

WESTERN TANAGER

Los Angeles Audubon Society

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The Los Angeles Audubon Society: The First Thirty Years

by Glenn Cunningham

Part I

In May, 1907, a small circle of bird lovers began to take bird walks in the hills and canyons of Garvanza. Interest grew and numbers increased, and on March 2, 1910, the group formed the organization that was to become the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

Mrs. Willis Dixon was elected its first president. Soon after, however, she passed away, and the first vice-president, Mrs. Myers, finished out the first term. Mrs. E.H. Hunter was then elected to serve the second term of two years.

For the first four years the Society was affiliated with the State organization, but separated in a 1914 meeting at the Hotel Clark to elect officers and selected Mrs. Robert Fargo as president. The first records surviving in the Society files date from that time, and the first entry reports a June 4, 1914, Audubon Field Day held in Laughlin Park. Regular reports of board meetings, general public meetings and field trips that are still intact date from September, 1918, although newspaper clippings in the scrap book record events as early as December, 1916. By then the Society was affiliated with both the State Federation of Womens Clubs and the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Over the succeeding years many changes have taken place in the organization, its size, character and functions. Even the name has changed. The first Recording Secretary (of the surviving minutes) consistently referred to the Los Angeles Audubon Club, although newspaper reports correctly referred to the Audubon Society. In the minutes of board meetings "Society" was first used in 1919. By 1922 the spelling Audibon was introduced, persisting for a time, but since 1922 the spelling of Audubon has been monotonously consistent.

From the beginning the Society annually

Illustration by Karen G. Jollie



Henslow's Sparrow

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elected officers, often re-electing some for two or more terms. Following Mrs. Fargo, Mrs. F.T. Bicknell served as president for eight years and at the conclusion of her last term was named President Emeritus.

In addition to the usual slate, other officers, some elected, some appointed, included Official Speaker, Editor, Librarian, Custodian, Trail Leader, Auditor, District Federation Secretary, and Chairman of the following committees: Program, Press, Education, Birds and Wildlife, Wild Flowers, Trees, Butterflies, Extension, Publicity, Hospitality, Membership, and Western Tanager.

Meeting places both for Board meetings and public programs, frequently changed with the evolution of the Society.

Following its initial meeting at the Hotel Clark, the Board members met at various other downtown locations including the Grosse Building, the old L.A. Public Library, the 8th floor waiting room of the Broadway Department Store, and the L.A. District Federated Clubs Board Room in the new Jr. Orpheum Building, as well as in private homes of board members and on one occasion, the Edgewater Club in Santa Monica.

Public program meetings were held at Exposition Park, for the first few years in the Art Museum, but from 1919 on in the State Building.

From April, 1927, until 1934 meetings of the board were held in the "new and beautiful library" at Flower and Fifth Streets. When room there was no longer available they moved to the branch library in Lafayette Park.

Plummer House in Plummer Park first entered the picture in 1937. The park occupied part of the former Plummer Ranch, originally, in turn, a small portion of the vast Rancho La Brea granted by the Mexican Government in 1826. Plummer Ranch had extended from Santa Monica Boulevard north to Sunset and from La Brea Avenue west to Gardner Street. With its orchards and vegetable gardens, dairy herd and vineyards of wine grapes it was considered typical of the times. The Plummer family house, known in later years as Pioneer Fiesta Center, attracted many visitors who enjoyed the famed hospitality.

Although Senor Eugene Plummer, last of the family to occupy the home, lived until 1943, he had over the years lost most of the land. When, in 1937, the last three acres were about to be foreclosed, they were bought by the County of Los Angeles and became Plummer Park which was soon expanded with additional acreage and the planned construction of several new buildings. The old house and garden, however, remained intact, and the house, reported to be the oldest in Hollywood, was designated an Historic Landmark by the California State Park Commission.

Soon after acquiring the property, the County, through a letter from J.K. Reed,

County Park Superintendent, to Mrs. Salmon, President of Los Angeles Audubon, offered the Society a room in the old house to be used as its headquarters.

On June 10, 1937, the Board held a special meeting in the park to consider the offer. Mrs. Scott of the Park staff showed the Board members through the home and the grounds and outlined future building plans and the possibility of Society participation. After luncheon "under the old pepper tree in the arbor" they retired to the president's home to discuss the proposal and to inspect the Society's collection of books, maps, charts and mounted birds, butterflies and wild-flowers, assembled together for the first time. The offered room was considered ideal for Society headquarters and for housing these possessions and it was voted to write a letter of acceptance to Mr. Reed asking that he set forth in writing any obligations to be incurred. It was understood that there were none beyond furnishing and caring for the room.

Immediately a House Committee was formed and a date set for members to visit and inspect the room. On July 1, 1937 thirty members "found all in beautiful order — maps, books and collections displayed in bookcases and showcases on the wall." On that occasion Captain Plummer himself appeared giving a talk on the original estate and its plantings. Mrs. Florence Lewis Clark, representing Superintendent Reed spoke for the Recreation Department "expressing the desire to cooperate in every way stating they would gladly see that the Society was moved into larger quarters as they found themselves outgrowing the present one, which seemed soon inevitable."

The first regular meeting was held in the new home on September 16, 1937. In preparation for its use a new elective office of Curator was established, and contents of the room were insured for \$200 at a cost of \$3.86. With members taking turns as hostesses the room was opened to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. Contents of the room were enriched when Mrs. Fargo presented a framed picture of Captain Plummer and the Los Angeles County Museum donated over 50 specimens of mounted birds, largely those most familiar locally.

When the predicted need for expansion arose, a second room was made available and for a time the Society offices and Nature Museum occupied the two front rooms of the house. But with Park-sponsored ceramic classes meeting in the back or north half, the situation was far from ideal. In addition museum exhibits were in open-fronted bookcases thus exposed to damage, and for each entry to the house a key had to be obtained from the Park office. Because of this inconvenience and lack of security the officers of the Society chose to keep their records at home.

However, due to the efforts of Marion Wilson, Curator and Headquarters Chairman, a gradual improvement followed as she succeeded in acquiring keys and eventually even a telephone. Various members of the Society donated their labor building proper shelves and bookcases.

The Park building program continued and on March 10, 1938 it was reported that the first load of lumber had arrived for the new Club House. "We were definitely to be included in the plans and were to have a room in the \$60,000 home," the notes concluded. A year later the new building was completed, dedication occurring on December 5, 1938. The Society then had to make the choice of accepting space in it or remaining in the old Ranch House. But since the latter had become immeasurably more attractive with the addition of certain provisions, namely that the entire building and the surrounding garden would be turned over to the Society, and that a new roof and heating would be installed, it was accepted with little hesitation.

Immediate improvements followed although the general appearance of the house and the floorplan remained much as they had been in Plummer's day. The Park Department repaired and painted the two north rooms, removed unneeded plumbing, papered the walls and built a fence with a locked gate around the yard.

One improvement has still not materialized. In December 1938 the County Supervisors were asked for a cat-proof fence surrounding the garden, to which they agreed in September, 1939. We still wait.

Occupation of the entire house allowed separate rooms for the Sales Office and the Library, and contents were rearranged accordingly. Members continued to donate their services. The large exhibit cases were built by Howard Capwell and their backgrounds painted by another member and artist, Vernon Mangold. Mrs. Brennan agreed to donate and install an air tight heater if fire ordinances allowed, and Mrs. Shearer arranged to have the chimney inspected. Mrs. Scott of the Park staff donated furniture for the house.

Finally came full utilization of Plummer House, or Audubon House, as it came to be known. Officers and committee chairmen brought their files and records from home, and regular Board meetings, Western Tanager mailings and soon most Society activities were centered in this, the now official headquarters of the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

At the time Plummer House was accepted in preference to space in the new Park Building it was decided to make reservations in the latter only for special gatherings such as the monthly program meetings which had been held in the State Building in Exposition Park since 1919. The first was held in the

new Park Administration Building November 29, 1939.

Programs

Monthly public programs covered a variety of topics even as today, but with much heavier emphasis on trees, wildflowers, and butterflies. Recognized authorities on nature topics, non-authority travelers reporting on distant areas, and authors of new books in the field of nature entertained the audiences, which according to an entry in 1923 averaged sixty in number of attendants.

Among the programs in the early years were the following that suggest the variety and the quality of the presentations, many by authors whose names are still familiar.

One of the earliest programs was that of J.C. Alpas speaking on the Birds of New Zealand. In May 1920 Theodore Payne pleaded for conservation of wild flowers. In November 1920 Mr. Leon Dawson of Santa Barbara read from the manuscript of his new book, *Birds of California*. In April 1921 Dr. William A. Bryan, Director of the Museum of Science and Art, spoke on Birds of the Laysan Islands which he succeeded in having made a Bird Reservation. He was followed in May by Miss Kennedy from the library speaking on the need for a new library for Los Angeles.

Mrs. Myers in October, 1921, gave a preview of her new book, *Western Song Birds*.

The March, 1922, speaker was Mr. Edward C. Jaeger, author of the *Mountain Trees of Southern California*, whose topic was "Four Thousand Miles on a Donkey over Desert Trails." He closed with pleas to get away from the conventionalities of life and out into the desert and mountains to study the wonders of nature.

Francis Fultz, author of *The Elfin Forest*, spoke at the May, 1927, meeting on the work of reforestation in the schools.

The marvels of modern technology were apparent when Mr. Alfred Cookman, speaker for the February, 1928 meeting "illustrated his talk with 75 lantern slides . . . especially remarkable as to detail due to his use of a lens which brought the image close to the camera from 200-400 yards distance thus enabling him to photograph them as if only a few feet away."

Dr. Bull, Curator of the Junior Museum chose for his January 1930 subject, "Birds on Postage Stamps and Coins." In April 1935, Theodore Payne again appeared speaking on "The Preservation of Wild Flowers and the Native Landscape of California."

This article will be continued in the next issue of the TANAGER

President's Corner

by Bob Shanman

As we start this new year at Audubon, I'd like to welcome everyone back from a summer of good birding and vacations. Planning for the coming months began last June, and it looks like we have an exciting year ahead for you.

There are several new members on the Board this year, and as I write this, possibly still an opening for the TANAGER Editor position. We would like to welcome Bob Van Meter, our new 2nd Vice President, and Norma Ocon, the new House Chair, to the Board. Our thanks to Brian Kahn for serving as 2nd Vice President this past year. Marge Wohlgemuth has served as House Chair for many years, and from everyone, thanks for a job well done. But Marge is not gone! She was elected to the position of Executive Secretary in May, replacing Carol Friedman, whose term had expired. Our thanks to Carol, too, for an excellent job in one of the more demanding positions on the Board.

The remainder of the Board has returned for another year. Ken Dendig, 1st Vice President; Dexter Kelly, Treasurer; Marilyn Cooper, Recording Secretary; Andrea Kaufman, Registrar; and Jean Brandt, Executive Past President complete the Executive Committee. The standing committee chairs are: (?), WESTERN TANAGER Editor; Willabelle Maloney, Education; Kimball Garrett, Programs; Ian Austin, Field Trips; Sandy Wohlgemuth and David White, Conservation; Roberta

Shanman, Librarian; Peggy Pantel, Social; Raye Rhoades, Publicity; and Olga Clarke; Bookstore and Sales. Herb Clarke continues to serve as a special advisor to the Board.

As you go through this issue, you will see some sad news in "Birds of the Season". Shum Sufel passed away in early July. To Betty and the family, our sincerest condolences—Shum will be missed by all of us.

Coming up this year will be another full schedule of programs, field trips and other activities. Beginning with this issue, Ian Austin will be publishing the regular field trip schedule, and projecting ahead several months with tentative dates for upcoming trips. Plans are being made now for the Annual Banquet in February, with more information to be in the November TANAGER. We have an exciting speaker for our November meeting—Dr. Charles Walcott, Director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Our 2nd Annual Photo Contest will be held in January, and maybe Kimball can get Jon Dunn to give us another excellent lesson in bird identification. If he does, then surely we must be quizzed on what we have learned, probably by "Professor" Herb Clark with one of his excellent slide examinations!

There will be updates on current activities which LAAS is involved with, possibly news on new publications, the Christmas Bird Counts and more. Come join with us for an exciting year with LAAS. We'd like to have your input and participation.

From the Editor

by Fred Heath

I can't believe that here it is September and my name is still on top of this column. To date, no one has volunteered to take the wonderful job of editor and I've agreed to stay on for a few more issues until someone comes (or is pushed) forward.

I was hoping to end my tenure with the July-August issue, which I felt was the best we've done from an aesthetic viewpoint. It's always nice to leave on an "up" note. Since this is the golden Fiftieth Anniversary issue, it would have been fun for the new editor to do something special. The old editor is just too tired to be clever or original (not to mention I used a lot of my originality on the April Fool's issue).

I will, however, carry through with my threat to finally write an article which will appear in the next TANAGER. Even if we find a new editor before then, I will force

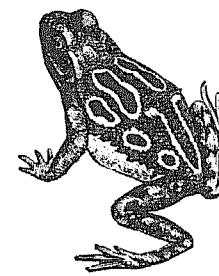
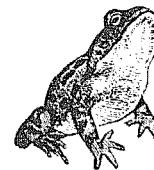
him or her to publish it (or I won't give Kimball's phone number). I know you've all spent another summer wondering what to do birding-wise. In my article I will propose a little suggestion in the form of the Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas Project. After reading it you won't be able to wait until next summer.

One last thing. I have in my possession two articles. One describing how to bird in China with special emphasis on the Emei Shan Nature Reserve in Sichuan Province. Another is a long (would have to be serialized) article on birding in Australia. As you may know, my feeling is to try and publish in the TANAGER articles which relate to birds and birding of a more local nature. However, the new editor may not feel that way. I would suggest that if articles like this would be of interest to you, you let the new editor know. If you don't have an interest that far afield, let the new editor know that too.

So long again, I hope for the last time.

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth



Years ago, before Sam Hayakawa earned his reputation as the most relaxed member of the U.S. Senate, he wrote an important and significant book called "Language in Thought and Action." Among other things, it was a witty analysis of the human tendency for deception and self-deception in the way we use language. It was well done and through a miracle of the educational bureaucracy it became a textbook in many high school and college English courses. This was even before George Orwell's "1984" burst upon the scene in which the official language — Newspeak — was a devastating parody of totalitarian double-talk. The War Department was the "Ministry of Peace;" concentration camps were under the "Ministry of Love," and so forth. (Do we hear an echo when the MX missile is called "The Peacemaker?"

Until January 1981 several Congresses and a handful of presidents had responded to an irresistible wave of public concern for a cleaner, more liveable America. They created an epoch-making series of environmental laws and agencies to control the poisonous by-products of the affluent society, to safeguard and enhance the wild scenic areas of the nation, to rescue endangered plants and animals. When the new administration settled into the seats of power in 1981, a startling change of direction was quickly evident. Enforcement of environmental laws — which had never been too stringent at best — was declared impossibly restrictive. Regulations became the great evil that had to be overcome. The private sector must be released from its bondage to bureaucracy in order to create its miracles of production. More. Because private enterprise is in all areas more efficient than government, no efforts should be spared to transfer control and ownership to big corporations.

What to do about all those people who applauded the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health and Endangered Species legislation? Sweet talk them and double-talk them. So let's pull on our wading boots and step gingerly into the polluted Sea of Ecospeak.

First, we certainly don't want to give the wrong impression so we call ourselves "Environmentalists." This distinguishes us from the "Extreme Environmentalist" who are bad guys led by "hit men" and are probably socialists to boot. To further undermine leg-

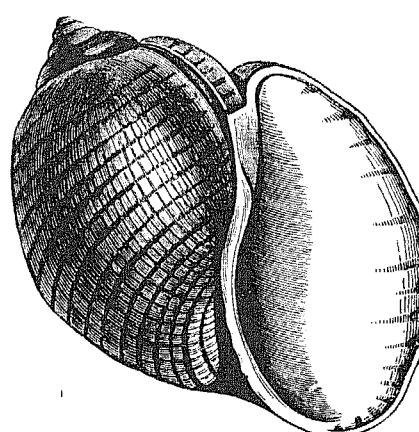
itimate conservation organizations you take a loaded buzz word and turn it inside out. "Special interests" is a familiar expression — a cliche for most of us — for a group that attempts to influence legislation and government for its own profit, not for the general welfare. James Watt, in a speech referring to heads of environmental organizations, said, "Those few leaders represent the narrow special interest groups who have lost their privileged access and their control of high government officials from the White House down . . ." A classic example of "Black-is-white" Newspeak. When the mining and power lobby proposes to "develop" land adjacent to, say, Bryce Canyon National Park and environmentalists oppose it, which is the special interest? Does the Wilderness Society or Audubon of the Sierra Club make a profit out of scenery undefiled by mine shafts and coal smoke? Which is the unspecial interest representing the public, the great majority?

The Sagebrush Rebellion in several western states is a brazen, breath-taking attempt to transfer 175 million acres of Federal land to the states — and ultimately to private owners. The Rebels talk of returning this land to the states when in fact it has always belonged to *all* the people. They are a profit-hungry coalition of ranchers, lumber companies, real estate speculators, utilities and mine operators. So how do you sell what has been called "The Great Terrain Robbery?" You call it a Sagebrush Rebellion. "Sagebrush" makes it a grass-roots movement, a broad populist union of all the White Hats in the hundreds of western movies we've seen. These are the strong, silent Marlboro men, John Wayne fighting the foreclosing bankers or the big absentee landowners. (Never mind

that the grass-roots rebels *are* the bankers and landowners. White is Black.) Rebellion in this country suggests the American Revolution (the only *good* revolution) and conjures up the Minute Men or the Boston Tea Party. The proud, self-reliant farmers fought George III like our contemporary Rebels fight the oppressive Government.

Clare Berryhill is the new head of the California Food and Agriculture Department and, as a recent LA Times story puts it, "makes no bones about his desire to lessen pesticide regulations." He says he would like to go back to pre-EPA days and have only his department control pesticide use. Says Berryhill, "I have to move slowly, agriculture can't afford to lose public confidence." His solution? "Streamline" the regulations. With the governor already promising farmers to reduce regulatory controls, it is not hard to guess what "streamlining" will mean. Bolero, a herbicide used by rice farmers along the Sacramento River, got into the drinking water. Over objections within his own department Berryhill did not ban its use because the safety tests thus far revealed "no known" health problems. All tests had not yet been made and some of the completed tests were invalidated because they were made by a testing laboratory now on trial for faking its reports. Berryhill, however, insists that "we have the scientific data and we would not allow the use of Bolero if we felt it was a health risk." On the face of it he *doesn't* have the scientific data for genuine public safety. So this is streamlining! When the Federal Clean Air Act came up for revision there was a hue and cry for "Fine-tuning" the regulations. Streamlining and Fine-tuning: a match made in heaven. Both splendid examples of Ecospeak. With connotations of up-to-date technology, of "cutting the fat", of increased efficiency, streamlining and fine-tuning appeal to our desire for elegantly simple solutions to complex problems, for smooth and effective operations. They are devised for smooth and effective deception.

Perhaps the most vivid and effective slogan of business-oriented conservatives is "Get government off our backs." Translation: Stop regulating us. Environmental laws without penalties are meaningless. Government has to say you can't dump your toxic junk where we get our drinking water — even if it's cheaper for you. And government has to have an inspector on the spot with the power to fine you or throw you in the slammer if you



disagree. No matter what it costs, no business has the right to dispense brown lung disease or mesothelioma along with its finished product. "Get government off our backs" is a marvelous phrase. It capitalizes on the universal instinctive resentment of Big Brother, the impersonal voice of authority. It forges a kinship between big business and every little guy who sees the deduction come out of his check every week, whose auto license renewal seems to come due sooner every year, who anxiously waits for the IRS to tap him on the shoulder. So if the man-in-the-street supports the industrial giant and the environmental regulations are gutted, the average citizen's health and safety are jeopardized. He's been had.

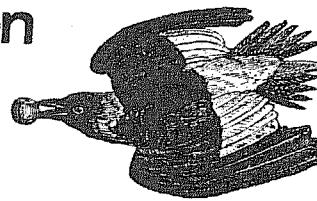
We could dig up many more examples of Ecospeak if we had the time and space. Since the environmental extremists have gotten their way and the nation is saddled with unbearable restrictions, isn't it time for a "Better Balance?" Time for "the pendulum to swing the other way?" As if the moderate efforts to protect our health must now be balanced impartially by measures that would *increase* the hazards to our health. Only fair, isn't it? This is the same thinking that decides that environmental laws must be "Cost-effective" regardless of values that don't show up on the cash register: health, safety, endangered wildlife, scenic beauty. Let's "Privatize" millions of acres of federal lands — sell it off forever — to balance the budget while we fling a trillion dollars at the Pentagon. And so on.

The message of the young Hayakawa when he was wide awake was: look behind the words and try to find the reality lurking there. Find the Paul Revere who is rousing the citizens for the Sagebrush Rebellion. Is he an underprivileged landless peon or a wealthy rancher? Is this an honest struggle for freedom or a naked land grab? When the environmental "Elitists" are accused of "locking up" Alaskan resources forever from development, ask for the facts. The great wilderness areas carved out of Alaska were planned carefully to *avoid* land with the richest potential for minerals, oil and timber. Only a small percentage of this vast natural paradise has been reserved for wilderness, and many of the wild areas are open to hunting and fishing. Is the average Alaskan screaming, "Lock up!" and "Sierra Club Go Home!" or are we hearing the stident cries of acquisitive "special interests?"

Most of us have learned that advertisements are not always factual, that we must take hyperbole with several grains of salt. After years of television commercials we can usually tell when some handsome figure in living color is trying to con us. Perhaps we might carry over some of this scepticism to politics — environmental or other-wise. And keep in mind the ancient advice: Let the buyer beware!

Birds of the Season

by Hal Baxter
and Kimball Garrett



he supposedly dull and static summer month of June and July are actually anything but that in southern California. This is illustrated by the near overlap in "spring" and "fall" migration that we experience. Vagrant-hunting birders comb the desert oases and coastal points through the first ten days of June, and shorebird enthusiasts start their activities during the last ten days of June and are in full swing by mid-July. In between, as well as before and after, an increasing number of birdwatchers are channeling their field energies into the documentation of breeding status and distribution of both our common and scarce species.

Predictably, some late spring vagrants did appear well into June. Most notable locally was a singing male **Cape May Warbler** discovered by Hank and Priscilla Brodkin in the trees along the east side of Malibu Creek, immediately above the Pacific Coast Highway, on 4 June. A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** was heard and glimpsed on the same day in San Francisquito Canyon, behind Valencia (Kimball Garrett). Jean Brandt found a male **Bay-breasted Warbler** at Linda Mia Ranch in the Antelope Valley on 8 June.

Two wetlands within an hour-and-a-half drive of Los Angeles are now nearly famous as productive shorebird spots: The Santa Clara River estuary, generally nicknamed "McGrath" after the nearby state beach, and the Piute Ponds on the edge of the Edwards Air Force Base north of Lancaster, known to many birders as the "Edwrds Air Force Base Marsh", or, simply "The Marsh". At McGrath, Andrew Starrett found an alternate-plumaged **Mongolian Plover** on 26 July — perhaps the same individual he discovered there in early August of last year. This year's bird remained at least through the end of July and was widely seen. At least one adult **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at McGrath in late July, along with small numbers of Red Knots and numerous other shorebirds. Just tsouth, near Pt. Mugu, Dorothy Dimsdale, Ruth Lohr and Barbara Elliott found a full-plumaged **Lesser Golden-Plover** on 20 July. The highlight at Piute Ponds was Los Angeles County's first **Rufous-necked Stint**, discovered by Keith Axelson and his Santa Monica Audubon group on 23 July and present to 29 July. It was an adult, retaining much alternate plumage, but slightly less

colorful than the bird which appeared at McGrath in July of 1981 and 1982. Along with the stint there was a **Solitary Sandpiper** on 24 July (Fred Heath et al), two **Red Knots** (scarce inland, but regular in the Lancaster area), a very early **Common Snipe** (Jon Dunn et al, 24 July), and a **Ruddy Turnstone** (also scarce inland — Kimball Garrett, 31 July). At the nearby Lancaster Sewage Ponds there was an adult **Baird's Sandpiper** on 24 July (juvenile Baird's will be expected in August and September). A tantalizing report of a possible **Little Ringed Plover** (complete black breast band, thin all-black bill, gray-green legs, white line behind black forehead band) came from Andrew Starrett at Piute on 30 July; the bird could not be found the next day. Farther afield, one or two **Ruffs** were noted in the San Diego area in late June and July (fide Richard Webster). The clock-work timing of shorebird migration fascinates us year after year. By late June adult **Western Sandpipers** were widespread on their southbound migration, and the first large wave of juveniles hit at both McGrath and Piute during the last week of July. An exceptionally early juvenile **Greater Yellowlegs** was at Piute on 29 July (Jon Dunn), contrasting with the nearby adults which still retained most of their heavily barred alternate plumage.

No clear trends of seabird "invasions" or displacements from the "El Nino/Southern Oscillation" phenomenon were in evidence by the end of July; we've received no reports of seabird abundance and species composition well offshore, but certainly nothing out of the ordinary was occurring along the coast. **Magnificent Frigatebird** numbers were, if anything, somewhat below normal. **Least Bitterns** nested again at the Whittier Narrows New Lakes (Natasha Antonovich), with four young observed on 7 July. An adult **Little Blue Heron** was at the north end of the Salton Sea on 23 July (Bob McKernan), and this species nested once again below San Diego. A **Wood Stork**, unusual along the coast, was at Sandyland Slough in Carpinteria in June. After an unprecedented winter invasion, two **King Eiders** were reported in mid-summer along the coast. A female was near the Queen Mary in Long Beach Harbor (. . . a Queen Eider? . . .) on 8 July (Dennis Minsky), an another female frequented

the Ventura Marina (often hiding among the boat slips) in late July. **Virginia Rails** bred at Chatsworth Park South in the northwestern San Fernando Valley; an adult with a chick was observed there on 8 June, and a dead chick was found nearby (Carolyn Smith).

An adult **Laughing Gull** at Venice Beach on 22 June (Charlie Collins, Jon Atwood and Dennis Minsky) was one of the few ever recorded in Los Angeles County. A handful of haggard and faded **Glaucous-winged Gulls** summered up and down the coast, as expected. These Glaucous-wings can appear exceedingly pale and may perhaps form the basis for occasional summer reports of Glaucous Gulls in the region. A group of equally haggard **Bonaparte's Gulls** spent the early summer on the Lancaster Sewage Ponds, with up to five **Franklin's Gulls** also present (e.g. two adults and three first-summer Franklin's on 19 June; Kimball Garrett and Fred Heath).

One or more **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were very much in evidence at Chantry Flat above Arcadia through the first half of June (Jim Halferty, Arthur Howe, Shum Suffel et al.). This species is resident in many of the canyons of the San Gabriel Mountains, but is rarely observed. Another pygmy-owl was heard calling near the start of the Blue Ridge Road, west of Big Pines, on 3 July (Kimball Garrett and Fred Heath). For at least the seventh consecutive summer a calling **Whip-poor-will** was near Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mountains (Kimball Garrett, 19 June); Whip-poor-wills were also noted at the James Reserve in the San Jacinto Mountains and near Camp Angeles in the San Bernardino Mountains. Los Angeles must be one of the better areas for swifts in the United States. After the "chimney-invading" migrant **Vaux's Swifts** had departed by late May, true **Chimney Swifts** were noted in several localities, e.g. Arcadia, West Hollywood, and Exposition Park (with up to nine at the last locality from 23 June to at least 1 August). This species appears to be gaining a strong foothold in southern California, **Black Swifts** nested again at the falls in Santa Anita Canyon. **White-throated Swifts** were, of course, widespread. A question for freeway commuters: how many of our major freeway interchanges and cloverleafs have nesting White-throated Swifts? (. . . quite a large percentage is our hunch).

Calliope Hummingbirds were in evidence, as usual, along Arastre Creek in the San Bernardino Mountains, at Iris Meadow on Mt. Pinos, and, in Los Angeles County, in the willows along the creek that parallels the Angeles Crest Highway from Big Pines to Wrightwood. They were also noted along the Prairie Fork of the San Gabriel River, at the end of the Blue Ridge Road. **Belted Kingfishers** summered at Malibu Lagoon — are they nesting in banks along the creek there? An obliging pair of **Williamson's Sap-**

suckers excavated a nest cavity only half a meter up in a pine along Mill Creek Road behind Big Bear Lake (L.A.S. field trip, 10 July). A female Williamson's was at Camp Lupine on the Prairie Fork of the San Gabriel River on 17 July (Kimball Garrett, Tom Frillman, and Fred Heath).

Happily, **Purple Martins** appear to have nested in Los Angeles County for the first time in several years. Several birds were present in mid-July in north Arcadia (Mike San Miguel), and on 24 July Fred Heath found twenty birds there, including young of the year. This species has suffered a severe decline in southern California as a nester, as have its smaller relatives the Tree and Bank Swallows. On 26 June a **Bendire's Thrasher** was found in the Kelso Creek drainage of Kern Co. (Larry Norris et al); nesting is a possibility in this area. The **Gray Vireos** at Bob's Gap near Pearblossom appear not to have nested successfully; whether over eager tape-playing birders were to blame is not certain, but common sense and caution are urged when scarce and local breeding species are being sought.

While **Nashville Warblers** have been noted in small numbers for years in our local mountains, it remained for nesting to be documented until this summer, when adults were observed feeding young near the beginning of the Blue Ridge Road west of Big Pines in the San Gabriel Mountains (Kimball Garrett, Fred Heath and Tom Frillman, 17 July). This species should be sought elsewhere among stands of Black Oaks within the mixed coniferous forest. **MacGillivray's Warblers** were noted and presumably nesting along nearly every stretch of willow-lined creek in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains; it is difficult to believe that this species apparently did not nest in these mountains until the 1970s. At least three singing **Yellow-breasted Chats** were in the riparian growth just above Malibu Lagoon throughout June and early July (Hank Brodkin et al.). This sensitive riparian species has declined greatly in southern California with loss of habitat. **Hapatic Tanagers** were again present along Arastre Creek in the San Bernardino Mountains, but were difficult to locate (Bob McKernan: pair on 25 June). The diversity of sparrows in the Baldwin Lake area of the San Bernardino Moun-

tains continues to be impressive on the annual LAAS summer field trip there. On a transect from the lake shore grasses up through the Great Basin sagebrush to the rocky pinyon-juniper slopes one encounters (roughly in order) **Savannah, Vesper, Brewer's, Sage, Lark, Chipping and Black-chinned Sparrows**.

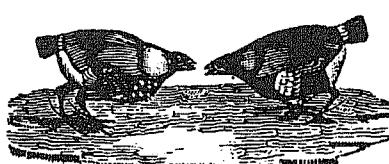
The brushy tracts and wetter meadows add **Fox, Song and Lincoln's Sparrows**, the more wooded areas yield **Dark-eyed Juncos**, and the drier more open flats below Baldwin Lake have **Black-throated Sparrows**. Not a bad assortment, which is, in fact, topped off (literally) to a lucky thirteen by the **Oriantha White-crowned Sparrows** which breed atop nearby Mt. San Gorgonio.

Bird behavior was a media event this summer in the form of aggressive nest-defending **Brewer's Blackbirds** along a stretch of Wilshire Blvd. in Santa Monica. Any birder will recognize this as a typical, widespread behavior pattern which is shown by many of our local species (perhaps most notably Northern Mockingbirds). Why the media picked up on this one instance of "crazed . . . Hitchcock-like" behavior (their words, not our) is this one spot is odd, although the restaurant adjacent to the nest made out with a heap of free publicity!

In our "further afield" section we should note that Arizona once again produced a **Berylline Hummingbird** (Ramsey Canyon), and that Texas hosted another **Green Violet-ear**. Perhaps most notable was a **Western Reef Heron** present since spring on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts; this African species is previously unrecorded in North America, and the possibility of escape of ship-assisted passage should certainly be considered.

Things are hopping (and flying, running, and swimming) in September like almost no other month. Adult shorebirds have largely reached their wintering grounds, but juveniles continue to stream through, with the possibility of rarities such as Curlew Sandpiper, or, who knows, a Temminck's Stint (one was found last September 1 in British Columbia). Migrant passerines will be everywhere, including a healthy dose of vagrants. And late in the month the first wintering "garden birds" — White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warblers and the like — will be in evidence.

Note: Our apologies go to those who records or names were omitted in this "transition" column, and our thanks go to Betty Suffel who helped out, during her very difficult time of loss, by organizing and forwarding Shum's notes. It will be sad and different for all of us to bird this fall knowing we can't "call Shum" about our latest finds and share them with him. But our field experiences will certainly continue to be enriched by everything he has taught us.



Send any interesting bird observations to:

Hal Baxter
1821 Highland Oaks Drive
Arcadia, CA 91006



CALENDAR

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 — 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 **8:00 a.m.** at the Pacific Ave. bridge. Take 90 West (Marina Fwy.) to its end at Culver Blvd. Continue west on Culver, turn north onto Pacific Ave. and continue to bridge.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 — 8:00 p.m. **Annual Evening Meeting.** Speaker will be the one and only Bob Shanman, President of LAAS. Bob will illustrate his talk **Birding and Being in Britain**, with some beautiful slides of Puffins, Gannets, other seabirds and land birds.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 — Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett will lead a trip to the **Antelope Valley**. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Jane Reynolds Park, north side of Ave. J. in Lancaster. Approximately 1 mi. E. of Hwy. 14. Will be looking for land migrants. Wading shoes might be handy!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1983 — A tentative field trip to the **Mr. Pinos areas**. Explore new mountain riparian birding area with **Shirley Rubin** (208-3430). Take Hwys. 5 North towards Bakersfield. Go through Gorman. Take Frazier Park Hwy. exit. Turn left at off ramp. Keep going until you reach the Y intersection of Cuddy Valley Road (known as the Mt. Pinos Rd.) and Mil Petrero Rd. Meet there at **7:15 a.m.** Park in the clearing. Good idea to bring water, warm jacket, lunch and hiking boots. **Please confirm this trip on the tape.**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 — Whittier Narrows. **David White** will lead a morning trip through this unique area alongside the San Gabriel River. Met at the Nature Center at **8 a.m.**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 — Ballona Wetlands. See September 10 trip for details.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 — Whittier Narrows. See September 24 trip for details.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 — 8:00 p.m. Evening meeting — Charles Walcott, Director of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology will have an illustrated talk on **Mysteries of Bird Navigation**.



Address Change — Many members who move, complain about missing an issue or two of the **TANAGER**. To avoid this, subscribers should notify Los Angeles Audubon Society directly. It takes several weeks for National Audubon to notify LAAS if you only pass your change of address to them.

FUTURE EVENTS

Look forward to the traditional Malibu-McGrath trip in October. Details to be announced in the October Tanager.

Annual LAAS Banquet in February. Do you have suggestions for this event? Send them to our Social Chairperson, Peggy Pantel, P.O. Box 2528, Gardena, CA 90247.



Audubon Bird Reports:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
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PRESIDENT Bob Shanman

1st VICE PRESIDENT Ellsworth Kendig

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WFO Convention

You are cordially invited to attend the **8th Annual Western Field Ornithologists Convention**.

September 29 through October 3, 1983
on the Monterey Bay at
Santa Cruz, California

Contact: Debra Love Shearwater, P.O. Box 7440, Santa Cruz, CA 95061
telephone (408) 425-8111

A dynamite weekend of field trips and lectures are planned! Numerous pelagic trips on Monterey Bay will observe the spectacular seabird migration. Owlng and land trips are planned to a variety of habitats. Lectures and a dinner banquet are planned for Saturday, October 1. This is an event that you will not want to miss!

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:

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|------|
| Sept. 10-12 | Tanner & Cortez Banks | \$67 |
| | Baldridge/Chandik/McCaskie/Webster | |
| Sept. 18 | Monterey Bay | \$25 |
| Sept. 24 | Leader to be announced | |
| | Monterey Bay | |
| Oct. 1 | Leader to be announced | |
| Oct. 2 | Monterey Bay | \$25 |
| Oct. 8 | Leader to be announced | |
| Oct. 9 | Monterey Bay | \$25 |
| Oct. 15 | Leader to be announced | |
| | Storm-Petrel Study Tour | \$32 |
| | 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

Los Angeles Audubon Society
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
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G. Shumway Suffel 1909-1983

It is with deep regret that we must announce that Shum, as he was known to most of us, died of a heart attack July 6, 1983.

Shum, of course, is known to every TANAGER reader as the writer of the *Birds of the Season* column. He started doing the column in October 1967 when it was called *Southern California Birds*. It was bylined "By Shumway Suffel—Guest Columnist for David Gaines". Shum must have enjoyed doing the column for in the very next issue of the TANAGER the byline read "by G. Shumway Suffel". For the next sixteen years Shum continued to turn out this column which has become the most popular feature in the TANAGER.

His patience with and encouragement of novice birders is one of the primary reasons that Southern California has so many enthusiastic birders. Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett, both regular contributors to the TANAGER, credit Shum with a strong positive influence. That influence will be sorely missed, although it will continue to reside in the hearts of all that knew him.

Aside from being a guiding light in the world of birding, Shum was a good husband to his wife Betty, and a wonderful father to his children Lucia and Bob. His family asks that any donations to be made in his name be made to Los Angeles Audubon society.

Thanks, Shum, and goodbye.