



# WESTERN TANAGER

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Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

## The Identification of the North American Tanagers of the Genus *Piranga*

by Kimball L. Garrett and  
Jon Dunn



he tanagers, which constitute the colorful and diverse New World subfamily Thraupinae of the major family Emberizidae, attain their greatest species richness in the tropics. Only four species occur regularly north of Mexico, and all of these are migratory species of the genus *Piranga*. Adult males of our species tend to be strikingly distinctive and easy to identify, but the plumage sequences vary among the species and female and subadult male plumages can be quite confusing. In this article we will attempt to summarize the typical plumage sequences of each species, discuss identification problems involving female and sub-adult male plumages, and comment briefly on subspecies differences in the one species which shows important geographic variation in our area.

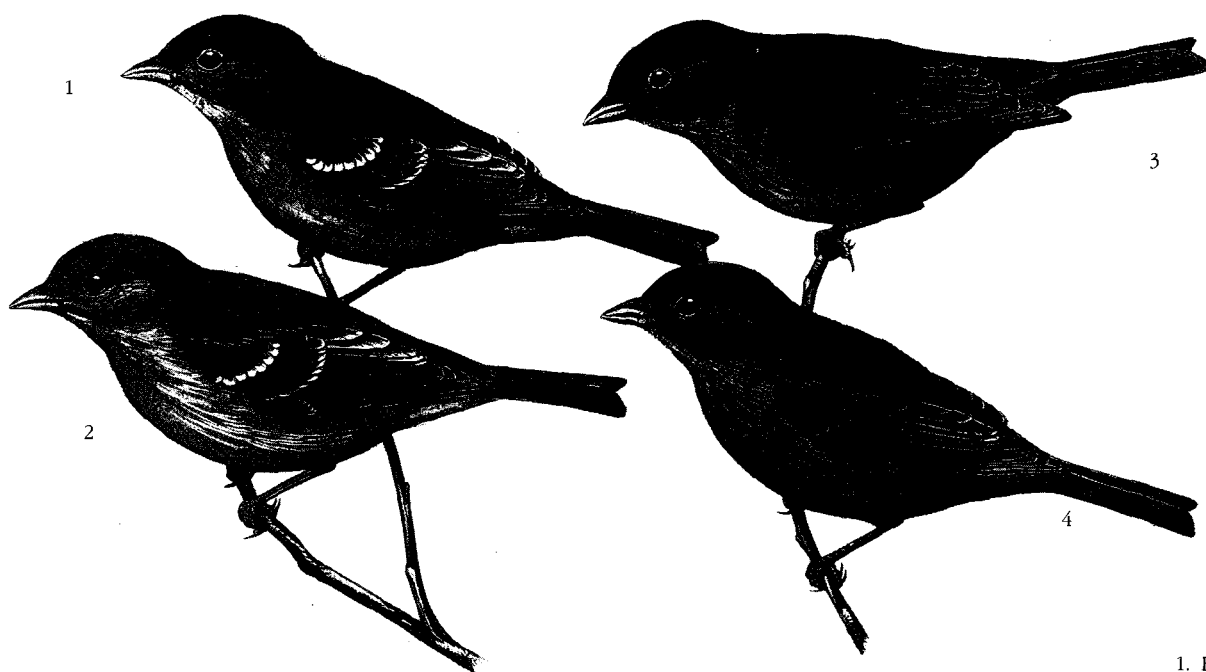
The common and widespread *Piranga* in southern California is the Western Tanager, *P. ludoviciana*. It is a common transient throughout and a common summer resident in coniferous and mixed forests (mainly in the mountains of southern California, but extending to sea level in the central and northern portions of the state). Although

most individuals winter in Middle America, an increasing number of birds are noted in winter in southern California, most often around flowering eucalyptus trees on the coastal slope. Grinnell and Miller (1944) considered the species rare in winter, citing only three records. We now know that it occurs regularly in small numbers in the coastal counties; in fact, up to 60-70 have been reported each of the past several winters along the coast, with a single-locality maximum of eleven noted during winter 1982-1983 in Santa Monica, Los Angeles Co. However, the Western Tanager is a very rare bird in winter in the interior. There are a handful of winter records for Arizona, and two were noted in Brawley, Imperial Co., on 20 January 1983.

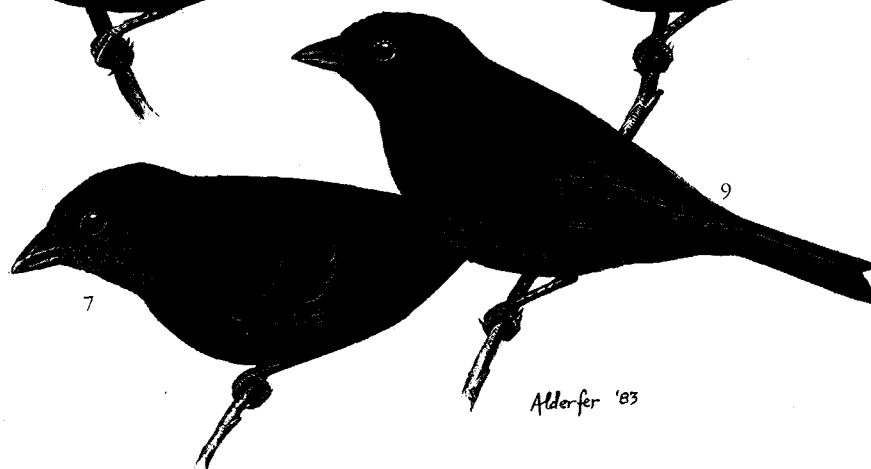
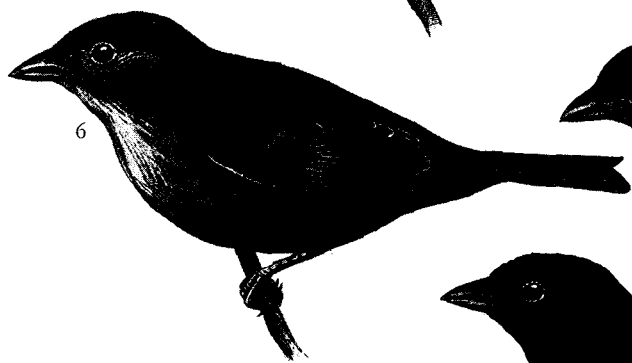
The Summer Tanager, *P. rubra*, is the only other tanager to occur in California in any numbers, although it is local. Breeding populations of the subspecies *cooperi* occur along the length of the Colorado River but are declining and now rare on the California side.

Small isolated breeding populations also occur farther west and north, e.g. Morongo Valley, Tecopa, the South Fork of the Kern River, and, perhaps, the Valyermo area of Los Angeles Co. Transients of vagrants show up regularly north and west of the breeding range in spring, fall, and winter. While it would seem likely that the majority of these records would pertain to *cooperi*, which breeds nearby, it appears in fact that most pertain to the nominate race *rubra* which breeds in the eastern part of North America. However, specimen evidence is badly needed to further clarify the status of the two races — what evidence there is favors *rubra* as the race involved in most extralimital sightings, though there are many spring and early summer records from marginal breeding habitat which may pertain to *cooperi*.

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1. Female Western (Gray Phase)

2. Female Western (Normal)

3. Male Scarlet (First Fall)

4. Female Scarlet

5. Female Hepatic

6. Female Summer (Normal-rubra)

7. Female Summer (cooperi)

8. Female Summer (Red Phase-rubra)

9. Male Summer (First Year-rubra)

Alderfer '83

The Hepatic Tanager, *P. flava*, breeds very locally in the arid conifer woodlands of our Great Basin Ranges (Clark Mountain, Kingston Mountains, New York Mountains), and there is a small population in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains along Arrastre Creek. These breeding populations are probably relatively recent — the species was not recorded by workers in these ranges in the first half of this century (see Johnson and Garrett *Western Birds* 5:45-56, 1974). There are handful of records of vagrants in the desert lowlands in late spring, fall and winter; the species has also been recorded casually on the southern California coast, with nearly all records being for late fall and winter.

The Scarlet Tanager, *P. olivacea*, is the rarest member of its genus in California. This eastern counterpart of the Western Tanager has been recorded casually in late May and June, and again in fall (primarily in October and November); it is the only tanager which has never been found wintering in California (the species normally winters in South America).

The identification of adult male tanagers is quite straightforward and is well covered in the standard field guides. In all of our species males in their first year and all females are quite distinct from adult males. Females and immature males may be recognized as tanagers (cf. female *Icterus orioles*) by their relatively stout bills and their chunkier, shorter-tailed shape. Immature and adult females of our tanagers are essentially identical. It should be noted that the juveniles of our species resemble dull adult females but are sharply streaked, especially through the underparts. Juvenal plumage is not seen away from the breeding grounds and will not be discussed further.

Our tanagers undergo a complete fall (pre-basic) molt. In the Scarlet Tanager, our only species in which breeding and winter adult males are strikingly different in appearance, this pre-basic molt is completed on the breeding grounds. It appears that many or most of our other tanagers do not complete the pre-basic molt until they have reached their winter grounds. The pre-alternate molt takes place in late winter on the wintering grounds, and involves most of the body (contour) feathers. It is during this molt that adult male Scarlet Tanagers change from green-bodied to red-bodied, and that adult male Western Tanagers get a bright red face.

The major identification problems emphasized in the species discussions below involve the females of all four species. Especially difficult can be the differentiation of female Hepatic and Summer Tanagers, although the Western/Scarlet pair can also be tricky and female Scarlet are close in appearance to the Hepatic/Summer pair.

### Western Tanager

Adult males in spring and summer are unmistakable, although the intensity and extent of the red on the head is variable. Males in their first spring (first-alternate plumage) are slightly duller yellow overall, have reduced red on the head, and have the flight feathers tinged with brown. Winter adult males, in fresh basic plumage, usually lack red on the head, have green edgings on the back feathers and have noticeable white tips to the secondaries and the rectrices. Curiously, adult males are almost never noted in winter in California.

In general, females are yellow-green overall, with a grayish saddle across the back. This saddle, which does not contrast strongly with the wings, is a useful feature in identifying females with worn wingbars (remember that the wing bars can be quite worn by late summer; also note below that female Scarlets can show a trace of wingbars when in fresh fall plumage). The anterior wingbar of females (formed by the median wing coverts) varies from white to pale yellowish. In males the anterior wingbar is quite bold and usually bright yellow.

The general body color of female Western Tanagers is quite variable. Many are very gray overall, with only the barest hints of yellow and green (see figure). Some birds (such as the female pictured in Louis Agassiz Fuertes' well-known painting — see, for example, Oberholser's *The Bird Life of Texas*, V. 2) are greenish, with a noticeable tinge of orange red around the face.

### Scarlet Tanager

The brilliant alternate plumaged male is simple to identify, and a joy to see. Males in their first spring tend to be a paler, more orangy red; their flight feathers are tinged brown. Adult males undergo their pre-basic molt before migrating south in fall — at this time green replaces the red, although some red may be retained on the undertail coverts and occasionally elsewhere on the plumage. Like breeding birds, winter adult males show completely black wings and tails. Immature males in fall resemble females, but are easily distinguished by their black wing coverts (contrasting with the olive flight feathers). Some fresh-plumaged birds may show narrow white tips to the wing coverts, forming very narrow wingbars. Wingbars may occasionally be extensive (see Davis, T.H. *American Birds* 26:713, 1972). Females are greenish throughout, but yellower below. The yellow of the underparts may be quite dull, probably especially on first fall birds. In all females, the brownish-olive wings contrast with the green back; there is no grayish saddle, concolor with the wing coverts, such as that shown in the Western Tanager.

In all plumages Scarlet Tanagers show pure white wing linings which, though hard to observe in the field, are diagnostic. Our

other tanagers show wing linings which are yellowish or (in adult males of Hepatic and Summer) reddish.

### Summer Tanager

Adult male Summer Tanagers are bright red throughout the year. Immature males in their first fall resemble females, but during their first pre-alternate molt (on their winter grounds) they develop patches of bright red varying greatly in extent among individuals. The most extensively red males in their first spring always at least retain green on the wing edgings. In their second fall males undergo a complete molt and then resemble adult males (though slightly duller).

Female Summer Tanagers vary greatly in color, from greenish (rather like the color of a female Scarlet, but more tinged with mustard), to golden-yellow (rarely), to mustard-yellow (tinged brownish). The occasional female is quite grayish, tinged with mustard-yellow. A small percentage of females are extensively washed with reddish or orange, especially on the undertail coverts (but occasionally through much of the plumage, including the flight feathers). This reddish wash is quite different from the patches of bright red which occur in males in their first spring and summer.

Our breeding race of the Summer Tanager, *cooperi*, is distinguished from the eastern nominate race, *rubra*, by its relatively larger bill, its paler, more pinkish-red plumage (adult males), or, in females, its paler plumage overall and, especially, its paler, grayer back. We do not encourage racial identification of Summer Tanagers in the field, although individuals which are extreme in bill size and plumage color saturation may be recognizable. Some judicious collecting still seems necessary to clarify the status and distribution of the races *rubra* and *cooperi* in California.

Bill color has been emphasized as a field mark in the Summer Tanager. While breeding birds, especially males show a rather pale bill, tinged yellowish and flesh, bill color may darken appreciably in the non-breeding season. Both Western and Scarlet Tanagers may show extensive fleshy-yellow coloration at the base of the bill. Thus, identification should not be based on bill color alone.

Greenish female Summer Tanagers may be quite similar to female Scarlet Tanagers, but always show a larger bill (both longer and more swollen at the base) and also show little or no contrast between the back and the wings.

### Hepatic Tanager

Hepatic Tanagers have a wide breeding range from the southwestern United States to Argentina. Our northwesterly race, *hepatic*, is at the dull extreme for the species. In all plumages, the crown, throat and breast are the brightest part of the bird. In

adult males these areas are red (duller than the red of a Summer Tanager but still a rather bright orange-red in most individuals). The red contrasts with the dusky gray cheeks and the extensively gray flanks. In females the bright area are yellow, again contrasting with the cheek and flanks. The throat and upper breast are often tinged orange. Young males in their first fall and winter resemble adult females. Year-old males in spring and summer also resemble females (in contrast to our other tanagers), but may show small amounts of reddish on the forehead, breast, and undertail coverts. Males just over a year of age, in their second fall, molt in a reddish plumage like adult males. Thus, only in molting males in late summer and early fall is one likely to see a "patchy" red and greenish bird; remember that immature male Summer Tanagers are "patchy" in their first spring.

All Hepatic Tanagers show dark bills, ranging from dusky-gray to blackish. While this is a good field mark, beware winter Summer Tanagers which may show rather dark bills. The shape of the Hepatic Tanager bill is dis-

tinctive; quite unlike the Summer Tanager, there is a distinct notch or "tooth" along the cutting edge of the upper mandible, about half way out.

### Vocalization

Our tanagers generally sing only on the breeding grounds. Western and Scarlet Tanagers have a song consisting of robin-like phrases with a burry quality. The song of the Summer Tanager is similar in form, but contains many clear, emphatic notes (e.g. "whee-chu"). The Hepatic has a song which is the least burry and the most continuous — it suggests a subdued Black-headed Grosbeak.

The common call note of the Western Tanager is a sharp, rising "pi-dik" or "pr-didik". This note is given frequently in migration. Scarlet Tanagers also have a hard "pit" or "chip" note; they often give a distinctive double-noted "chip-burr". Summer Tanagers give a loud and distinctive series of sharp notes, "chicky-tuck", "pit-i-tuk", or "chicky-tucky-tuck" (Dunn likens the sound to that of a reset mechanism on a pinball

machine). The Hepatic Tanager gives a single "chuck" or "chup" note, suggestive of the common call note of the Hermit Thrush, but sharper. All of our tanagers give a high, wheezy, "wheet?" note, often in flight.

It is hoped that the preceding information will help observers in documenting records of our rarer tanagers (Scarlet and Hepatic), and in further clarifying the status of the races of Summer Tanager. We have relied greatly on the research collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (from which Jon Alderfer painted the figure), the American Museum of Natural History, and the United States National Museum. We have also benefitted from past discussions with Van Remsen, Joe Morlan, and others.

*Note: The original illustrations by Jonathan Alderfer were rendered in color and lose something in black and white. However, it is the intention of the LAAS to make available in the future a complete set of this identification series with some of Mr. Alderfer's illustrations in full color.*

## Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas

by Fred Heath

**B**y the time you start to read this article, you've probably read the rest of this issue of the *TANAGERTWICE*. Who wants to read about boring breeding birds anyway? But if you could just bear with me through a couple of pages, I promise to provide a suggestion as to what to do with your otherwise slow (bird-wise) summers. If you elect to take me up on this suggestion, I guarantee you will add an exciting and educational dimension to your birding hobby.

### Introduction

Many of us enjoy the sport of finding or just seeing that rare bird and checking it off on our life, state, county or even backyard list. Some will have the most unusual lists like "birds seen while wearing my Penguin shirt" or "penguins seen while wearing no shirt" or "birds noted from my hot-tub". Most of this listing is just plain fun, some has added scientific value such as the Christmas Counts. They are great games, but provide excellent information on winter ranges, population dynamics, effect of weather, etc., because they are consistently carried out over a number of years.

What could be more valuable than participating in a study (a word that sounds like all work and no fun) of the breeding ranges and habits of our local birds. I know, you're asking yourself, "Who cares? I won't find

many (maybe any) life, state, county birds while chasing the breeding birds of L.A. County." Before I lose you, let me explain briefly what a breeding bird atlas is.

An atlas, of course is a set of maps. A breeding bird atlas is a set of maps, usually one per species which shows where the bird probably, possibly or definitely breeds. The map for each species is usually broken down into rectangular grids and the presence (or absence) of breeding activity (with notation of the degree of confidence) is noted in



*Phainopepla*



*Blue Grosbeak*

each grid block. As I will explain later the proposed grid for L.A. County contains 436 such blocks. Individuals or teams of birders cover each block and try to simply determine whether a species breeds in that block to the highest degree of confidence possible. An estimate of the species population is not necessary, just presence as a breeder in each grid block. To make it even easier, this is done over a five year period. So if a species which is thought to be breeding is missed in one year, there are four more years to find breeding evidence.

## Purposes and Uses

Even if you are interested you might ask, "What is the purpose of all this work?" Since I am a great believer in not re-inventing the wheel, I've borrowed a section of an article written by Sarah B. Laughlin, Douglas P. Kibbe and Paul F.J. Eagles entitled *Atlasing the Distribution of the Breeding Birds of North America* which appeared in the January 1982 issue of *American Birds*. This section, reproduced below was appropriately called *Purposes and Uses of a Breeding Bird Atlas*.

The BASIC OBJECTIVE of an Atlas project is to document the current status and distribution of all breeding species of birds within a major geographical area, and to publish these data in the form of printed maps, one per species (with some exceptions) for a permanent record. An atlas can be duplicated at any time in the future, and thus has great potential baseline value. The uniformity of the data collection process allows its results to be compared with atlases compiled elsewhere, or to atlases compiled in the same area in future years.

The primary objective of an atlas project is:

1. to accurately determine and map the spatial, or geographic and temporal distribution of every bird species breeding within a defined area during a specific time period (usually five years).

There are, however, a number of secondary objectives which are fulfilled in the course of, and as a result of, fulfillment of the primary objective. These may include:

2. to develop an ecological data base — i.e. where and how much of each habitat type lies within the atlas area.
3. to determine which species breeding therein are endangered or threatened, and to provide distributional data on these species.
4. to provide documentation of the need to protect areas of unique and fragile habitat vital to the maintenance or increase of certain species' populations.
5. to provide a body of environmental data that can be used by legislators, land use planners, developers, conservationists and environmentalists.
6. to provide a distributional baseline data source against which future changes can be measured.
7. to develop survey techniques that can be duplicated in the future.
8. to help educate the public and everyone concerned, about birds.

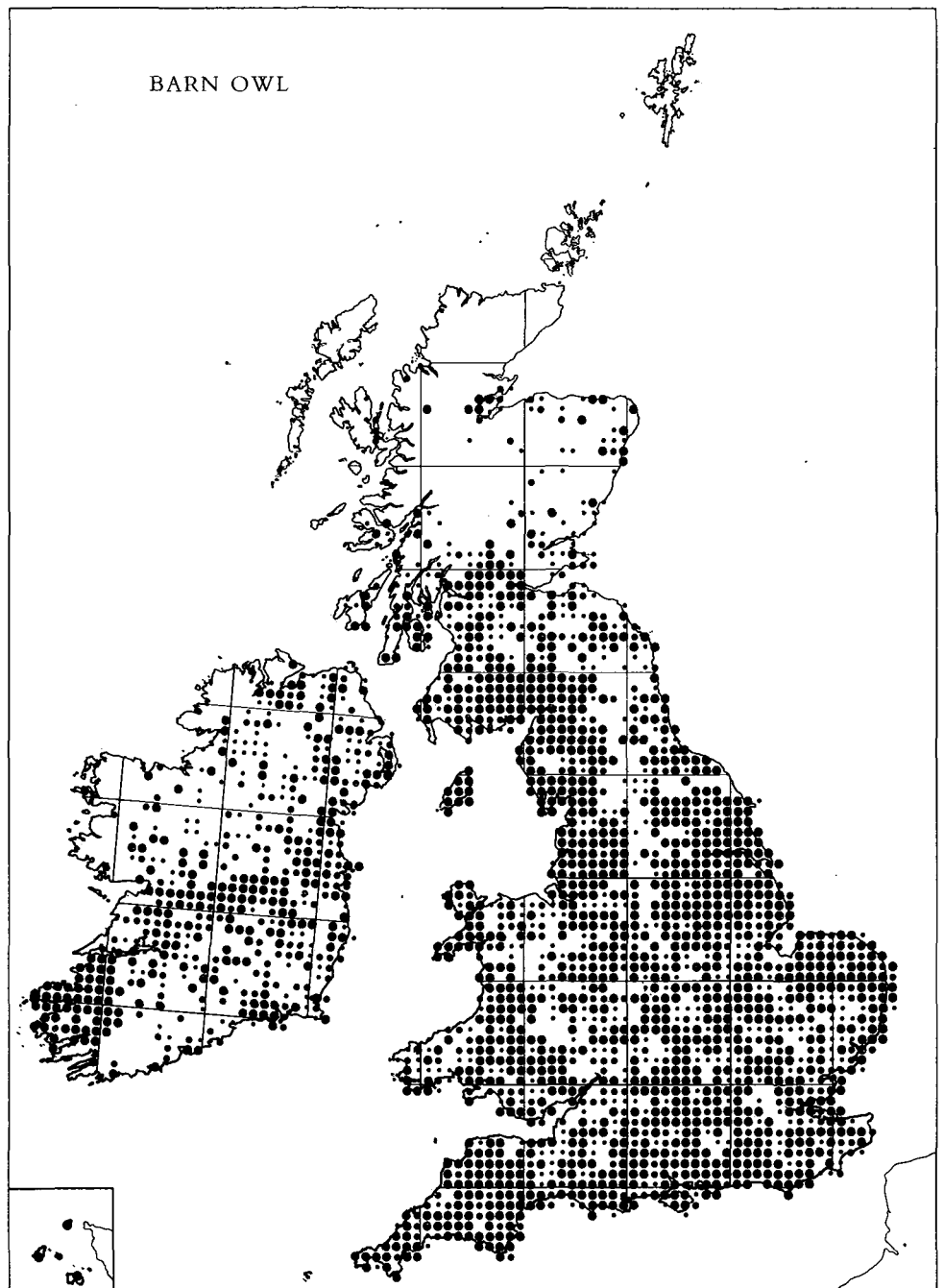
## History

In 1954, the British Botanical Society began a project to map the plant species of the British Isles. They developed a grid system with square blocks 10 kilometers (approximately 6.2 miles) on a side which neatly overlays a standard set of topographical maps produced by the Ordnance Survey in Britain. In 1962 the *Atlas of British Flora* was produced using this system.

Between 1968 and 1972 (5 years), British ornithologists using the same 10k grid covered the 3,862 squares which made up the British Isles including all of Ireland. A book was published by T. & A.D. Poyser under the auspices of the British Trust for Ornithology and the Irish Wildbird Conservancy titled *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland* in 1976 showing all the information gained during the five year project. The degree of confidence in breeding was shown by different sized dots in each grid square. The smallest meant possible breeding, the next probable, and the largest dots for con-

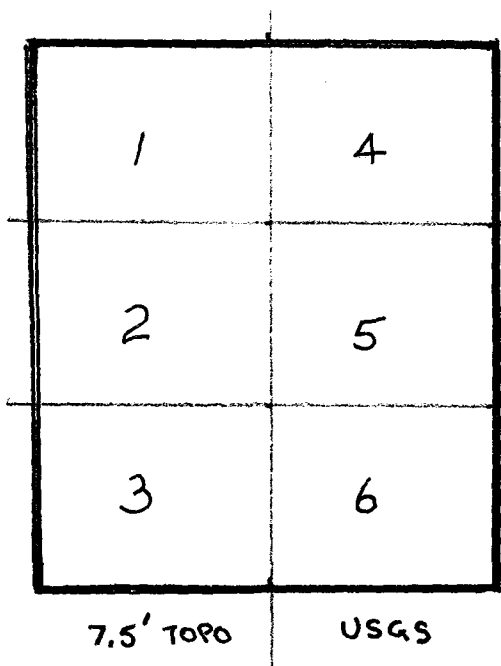
firmed breeding. I've reproduced a map from this book showing the distribution of the Barn Owl. In the book these dots are in color and don't interfere with the map outlines.

Other bird atlases were completed for the Netherlands, West Germany, New Zealand and Switzerland. In 1985 there are plans to atlas all of Europe at one time. In this country various states have started atlas projects and Marin County in California is finishing up one now. I noticed in a recent report that the Audubon Society sponsored or co-sponsored atlas projects in ten states.

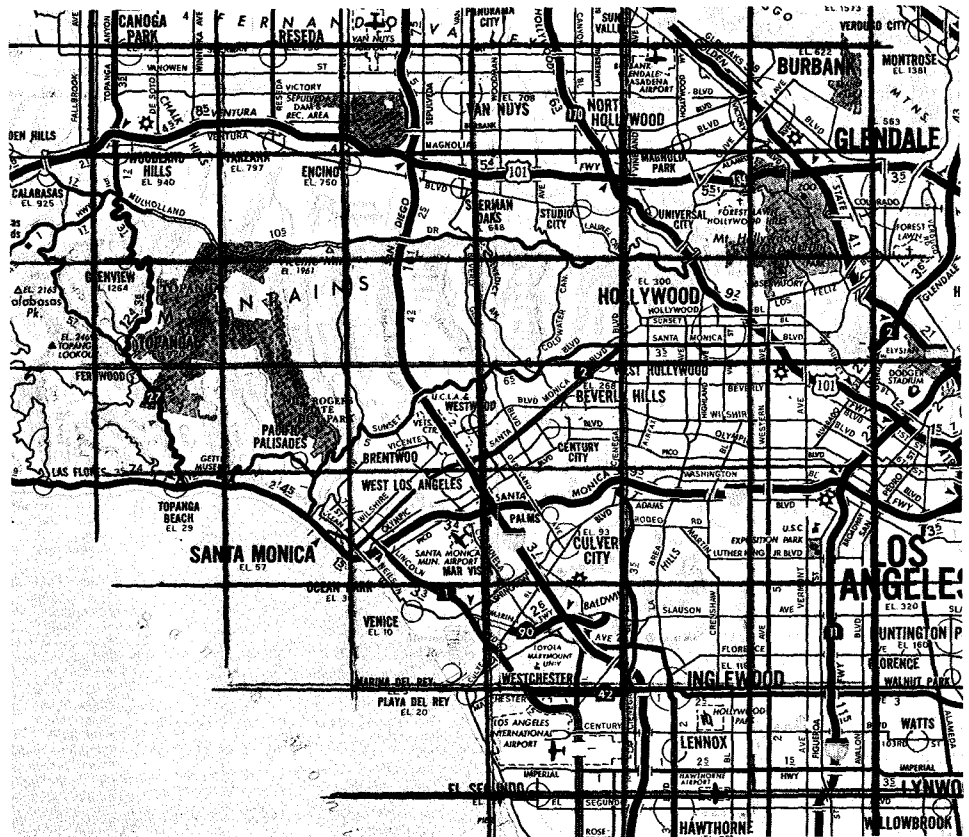


### Grid Size

Although the British used grid blocks which are 10 kilometers on a side, most of the states in the U.S. have used blocks approximately one quarter the size. Here the grids have been about 5 kilometers per side. A number of states have simplified the map making process by using the readily available 7.5 minute series of topographic maps made by the United States Department of Interior's Geological Survey. If these quadrangle maps are divided into six equal blocks by bisecting them with a vertical line and dividing them in thirds with two horizontal lines you get blocks almost 5K on a side. New York chose to use exact 5K sided squares and thus spent a lot of time and money having to make up maps. For the L.A. Atlas we will use 7.5' quadrangles divided as described above to look thus:



The L.A. Atlas would use 81 of the USGS maps and would contain 436 of the one sixth size blocks. Note that this does not include the three off-shore islands Santa Catalina, San Clemente, and Santa Barbara, all technically part of L.A. County. Contrast these 436 blocks with the 3,862 covered in Britain or the 5,299 covered in New York. These blocks would be a little more than three and half miles wide (east-west) and slightly less than three miles high (north-south). To give you an idea of the size of these blocks, I've sketched a few over this Automobile Club map:



You might go out now and buy a topo map of your favorite birding area and see what block or blocks it fall into.

### Time Frame

The *ideal* time to complete a breeding atlas would of course be one year. But because this is pretty much an impractical time to adequately cover an area the size of L.A. County, we will use the generally accepted five-year period. The five year time frame allows us to make the trade off between complete coverage and the ideal "snap-shot" in time. In this time Vermont which covered 277 blocks was able to find 191 breeding birds with 177 confirmed. Eight *new* breeding records were confirmed during the atlas work.

Although it's late, I would hope to start the L.A. Atlas in 1984 go through 1988. Even if 1984 was a messed up year because we weren't organized properly, at least we would be started.

### Breeding Behavior Criteria

One of the most important needs in doing and atlas is having an ordered set of easily understandable, and consistent criteria for defining the degree of confidence in breeding. The ordering must be from "least certain" to "most certain". This is quite a difficult task and was fairly well established by the British for their efforts. The various states modified it slightly. The differing criteria and codes were studied by the Northeastern Breeding Bird Atlas Conference and a stand-

ardized behavior code for North America was recommended. Table 1 which was borrowed from the same previously mentioned *American Birds* article gives this system.

Note that most areas (and L.A. County will follow suit) have ignored the observed category since the mere occurrence of a species in a block during the breeding season does not in itself constitute any significance whatsoever of evidence of breeding.

Once a bird has been confirmed in a particular block anytime within the five year period, it really doesn't have to be noted again. However, many observers find it fun to get to a higher level of confirmation for various species. It has been found that the easiest time to confirm breeding is when young have just fledged. Thus you don't have to be an expert nest finder. But from my own personal experience, when you start looking for breeding birds you become an "expert" at nest finding. Again finding the nest isn't necessary in many cases. As a matter of fact, visits to nest sites are sometimes harmful as they can lead predators straight to the site.

I had a recent experience which points up the fact that you don't need the nest to confirm breeding. Kimball Garrett had noted in past years singing Nashville Warblers in the same general area in the San Gabriels. Kimball and I went into this area this year with the hopes of finding breeding evidence. We had very little trouble finding a pair which definitely seemed territorial. The search for a small nest on the ground shielded by brush

Table 1. Standard Behavior Criteria for Coding Breeding Bird Atlas Report Forms

	Code <sup>1</sup>	Evidence
<b>OBSERVED</b>	0	Species (male or female) <b>observed</b> in block during the breeding season, but believed not to be breeding.
<b>POSSIBLE</b>	✓	Species (male or female) observed in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season.
	X	Singing male present in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season.
<b>PROBABLE</b>	P	<b>Pair</b> observed in suitable habitat during its breeding season.
	T	Permanent <b>territory</b> presumed through defense (e.g. chasing of other birds; or song at the same location on at least two occasions a week or more apart).
	C	<b>Courtship</b> behavior or <b>copulation</b> .
	N	Visiting probable <b>nest-site</b> .
	A	<b>Agitated</b> behavior or anxiety calls from adult.
	B	Nest <b>building</b> by wrens or excavation of holes by woodpeckers.
<b>CONFIRMED</b>	NB	<b>Nest building</b> by all except woodpeckers and wrens.
	PE	<b>Physiological evidence</b> of breeding (i.e., highly vascularized, edematous incubation [brood] patch or egg in oviduct) based on bird in hand.
	DD	<b>Distraction display</b> or injury feigning.
	UN	<b>Used nest</b> or eggshells found. Caution: These must be carefully identified, if they are to be accepted. <sup>2</sup>
	FL	Recently <b>fledged young</b> (of altricial species) incapable of sustained flight <sup>2</sup> or downy young (of precocial species) restricted to the natal area by dependence on adults or limited mobility.
	ON	<b>Occupied nest</b> ; adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest (includes high nests or nest-holes, the contents of which cannot be seen) or adult incubating or brooding.
	AY	<b>Attending young</b> ; adult carrying fecal sac or food for young, or feeding <sup>2</sup> recently fledged young.
	NE	<b>Nest with egg(s)</b> <sup>2</sup> .
	NY	<b>Nest with young</b> seen or heard <sup>2</sup> .

<sup>1</sup>The letter code is entered by the field workers in the appropriate space on the field report form. **Possible** and **Probable** categories are represented by single letters or a symbol, **Confirmed** by double letters. Letters have been selected as a mnemonic aid; keyed to boldfaced words in criteria definitions.

<sup>2</sup>—Presence of cowbird eggs or young is confirmation of both cowbird and host species.

Courtesy of American Birds

appears to be breeding? Well, you can always bring someone back to the spot to help confirm the sighting. Unlike migrants, breeding birds stay in the same place for weeks at a time.

In reading about other atlas projects the people who volunteered to do the field work mention looking at birds in a whole different light. That their enjoyment of birding has increased by leaps and bounds. But even if you have a competitive urge, many observers in other projects have mentioned the kick of confirming the largest percentage or beating a friend who has a neighboring block of similar habitat.

Aside from the observers, we'll probably need about a dozen regional co-ordinators. Each co-ordinator will be responsible for an area with somewhat similar habitats. Maybe we'd have a person responsible for the San Gabriel Mountains and another for the Santa Monica Mountains, and still another for the largely urban area of the LA Basin. The co-ordinator would make sure that all the blocks were being covered. If one block had 90% of the birds confirmed for example, the co-ordinator might have these observers help out in a block with little or no coverage.

Aside from these volunteers, a single overall co-ordinator who would be close to full-time at least for part of the year is absolutely necessary. In my opinion this must be a paid position. Now we're talking money. Yes, this is going to cost something besides our time and sweat.

All of the information gathered must be keypunched into a computer that has software to do the mapping. In New York this was done by the State Department of Environmental Conservation. But can you imagine in post-Prop 13 California getting the state fund to anything. Maybe a computer company will lend or give us a computer to do the job, but the entering of the information itself requires many manhours.

Because this task will require much more than just the efforts of the observers, it cannot be run by just a single organization, even one as large as Los Angeles Audubon. I believe we will need the backing and help of all the Audubon Chapters in Los Angeles County, National Audubon, our local museums, the local colleges, California Fish and Game and various U.S. Government agencies like the Forest Service and Park Service.

I will be making a presentation to the L.A.A.S. Board of Directors as to what exactly I think is required. This will be done in late November. What I need is an expression of interest from you, the membership. Please let Bob Shanman, the L.A.A.S. president, know what you think of the plan, what you might be willing to do or any suggestions you might have for funding, free computer time, people to be approached, etc. Hopefully the summer of 1984 will be the start of a new birding experience for all of us.



was hopeless. Since the birds themselves weren't helpful by leading us to the nest, we soon gave up. Two weeks later we returned to the same spot with Tom Frillman to help. We quickly spotted a family of Orange-crowned Warblers — breeding confirmed. Kimball found an adult Nashville and then after a few minutes of chasing it around, Kimball called our attention to it feeding a young bird not long out of the nest. This is the first confirmed breeding record for the Nashville Warbler in southern California, and it was more exciting than seeing a Buff-Breasted Sandpiper in Lancaster, which was a state as well as a county bird for me. And I am an avid county lister!

### What's Needed

If you've read this far you now know what a breeding bird atlas is. Obviously, in order to pull this monumental task off, we are going to need lots of volunteers such as yourselves to get out and look for breeding birds. In a lot of ways that's the easy part. All you need is a topo map and you're off and running. Since many of the birds are fairly common ones with which you are already familiar and you will looking at birds at birds in full breeding plumage, the identification problem is almost non-existent. And what if you stumble across a rarity that



## The Lancaster Christmas Count Scores Again

by Fred Heath

The July issue of *American Birds* recently turned up in my mailbox. Needless to say *American Birds* is one of the few journals that comes out later than recent issues of the *Western Tanager* (Who is the editor anyway?). At any rate as some of you are aware from personal experience or Dorothy Dimsdale's article in the *Tanager* (July-August 1983) the July *American Birds* is the Christmas Count edition. I always enjoy pursuing this issue to note which counts had the high count for various species. In particular, I have great interest in the Lancaster Count for which I have the dubious distinction of being the founder and current compiler.

Once again the world famous Lancaster Count recorded a number of highest counts in the U.S. and Canada. We had three highest counts all to ourselves, and had to share the honors with a fourth species. The shared bird was the **Le Conte's Thrasher**, of which we saw three, as did the Desert Game Refuge Count in Nevada. In past years we have shared the highest count with another Southern California count, the Joshua Tree National Monument Count. Unfortunately, they only could find one Le Conte's Thrasher this year.

The three birds we had the highest counts alone were: **Raven**, 1,647; **Mountain Bluebird**, 839; and **Tricolored Blackbird**, 15,941. The Raven count is not only the highest this year, but is the highest *EVER*.

While scanning the results of the high counts, I did a double-take at Great Horned Owl, but quickly realized the Lancaster I noted was from the Southern Lancaster County in Pennsylvania. Speaking of "Horned" birds, I noted that we didn't get the high count for Horned Larks this year, but that's to be expected, considering we had less than 20% of the previous year's numbers. As they say, "Wait 'til next year!" The high count this year was only 10,071 birds in Cimarron, KS. If that's the best they can do, the next count we should beat them by at least three to four times (with our eyes closed)!

If you're interested in helping us beat Cimarron for Horned Larks or getting a new world high in Ravens, come join us on the Lancaster Christmas Count, beginning Saturday, December 17, 1983, at some ungodly hour in the morning. —

### OOPS!

The photograph of Cuyama, the newest addition to the condor flock at the Los Angeles Zoo, was erroneously attributed to the San Diego Zoo. My apologies to the L.A. Zoo. My thanks to both zoos for the fine photos they sent allowing us to flesh out Harrison Starr's article.

## Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

**T**he sky was cobalt blue with magnificent white clouds we rarely see in southern California. The Rockies spread out before us in an endless panorama, remnants of glacial ice gleaming here and there against the dark mountains. Mountain Bluebirds were everywhere, dazzling mortal eyes with their astonishing color. Evening Grosbeaks browsed in small trees — almost within arm's reach. And at times it was hard to walk across the green lawn without stumbling over Pine Siskins. This was Estes Park, Colorado, the setting for the convention of the National Audubon Society in late August.

Though many of us got up at daybreak to bird before breakfast, this convention was serious business. Delegates wrestled with every conceivable environmental problem: acid rain, toxic wastes, nuclear war . . . But in a sense, birding was the real business of the convention. All the concerns and energies of the half-million people represented here were dedicated to a cleaner world where birds still sing, where the sky is still blue, where fish still leap in undefiled lakes.

In 19th-century coal mines captive canaries were used to detect deadly methane gas, warning the miners of danger. Today, birds are still indicators of our planetary health. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the Eskimo Curlew are probably gone forever. There are only five male Dusky Seaside Sparrows left but no females. With enormous effort and expense the California Condor and the Whooping Crane may yet be rescued. The Global 2000 Report to the President warned that hundreds of species of plants and animals may become extinct worldwide by the year 2000. Though extinction of species over long periods of time is the fate of most forms of life, the accelerated rate of extinction of the last hundred years must be laid at the feet of the human race. We have not only fouled the nests of the birds by destroying their habitat, we are fouling our own nest. Our follies are rapidly pushing us to the point where we may be committing environmental suicide. There are over four billion of us in the world today and we may be six billion in twenty years. We remember that the Passenger Pigeon once darkened the sun.

At the convention, the realization that this is indeed a small and fragile planet was inescapable and underlined the theme of the entire gathering; Think globally, act locally. Cumulative combustion of fossil fuels

may increase carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, changing weather and climate for the whole world. Acid rain from German industrial plants is not only killing trees in Germany's treasured Black Forest but has already ruined thousands of lakes in Scandinavia. Potentially lethal pesticides are present in the tissues of almost every person on earth. Destruction of tropical rain forests may bring about the demise of hundreds of plants and animals — some not even known to science and whose contribution to ecosystems may be essential to *our* survival. Yet they may quietly slip into the pool of time without a ripple, unheralded and unsung.

One perception of the convention stands out clearly. It was not just the startling fact that National Audubon now has 500,000 members in nearly 500 chapters, it was the undeniable aura of confidence and strength that was felt. This is extraordinary when one is faced with so many negative forces in the world today — including the unfortunate anti-environmental bias of the present Administration. Russell Peterson seems to be the man for these times, these rough times. He seems to have a solid understanding of what we're up against; the power of entrenched interests, the politics of environmentalism, the need to fight the enemy and not surrender. I find this remarkable in a former Republican governor and DuPont executive. Perhaps his background gives him a picture of the inner workings of the mind of our adversaries that is clearer than the view of a knee-jerk militant. While he warned of complacency, he declared that "in the past year, the tide has clearly turned in our favor." Among other favorable signs, he said, were these: public pressure forced Gorsuch-Burford and her cabal to resign from the Environmental Protection Agency; the 1982 elections added more environmental good guys to Congress; the menace of acid rain has finally been recognized by the Administration; nuclear power is becoming more widely understood as an expensive, dangerous source of energy; opinion polls show an overwhelming desire in the land for clean air and water and Congress is reflecting this fact with a drive for stronger legislation.

It was a busy week. Mornings and evenings were general sessions in the auditorium where films were shown, panel discussions held and eminent people spoke. The governor of Colorado, Richard Lamm gave a powerful, sobering scenario of what this country might be like in thirty or forty years if we ignored the signs of environmental degradation and overpopulation. Senator Robert Stafford of Vermont, the Republican chairman of the Senate Committee on Environ-



ment and Public Works, and a tower of strength against the developers and de-regulators, said, "You must not forget that the polluting interests are large, rich, powerful and have friends in high places."

The afternoons were spent in small workshops covering every conceivable subject from "Old-growth Timber Management" to "How to Fight a Water Project and Win" to "Attracting Birds to Your Backyard." These were usually several workshops scheduled at the same time so with four of us from LA Audubon we managed to split the sessions up pretty well. But there were still times when you wished you were twins. We were particularly impressed with the high caliber of the rank-and-file delegates. Workshop leaders were for the most part knowledgeable and sharp and there were excellent questions from the floor and a lot of productive give and take. The dining room was more than a place to feed the face. Discussions with complete strangers would spread out to a whole table and sometimes lasted long after everyone was finished eating. All was not sweetness and light. There were times when you found yourself bored or fatigued or the workshop failed to cover the material you had anticipated. Or some talkative joker would monopolize the session, frustrating the rest of the participants. Over all, however, it was stimulating and rewarding.

The "Think globally . . ." session was brought home to us dramatically by a vivid panel discussion by the executive director of the European Environmental Bureau, the head of the Environmental Liaison Center in Kenya and the director of the American Global Tomorrow Coalition. It was good to know that we are not alone in the environmental struggle, that even in the hard-pressed third world there are people who are able to look beyond the next meal. We are told that one of the best things we can do for them is to solve our own environmental problems. Hubert Davis, the European representative, put it this way, "Whatever they admire or despise about the country, people around the world *expect* things of America. What they seem to want most of all is for the country to live up to the high ideals it sets for itself." Amen.

"**T**hey've got the money, we've got the votes!" The speaker was Brock Evans, a professional lobbyist for 17 years. This was a forceful, confident man working for National Audubon in Washington and we were getting it straight from the horse's mouth. He was talking to a crowded

room in a "Legislative and Administrative Lobbying Techniques" workshop at the recent convention in Estes Park. He could not say enough about the importance of letters in influencing legislation. Even the most "secure" officeholder has to listen to his constituents; there's always the next election. Evan's pounded home his message: we'll never be able to outspend the opposition, but we're the grassroots and they're just a handful. He gave an example of how a determined campaign of pressure - phone calls, visits to a lawmaker's office, and hundreds of letters - turned around what appeared to be a lost cause into an emphatic victory. When the voter talks, the Congressman listens.

At a later workshop we gathered in a circle and kicked around ideas of how to achieve our environmental goals. Part of the group were legislative aides for Senators Chafee and Stafford and Representatives Breaux and Forsythe - all strong environmental leaders in Congress. Every one of them stressed the importance of individual letters from the folks back home. These were not Audubon lobbyists trying to rouse the troops to battle, they were the people at the other end of the letterbox who *read* the letters and tell their bosses which way the wind is blowing. They said there was nothing more impressive to a legislator than a mailbag full of letters on a subject close to the heart of the electorate. Most people do not write. When a voter feels strongly about a bill or a resolution and takes the time and energy to sit down and write - that's a big event. That person is going to want to know what happens to that bill and how his Congressional employee voted.

Timing is important. If a measure is coming up in committee at some uncertain future time, a letter - no matter how eloquent - is going to get lost in the shuffle or forgotten. That's where Audubon comes in. Our people in Washington are in close touch with what's happening on the floor of Congress. They spend a lot of time with the legislative aides who are usually young, bright and knowledgeable and do most of the spade work and research. When the critical moment arrives for letters and telegrams on an important issue, the word goes out to Audubon all over the country. National has a well-crafted "Audubon Action Alert" giving the background and the pertinent facts in the matter. It condenses the information, gives suggestions for the appropriate message, tells you whom to send it to and gives the address. Anyone who wants to join the network can write to: National Audubon Society, 645 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington DC 20003. It's free. We have a few application blanks in Audubon House.

Los Angeles Audubon has its own letter-writing network. Those who take part get a phone call about once a month. They are

given the information and asked to write a letter in their words. A short, simple, courteous request for action is all that is required. Nothing difficult or complicated. Sometimes our network joins National's Action Alert. Other times we may concentrate on state and local issues that are important to us but which National cannot easily handle. (We could hardly expect someone in Arizona or New Jersey to write a letter to an LA councilman about a trash dump in Griffith Park.)

In the Emerald City of Oz the little girl from Kansas said to the terrifying Wizard, "I am Dorothy, small and weak." There are times that we all feel that way. The act of writing a letter is a statement and a commitment. It says you are taking a positive step; you are involved. It is an expression of your faith in the democratic system. It means you really think your voice is important, that one vote does make a difference. And all the evidence we have indicates that if enough of us shout out loud we do make a difference. We are no longer small and weak.

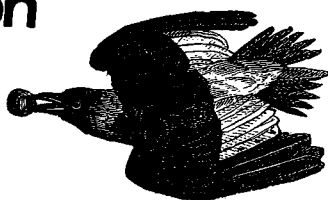
There are about 85 of us writing letters. That isn't to be sneezed at, but with some 4,000 members in LA Audubon can't we at least double that number? If you would like to help make things happen and you're willing to invest twenty cents a month, call or write: Sandy Wohlgenuth, 19354 Calvert St., Reseda 91335, 344-853.

**T**he three peregrine falcons placed in the same hack box as those released last year in the Boney Ridge Wilderness Area met a decidedly different fate. The normal procedure is for attendants to feed the birds for four to six weeks until they learn to fly and kill their own prey. As they become more adept and successful in foraging they gradually abandon the offered food and eventually leave the area. This year, a short time after the hack box was open, a fox appeared and frightened the birds away. They did not return to the site and it was feared they would all die of starvation as they had never made a kill. Several weeks later, after one bird was found dead in the vicinity, two of them were discovered at nearby Pt. Mugu marsh. They were still wearing the radio transmitters and so were easily identified. The Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, who had handled both releases were delighted and amazed. This was the first time in their experience that peregrines that young had managed to survive under those circumstances.

The birds have dispersed and could be anywhere: Ballona, Mexico or still in the Santa Monica mountains.

# Birds of the Season

by Hal Baxter  
and Kimball Garrett



**T**he end of September is a difficult time to sit down and put together a *Birds of the Season* column. The crescendo of migration, and the associated rarities, makes us hesitant to put the column down on paper — who knows what major change or addition that next phone call will prompt when things are moving this fast? All that aside, we'll attempt to set down here the situation as of the fourth week of September, and the inevitable flood of unusual sightings which will occur while this is in press will be recorded in the next issue.

The showstoppers of the early fall migration both came from northern California. An immature **Yellow Wagtail** was discovered near Santa Cruz on 4 September, and remained for several days to viewed by numerous observers; this contrasts sharply with the behavior of California's four other Yellow Wagtails, none of which ever landed long enough to be studied carefully (but at least three of which gave their distinctive call notes in flight). On 7 September Jeri Langham confirmed the presence of an **Eastern Wood-Pewee** in Durham Ferry Park southeast of Stockton. The bird was in full song in the early morning, and the diagnostic vocalizations gave California its first unassailable record of this species. The bird had been present for at least a month before it was confirmed, and had undoubtedly summered; the fact that the bird was in full song indicates that it was not a migrant. It was seen and heard by numerous observers through much of September. Other notable rarities in northern California in early September included an **Upland Sandpiper** seen briefly in Santa Cruz on 4 September and a juvenile **Rufous-necked Stint** at the Bolinas Sewage Ponds in Marin County in mid-month.

Pelagic birding off southern California in September ranged from routine to downright dull (for the veterans). Trips to the San Clemente Island area from San Diego and San Pedro failed to produce any tropicbirds, but did produce good numbers of **Least Storm-Petrels** and **Craveri's Murrelets**. Sightings offshore were otherwise as expected.

Salton Sea birding was also less productive than hoped. As of this writing no boobies had put in an appearance, and few frigatebirds had been sighted. Of interest was an adult **Roseate Spoonbill** near the Wister Unit at the south end of the Salton Sea on

4 September (Phil and Marcia Balbus). The same observers also had a flock of 14 **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** nearby.

**White-faced Ibis** were more in evidence in Los Angeles County this fall than usual. One was at Piute Ponds near Lancaster on 3 September (Brian Keelan), and a flock of sixteen was seen on the L.A.A.S. field trip there on 17 September. Another was in the Sepulveda Basin on 10 September (Ted Kinkeloe).

Thanks to the efforts of the recovery team, **Peregrine Falcons** are being reported with delightful frequency in the greater Los Angeles area. Dorothy Dimsdale found one harassing a Red-shouldered Hawk at Malibu Lagoon on 14 September.

Two **Black Oystercatchers** along the Malibu coast just above the Ventura County line were unusual for that area (Bob Pann, 4 September). Three **Lesser Golden-Plovers** were found on the Oxnard Sod Farms on 11 September (Doug Willick and Steve Ganley), and a juvenile was near Irvine on 19 September (Doug Willick). Observers should familiarize themselves with the distinctions (albeit subtle) between the "American" (*dominica*) and the "Pacific" (*fulva*) forms of the Lesser Golden-Plover; there is some evidence (see the July 1983 *Auk*) that these two forms behave as distinct species. **Baird's Sandpipers** were noted widely, but in smaller numbers than in some recent years. Twelve were noted at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 3 September (Brian Keelan), and ten were there on 17 September (L.A.A.S. field trip). Doug Willick found only two Bairds in Orange County all fall — certainly an off year (for the sandpipers, not Doug). Small numbers of **Pectoral Snadpipers** were reported after early September. A **Stilt Sandpiper** was at the oxidation ponds on the Kern County portion of the Edwards Air Force Base on 3 September (Jon Dunn). The rarest shorebird locally was the **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** discovered at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 3 September by Brian Keelan and Jim and Ellen Struass; it remained to at least 10 September. Jon Dunn turned the L.A.A.S. field trip to the Lancaster area on 17 September into a memorable on-the-spot lesson in dowitcher identification. In the Lancaster area (where most Long-billeds and all Short-billeds are strictly migrants), juvenile **Long-billed Dowitchers** were just arriving, affording comparisons

with the five juvenile **Short-billeds** which were struggling through at the tail end of the migration. Jon pointed out the adult Short-billeds had already reached their wintering grounds (large coastal estuaries), and thus that adult dowitchers around Lancaster could confidently be called Long-billeds (vocalizations confirmed this). Two **Dunlin** at Huntington Beach Central Park on 14 September (Doug Willick) were the first of this late-arriving species to be reported. A **Parasitic Jaeger** at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 3 September (Jon Dunn *et al*) was at an unusual locality. Certainly one of the rarest birds of the month was a **Common Black-headed Gull** found by Loren Hays along the Los Angeles River Channel near the Pacific Coast Highway on 10 September (and still present to at least 21 September).



*Buff-breasted Sandpiper*

Vagrant **White-winged Doves** are regularly noted along the coast in early fall; one was found at Big Sycamore Canyon on 8 September by Hank Brodtkin. A calling **Flammulated Owl**, one of our more elusive breeding birds, was at Palomar State Park on 7 September (Brian Keelan). Large aggregations of **Common Barn-Owls** (up to a dozen per ranchyard) were noted in the Lancaster area in September (Phil Sayre, Ed Navojosky *et al*). Transient **Lesser Night-hawks** were at Piute Ponds on 3 September (Brian Keelan) and near Turtle Rock, Orange Co., on 15 September (Doug Willick).

Pt. Loma, near San Diego, produced its second **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher**; this one was found by Richard Webster on 16 September and remained to at least 20 September. This constitutes only the fourth record for California. Several observers chasing the Sulphur-bellied on 20 September were also treated to a rewarding but typically brief visit by a **Great Crested Flycatcher**. While there are no early indications of any invasions by montane or boreal

species, it is interesting to note that Hank Childs had his first **Mountain Chickadee** in 15 years in his yard in Upland (1900' elevation). Mountain Chickadees were also noted on the campus of Cal Tech in Pasadena (John Parmeter, who has just migrated there from Chestnut-backed Chickadee land). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found by Laurette Maisel in her Tarzana yard on 19 September.

September is warbler month, and there was a healthy dose this year. **Virginia's Warblers** were scattered along the coast, as expected (e.g. one on the Oxnard Plain on 11 September by Steve Ganley *et al.*). An adult male **Cape May Warbler** was found along the east side of Malibu Lagoon, just north of the bridge, on 4 September (Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin); interestingly, this is the same clump of trees that harbored an adult male Cape May on 4 June (but the bird was definitely not there inbetween!). This same clump of trees had a **Blackpoll Warbler** on 4 September (the Brodtkins) and a **Prothonotary Warbler** on 18 September (Kimball Garrett). Other Blackpoll Warblers were noted at Harbor Lake (Ed Navojosky *et al.*), Huntington Beach Central Park (Doug Willick), and numerous other localities. **Black-and-white Warblers** were reported from Tapia Park on 8 September (Hank Brodtkin) and from Oak Canyon Nature Center, Orange Co., on 20 September (Doug Willick). Among the many **Northern Waterthrushes** reported were birds at Malibu Lagoon (Wanda Conway and Gail Benton, 12 September), Harbor Lake (Jerry Johnson, 11 September), Turtle Rock Nature Center (Doug Willick, 14 September), and near Lancaster (Jon Dunn, 3 September; another by L.A.A.S., 17 September). **American Redstarts** reported locally included an immature in Santa Anita Wash on 11 September (Mike San Miguel) and an adult male in Malibu, off Kanan Road, on 23 September (Deborah Herczog). An immature **Mourning Warbler** was found near the upper part of the campground in Big Sycamore Canyon on 18 September (Hank and Priscilla Brodtkin).

Brian Daniels found a "**Yellow-green Vireo**" (the tropical counterpart of our Red-eyed Vireo, now considered the same species) on Pt. Loma on 17 September. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were found at Linda



Send any interesting bird observations to:

**Hal Baxter**  
1821 Highland Oaks Drive  
Arcadia, CA 91006  
Phone # (213) 355-6300

Mia Ranch in the Antelope Valley (Jon Dunn, 16 September) and at the South Coast Botanic Gardens (a male on 22 September, Jerry Johnson and John Ivanov).

The **Aztec Thrush** mentioned last month from Madera Canyon, Arizona, was present well into September and seen by many observers. A **Crescent-chested Warbler** (a Mexican relative of the Parula) was discovered in Garden Canyon in the Haachuca Mountains, Arizona, and set off a flurry of chases. The bird, the first of its species to be documented north of Mexico, was seen by many lucky observers through mid-September, after being found around 3 September.

In November the attention of birdwatchers will shift from those birds which are making brief stopovers (sometimes too brief) during migration to those birds which are settling in for winter. Many of our more unusual winter birds from last year are likely to return again; hoped for individuals in this category would be the Pt. Reyes Eurasian Skylark, the Foster City Smew, the "Merry-Go-Round" Greater Peewee, and so on. And a host of new winter arrivals will be discovered. But everything is not at a standstill in November; a long list of vagrants is possible, most of which will not remain for the winter. And there are various types of "specialty" birding to try: high tides at coastal estuaries for rails, mowed alfalfa fields in the Antelope Valley for pipits and longspurs, coastal points during storms for "wrecks" of Red Phalaropes and pelagics, and so forth. And remember that it's never too early to start scouting your favorite Christmas Count areas; the most successful counts have scouts afield well in advance of the "big day".

## From the Editor

by Fred Heath

This issue is positively my last. The October issue was extremely late because among other problems, I had to zoom off to Chicago and Tampa during September for business reasons. This November issue shouldn't be quite as late assuming no business emergencies arise. However it is clear to me that the month of November promises to be a busy one for me and the December issue would be delayed quite a bit. Thus I am firmly resolved to have this November issue be my absolute final one. I've said my good-byes, thanks and acknowledgements in the July-August issue, so without ado, I'm closing out this chapter in the editorship of the *WESTERN TANAGER*.

Amen — Michelle Heath

## Winter High Tide at Upper Newport Bay

by William C. Bakewell

November, December, January, and February are the best months for searching for rails and other birds at Upper Newport Bay. American Bitterns, Clapper, Virginia, and Sora Rails are most often seen there during these months, and the rare Black Rail is a possibility. These birds are by far most easily found at about the times of the highest high waters during the times of the spring tides during this season. There are tide gauges in Upper Newport Bay, but most local biologists seem to agree that the times and heights of higher high water at Upper Newport Bay and Los Angeles Outer Harbor may be taken to be about the same. In the paragraphs below the times of favorable high waters during this season will be set forth.

The heights of the tide for the times given below are all at least 6.3 feet. On 18 and 19 January 1984 the heights of the higher high waters reach this season's maximum of 6.9 feet. Jean Brandt, in her earlier article on Upper Newport Bay (*Western Tanager*, October 1977), advises birders looking for rails to be on station a half hour before the time of higher high water and to stay for at least one hour. For that reason the times given below all are for higher high waters that occur more than a half hour after sunrise.

In November 1983 the times of higher high water are 0741 on Thursday the 3rd, 0811 on Friday the 4th, 0843 on Saturday the 5th, 0914 on Sunday the 6th, 0814 on Sunday the 20th, 0845 on Monday the 21st, and 0922 on Tuesday the 22nd.

In December 1983 the times of higher high water are 0744 on Saturday the 3rd, 0817 on Sunday the 4th, 0849 on Monday the 5th, 0753 on Monday the 19th, 0831 on Tuesday the 20th, 0913 on Wednesday the 21st, and 0959 on Thursday the 22nd.

In January 1984 the times of higher high water are 0758 on Monday the 2nd, 0739 on Tuesday the 17th, 0823 on Wednesday the 18th, 0908 on Thursday the 19th, and 0957 on Friday the 20th. The highest high waters during this entire season of good birding at Upper Newport Bay are on the 18th and 19th, their heights being 6.9 feet.

In February 1984 the times of higher high water are 0732 on Wednesday the 15th, 0817 on Thursday the 16th, 0902 on Friday the 17th, and 0951 on Saturday the 18th.

All of these data were gotten from the 1983 and 1984 editions of *Tide Tables West Coast of North and South America*. These books are published by the National Ocean Survey of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Good birding!



# CALENDAR

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 — Jerry Johnson** (831-1919) will lead a trip to **Harbor Lake**. Meet Jerry at **8:00 a.m.** in the northwest corner of Harbor Lake Park in the parking lot at the junction of P.C.H. and Vermont Ave.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5 — Mary Carmona** (222-5585) will lead a trip to **Sycamore Canyon**. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the small bridge inside Sycamore Canyon State Park. Go north on P.C.H. until you see the sign for Syc. Can. State Park. Park in the triangular parking lot just outside the park. Bring lunch.

**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**.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 — Ballona Wetlands**, join **Bob and Roberta Shanman** (547-2867 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 into Pacific Ave. and continue to bridge.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13 — 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.**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 — 8:00 p.m. Evening Meeting.** This year's Christmas meetin will deal, appropriately, with **Christmas Island** in the central Pacific Ocean. **Dr. Ralph W. Schreiber**, Curator of Ornithology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, will discuss the now famous El Nino event in relation to his studies of the breeding seabirds of the central Pacific in **"The World According to El Nino"**.

**TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 1984 — 8:00 p.m. Evening Meeting. Our Second Annual Members' Slide Contest.** Start choosing your very best slides now. **Prizes** to be offered. Details in the December **TANAGER**.



**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.

## Leaders Needed

We need people to lead filed 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 683-1560, Evening 452-3318).

### Audubon Bird Reports:

<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>(213) 874-1318</i>
<i>Santa Barbara</i>	<i>(805) 964-8240</i>

Los Angeles Audubon Headquarters, Library, Bookstore and Nature Museum are located at Audubon House, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046. Telephone: (213) 876-0202. Hours: 10-3, Tuesday through Saturday.

## WESTERN TANAGER

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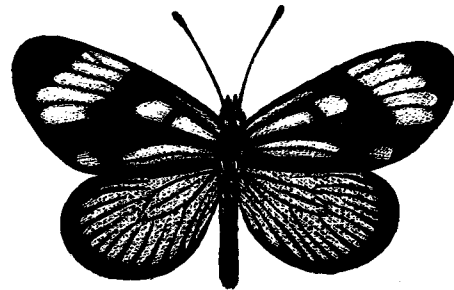
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Audubon membership (local and national) is \$25 per year (individual), \$32 (family), \$15 (student) or \$17 (senior citizen), including AUDUBON Magazine and THE WESTERN TANAGER. To join, make checks payable to the National Audubon Society, and send them to Audubon House at the above address. Members wishing to receive the **TANAGER** by first class mail must send checks for \$5 payable to Los Angeles Audubon Society.

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**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.



## Shearwater Trips



Debra Love Shearwater runs a series of regular pelagic trips out of Monterey and Morro Bay. The following is a list for the rest of the year.

Nov. 13	Monterey Bay	\$25
	Leader to be announced	
Nov. 19	Inner Monterey Bay	\$30
	Leader to be announced	
Dec. 3	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  
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