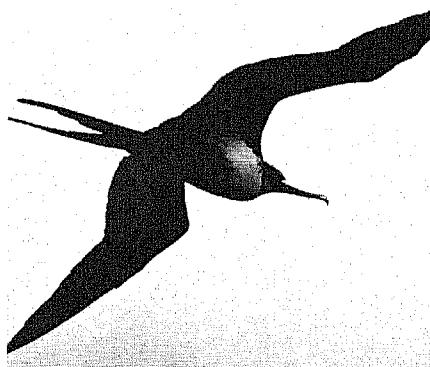
This is another of Kauai's famous picture-postcard spots. You can watch the tour boats going to the Fern Grotto and Cattle Egrets flying along the river. Across the highway from the overlook is a waterfall with White-tailed Tropicbirds.

Kilauea Lighthouse

This bird sanctuary is a small peninsula on the north coast of Kauai. It's the only easily accessible location where I would guarantee finding seabirds. In addition to the nesting colony of Red-footed Boobies on a cliff just across from the lighthouse, we saw Brown Boobies, Great Frigatebirds, White-tailed



Kilauea Lighthouse



Great Frigatebird

Tropicbirds, a Red-tailed Tropicbird, and a Green Sea Turtle. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters nest in burrows on the side of the peninsula. The birds fly so close here you can get excellent photographs. The reserve was only open in the afternoons when we were there.

Anini State Beach

Anini Beach is a couple of miles west of Kilauea Lighthouse. Cattle Egrets and Common Mynas are abundant in the area, and I found a Wandering Tattler and Great Frigatebird at the beach.

Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge

On the way to the Napali Coast, you'll pass the ponds and taro fields in the Hanalei Valley. It's a lovely area and a good spot to find Hawaiian Duck and Hawaiian Coot (sub-species of the American Coot).

Na Pali Coast

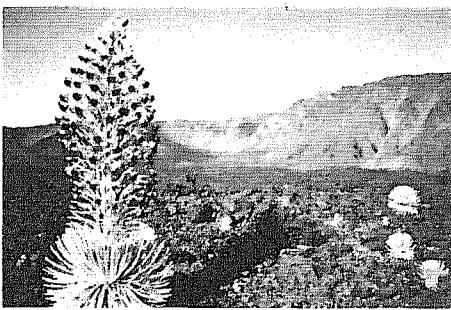
The Na Pali Coast is world famous for its rugged beauty. Birds weren't plentiful, but we did see a White-tailed Tropicbird, a Brown Noddy, and a Brown Booby. The trail to the Hanakapiai Valley is moderately strenuous but extremely scenic. A side trail goes up the valley to Hanakapiai Falls. I could hear birds along this trail, but they weren't visible due to the tropical vegetation. The Na Pali Coast trail beyond Hanakapiai Valley becomes difficult.

Maui

Many visitors to Hawaii have chosen Maui as their favorite island because of its tremendous variety. The beaches of the Lahaina area are great for sunning and snorkeling. "Heavenly" Hana provides a dramatic contrast from the resorts and condominiums of Lahaina with its laidback pace and lush tropical foliage. Towering over the entire island, Haleakala, a dormant volcano, offers a spectacular landscape within its caldera and virgin rain forests on its windward slopes. Unfortunately, birding on Maui was not as terrific as the scenery. There are some birds found only on Maui such as the Crested Honeycreeper, the Maui Parrotbill, and Poo-uli, but they are very difficult to find. These and other endemics live in the rain forests on the windward slopes of Haleakala.

Haleakala National Park

The panorama from the visitors center on top of Haleakala is unforgettable. Its caldera is one of the largest on earth. The western part of the caldera is a spectacular desert-like environment of lava ash and cinder cones. There are a few shrubs including the beautiful Silversword and some patches of grass. Where vegetation is present, you can find Chukar, Nene, and, in winter, Lesser Golden



Silver sword



Hawaiian Goose or Nene

Plover. To get to the birds, you'll have to descend into the caldera which means climbing back up over 3000 feet to get out. There are three cabins on the floor of the caldera if you want to stay overnight. The Paliku region in the eastern portion of the caldera is a day's hike from the western rim. It receives over 200 inches of rain each year, and the vegetation is quite different from the western side just a few miles away. Near Paliku, we saw Mockingbirds and an Apapane, and Nene were quite common. Dark-rumped Petrels nest in the cliffs of Paliku, and they can sometimes be heard calling. In the Kipahulu Forest on the other side of the ridge from Paliku, the Poo-uli was discovered in 1973. It's also the home of Common Amakihi, Maui Creeper, Akepa, Nukupuu, Maui Parrotbill, Apapane, Iiwi, and Crested Honeycreeper.

The grasslands on the upper slopes of Haleakala outside the caldera contain introduced Western Meadowlarks, Skylarks, and Ring-necked Pheasants. Hosmer Grove near the edge of the park is supposed to be a good place to see the more common endemics. Unfortunately, the day we were there it was drizzling and the clouds obscured just about everything.

Hana

The Hana Highway is the worst paved road I've ever been on. There are so many potholes and hairpin curves that the last twenty-five miles take almost two hours to travel. The dozens of waterfalls and beautiful vistas do ease the aggravation, but I would suggest you break up the drive with a picnic lunch at Keanae Arboretum. The arboretum is located in a lovely little valley with a

stream just made for a relaxing dip. There are Northern Cardinals, Japanese White-eye, Spotted Doves, and other introduced birds. The only native species I encountered was a Black-crowned Night Heron gliding over the stream. Waianapanpa State Park just outside of Hana has rustic cabins which are inexpensive and some even have ocean views. The coast in this part of Maui is extremely rugged with black sand beaches and blow-holes. Look for Brown Noddys, Great Frigatebirds, and other seabirds. The Oheo Gulch which is part of Haleakala National Park is located beyond Hana. It contains a series of stair-step pools that empty into the ocean. We found a small flock of Ruddy Turnstones near the mouth of the stream. There is a trail paralleling the stream leading to Waimoku Falls. You'll only find introduced birds, but the trail winds through a bamboo forest that's worth a visit.

Hawaii

Hawaii is the largest and the youngest of the main islands. In fact, it's still growing due to periodic eruptions that extend its coastline. Like the other islands, it has a wet windward side and a dry leeward side, but, due to its youth, lava flows are much more prominent on Hawaii than the other islands. Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa are the two massive volcanoes that dominate the island. They're both over 13,000 feet high and are snow covered in the winter. There are five species of birds found only on Hawaii, the Hawaiian Crow, Hawaiian Hawk, Hawaii Creeper, the Akiapolaau, and the Palila. Other endemics to look for include Hawaiian Thrush, Elepaio, Amakihi, Akepa, Ou, Apapane, Iiwi, and Nene.

Volcanoes National Park

The Kilauea caldera is one of the most active volcanic areas in the world. Like Haleakala, it has a wet side and a dry side. On the dry side, Halemaumau, the Fire Pit, has White-tailed Tropicbirds when it's not erupting. At the Southwest Rift Zone which extends out of Halemaumau, we spotted a small flock of Nene flying past. On the wet side of the caldera is a lush Ohia-Fern forest with Giant Tree Ferns. The Thurston Lava Tube trail is supposed to be a good area for endemics, and it certainly has the right vegetation. However, we couldn't see any birds although we could hear them calling in the upper canopy. Across the road, the Kilauea Iki trail descends to a relatively recent crater. Visibility is better as the trail switchbacks downward, but I could only find Nutmeg Manakin and some wild orchids. A few miles from the Kilauea Crater on the Mauna Loa Strip Road is Kipuka Puaulu or Bird Park. It's an island of rare vegetation surrounded by lava flows. We found introduced birds such as House Finches, Northern Cardinals, and a Melodious Laughing-Thrush (Hwa-Mei). Again, I

couldn't find any endemics although they are resident there. There are additional kipukas farther up the Mauna Loa Strip Road. On the coast just outside the park's entrance is the Queen's Bath, a favorite swimming hole of the locals. We saw a beautiful light phase Hawaiian Hawk there early one morning.

Hilo Ponds

The freshwater ponds near Kapiolani Drive in Hilo are a good place to see native Hawaiian waterbirds such as the Hawaiian Coot and Black-crowned Night Heron.

North Kona Coast

The Kona Coast is a desert-like landscape of brown and black lava flows. Vegetation is sparse, but there are a few areas that offer good birding. At Hapuna State Beach, we encountered Mockingbirds, Northern Cardinals, Saffron Finches, Grey Francolins, and Warbling Silverbills.

For Further Information

Hawaii's Birds published by the Hawaii Audubon Society is an invaluable little booklet. It is compact, up-to-date, and inexpensive in addition to giving good information on what birds to expect and where to find them. It's available at Audubon House. Peterson's *Field Guide to Western Birds* covers Hawaii, but it's much less informative than the Audubon booklet. Andrew Berger's *Hawaiian Birdlife* is the most detailed account of Hawaii's birds available, and it's recently been revised. You might also check the Hawaii Audubon Society newsletter, *The Elepaio*, which you can find in the UCLA Bio-Medical Library.

Bird names changed to follow 34th Supplement to the AOU check-list of North American Birds, July 1982.

—Editor



Color Marked Bird

If you see a color marked bird and cannot recall or cannot find a Request for Assistance with details, please send all the pertinent information normally requested to the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD 20708 or, in Canada, to Banding Office, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0E7. These agencies coordinate color banding programs by a permit system to avoid duplication, and will forward the data to the bander. If you do respond directly to the bander whose name appears in a request, please send a copy of the information to the banding office.

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

How Sweet It Is . . . Malibu

The first meetings called by the State Parks and Recreation Department were in 1976. A couple of years before, the Department had come up with a plan that would have made Malibu Lagoon a kind of Coney Island without roller coasters. It called for blacktopping the marsh to permit parking for 640 cars, establishment of an RV campsite and fire pits on the beach. The historical Adamson house on the east side of the lagoon was to be razed and more beach facilities were to be provided there. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers was to channelize the lagoon in its traditional manner. The community and conservationists rose up in righteous dismay. Fortunately, money was short and nothing was done.

A new, more environmentally-oriented administration and a bond issue revived interest in developing this State Beach Park. This time, instead of presenting a finished plan from on high, the Department tossed the ball to the public and said, "Tell us what kind of a place you want." Meetings, hearings and workshops followed for the next couple of years, and the skeptics were amazed: the big wheels were really listening! Out of this came the plan for a Natural Preserve with a restored marsh and minimum intrusion by people, dogs, horses and dirt bikes. There was unanimous approval. Then suddenly there was no money and new anxieties developed. In 1980, a bill was introduced into the legislature that appropriated \$1.3 million and sailed through with no opposition. All systems go? No such luck. The Little League had two fields in the park and at the last minute the parents, who had previously accepted the fact that they would have to move, decided to fight their eviction. The wheels of the law grind slowly and it was not until a hectic year later that the courts and the Coastal Commission ordered the League out and the project began.

At the close of 1982 the new Malibu Lagoon was completed. Sycamores, alders and cottonwoods were planted on the high ground along with many native plants and shrubs. Large inlets — arms of the lagoon — were created to bring tidal flow into the new marsh area where salicornia (salt-marsh pickleweed) will grow. Bridges span the inlets and form a part of the path to the beach. Gulls and shorebirds already can be seen close by the bridges where they can rest and feed without being disturbed. A stretch of shore line has been retained along the west edge of the lagoon so that observa-

tion of the lagoon proper can be made with binoculars and scope — much as before. The Adamson house has been declared a historical site and is being made into a museum of Chumash and early Spanish cultures.

The early returns from birders — the severest critics of "development" — have been enthusiastic. Though everything is new and raw, the potential can be readily seen for a genuine productive marsh. It was a victory worth waiting for and a tribute to the democratic process, the planners and the people who hung on through every setback. Now for the first Clapper Rail!

Morongo

For years the magnificent oasis in Morongo Valley has been not only a migrant trap but an infallible birder trap. This green island in the desert catches a delicious variety of tired, thirsty birds stopping on their way north and south to rest and feed before completing their compulsive journeys. Birders travel great distances to see the migrants and vagrants,

the mixture of desert species and riparian woodland species. Gambel's Quail and Yellowthroat, Lucy's Warbler and Summer Tanager, Brown-crested (Wied's Crested) Flycatcher and Vermilion Flycatcher. The desert Ladder-backed and the woodland Nuttall's Woodpeckers overlap here and can neatly be compared. A visit to Morongo in the spring is mandatory for most birders, and visiting firemen make a special effort to include it in their itineraries.

In recent weeks Morongo has been in jeopardy. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, the owners of Big Morongo Regional Park, like all local jurisdictions, has been short of money and trying to get out from under the financial burden of the park. A serious persistent rumor that the entire park would be sold for a Recreational Vehicle camp sent shudders through the birding community all over southern California. The Nature Conservancy, which owns the property downstream from Big Morongo, began negotiations to become the trustee of the park. San Bernardino Audubon joined with the Conservancy to accomplish this goal. To demonstrate that appreciation for Morongo was not just a local issue, LA Audubon circulated a petition to the Supervisors asking that its unique values be retained. In two weeks 500 signatures were obtained from our members and many other local societies.

In the November election, the politician who was pushing the development that



Illustration by Marianne D. Wallace

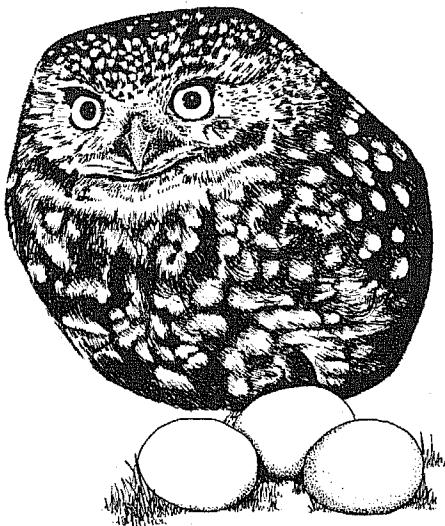


Illustration by Marianne D. Wallace

Condor to Learn About Birds, Bees

The following was found in the January 14, 1983 issue of the Los Angeles Times.

PHILADELPHIA (UPI)—The Philadelphia Zoo will send two rare Andean condors to Los Angeles to teach a California condor the facts of life, a zoo official said Wednesday.

"Because this bird has been hand-reared, he doesn't know about sex," said Lawrence Shelton, the Philadelphia zoo's curator of rare birds.

Shelton said the birds, named Cornelia and Charles, will be flown to the Los Angeles Zoo today.

They will be placed in a separate cage but visible to California condor "Topa Topa" so he can see how they socialize, Shelton said.

"We're sending them out because they're a proven breeding pair," Shelton said. Cornelia and Charles have produced one chick, although it died.

The Andean condors are a species closely related to the California condor, of which only about 20 exist. So far, attempts to capture a female California condor as a mate for Topa Topa have been unsuccessful.

Estate Planning

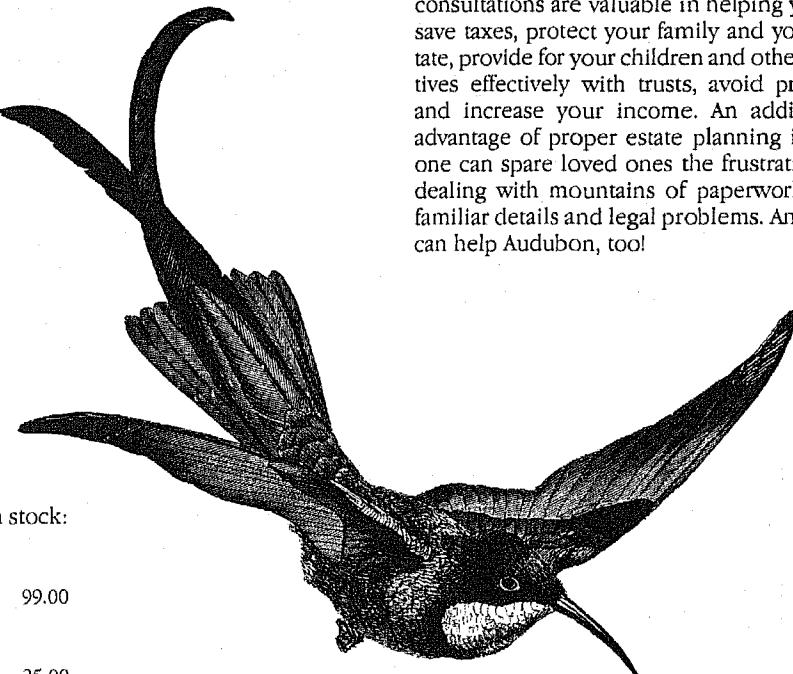
Over the years, bequests have been of great importance to the National Audubon Society and in some cases to local chapters. Gifts such as these are painless to give, yet help to carry on the Society's vital work long into the future.

Since over half of the population do not have wills, the importance of estate planning becomes very clear. Moreover, you should be aware that many existing wills are out of date because of the passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981.

National Audubon Society, through attorney and Audubon member Leland Alan Stark of Beverly Hills, is implementing a series of estate planning seminars in the Southland.

Attorney Stark also offers an hour-long estate planning consultation in his office at no cost or obligation. If you wish to take advantage of his offer, or if you would like to be notified when estate planning seminars are being offered in the Los Angeles area, contact Doug Buckmaster, Director of Development, Western Region, National Audubon Society, 1414 Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 6, South Pasadena, California 91030; phone (213) 441-3466.

The estate planning seminars and private consultations are valuable in helping you to save taxes, protect your family and your estate, provide for your children and other relatives effectively with trusts, avoid probate and increase your income. An additional advantage of proper estate planning is that one can spare loved ones the frustration of dealing with mountains of paperwork, unfamiliar details and legal problems. And you can help Audubon, too!



Bookstore Update

We are pleased to announce the following items are now in stock:

THE BIRDS OF AFRICA, vol 1, ALBATROSSES TO WOODPECKERS, Urban, Brown & Newman	99.00
A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF SOUTH AMERICA, de Schauensee A soft cover re-print of the out-of-print book, with addenda & without plates	25.00
A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE GALAPAGOS, Harris, 1982	20.00
AUDUBON SOCIETY BEGINNERS GUIDE, BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA	2.95
AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN TREES, WESTERN REGION	12.50
AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS	12.50
VOICES OF SOME GALAPAGOS BIRDS, Hardy, Cassette	5.95
FIELD CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF GALAPAGOS ISLANDS, Leck & Mason	1.75
FIELD CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA Won	2.95
FIELD CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF NEW GUINEA & SATELLITE ISLANDS, Steffee	1.75
CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE YUCATAN REGION, MEXICO, Edwards75
TRAVELER'S LIST & CHECKLIST FOR BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, A.B.A.	1.00
BIRDS OF BENTSEN-RIOS GRANDE VALLEY STATE PARK50
BIRDS OF SANTA ANA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE40

President's Corner

by Bob Shanman

This month's column might be more appropriately titled "Ballona: National Audubon Becomes Involved." My wife and I have been birding about six years, and in this time, Ballona has become one of our favorite birding locations. As many of you know, we lead monthly walks there, and we now have a species list for the general Marina area of about 150 birds. However, this is far below the estimated list of 300 for the historic wetlands that were once over 2000 acres. The area began to degrade in 1932 with the channelization of Ballona Creek; was then severely affected by the construction of the Marina, and now, much of what remains is proposed for development.

Summa Corporation presently owns the Ballona Wetlands, and it is included in their master plan for the Playa Vista project. Originally, Summa had proposed to preserve about 72 acres of the remaining undeveloped area as wetlands. However, the County Museum of Natural History performed a study of the area, under the direction of Dr. Ralph Schrieber, and looked at all aspects of the ecosystems involved. In their report, the study team concluded, and recommended, that in order for the wetlands to survive, about an additional 100 acres of support



area was required and should be included for preservation. Following review of the "Schrieber" report, Summa modified their plan to include the added land. Since that change was made, tentative agreements have been reached with the Gas Company to include their land within the boundary of the reserve area. The total area now proposed for preservation/restoration is about 215 acres.

In November, Russ Peterson, NAS President, met with senior executives of Summa to discuss their proposals, and was able to see the wetlands first hand. He was enthused about the chance to save such a large area within an urban environment. He also saw an opportunity that could provide Audubon with a major educational facility and sanctuary open to an audience of 7 million people. At the same time, Summa indicated an interest in having Audubon become involved in the restoration effort.

To this end, Russ requested Dick Martyr, Western Regional Vice President, to begin discussions with Summa towards Audubon becoming the trustee and operator of the restored wetlands, provided there was local chapter support. On December 9, your Board met to discuss the proposed plan in detail,

considered its pros and cons, and whether to support National's involvement. Two motions were made and passed: to generally support the concept of the proposed restoration, and to support National in discussions with Summa with the goal that the preserved area would be turned over to Audubon.

With this backing, Dick has begun discussions with Summa. National's involvement was made public by Dick at the December 16 Board of Supervisors Meeting. And, in the near future, Audubon will field a team of wetland and sanctuary specialists to review the restoration concept, along with the history and much scientific literature on Ballona. They will report back to Russ and Dick on the viability of the area as an educational facility and sanctuary within the goals of Audubon.

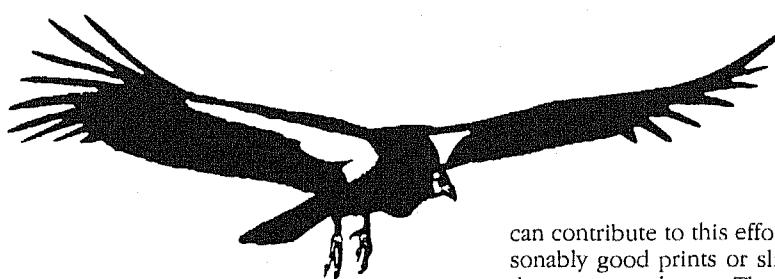
At this time, nothing is firm, and no commitments have been made other than to explore the possibilities for mutual cooperation. However it is exciting to know that there is a real possibility of National Audubon becoming the protector of most of the land that is still called Ballona. We wish National, and Dick, the best in working on this important effort.

Condor Recovery Program Expanded

The California Fish & Game Commission, at its January 7 meeting, again expanded the Condor Recovery Project permit. The Condor Recovery Team, led by John Ogden of National Audubon, and Noel Snyder of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, along with veterinarians caring for the young male Condor captured in December, have been granted permission to keep this bird at the L.A. Zoo for future captive breeding efforts. The team was also given the go-ahead to trap two additional birds. One bird is thought to be an unmated female, which if caught, would become Topa Topa's mate at the L.A. Zoo. The second bird must be either a juvenile or an unmated adult.

In addition, the Commission has approved the radio-tagging of any two additional birds, and the taking of all first eggs (with certain time restrictions) in order to cause mated pairs to double-clutch. The team believes that up to four eggs could be taken this year under the revised conditions. The Commission vote on each of these items was unanimous.

The Commission has greatly expanded the permit in the last six months. They had indi-



cated to the team their support for the program, but needed to be reassured of the team's ability to handle the birds without endangering them. Now it would be appropriate for everyone who supports the program to thank the Commission. Letters of thanks (and support) should be sent to: California Fish & Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95824.

As with other aspects of birding, the Condor Recovery Project can benefit from data obtained by those of us who are weekend birders. Noel Snyder has been collecting and analyzing Condor photographs for the past several years, and through this technique, he has been able to track individual birds and to estimate, with some confidence, that the wild population is only about 20 birds. You

can contribute to this effort if you have reasonably good prints or slides taken within the past several years. The date and location must be accurate. If you have this type of data, please send copies to: Condor Recovery Project, 87 N. Chestnut Street, Ventura, California 93001, Attention Noel Snyder.

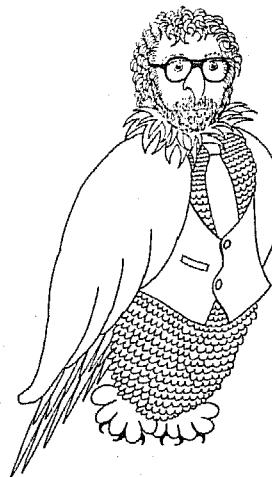
For you history buffs, it is interesting to note that LAAS has been supporting the Condor since 1939, when, at the February board meeting, the Association voted to pledge \$5 each year for two years to support a three-year study of the bird. As I write this (January 16), your donations have surpassed the \$2500 mark for this year. At the February board meeting, the board will vote on the Chapter's contribution, and the total amount will be presented to John Borneman of National at our March 1 Banquet. On behalf of the Board, and the Condor Recovery Project, I would like to thank all of you who have continued to support this program.

From the Editor

by Fred Heath

I've mentioned it a few times in past TANAGERS. I like to stay pretty much with articles on California especially Southern California. However as you have probably already noticed, I've dedicated a few pages of this month's issue to Hawaii. For us in California a flight to Hawaii is relatively inexpensive and there are all sorts of package deals which allow visits to several islands at a reasonable cost. If your spouse, roommate, etc. is not particularly interested in birds, you might have a tough time getting them to go on a trip to say the rain forests of Mexico or even SE Arizona in the summer. A trip to Hawaii is much easier to sell and visits to the normal sightseeing spots should net you some of the native birds (as mentioned in this month's article). I know after preparing this article, I've started to leave brochures on Hawaii all over the house for my wife and surfing son, Dean, to find. In the next issue, I will be publishing a second very similar article by Helen and Teri Matelson.

Editing these Hawaiian articles was the most difficult job I've ever had to do for the TANGER. This is for two reasons, neither of which has anything to do with the authors' writing ability. The first problem is the unusual (unusual for a howlee [the derogatory term used by Hawaiians to describe tourists]) spellings of the various place names. It is easy to drop a vowel or two and not even notice. As a matter of fact, I'm terrified the typesetter will run short of vowels along



with *w*'s and *k*'s. On three different maps you can find four different spellings for the same place. I have chosen to use the spellings in the AAA map for this purpose (It's now serving another purpose casually sitting on the coffee table at home). The second thing is that I chose to change the names to conform to the latest AOU check-list supplement. This was complicated enough, but to add to the confusion the Hawaiian Honeycreeper which had been divided into 6 sub-species was split into 5 full species. It took me quite a while to untangle this mess. I sure was sorry I decided to embark on this task. As I'm sitting here writing this, I am looking ahead with dread to the proofreading on the final copy. I imagine I can't have more typos than in the November issue, but then again that's not saying much. That of course is typical of my column: a lot of words, but not saying much.

I received this letter in the mail and thought I'd share it with you

—Editor

Book Review

I simply *must* tell you about this *outrageous* little book that crossed my desk the other day (I love that cliche; it's so executive!). The most outrageous thing about "**Eagles Have Bad Breath**" by Jack Aulis (1980) is the price — \$4.00. Four bucks for a *thirty-page* paperback — I mean, really! But, believe me, it's worth every quarter!

Mr. Aulis has a different attitude toward our feathered friends than you or I. To him all birds are sparrows (which isn't all that far from the truth, actually). And he has the solution to all those confusing fall warblers (a subfamily of sparrows). "There are dozens of them," he states, "and in every case the male warblers don't look like the female warblers of the same species, and their offspring don't look like either of their parents. Furthermore, the males molt twice a year, during which times they don't even look like themselves. They do it on pur-

anese beetle population in a single, collective gulp (if only they would). What we need is something that eats lots of starlings."

While suggesting how we get rid of such unwanted species, he also tells us how we can attract others, such as the lovable little chickadee, "that quick and acrobatic bird who is filled with curiosity, self-confidence and insects." He suggests "standing in the woods and making little squeaking sounds by sucking on the back of your hand." But he warns against trying this on a busy street corner.

This book is not without a few errors of fact, however. The author contradicts himself when he tells us that some birds are members of the harbinger family. We cognoscente know, of course, that the harbingers are just another sparrow subfamily. According to Aulis the harbinger family (sic) "is a group of birds who tell you what's happening: Robins—It is spring. Bluebirds—You are happy. Storks—You have been pregnant. Vultures—You are dead, and probably have been for several days (very sic). Flickers—

Despite a few such errors the book is otherwise quite accurate, scholarly and informative (Did you know that Linnaeus, the fellow who gave us all those Latin names, was neither an ornithologist, nor Latin? Nor was his real name Linnaeus!). Why does the eagle have bad breath? I'll let you find that out for yourself. Which may prove rather difficult, since I have no idea where you might purchase a copy of this little gem. As I said, it just happened across my desk one day . . .

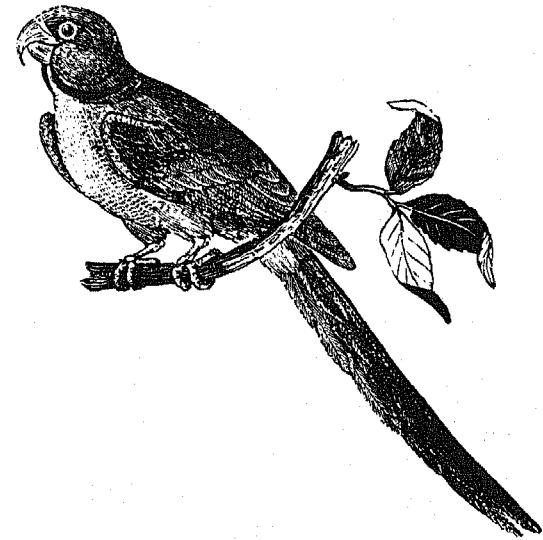
Rona Parrot

P.S. I want my job back.

pose," he tells us. His advice: "If everyone would ignore them, they'd stop it."

His book is a field guide of sorts, but a lot better than the conventional guides with their hundreds and hundreds of species that probably don't exist anyway. Since his world only consists of 26 species (including the squirrel) he can tell us much about each one that we would never find in a conventional guide. Take the bluebird — "the dearest darling of birds." Aulis tells us that the Bluebird of Happiness (its full name) is often called "the blue robin", but is more often known as "Oh, the sweet little thing!" And it's patriotic, too. Lest we overlook this obvious fact, he impells us with, "The bluebird is truly representative of American birds, for it is fittingly clad in the national colors. Blue, rust and dirty-white."

But Aulis is not all bubblegum and sentiment. No, indeed! He describes the starling as a "short-tailed, chunky bird of no appeal whatsoever." And he is not at a loss in suggesting what we do with this despicable little creature. "As many starlings as there are," he points out, "they could wipe out the Jap-



I did a little digging and discovered that this book can be found at the Mole Hole located at 2708 Main Street in Santa Monica.

Editor

Birds of the Season

by Shum Suffel



Early winter was disappointing in the traditional sense, with few winter birds. Even robins, waxwings, and "White-crowns" were scarce, while Lewis' Woodpeckers, nuthatches and siskins were reported singly, if at all. BUT, December 1982 will be remembered as the month of exceptional rarities. It began on 6 December when word came of a colorful adult male **King Eider** at the Imperial Beach pier below San Diego. It was seen over the weekend, then missed for several weeks until it reappeared on 8 January. Remarkably, a lovely cinnamon-brown female **King Eider** was found with the scoters at the Huntington Beach Pier by Russ and Marion Wilson on 8 December. It was easily refound by scores of eager birders until at least mid-January. Miraculously, another female **King Eider** was at the mouth of Newport Bay on 19 December for the boat party of the Orange Co. (coastal) Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The Orange Co. (inland) CBC on 19 December turned up a **Thick-billed Kingbird** (about ten state records) on the outskirts of Tustin (Lois Loughran and Doug Willick). It was first reported as a Tropical Kingbird because of the extensively yellow underparts (a fresh fall/winter plumage not shown in the field guides). With it was an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** (fourth winter record), along with two **Cassin's Kingbirds**. Then, rarest of all, there was the **Rufous-backed Robin** (third California record and first coastal record) at the Newport Harbor High School Nature Center. Its discoverer remains unknown, but rumor has it that it was found by central Californians about 2 January. It was widely seen thereafter, but with difficulty as it stayed well hidden as it fed in its favorite toyon shrubs or roosted in nearby willows.

Those were the "four-star bell-ringers", as Herb Clarke likes to say, but there was much, much more — particularly because of the Christmas Counts. The only **Red-necked Grebe** was on the Morro Bay CBC and the only **Reddish Egret** was at the south end of San Diego Bay on the CBC there. A **Cattle Egret** near Newhall, L.A. Co. was in an area where they had not been reported before, but the habitat — open fields with cattle — was suitable (Colleen Lee, 14 January). Seven **White Pelicans** spent most of December at Bolsa Chica. A **Ross' Goose** at Upper Newport Bay was not expected as the species is now quite rare

along the coast. A **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Solano Beach, San Diego Co., but none could be found at the Whalen Ranch where they have wintered in recent years (Herb Clarke, 6 December). A female **Wood Duck** was at the Whittier Narrows "New Lakes" (Natasha Antonovich, 9 January) and five more were found near Montclair on the Claremont CBC, which also had a **White-winged Scoter** on the San Dimas Reservoir (they are casual on fresh water inland). A **Common Goldeneye** at King Harbor (John Ivanov, 22 December) was among the few reported. An adult male **Black Scoter** and a **Parasitic Jaeger** were seen from the San Pedro Breakwater (Brian Keelan, 4 December).

Larry Norris writes from Sequoia National Park that the Little Baldy trail is a good place to look for **Northern Goshawks**, a much-wanted raptor. The only late reports of **Broad-winged Hawks** come from the Morro Bay area and, on 31 December, above a taco stand at Sepulveda and Washington Place in Culver City (spied by Jon Dunn from the freeway). At least two **Zone-tailed Hawks** are wintering above Fallbrook, San Diego Co. (Brian Daniels *et al.*). The **Merlin** in the Arcadia Arboretum has not been seen recently, but one was in the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, Claremont (Natasha A., 27 December), another was in Altadena (Lois Fulmor, 4 December), a third was at the Whalen Ranch above Oceanside (Herb Clarke, 6 December), and a fourth was spotted on the Palos Verdes CBC. The **Peregrine Falcon** recovery program must be succeeding, as there were more than five reports in December.

The extreme high tides in late December at Upper Newport Bay flushed out four species of rails including a **Black Rail** for a lucky few, but no Sharp-tailed Sparrows have been seen there for several years now. Another Black Rail, was found for the Morro Bay CBC where they are difficult (always!) but regular. At Upper Newport Loren Hays watched a Northern Harrier capture and devour a small black bird which he believes

was a Black Rail, on 2 January. The boat launching area at Upper Newport is the best place north of San Diego to see **Red Knots**. There were six or more there on 24 December, including a buffy albino with a pink bill. The south end of the Salton Sea (SESS) CBC recorded 23 **Stilt Sandpipers**, which are expected there in small numbers almost year round. Two **Thayer's Gulls** there were very rare, but the species is probably regular there in winter. The only **Glaucous Gull** south of Morro Bay was at SESS (where casual) on 31 December (Guy McCaskie, Jon Dunn). Two **Black-legged Kittiwakes** were flying in the pouring rain at the Malibu Pier on 22 December (Greg Sater and Jay Fuhrman). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was seen in a side-canyon near the Santa Anita Dam above Arcadia (Mike San Miguel, 30 December), and a **Spotted Owl** was still being seen in the Switzer Picnic Area above La Canada on 28 December (Dorothy Dimsdale).

The **Broad-billed Hummingbird** returned to Balboa Park, San Diego, for its third winter there, and nearby was an immature male hummer, perhaps a Ruby-throated or a hybrid, which was the subject of much speculation. A male **Calliope Hummingbird** coming to a feeder in Three Rivers, Tulare Co., on 30 October was an exceptionally late fall record (adult males normally depart in July — Garrett and Dunn, 1981). It would be interesting to know whether the **Allen's Hummingbirds** reported by Jacob Szabo at the Bel Air Country Club and nearby UCLA campus 2-3 January were of the "non-migratory" race *sedentarius* which is supposedly confined on the mainland to the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The same question applies to the record 15 recorded on the Malibu CBC. The only report of **Lewis' Woodpeckers** in our area was of two in Marshall Canyon (Claremont CBC, 18 December); this contrasts with last winter when the Pasadena CBC reported fourteen. Returning for the third winter, a Male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** of the eastern race *varius* was in Silverado Canyon, Orange Co. (fide Doug Willick); another Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (race?) was in Long Beach Recreation Park (Ken Clough, 6 December). A female **Williamson's Sapsucker** near Malibu Lake (Laurette Maisel, 16 December) was in typical conifer habitat, but there was only about ten previous records of this high mountain species in the lowlands. A male **White-headed Woodpecker** in Altadena was one of the few downslope migrants from the nearby mountains (Lois Fulmor, 3 December).

Two **Tropical Kingbirds** were in the Santa Barbara/Goleta area (Paul Lehman) and one was wintering near Chino (Henry Childs). The only **Eastern Phoebes** were in Mission Viejo in Orange Co. (Doug Willick, 12 December) and on the SESS CBC on 21 December. The fourth winter record of a



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

Least Flycatcher was one along San Jose Creek in Goleta (Paul Lehman). The traditional picnic gathering at noon on the Malibu CBC (19 December) was disrupted by the discovery of a **Hammond's Flycatcher** nearby (Ed Navojosky, Jon Dunn *et al.*). This is only the second confirmed winter record for the state. Most observers were surprised by the amount of yellow on the underparts of a winter Hammond's. The **Gray Flycatcher** is at the Arcadia Arboretum for at least its third winter there; the L.A. Country Club Gray Flycatcher returned for its fourth winter and was seen on the Los Angeles CBC (Jean Brandt, Ken Kendig). Another Gray Flycatcher was found on the Palos Verdes CBC. Also at the Arcadia Arboretum were two very yellow **Western Flycatchers** (Jean Brandt, 17 December, Barbara Cohen 19 December). They were later heard "singing" at each other by David Mark. Four **Vermilion Flycatchers** were reported, with an adult male and an immature male at the Brookside Golf Course



ponds for the Pasadena CBC on 20 December, and a male and female at the Prado Basin park below Chino (Henry Childs). The Palos Verdes CBC (26 December) reported a single **Cliff Swallow**; this is only the sixth winter record, although the earliest migrants arrive in late January. Also casual in winter was a **Bank Swallow** on the Morro Bay CBC. There were no local reports of Varied Thrushes, as contrasted with last winter when as many as ten were

reported on the Pasadena count. The only **Golden-crowned Kinglet** away from the Santa Barbara area was seen in Whitewater Canyon on the Morongo Valley CBC (David Koeppel, 27 December). There has been no word on the Long Beach **White/ Black-backed Wagtail** since mid-December; later sightings are solicited. A delayed report of a "white" Wagtail in the San Simeon campground on 22 October comes from Virginia Escher. **Cedar Waxwings** were still scarce as of mid-January, with only a few small flocks reported. At least two **Warbling Vireos** were in the Arcadia Arboretum after late November (Barbara Cohen, Don Sterba); Barbara saw them both on 12 January. A **Philadelphia Vireo** in Huntington Beach Central Park (HBCP), found by Richard Webster on 26 November, stayed into January for a second winter record.

At least twenty species of warblers were wintering in our area. A **Virginia's Warbler** at the Newport Harbor High School Nature Center was there for its third winter. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** (of the race *albilora*) was found dead by Chuck Bush in the park along Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica on 7 January for a first winter record. A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was wintering in HBCP and the **Grace's** returned to Montecito for its fourth winter there. The **Worm-eating Warbler** in Long Beach Recreation Park (Brian Daniels) was seen to at least 12 January, but the one which wintered in Whaley Park, Long Beach, last year returned in November but could not be found in December. A **Painted Redstart** near Malibu Lake (Jean Brandt *et al.*, 15 December) stayed for the Malibu CBC on the 19th; another in Rocky Nook Park (Jon Dunn and Paul Lehman) stayed for the Santa Barbara CBC on 2 January. Of lesser interest were a few **Tennessees** (including one on Pt. Dume for the Malibu CBC and an amazing eight on the Santa Barbara CBC; several **Nashvilles**; several **Yellows** including four at Harbor Lake for the Palos Verdes CBC (Barry and Terry Clark, 26 December); a dozen or more **Black-throated Grays**; **Hermits** at Malibu Lake and HBCP and probably elsewhere, a **Palm Warbler** near Irvine; half a dozen **Black-and-whites** including two in HBCP and singles at Harbor Lake, Zuma, and Puddingstone Lake Park; some twenty **American Redstarts**, including ten on the SESS CBC; and several **Wilson's Warblers**.

Wintering orioles and tanagers were mostly along the coast, e.g. one **"Baltimore"** and two **"Bullock's"** **Orioles**, a **Summer Tanager**, and an **Hepatic Tanager** in Doheny Beach Park (Brad Schram *et al.*, 25 December). Again this winter there were three **Scott's Orioles** in the hills north of El Toro for the Orange Co. (inland) CBC on 19 December. A young male **Scott's Oriole** was feeding on prickly pear fruits at

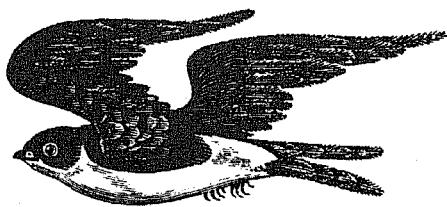
Anza, 4200' in the mountains south of Lake Hemet (Shirley Register, 8 January). A **Hooded Oriole** in Whitewater Canyon (David Koeppel, 27 December) was perhaps only the second winter record for the desert. A male **Hepatic Tanager** was near the Santa Barbara Mission for the CBC there on 2 January. There's no doubt that **Great-tailed Grackles** are moving in, with eight reported southeast of Chino (Henry Childs) and one as far north as Santa Barbara. No Black-headed Grosbeaks were reported, but **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were in the Arcadia Arboretum (a young male on 16 December by Virginia Escher), in Santa Barbara, and at Helen Dickinson's Palm Desert feeder in mid-December. A young male **Lark Bunting** was found on the Lancaster CBC by Jon Dunn on 18 December, and there is a delayed report of a female in the San Jacinto Valley on 4 November (Bill Wagner). A **Field Sparrow** in the remote Lanfair Valley of eastern San Bernardino County (Gene Cardiff, 11 December) could not be relocated the next day. This would be a second record for the state, the first being on the Farallon Islands in June 1969. A dubious Snow Bunting near the burned-out M*A*S*H set in Malibu Creek State Park proved to be a leucistic junco. No wonder it couldn't be found in the field guides! The only **Harris' Sparrows** reported were on the SESS and Lancaster CBCs, and the only **Swamp Sparrow** was at the edge of Laguna Blanca on Hope Ranch for the Santa Barbara CBC. Allen Keller of Northridge writes that he was able to film close-up movies of a **White-throated Sparrow** in his yard in mid-December. Other White-throateds were in HBCP and in Long Beach Recreation Park. On Plano Trabuco above El Toro, Orange Co., where fifty or more longspurs have been seen in past years, there were only two **Lapland Longspurs** on 3 December and these could not be relocated (Doug Willick).

The abundance of interesting birds found on the various Christmas Bird Counts certainly proves that good birds are there even in mid-winter, and that perseverance and hard work will dig them out. Through the years we have learned not to expect too much birding excitement in March. Despite the early arrival of swallows and hummingbirds, the peak of spring migration is still a month or two away. Primarily, March is a month for new arrivals, mostly our summer resident birds, with northern nesters delaying their migration until April or even May to await optimum conditions at their nesting areas.





CALENDAR



TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 8:00 p.m. — Evening meeting. **Research Concerns in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.** Join **Larry Norris**, Research Biologist, for an illustrated discussion of watershed management techniques concerning prescribed burning, Little Kern, Golden Trout and acid rain in the Sierra Nevada.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12 — Ballona Wetlands. Join **Bob and Roberta Shanman** (545-2867, after 6) for a morning of birding in this threatened wetland. Ducks, shorebirds, gulls, terns and other water related species will be in evidence. 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.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20 — Whittier Narrows. **David White** will lead a morning trip through this unique area alongside the San Gabriel River. Meet at the Nature Center at **8 a.m.**

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 — Interested in trying a new sport? Join **Lee Jones** for a birding tour of the **ANTELOPE VALLEY** — on bicycle. You will use new high-tech, low weight mountain bikes to discover some of the more remote areas of the Antelope Valley. A support vehicle will take you to the Antelope Valley, carry supplies and food and pick you up at the end of the day. The terrain will be level and you will be spending most of the day travelling well-marked, dirt roads and trails. Nevertheless, a little bike-riding experience prior to the trip is advised. For more information (cost, itinerary, what to bring) write or call Casey Patterson, P.O. Box 692, Topanga, CA 90290 (213) 455-2544.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12 8:00 p.m. — Evening Meeting. **Lloyd Kiff**, Curator of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, will present a brand new slide program on **"The History and Natural History of the California Condor".** Don't miss it.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17 — Whittier Narrows. **David White** will lead a morning trip through this unique area alongside the San Gabriel River. Meet at the Nature Center at **8 a.m.**

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

NOTE: All evening meetings are held in the large meeting room on the south side of Plummer Park.

Leaders Needed

We need people to lead field trips. Do you have a favorite birding locale? You don't have to be an "expert" to show other birders, especially beginners, a few nice looks at some of our common species. Your trip doesn't even have to be long . . . you can opt for a short morning excursion. Call our Field Trip Coordinator — **Ian Austin** to make arrangements (Day 879-9700, Evening 452-3318).

Audubon Bird Reports:

<i>Los Angeles</i>	(213) 874-1318
<i>Santa Barbara</i>	(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.

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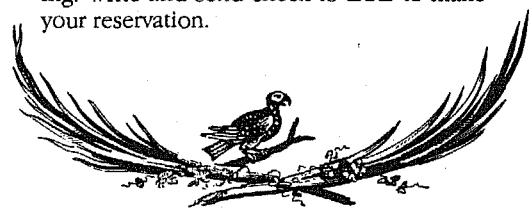
Subscriptions to THE WESTERN TANAGER separately are \$8 per year (Bulk Rate) or \$13 (First Class, mailed in an envelope). To subscribe, make checks payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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Tuesday, March 1, 1983 at the Starlight Room of the Sportsman's Lodge on Ventura Blvd. in Studio City. We are pleased to present a program by our own **Terry Clark**, who will show her recent bird/wildlife films, "Sanctuary" and "Double Concerto".

Cocktails at 6:00 p.m. Dinner at 7:30 p.m. Cost of \$15 per person includes valet parking. Write and send check to LAAS to make your reservation.



Shearwater Trips

Debra Love Shearwater runs a series of regular pelagic trips out of Monterey and Morro Bay. The following is a list of upcoming scheduled trips from Monterey Bay:

March 5	Monterey Seavalley/	\$35
May 14	Don Robertson	
May 21	Monterey Bay/	\$24
July 30	Jeri Langham, John Luther	
August 13	Cordel Banks and Beyond/	\$36
August 20	Ted Chandik,	
August 27	Guy McCaskie	
	Monterey Seavalley/	\$35
	Leader to be announced	
	Monterey Seavalley/	\$35
	Leader to be announced	
	Cordell Banks and Beyond/	\$36
	Leader to be announced	
	Monterey Bay/	\$25
	Leader to be announced	

Reservations are made by sending a check payable to Debra, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Debra Love Shearwater
362 Lee Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 425-8111

A detailed brochure is available which describes these 1983 pelagic trips. Write or call Debra for further information.

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