



WESTERN TANAGER

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The Big Climb

by Helen Matelson
and Teri Matelson

My "life list" rests at night onto 595 birds, each seen within the confines of the American Birding Association's allowable limits. That 600 number threshold is tantalizing — better start going for the hard ones — those little numbers that don't just drop into your lap, like the Colima Warbler who has a taste for Texas in the summer. Not just any old place in Texas, but the southwest corner of the Chisos Mountains in Big Bend National Park, between the altitudes of six and seven thousand feet; accessible only by a TEN mile trail with steep terrain, switchbacks and all those good things. Three hundred and fifty miles away in the Hill Country of South Texas live other special birds with particular tastes in terrain. The Golden-cheeked Warbler, and the Black-capped Vireo are commonly found only in what is referred to as the Texas Hill Country, the Edwards Plateau. This area is made of limestone strata extending from Austin through San Antonio, and to Del Rio near the Rio Grande River. Juniper and Oak

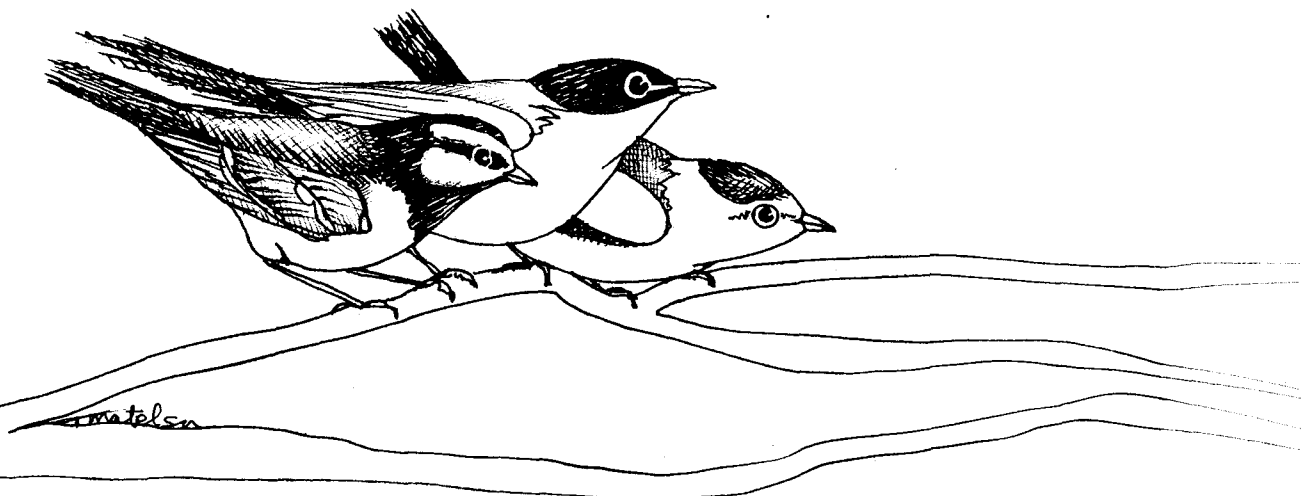
trees growing on the slopes, rivers, and picturesque ranch land contrast this area from the rest of desert-like South Texas. We'd long been anxious to search for these birds and finally decided to plan the trip. Valuable help came from a friend, Maurine Lee, (a dedicated birder from Dallas) in the form of a book written by Edward Koutek, called "Texas Birds, Where They Are & How To Find Them." Koutek's book can now be purchased at the Los Angeles Audubon Book Store, or from the Gulf Publishing Company, Houston, Texas. Armed with this informative book, and Jim Lane's "A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas," locating birds and prime birding areas is easy.

Teri and I started off to try our luck on May 12, 1984, flying to Austin, Texas on Muse Airlines. The car rental company was all out of our usual compact-type cars, so this adventure started with a sporty new Thunderbird. The La Quinta Motel on Highway 360 (Benwhite Street) was a very convenient location from which to start our quest for the

warbler and the vireo. Having secured our room by three o'clock, we drove confidently out route 360 to Wild Basin on Bee Creek, a 200-acre nature preserve within sight of the capital dome. The property along this road is being bulldozed and turned rapidly into housing projects. Wild Basin was recently acquired to preserve a segment of Texas Hill Country in this section of Austin. In late afternoon, only a few birds greeted us. That evening, we spoke with Chuck Sexton, a former California birder now living in Austin. Chuck gave us some helpful suggestions for finding our birds. Early in the morning, we drove again along route 360, just past the entrance to Wild Basin, parked on the right side of the road, climbed a small hill, and followed a short path on some as-yet undeveloped ranch land. Several very active, noisy, Black-capped Vireos, not low in the bushes as often described, but in the trees above eye level, gave us long satisfying views. Golden-cheeked Warblers do nest along Bee Creek, but we took Chuck's advice

From left to right: Golden-cheeked Warbler; Black-capped Vireo; Colima Warbler

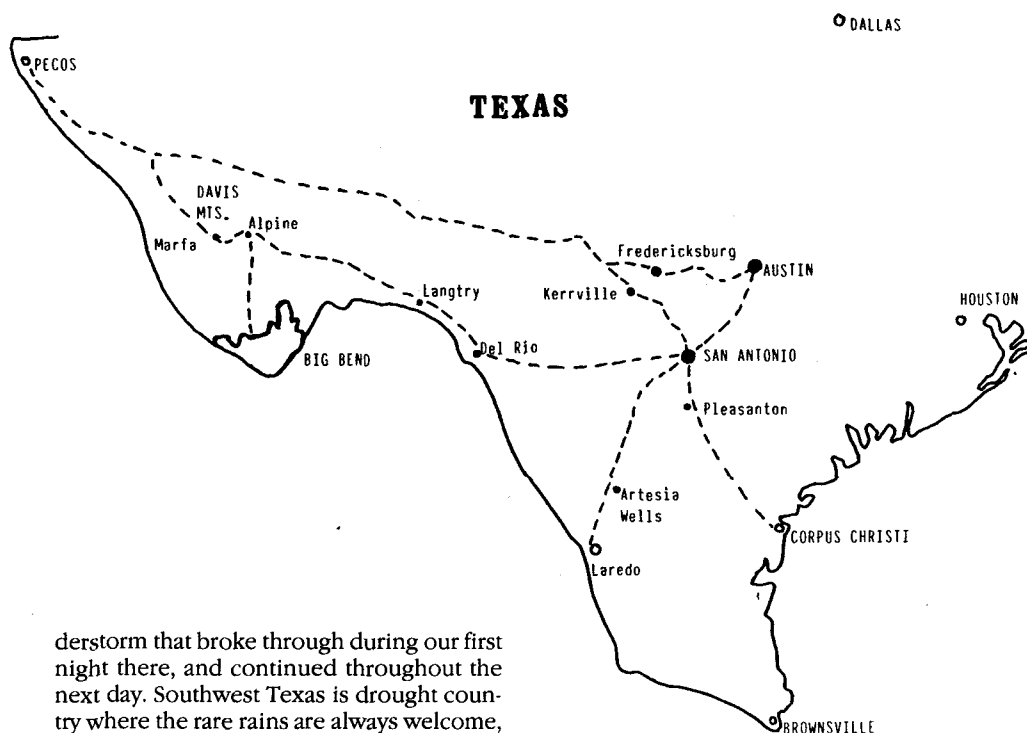
Illustration by Teri Matelson



and drove one half mile further along route 360 to look for them. One clue to finding the Golden-cheeks, is to look in and around Juniper trees, often called Cedar. After crossing Lake Austin, we turned left at Highway 2222, and left again at City Park Road; pausing at turn-outs wherever Juniper trees are flourishing. The third stop produced two beautiful Golden-cheeked Warblers, posing and singing in the tree tops above us . . . sweet success.

Austin is a lovely city, but alas, when chasing special birds, sight-seeing gets short shrift. We were eager to drive west to the Davis Mountains, the only habitat left in Texas (so they tell us) where one might see the Montezuma Quail. The Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch, the Hill Country towns of Fredericksburg, and Kerrville were pleasant stops along the way. Fredericksburg was first settled by German farmers in 1846. The buildings along the main street are a photographer's delight. Gillespie County is the state's largest producer of peaches, available at roadside stands this time of year. Kerrville at 1600 feet is the part of the Edwards Plateau called the Balcones Canyonlands, with numerous canyons and springs that flow into the Guadalupe River. Route 1340 (off of Route 27) along this river is a scenic road to travel along and look for Green Kingfishers. The Game Management Center, fifteen miles down the road, provides information concerning the local wildlife. A booklet distributed by the Center informed us that Golden-cheeked Warblers nest there. Bronzed Cowbirds, Canyon Wrens, and the Black-backed Lesser Goldfinch were common along the road.

On the way to Alpine, where we spent the night, we were surprised and thrilled to watch a Swainson's Hawk chase a Harris' Hawk. Alpine is a very nice small town on the edge of the Davis Mountains, with a University and an active Audubon Group. The following day we went to the Davis Mountain State Park, located on State Highway 118, at an elevation of 4900-5500 feet. This beautiful park has excellent facilities such as camp and trailer sites, hiking trails, and an Interpretive Center open from June through August. McDonald Observatory is located on Mount Locke at the edge of the park area. The Indian Lodge, an adobe-style Inn is operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and has restaurant facilities, swimming pool, and air conditioning. The small town of Fort Davis, adjacent to the State Park, has a historic-looking hotel, restaurant, and several shops, as well as a general store that serves great fountain sodas. High and low we looked throughout the park for the Montezuma Quail. In the past, they have been reported in the campground area near the Indian Lodge, in the main campground, and along the road to the Observatory. We were not helped in our search by the thun-



derstorm that broke through during our first night there, and continued throughout the next day. Southwest Texas is drought country where the rare rains are always welcome, so we complained quietly in our disappointment at having missed the quail.

Driving South in light, scattered rain-showers toward Big Bend, we watched intently for Lark Bunting. As strange as it may seem, I had never seen a Lark Bunting! Koutek advised, in his book, driving down Route 2810 near Marfa, where they can be seen all year. Do you know he is right?! There we saw a male in breeding plumage and several females. Along this beautiful and quiet stretch of road we came face to face with Scott's Orioles and Blue Grosbeak. This is a good place to look for Sparrows in winter.

Big Bend National Park is a remote section of Texas adjacent to Mexico. This park consists of 708,221 acres, encompassing the lowlands of the Rio Grande, the arid Chihuahuan desert, and the woodlands of the Chisos range. The fauna reflects the diversity of habitat. The many miles of paved roads, dirt roads, and hiking trails, spectacular canyons and scenery at every turn could provide weeks of investigation and discovery to the visitor, throughout the year. The Colima Warblers, however, can be found only between mid-April and September. When visiting Big Bend, it is always advisable to check in at park headquarters at Panther Junction for checklists and information on the weather and campgrounds. The Village in the Basin has a comfortable lodge, cabins, and a motel. Since the number of rooms is limited and the amount of visitors great, a reservation is advised. Address: National Park Concessions, Chisos Mountains Lodge, Inc., Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834. Phone: 915-477-2291. Horses are available for rent here, if you like to ride, or if you prefer not to hike the 10+ miles to the

Colima Warbler area and back. A good system is to rent a horse for the trip up, and to hike down. The most favored route is to hike up the Laguna Meadows Trail, and to slip and slide down the shorter, steeper, and more difficult switchback trail of Boot Springs. Colimas can be seen at the top of Laguna Meadows, although we merely heard the bird there. At the top of Boot Springs Trail we saw several of the rare Colimas, and got wonderful views as we slowly negotiated the downhill journey. This is a husky-appearing warbler, clean grey, large eyes on a plain face, dull orange cap, crissum, and sides, and a light melodic song. We climbed ardently for the Colima, nearly eight hours in all . . . well worth the trip.

Old Ranch oasis is a *must* stop in Big Bend. This lush spot lures nest Bell's vireos, Blue Grosbeak, Varied Bunting posing in brilliant sunlight, Chats, Scott's Oriole, the Magnificent and Lucifer Hummingbirds, and on and on. This is a difficult place to leave! The blooming desert plants at Panther Junction Headquarters had one or two Lucifer Hummers taking a drink this early in the season, although greater numbers appear later in the summer and fall. Big Bend and surroundings are so extensive, it was a pity that we could not spend many more days there to do it justice.

More rain ushered us on our way east, but the sun shone on our arrival at historically intriguing Langtry. The visitors center here really welcomes the traveler with the illustrated story of Judge Roy Bean, booklets, maps, Texas publications of every sort, and a

garden filled with Texas flora, Orchard, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Verdin, and Summer Tanagers. Del Rio was our night stop; an interesting city located on the 85-mile long recreational Lake Amistad, formed by damming the Rio Grande River. Next door to Del Rio, across the Rio Grande, is the Mexican border city Ciudad Acuna. It was a real treat to enjoy a little south-of-the-border shopping before heading on. Just past Del Rio on Route 90, we stopped at a culvert and identified our first Cave Swallows. Much like the Cliff Swallow, if one looks carefully, the lack of a black throat is the easiest way to identify this species. Cave Swallows have adopted culverts here and further east as areas in which to nest.

Garner State Park looked like a good place for a picnic lunch (and to watch for a Green Kingfisher). On this Saturday *thousands* of Texans, young and old, felt just as we did. Attempting to spot the Green Kingfisher along the river on a busy spring or summer weekend is impossible. We left the park, and turned onto Route 1050; crossing the Sabinal River just past Utopia, we drove over a

bridge and down a short dirt road to the river bank. Five minutes after exiting our car, starting at the shrubbery beside the river, a splash of water revealed a super Green Kingfisher diving for lunch. Ten minutes later he flew into the trees along the river bank where he was more difficult to see — we felt lucky to have found him while he was busily feeding. Painted Buntings were particularly plentiful in this area, and we saw a wild turkey crashing through the brush near the road. A Great Horned Owl sat in plain view along Highway 90 as we drove in the glistening light of late afternoon into San Antonio.

Close to our hotel, along the Riverwalk in San Antonio, we strolled the streets of reconstructed colonial buildings while paddle-wheel boats cruised along the little river — a nice evening interlude. For us, the rest of the trip was to be a visit to relatives in Pleasanton and tiny Artesia Wells, south of San Antonio. In Pleasanton, Common Nighthawks, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, and Bullocks Orioles were plentiful. A male and female Canada Warbler surprised us along a wooded creek bed. Bisecting the dry

cattle land, are creeks, densely covered with old growth, harboring many interesting birds. Squeezing our way through the foliage, we felt as though we were in some dark jungle instead of the desert. While making our way along one such dry, densely vegetated creek at a ranch in Artesia Wells, we were delighted to see, among other birds, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, and Mourning Warblers, Olive Sparrows, Brown Thrasher, Acadian Flycatcher, Caracara, and a glimpse of Audubon (Black-headed) Orioles. They tell us that the Audubon Orioles are common here all year. Black-bellied Tree Ducks, Little Blue, Great Blue, and Green-backed Herons were common around the small, muddy, ponds called cow tanks. This dry, south Texas desert, as productive as the lush Hill Country, and the Big Bend woodlands, was the last stop in our search. Reluctantly we returned our Thunderbird to the airport in San Antonio. Texas birding is great . . . the big climb is behind me now, and I'm *over 600!*

From The Editor

by Fred Heath



Well this is the April issue and you'll notice I've *almost* managed to let it go by without any of the crazy things which were done the last time I did an April issue of the *Tanager*. I said, "almost" because I couldn't resist printing the short tongue-in-cheek article written by Harold Swanton. I hope this article offends no one, just in case, however, I would like to apologize in advance to Wanda Conway, our Field Trip Chairperson. It was Wanda who came up with the idea of reserved trips for a modest fee. As a member of the LA Audubon Board, I spoke against this paid birding and voiced the opinion that it set a bad precedent. I was, however, out-voted and Wanda

went ahead with her plans. A year later, a few things are rather obvious to me. First in looking at the *Calendar* page you can't help but notice all those fantastic trips, most over an entire weekend that could not exist if the leaders didn't get some compensation. The other thing that is equally important in looking at that same page is that the number of free trips have not diminished. As a matter of fact, under Wanda's able direction the number of free trips has increased. The last point is the fact that the paid trips are filled. This means that there are people who actually feel it is worth the fee to spend a day or a weekend with an expert birding a more distant area. We all owe Wanda a vote of thanks for the foresight to conceive of and carry out this wonderful idea, in the face of doubting Thomases and Freds.

Aside from the fact there are not four ridiculous (and fun filled) pages of April Foolery, you long time *Tanager* readers can tell I've mellowed in other ways. Like for instance in my last editorial, the old Fred would have introduced Larry Norris' ascent through the plant communities of the Sierras as "Getting High with Plants." But the new Fred can resist such frivolities . . . *almost*.

One of the reasons for me to get more serious is the fact that with this issue, I have run out of articles for the *Tanager*. Oh, I've been promised this and that, but I don't actually have anything on hand. We've never had a four page *Tanager*, but anything is possible. If you've got an article you want to write, let me know. If you've got an idea for

an article, but can't or don't want to write it, let me know that too. I might be able to bully someone else to write the article. Once again I have to thank Wanda Conway because I know at least one page, the *Calendar* page, is filled. Unless you want three pages of this miserable editorial, get me some material! Send ideas, articles, pictures, drawings to Fred Heath, P.O. Box 5036, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

A Gentle Reminder

Those old, used, but still adequate binoculars hiding away in your closet will be just the thing for a school kid when the Topanga-Las Virgenes Resource Conservation District (a state agency) begins its study program for 4600 fourth-through-sixth graders on wetlands and estuaries and the plants and animals there. This is a great way to develop an interest in the natural world and how to conserve it at a crucial age. You can help out with binoculars or even microscopes. Bring them to Audubon House or call Sandy or Marge Wohlgemuth at 818-344-8531. *Thank you.* Note that your optical donations are tax deductible.

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.

Plant Communities and Bird Habitats in Southern California

PART IV: THE SOUTHERN SIERRA NEVADA

by Larry L. Norris

CONTINUED from last month's issue

Montane Chaparral: In the widespread forest communities of the Southern Sierra one smaller, but important, plant community is found in arid, exposed situations above 6000 feet. This is the Montane Chaparral, sometimes surrounded by Mixed Coniferous Forest, but more often surrounded by Red Fir Forest. Montane Chaparral is a subclimax or climax vegetation type present in logged or burned areas, or in areas of comparatively poor soil development. A patchy distribution for this plant community is the natural result since it is primarily limited to the pattern of disturbances in the Mixed Coniferous and Red Fir Forests.

The dominant plants within this community are shrubs. The two most prevalent are Bush Chinquapin (Chinquapin Oak) and Greenleaf Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), however, locally other shrubs can be present in dominant proportions such as Mountain Whitethorn, Mountain Mohogany, Bitter Cherry (*Prunus emarginata*) and Parish's Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos parishii*). Few forms are found below the dense almost impenetrable shrub cover.

Montane Chaparral is nesting habitat for Green-tailed Towhee, Stephen's Fox Sparrow, Mountain Quail, Dark-eyed Junco, House Wren and Dusky Flycatcher (at the edges). In migration MacGillivray's and Wilson's Warblers use the dense habitat for protection while they forage or rest. Since this habitat is primarily used by ground nesters and foragers, wildfire has a devastating effect on the bird populations. In the Chaparral of the lower elevations this is also true, but the recruitment from surrounding unburned habitat allows for replenishment in kind as fast as the burned areas can support bird populations. In the case of the patchy distribution of Montane Chaparral post-wildfire recruitment is slower. The author has investigated several patches of Montane Chaparral that were in various stages of recovery from wildfire or logging and was not able to find a Fox Sparrow or Junco. The guess was that since the character of the recovering habitat was similar to many other areas, the remoteness of the habitat had to be the factor keeping common nesters away. In time, it is supposed, these isolated patches of Montane Chaparral will be found and reinhabited by the typical nesters.



Photo by Ian Austin

Nesting Plumbeous Solitary Vireo, Chimney Creek, Kern Plateau, Tulare Co. Nest in Canyon Live Oak.

Red Fir Forest: Between 7000 and 8500 feet in the Southern Sierra in areas of deep, well drained soils the forest is comprised almost entirely of Red Fir (*Abies magnifica*). This tall fir grows in pure stands with very little undergrowth. Occasionally it is interrupted by a granitic outcrop or a patch of Montane Chaparral, or is mixed with Jeffrey Pine, Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*) or, in damp areas, Quaking Aspen and Scouler's Willow (*Salix scouleriana*), but mostly it is extensive, quiet, causes subdued light conditions, and is birded best by ear.

Year round residents are Northern Goshawk, Spotted Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Townsend's Solitaire and Blue Grouse. In the spring the Red Fir Forest is full of the drumming of the Blue Grouse and the flute-like song of the Hermit Thrush. Migrating species that nest in the Red Fir Forest are Hermit Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Tanager, Hammond's Flycatcher and Olive-sided Flycatcher to name a few. In the thickest areas of Red Fir Forest not much birding is done by sight. Almost all the birds are heard as they sing and call from the upper part of the canopy. Few are seen at all, and fewer still are seen well.

Subalpine Forest: What constitutes Subalpine Forest is still debated by those seeking to more precisely define plant communities in the Sierra Nevada. The debate arises from the fact that Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus mur-*

rayana) often forms extensive pure stands at elevations above the Red Fir Forest, but below those truly subalpine pines; the Fox-tail (*P. balfouriana*), Whitebark (*P. albicaulis*), and Limber (*P. flexilis*) Pines. When considering the Sierra Nevada as a whole

Red Fir Forest at an elevation of 8000 feet near Little Baldy, Sequoia National Park.



Photos by Larry Norris



Subalpine Forest of Foxtail Pine in the Kern River drainage of Sequoia National Park.

one would have to treat those extensive pure stands separately as Lodgepole Pine Forests. However, within the scope of this article, dealing only with the Southern Sierra; noting that pure stands of Lodgepole Pine exist intergrading upslope with Foxtail Pine to form a commonly encountered mixed forest where species share dominance, we can reasonably consider it all to be Subalpine Forest. Besides, the birds seem to treat the variations as roughly the same habitat. The major break in bird species when moving upslope is between the upper reaches of the Red Fir Forest and the lowest stands of Subalpine Forest, which is usually dominated by Lodgepole Pine at these elevations (8000 – 9000 feet).

Understory shrubs are Red Heather (*Phyllodoce breweri*), Labrador Tea (*Ledum glandulosum*), Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*), Red Elderberry (*Sambucus microbotrys*) and Prickly Currant (*Ribes montigenum*).

A couple of hole nesters that inhabit this plant community are unique to boreal zones, Williamson's Sapsucker and Black-backed Woodpecker. Southern California birders are always looking for a lead on finding these two species. In the Southern Sierra Williamson's Sapsucker is regularly seen in summer at Troy Meadows in the Kern Plateau. Black-backed Woodpecker is a different story. The southernmost record known to the author is near Farewell Gap in Mineral King, Sequoia National Park. Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Calliope Hummingbirds nest in Lodgepole Pines around the many meadows. Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird, and White-breasted Nuthatch are often seen on Foxtail

Pines near timberline. Occasionally a Red-breasted Nuthatch will ascend from the Red Fir Forest into the Subalpine Forest.

The true finches (*Fringillidae*) are well represented in the Subalpine Forest plant community. Cassin's Finch and Pine Siskin can usually be seen on a birding trip to the high country. The more erratic Fringillids, Red Crossbill and Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, are harder to come by but in summers like 1983 and 1984 flocks of crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks were often observed in the Subalpine Forest and even down to the Mixed Coniferous Forest. Pine Grosbeak is a very difficult bird to find in the Southern Sierra. The southernmost locale known to the author is Mineral King, Sequoia National Park.

In all the Southern Sierra only two roads take the birder to the threshold of the subalpine zone the Mineral King Road in Sequoia National Park and the Horseshoe Meadow Road on the east slope ending at the Golden Trout Wilderness.

Alpine Plant Communities: In the Southern Sierra the highest plant communities exist above timberline. Two alpine plant communities have been described: the Alpine Meadow community being those areas of moist meadows and grassy swards alongside the small streams and lakeshores, and the Alpine Rock community being those areas of shallow, gravelly soils and rock outcrops supporting only a few small plant species. This also includes the rugged, precipitous cliffs and crags of the highest peaks.

Nest of young Dark-eyed Junco. Montane Chaparral in Lloyd Meadows Basin, Sequoia National Forest, Tulare County.



The alpine meadows are dominated by a genus of sedge named *Carex*, although the meadows superficially appear to be grass. Several genera of grass do occur in these meadows as well as many species of wildflowers and rushes. For the birder it is enough to recognize these alpine meadows as valuable forage habitat for small mammals and insects; ergo valuable forage sites for raptors and passerines. Water Pipits nest near these meadows and forage in them. White-crowned Sparrows nest in the few willows near the streams, and Spotted Sandpipers nest on the lakeshores and streamsides on the edge of the meadows.

Clark's Nutcracker is an inhabitant of the alpine zones of the Southern Sierra.



The Alpine Rock community offers less forage items for birds than the meadows, however, most nesting sites are on the cliffs and slopes for protection and concealment from predators and the weather. The gray-crowned race of Rosy Finch nests in the cracks and crevices of vertical cliff-faces well above timberline. No other bird seems so completely adapted to its habitat of snow, ice, and rock. Rosy Finches eat frozen insects that have been blown onto snowbanks by the strong alpine winds. The author has seen a large mixed flock of Rosy Finch and Dark-eyed Junco feeding on frozen insects on the large snow bank on the south side of Farewell Gap at different times during hikes through the area. The wind is almost constant through Farewell Gap and this evidently continues to blow insects onto the snow bank.

Mountain Bluebird, Rock Wren, Horned Lark and Water Pipit all forage about the grass hummocks and boulders for insects or seeds during the short alpine summer. During the extensive study of the alpine vegetation in the upper Kern River drainage the

author noted that the most common bird encountered in randomly placed vegetation plots was the Water Pipit.

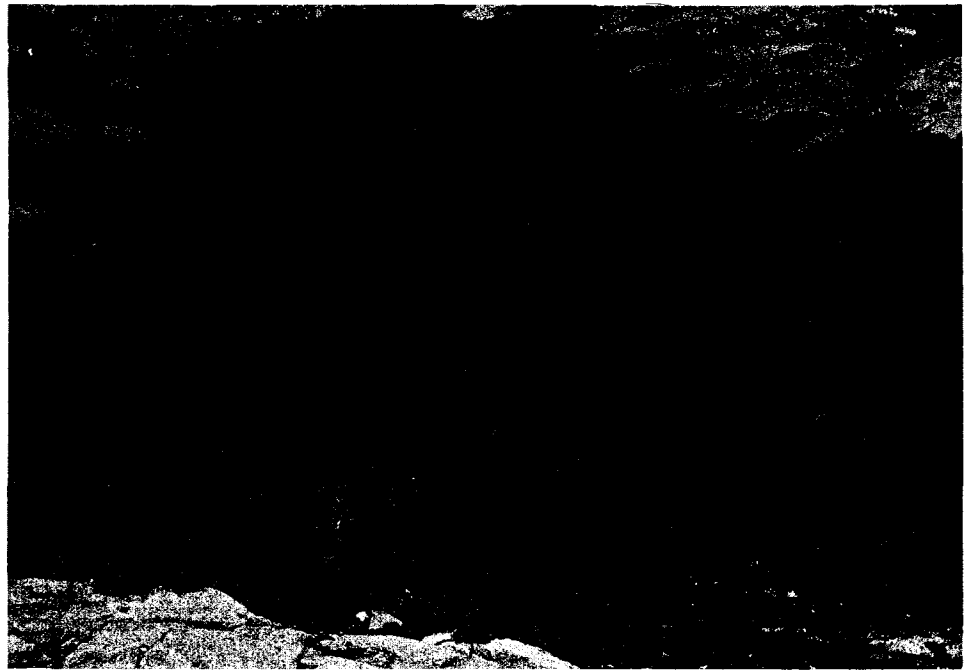
Raptor species such as Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and Red-tailed Hawk use rock outcrops as perches from which to watch for prey. Peregrine Falcon and Merlin have been observed migrating southward over the high country in late August and September. The alpine zone cannot be easily birded except during the summer and fall. It is locked in snow and cold during the long winter and most of spring.

Conclusion

This concludes the overview of plant communities as bird habitats in the Southern Sierra. Other habitats exist in the Southern Sierra that are not related to plant communities. Natural lakes, reservoirs, agricultural or developed areas are important habitats, but are beyond the scope of this series.

It is evident that a wealth of birding trips await those adventurous enough to search out the many and varied bird habitats of the Southern Sierra. The roads are mostly paved or well graded dirt roads, and go through every habitat except the subalpine and alpine zones. By noting the habitat and time of year a birder will eventually be able to predict with a degree of accuracy what species will be present. But do not be too sure, surprises are not all that infrequent in the large area covered by the Southern Sierra.

When planning a birding trip to the Southern Sierra it would be wise to study the



Blueberry and willow fringed creeks form the only riparian habitat at elevations above 10,000 feet. This is nesting habitat for White-crowned Sparrows.

maps carefully, making choices as to what habitats will require most of your attention, because driving in the mountains takes up a lot of time. Figure your speed at 25 mph instead of 55 mph. The Automobile Club of Southern California has excellent maps of Kern and Tulare Counties that cover the

road sections of the Southern Sierra. Up-to-date detailed maps of Sequoia National Forest and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks are available for a price from the Sequoia Natural History Association, Ash Mt. Box 10, Three Rivers, CA 93271.

Santa Barbara Fieldtrip 19 January 1985

Eighteen observers and leader Paul Lehman spent a good day of birding in the Santa Barbara area on 19 January. Beginning in the residential areas of Montecito, the participants were treated to excellent views of the Grace's Warbler, which is back for its sixth winter, and of a perched Merlin. Then moving up the coast to the Goleta area, a stakeout Black Scoter was seen at Goleta Beach Pier; however this bird was outclassed by a closely observed Red-necked Grebe. Then it was off to the Devereux Slough area, which hosted Western Tanager and "Bullock's" Oriole, followed by a check of the ranchland foothills which provided Lewis' Woodpecker, Cassin's Kingbird, and 20 Mountain Bluebirds.

Finally, the group descended on a kind landowner to see his stakeout Bendire's Thrasher, a sneaky bird which most observers were able to see at least briefly. In all, 110 species were seen.

— Paul Lehman

...
An outstanding day with lots of good study views (i.e. 5 species Grebes) — the cream of the Santa Barbara Christmas Count!

— Wanda Conway, Field Trip Chairman

Official LA Audubon Shirts

At long last due to the persistence of our Education Chairperson, Sharon Milder, we now have on sale at Audubon House the Official Los Angeles Shirts. The design is from a specially commissioned painting by Jonathan Alderfer, the illustrator of the upcoming Jon Dunn-Kimball Garrett Identification Notes book. The black and white

illustration on this page doesn't begin to do the full-color rendering of a male Western Tanager justice. There are both T-shirts at \$9.95 and sweat-shirts at \$16.95 made of the finest material known to man. The shirts are in your choice of Snowy Egret White or Clark's Nutcracker Gray.



Official LA Audubon Society Shirt
Illustration by Jonathan Alderfer

Book Review

by Sharon L. Milder

HUMMINGBIRDS: THEIR LIFE AND BEHAVIOR. Text by Esther Quesada Tyrrell, photographs by Robert A. Tyrrell. Crown Publishing Inc., New York. 1985. 212 pp., 235 full color photographs, numerous line drawings, halftones and color drawings. \$35.00.

This book is a compilation of the most beautiful hummingbird photographs I have ever seen. Robert Tyrrell has immense talent — so good, in fact, that he will either inspire those with an interest in bird photography to greater heights or cause them to give up! Though it appears that most of the birds were captured for the purpose of photography (you can see the same twigs and "artificial" background in several pictures), this does not in any way detract from these outstanding works of art. It seems unfortunate that Mr. Tyrrell did not showcase the female hummingbirds as well in his photo-essays, as the text drawings portraying the females of the North American species are of little use: their proportions seem awkward and heavy and their feet and eyes are often too large; the drawings do not accurately portray the subtle features which distinguish the various species.

Following a brief introduction to the hummingbird family is a "portfolio" of North American hummingbirds, presented in alphabetical sequence. The species accounts are generally accurate, but expand little on information found in standard field guides. Range maps, which might have been useful, are not given (but may, of course, be found in any field guide). The photographs (two



Broad-tailed Hummingbird by Robert Tyrrell

per species) in this section have been beautifully reproduced, as have those used liberally elsewhere in the book. The photos range from ¼ to full page format, the page size being 12" by 9".

Following the accounts of North American hummingbirds are sections on anatomy, feathers, flight, courtship and nesting, food and metabolism, behavior, and wildflower pollination. These sections are, in general, informative overviews, accompanied by useful drawings; never do these treatments get too technical. Again, Robert Tyrrell's stunning photographs lavishly illustrate the text sections. The chapter on behavior contains information on songs and calls, territoriality, grooming and predators; this chapter is disturbingly anthropomorphic at times, and in general its treatments left me uncomfortable. Hummingbirds and wildflower pollination, a topic already dealt with extensively by K. A. and V. Grant (*Hummingbirds and their flowers*, Columbia Univ. Press, N.Y., 1968), is the subject of the final chapter. The information is taken from Paul A. Johnsgard's *Hummingbirds of North America* (Smithsonian Inst. Press, Washington, D.C., 1983) and is presented along with 38 photos of hummers feeding at identified wildflowers. Finally, an appendix lists all of the known hummingbird species of the Americas, following the sequence of Morony, Bock and Farrand's American Museum of Natural History listing.

This new book will invite comparison with Crawford Greenwalt's 1960 masterpiece *Hummingbirds* (now out of print). Advances in high speed strobe photography, have certainly established a new high state of the art — for beauty and composition, Robert Tyrrell's photographs are superior.

Johnsgard's *Hummingbirds of North America* (1983) was preceded in 1973 by

Alexander Skutch's *The Life of the Hummingbird* (Crown, New York). Data on the taxa treated in the Tyrrell book mostly repeat what has gone before in the two above books. The comparison with the Johnsgard book is especially relevant, since that book and the present one came out in a two year period and treat the same subset of species. The text in Johnsgard has more information, but the Tyrrell book is accurate and much more attractive.

The title, *Hummingbirds, Their Life and Behavior* is a rather poor choice of words. Behavior is a part of life, thus "life" and "behavior" in the same title smacks of redundancy.

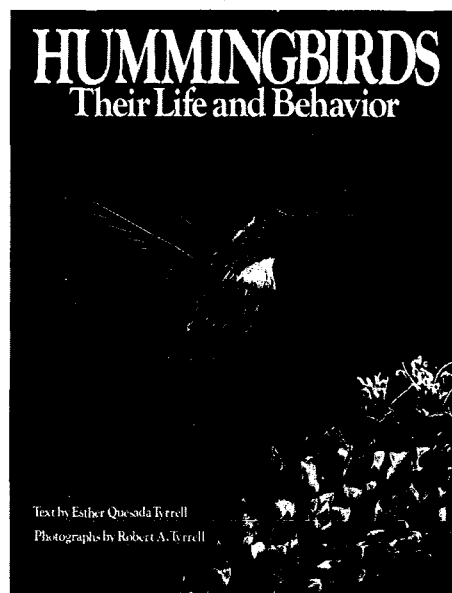
The photographs in this volume are so stunning one feels there should have been even more photos and less text (the drawings and the text do not approach the quality of the photographs). Photography has reached a place where it can be considered a high art form. Just as Gould and Audubon reach a high point in bird painting in the 1800s, so has photography at its best reached that point as an art form today. Had this book been only a celebration of hummingbirds through photography it would have been enough.

This book is unique not only for its superb photographs, but also because it is one of the few popular bird books published recently without an introduction or forward by Roger Tory Peterson. This in itself is a true rarity in bird literature!

If you enjoy fine photography or have any interest in hummingbirds, you will be happy to have this book in your library.

Note: this book will be available for sale and autographs by the authors after the April Evening Meeting at which Esther Tyrrell will be the speaker.

Cover photo of *Costa's Hummingbird*



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

From the Wall Street Journal, March 10, 1992

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 1992

VOL. CXXXIII NO. 40

Birding For Bucks Comes of Age

— by Harold Swanton

Assessing a modest fee for services of a leader on Audubon Society bird walks seemed like a notion worth trying back in the early eighties, just as placement of a scoop of ice cream on a cone of crisp cake dough occurred to someone at the 1904 St. Louis Worlds Fair. Both were ideas whose time had come. Birding for bucks took off immediately and today, less than ten years after the first timid attempts, it is a growth industry with grosses coast to coast running well into eight figures and no end in sight. Our reporting team surveyed three representative factors in the burgeoning new industry.

Bel Air Birdsearch, based on the West Coast with branches in posh communities coast to coast, caters to the affluent. Birdmobiles are tangerine-flake-kandy-colored plush-lined vans attended by Birdettes, attractive young women in snappy uniforms, each with an outstanding pair of binoculars. There is Muzak en route, along with a champagne brunch, Questars and Leitz Trinovids. Their 4-color catalogue has an introduction by Roger Tory Peterson. On the negative side, there might be a half-hour taped slide show on gull identification.

B.A.B.'s one day, three-point package offers Malibu Lagoon, Big Sycamore, and McGrath, with a guaranteed minimum of 80 species for \$129.95. The all-important unit (per species) cost thus runs \$1.6244, by far the highest of the three. But getting there, B.A.B. claims, is more than half the fun.

Ornithowhammy holds the middle ground, suburban sub-Yuppies in the \$20-50,000 class. Vehicles are solid Ford minibuses, leaders are apt to be college or high school biology teachers in good cloth coats with Bushnell Cus-tom 7 x 35s. Lunch is invariably a ham and cheese on rye with a dill pickle, a Pepsi, and a banana.

Ornithowhammy will deliver the 80 species on the Malibu-Big Syc-McGrath swing at a modest \$62.75, the PSC (per species cost) a sensible \$.7844.

Threadbare Seekers, Inc. caters to the food stamp-welfare set, vehicles usually old Volks buses with square wheels, leaders mostly starving grad students. Binoculars tend to be out of collimation and scopes need cleaning. You bring your own lunch. They'll get you there, but it won't be a ball.

Threadbare guarantees the 80 species on the three-point day at an incredible \$29.95, its PSC only \$.3744. We'd call Threadbare a Best Buy were it not for the unhappy fact that now and then a Threadbare bus takes off and is never heard from again.

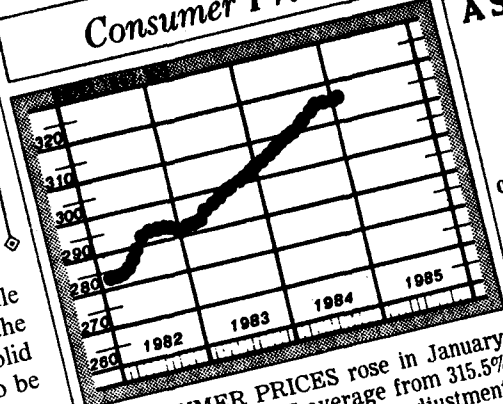
Next move in the birding for bucks field obviously will be the franchise. McDonald's reputedly is in the planning stage for outlets at fast food units handy to birding areas. Rumor is for an unnamed flat figure they will offer an Egg McMuffin, small fries, tall Pepsi and 70 species.

We asked Seymour Snively, a Bel Air tour leader, if anyone just picks up a pair of binoculars and goes off birding on his own.

"No law against it," Seymour said. "But consider this: you want your appendix out, you go to a surgeon. You want a bird list, you go to a pro."

He gave us a farewell-flake Birdmobile, burgeoning with birders and Birdettes, outward bound for McGrath.

Consumer Prices



CONSUMER PRICES rose in January to 316.1% of the 1967 average from 315.5% in December before seasonal adjustment, the Labor Department reports. (See story on page 2)

An Old Flame Dies, But for Miss Liberty It's a New Beginning

Statue Will Get a New Torch, Built by Frenchmen Who Remember the Old War

By MEG COX

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
NEW YORK—The Statue of Liberty won't look much different when folding comes down. Her skin is green and her face still uncrumpled. She won't have shifted the torch in her hand.

But thousands of tourists flock to the refurbished statue to be the first to see the statue after the 4, 1986, are putting off visit for repairs for restoration funds. The statue entombed in scaffolding apparently left the impression of a crippled thing isn't accurate.

It's true that tourists flock to the statue to see the stairs inside to peer down at the Bay. But something else is true: The statue is repeating itself.

French craftsmen are working on the statue's copper sheets in the technique by which the statue in the first year they will be replaced with copper into a new high. Much of the view of the statue is from the inside.

WART
STREET JOURNAL
When two police officers charged with hindering Stenhach's neat, composite the court-mlet of 2,800, he ag for one of his ge himself and his aw partner, Walter, read the Miranda ay in a police car for

On June 14, 1983, the Stenhach brothers were charged with hindering justice in Pennsylvania—evidence, conspiracy and s for which they each ars in prison and \$25,000 with automatic disbar-

what the Stenhach brothers nightmare, a nightmare that

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Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgenuth



It came on the evening wind that drifted through the shantytowns . . . The lucky ones, alerted by the suffocating odor, escaped. Thousands did not. Some perished in their sleep. Others awoke, dizzy and nauseated, their eyes on fire and their lungs filling with fluid until they could no longer breathe, dying from exposure to a chemical few had heard of in perhaps history's worst industrial accident.**

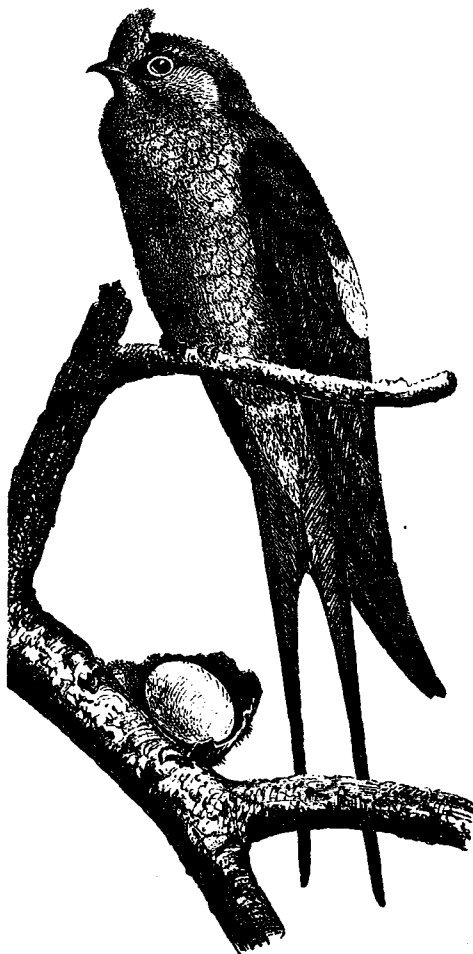
More than 2000 people died horribly in Bhopal, India, last December. *Two hundred thousand* survive with lives damaged and shortened by the poison gas they inhaled. This, of course, was the Union Carbide plant where a safety-system malfunction released methyl isocyanate for only one hour before the leak was stopped. Repercussions in this country have shaken people who live near chemical plants as well as responsible leaders of the industry. The president of Dow Chemical said, "We can't say that nothing will ever happen here." A Monsanto executive said, "If you had asked me two weeks ago what are the odds that any top chemical company would have an accident that would kill two to three thousand people, I would have said that it was unthinkable."

Though the Bhopal tragedy has sent some industry leaders scurrying to tighten up their safety devices and re-thinking their production systems, the vice-president of the Chemical Manufacturers Association says, "It's easy to pick on industry. Let's take the politics out of this and look at the facts. We're the safest industry in the United States." And it is true that the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the chemical industry has only half as many job-related injuries or illnesses than those of all manufacturing industries. What the statistics don't show is that the potential in the chemical industry for widespread health hazards is far greater than the average manufacturing plant. A worker who falls and breaks a leg in an ordinary factory does not usually endanger his companions on the job or thousands of people living or working nearby.

A cosmic preliminary bout to the dreadful Bhopal main event was Mexico City. In a suburb, surrounded by a dense population of poor people, a storage depot of liquified natural gas exploded, taking over 400 lives. Newspaper reports indicated that most of its neighbors had no idea what the facility was for. A few years ago, a liquid natural gas installation was proposed for Point Conception, with ships coming in from Indonesia

and elsewhere with gas under pressure. This is a relatively uninhabited area yet the project was abandoned after an extensive public protest. An equally long and bitter struggle failed to halt the operation of the Diablo Canyon nuclear generating plant though it was sloppily built and on an earthquake fault. Three Mile Island is the classical case of an accident that couldn't happen. Though fortunately no one died, the incident sent shivers of fear throughout the world for what might have been. Billions of dollars were lost and today — six years later — not only is the plant still radioactive and useless, but the consuming public is asked to pay for the technological incompetence.

What we're considering here is the perplexing notion of "acceptable risk." We risk our lives every day. When we drive to work, take an elevator, cross the street with the WALK sign blazing, we're taking a chance that we won't reach our destination. Life is a



continuum of decisions and we are all aware — consciously or not — that there are risks and that we must choose. But the choices are *ours*. Three Mile Island was considered by the utility and by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a certifiable acceptable risk. The Union Carbide plant in West Virginia, the twin brother of the Bhopal plant, is still an acceptable risk. So was the housing tract at Love Canal. All these decisions are made by "absentee landlords," so to speak, by agencies and boardrooms far away that rarely consult people in the neighborhood or workers in the plants themselves. Until recently, industry fought tooth and nail to prevent disclosure of the constituents of hazardous substances handled by their employees, saying that trade secrets would be given away. Now, with local and federal pressure for "right-to-know" laws growing, companies have been more compliant. A Monsanto spokesman says, "It's fair to say we're doing this in response to heightened public concerns about chemical hazards after the Bhopal incident."

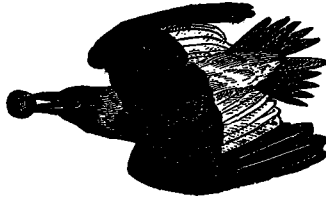
The world seems to be closing in on us more and more every day. We open the morning paper with a quiver of anxiety in our gut. Cancer lurks in every breath we take, every glass of water we drink, every morsel of food we eat. Poisonous gas bubbles out of landfills; radiation threatens with every nuclear plant shut-down. There seems to be no escape, no place to hide. Is there a way out? Perhaps part of the answer is a new sense of responsibility. The idea of acceptable risk must be clarified. The burden of proof of safety must rest upon industry. Of the thousands of chemicals — new and old — that reach the marketplace every year, how many were tested by impartial laboratories *before* they were released? Industry must bear full responsibility for the hazards it creates. If the expense is great enough (insurance, fines, lawsuits) more caution will be taken before potentially dangerous facilities are built. The "get government off our backs" philosophy has no place where health and lives are concerned. Government's first responsibility is not the enhancement of profits but the protection of its citizens. The regulatory agencies must have money, expertise, independence and integrity. Too often the regulators have come from the ranks of the regulated; too often the old cliché of the fox guarding the henhouse has been all too true.

Man has always lived in a dangerous world. There will always be accidents and death: *that* is the acceptable risk, the cost of being alive. But we must come to realize that we can no longer tolerate unacceptable risks that are being sold to us because they provide jobs or kill more bugs, or make us stronger than anyone else. The alternative is the next Three Mile Island or the next Bhopal, or — yes — the ultimate nuclear winter.

*—The New York Times

Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter
and Kimball Garrett



The late winter period is traditionally "slow for unusual birds in the southland; birders' minds are occupied with visions of hectic days of spring migration soon to follow. But birds are still out there in February to be uncovered by active seekers, as the following roster of sightings will attest.

California's first **Streak-backed Oriole** in seven years (and the first to be found on the coastal slope in nearly twenty years) was unearthed by Richard Webster at Kate Sessions Park in northern San Diego on 23 February, and seen by numerous birders on 25 February. This bird, an immature male, had apparently been in the area since 12 December 1984, according to a local resident. This Middle American species is a casual vagrant to southern California and southern Arizona; many birders will remember the one that played hide and seek in the date palm groves of Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, in November and December of 1977.

Reports of the first migrant hummingbirds and swallows were widely received in February. An adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** at the Hollywood Reservoir on 15 January (Chuck Bernstein) was exceptionally early, although the closely related **Allen's Hummingbird** was moving through in

good numbers during the latter half of January. All swallow species except the perennially late Bank Swallow and Purple Martin were reported by the third week of February.

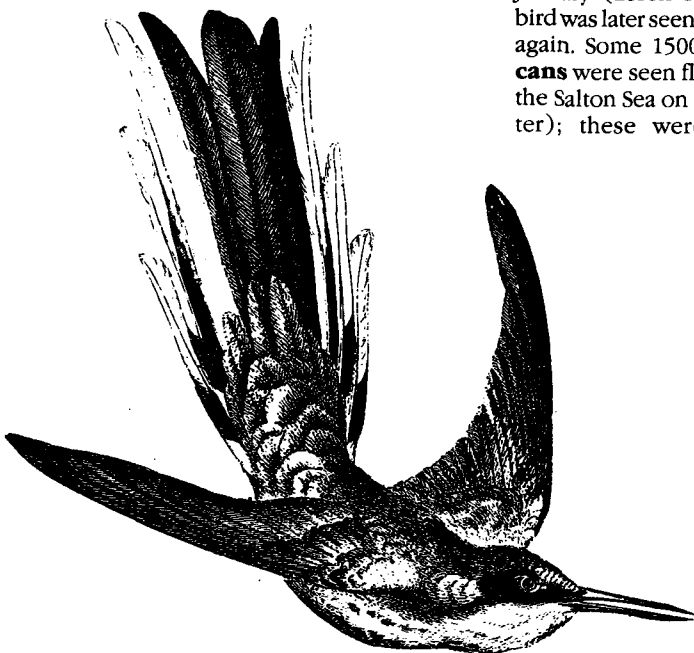
Every winter a few of our normally "coastal" loons, grebes and ducks appear on inland lakes and reservoirs. The **Arctic Loon** which was first found on a reservoir near the Oak Canyon Nature Center in Orange County in late November was present into late February (Doug Willick). Castaic Lagoon, below the main dam at Castaic Reservoir, above Valencia, had three **Surf Scoters** in a quick check on 18 February (Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer). Another check on 3 February yielded these scoters, plus a **Red-breasted Merganser** (with several Commons) and eleven **Horned Grebes** (certainly the highest inland count ever for Los Angeles County).

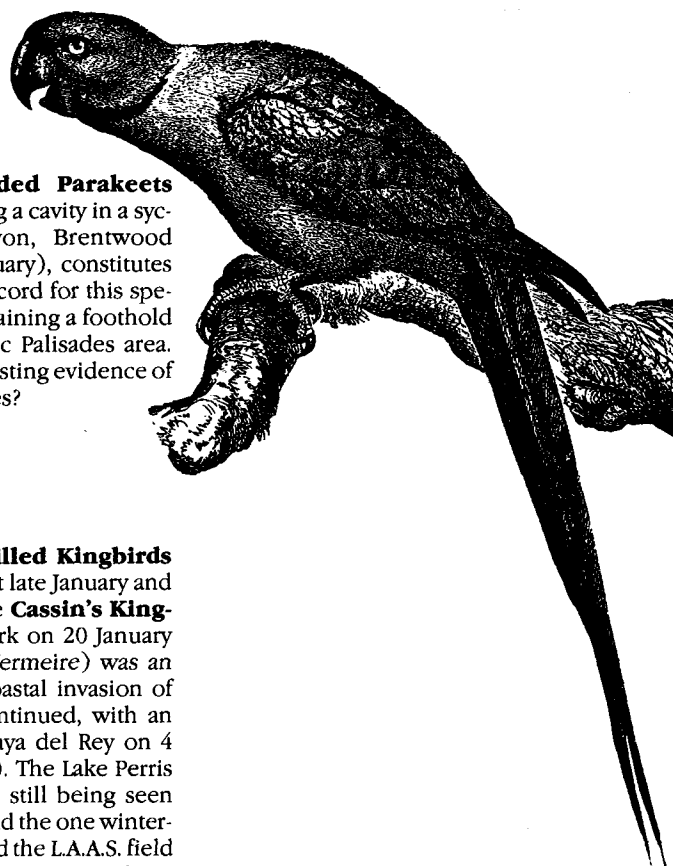
A single **Red-necked Grebe** was just off Malibu Lagoon for several days until at least 16 February (Janet Cupples). The only pelagic bird of note was a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** less than ten miles off Palos Verdes Peninsula on 26 January (Henry Childs' Chaffee College group). Very odd was an immature **Magnificent Frigatebird** sitting on the ground at Bolsa Chica on 19 January (Loren Hays, Gerry Tolman); the bird was later seen flying off, was not reported again. Some 1500 **American White Pelicans** were seen flying over the south end of the Salton Sea on 26 January (Richard Webster); these were probably northbound

migrants which had wintered in western Mexico or Baja California. Likewise moving northward were 40 **Greater White-fronted Geese**, observed over Exposition Park on 8 February (Kimball Garrett). The Irvine Park **Barrow's Goldeneye** was still present into mid-February, and another was well off Red Hill at the south end of the Salton Sea on 26 January (Guy McCaskie, Richard Webster).

Merlins were noted at the Cerritos Channel in Long Beach (Jean Brandt and Phil Sayre, 21 January) and in Santa Monica (Nan Moore, one on 25 January, two on 29 January). A **Black Oystercatcher** was on the Marina del Rey breakwater 10-24 January (Bruce Broadbooks). A **Little Gull** found at Salton City on the west shore of the Salton Sea in mid-January was erratic and hard to find; it was last reported on 31 January (Jon Dunn). A **Glaucous Gull** at Salton city on 26 January (Guy McCaskie and Richard Webster) may have been the same bird that was at Red Hill at the south end on the 18 December Christmas Count. An amazing five Glaucous Gulls were in the fields near the new dump near Lompoc in late January and early February. another Glaucous Gull was reported at the south end of San Diego Bay on 1 February (Dexter Kelly). In addition to the 30+ **Black Skimmers** at Bolsa Chica during January and February, a single skimmer was seen and photographed at Malibu Lagoon on 23 February (Greg Homel); it was gone the next day.

The status of **Saw-whet Owls** in southern California remains rather poorly understood, but our knowledge of their distribution in our local San Gabriel Mountains took a quantum leap forward in February. Brian Keelan and Jim and Ellen Strauss had found a nesting pair in the Buckhorn Campground vicinity last summer; the young birds they observed constituted the first proven breeding of the species in the San Gabriel Mountains (and in mainland Los Angeles County). On the night of 17 February this year, Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer found three pairs and two additional single territorial birds along the Valyermo Road below Big Pines, and the adjacent Angeles Crest Highway. Numerous birders the following weekend (Fred Heath *et al*) found some of these birds and at least one additional pair. This suggests that Northern Saw-whet Owls are numerous in the San Gabriels in mixed coniferous forest habitat, especially where live oaks are mixed in. Our failure to detect them in past years may be due to the fact that efforts were concentrated in mid-summer, when calling has probably largely ceased. Saw-whets, like many other owls, are very early nesters, and the peak of territorial calling is probably in late winter. Also, Saw-whets are known to be erratic through most of their range — this year may be truly exceptional.





A pair of **Black-hooded Parakeets** (=Nandy Conures) entering a cavity in a sycamore in Sullivan Canyon, Brentwood (Kimball Garrett, 24 February), constitutes another likely breeding record for this species which appears to be gaining a foothold in the Santa Monica/Pacific Palisades area. Does anybody else have nesting evidence of this, or other, parrot species?

Our wintering **Thick-billed Kingbirds** were still present to at least late January and early February. Twenty-five **Cassin's Kingbirds** at Santa Fe Dam Park on 20 January (Chuck Hamilton, Betty Vermeire) was an exceptional count. The coastal invasion of **Mountain Bluebirds** continued, with an additional record from Playa del Rey on 4 February (Wanda Conway). The Lake Perris **Bendire's Thrasher** was still being seen into February near Lot 8, and the one wintering in Santa Barbara obliged the L.A.A.S. field trip there on 19 January. An **American Dipper** constructing a nest along Piru Creek just west of Frenchman's Flat, below Pyramid Reservoir, was at a rather accessible locality (Kimball Garrett, 23 February).

The wintering **Pine Warbler** in Colorado, San Diego, continued to be seen into February; Doug Willick found a **Bell's Vireo** (very rare in winter) at this spot on 22 January. A **Tennessee Warbler** was at Huntington Beach Central Park on 9 February (Brian Daniels), and two **Palm Warblers** were seen throughout the period at Doheny State Beach (Kurt Rademaker). Up to 14 **McCown's Longspurs** were off Davis Road near Lakeview well into February, and two **Lapland Longspurs** were found nearby in the San Jacinto Valley on 23-25 February (Brian Keelan).

There were scattered reports of **Red Crossbills** in the lowlands into early February, e.g. several at El Dorado Nature Center (Brian Daniels), and 7 at Hillcrest Park, Fullerton, 11 January to 3 February (Doug Willick and Jon Dunn). **Pine Siskins** and **American Goldfinches** were exceptionally numerous in many parts of the coastal lowlands and Antelope Valley. Up to a hundred siskins were stripping aphids off mustard plants in a field on Pt. Dume on 24 February (Kimball Garrett).

A **Black-billed Magpie** in Huntington Beach (Doug Willick, 20 January) would certainly have to be considered an escaped or

released bird, as would the male **Painted Bunting** at Gail Warwick's feeder in Silver Lake on the same day.

Birding will be excellent everywhere in the region in April, from the coast (where a major passage of loons, brant, scoters and other seabirds should be visible from coastal points such as Point Dume), through the canyons around the Los Angeles Basin (where nesting will be in full swing and pulses of migrants will be detected) to the deserts. Late April marks the high point of spring migration for many of our species, and the magnitude of these movements at our desert oases, such as Morongo Valley can be spectacular. Also of interest will be migration of shorebirds and other waterbirds, not only at the Salton Sea, but at other interior wetlands. Find your own oasis, be it a grove of cottonwoods or a sewage pond, and watch the spring unfold!

Send any interesting bird observations to:

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

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Renew Your Membership Through LAAS

When you receive your annual renewal notice from National Audubon, we strongly urge that you complete the form and send it along with your dues check to Audubon House rather than directly to National Audubon. National has been having difficulties with the data processing firm handling membership. This has led to many errors in chapter records across the country, including ours. It has also resulted in some of our members missing issues of the WESTERN Tanager. By sending your renewal directly to us, many of the problems should be avoided.

Before forwarding your renewal to National, we will photocopy your form and check, and make sure that our records are current. By renewing through L.A. Audubon you will be sure not to miss any issues of the Tanager. We will also be able to confirm that National has placed you in the correct membership category.

We care about your membership, and are willing to make this extra effort to serve you better.





CALENDAR

CALL THE TAPE!

Before setting out for any field trip, call the Audubon Bird Tape, (213) 874-1318 for special instructions or last minute changes that may have occurred by the Thursday before the trip.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, APRIL 6 — Caryl Smith will lead us through the little used Limekiln Creek Park in search of the wide variety of residents and possible migrants. Bring lunch for possible afternoon water-birding in nearby area. Exit Simi Fwy. 118 at Tampa; go north short distance to Rinaldi and turn west to end of street. Meet at 9 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13 — Join Bob Shanman (545-2867 after 6 p.m.) at 8 a.m. for his end of the season walk in the unique Ballona Wetlands. Will undoubtedly see a wide variety of shorebirds, some raptors, and possibly migrant land birds. Take Marina Fwy. 90 west to Culver Blvd., turn left to Pacific Ave., then right to footbridge at end. \$3 parking.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14 — Meet Fred Heath at 7:30 a.m. at the Lamont-Odet Overlook (off L. Palmdale—about 40 min. north of intersecting Freeways 5 & 14) on Fwy. 14 for a day of birding and wildflowers in the Antelope Valley. We will look for migrants, waterbirds, and desert specialties i.e. LaConte's Thrasher, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Scott's Oriole. Bring lunch and a lot of water. For those wishing to carpool, meet across the street from Denny's at the Roxford exit (no. end of the valley) of Fwy. 5 at 6:45 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20 — David White will lead a morning walk at the Whittier Narrows Regional Park looking for migrants plus a good variety of land and water birds. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So. El Monte, near crossing of freeways 60 and 605.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21 — Wayne and Judy Moore will lead their monthly morning walk for beginners in the Malibu Creek State Park. This is in cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountain Task Force. Expect a good variety of chaparral birds at this former movie location; will also look for migrants, Canyon Wren and Golden Eagle. Meet at the parking lot (\$2 fee) 200 yards south of Mulholland just off Las Virgenes/Malibu Cyn. Rd. at 8 a.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26 — Join Allan Keller at 8 a.m. for prime migration birding in Chatsworth Park South. In addition to resident chaparral species, will look for warblers, orioles and grosbeaks. From Topanga Cyn. Blvd., go west on Devonshire, continuing into parking lot near the Rec. Center.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28 — Meet Dr. Elton Morel at Mojave Narrows, a marvelous 800 acre desert oasis where spring migrants congregate. Will also look for Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Gambel's Quail and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Take Hwy. 15 toward Victorville exiting at Bear Valley Rd; go east 3.9 miles to Ridge Crest Rd., turn left 2.6 miles to park entrance. (\$2 fee day or weekend camping; fishing more). Meet at 8 a.m. at boathouse. Approximately 2 hours from L.A.

SATURDAY, MAY 4 — Harold Bond will lead a morning walk through O'Melveny Park, one of the Valley's newest and wildest parks where waves of migrants have been seen. From Simi Fwy. 118, exit and go north on Balboa to Senson St., turn west to parking lot at end. Meet at 8 a.m.

RESERVATION TRIPS

WEEKEND, APRIL 13-14 — Travel in comfort on a tour bus (reclining seats and restroom) to see the displaying Sage Grouse in the Crowley Lake area. We'll also look for Blue Grouse, Black-billed Magpie, Red Crossbill, Evening Grosbeak, Clark's Nutcracker; etc. \$75 fee includes one night lodging, double occupancy (please designate pre-selected roommate or smoking/non-smoking); \$15 additional for single room. Please note on your reservation whether you would still be interested in going by car should we either not get the minimum 30 participants by 3/26 or if road conditions would prevent bus access to the area. Fee \$25 ea. w/o lodging. (A car trip would probably require 2 nights lodging and 800 miles of driving.) See Reservation Procedure. David Koepfel Leader.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20 — Join Bruce Henderson and Tom Keeney for this first special access trip into Banning Canyon/San Geronio Creek area. See various habitats as we travel from 2,000 ft. to 8,000 ft. in search of residents and spring migrants. Limited participation.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27 — Spend a special spring migration day in the Coachella Valley Area with Robert McKernan. A unique opportunity to see a good variety of passerine migrants plus large numbers of breeding plumaged shorebirds. \$10 per person.

TUESDAY, MAY 7 — Join Jean Brandt for a special morning access tour through the Huntington Library Gardens at this peak migration period. Make reservations early. Maximum: 20 people.

WEEKEND, MAY 18-19 — Visit the Lanfair Valley Area (near Needles), one of the most interesting and least explored areas in so. Cal. with Brian Keelan. This remote high desert will feature breeding Bendire's Thrasher; other possibilities are: Gray Vireo, Scott's and Hooded Orioles, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Poorwill, Gilded Flicker and other Arizona specialties. Plants, mammals and reptiles will also be emphasized. \$30 per person.

WEEKEND, June 29-30 — Join this perennially popular trip to see a great diversity of species in four distinctly different habitats of the Kern River/Greenhorn Mt. Area with Bob Barnes. Some of the possibilities are: Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grouse, Pinyon Jay, Gray Flycatcher, Williamson's Sapsucker. \$20 per person.

WEEKEND, JULY 13-14 — See an exciting diversity of plants, animals and birdlife with David Gaines while exploring the eastern Sierra from Mono Lake to Tioga Pass. Easy hiking, spectacular mountain views and flower displays in addition to looking for Lewis' Woodpecker, Pinyon Jay, Gray Flycatcher and others. \$20 per person.

PELAGIC TRIPS

SATURDAY, MAY 11: Puffin and Shearwater Trip, Santa Barbara Island and out to sea. Depart 6 a.m., return 6 p.m. Leaders: Kimball Garrett and Richard Webster. Price: \$24 per person.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th: Shearwater and Jaeger Trip, Santa Barbara Island and out to sea. Depart 6 a.m., return 6 p.m. Leaders: Bruce Broadbooks and Kimball Garrett. Price: \$24 per person.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22: Red-billed Tropicbird Trip, San Clemente Island. Depart 5:30 a.m., return 6 p.m. Leaders: Richard Webster and Louis Bevier. Price: \$25 per person.

RESERVATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

Reservations will be accepted ONLY if ALL the following information is supplied: (1) Trip desired; (2) Names of people in your party; (3) Phone numbers-(a) usual and (b) evening before event, in case of emergency cancellation; (4) Separate check (no cash please) to LAAS for exact amount for each trip; (5) Self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and associated trip information. Send to: Reservations Chairman Ruth Lohr, LAAS, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled two weeks prior to the scheduled date (4 weeks for pelagics) and you will be so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation during that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement.

If you desire to carpool to an event, Ms. Lohr or Art Levine (usually in office on Tuesday) can provide information for you to make contact and possible arrangements.

EVENING MEETINGS

TUESDAY, APRIL 9 — Esther Tyrrell will give a slide illustrated talk on Hummingbirds of North America. Esther co-authored the book *Hummingbirds: Their Life and Behavior* with her husband Robert Tyrrell. This book will be available at the Audubon Book Store for sale and autographs by the authors.

TUESDAY, MAY 14 — Join Larry Naylor for a slide illustrated program on the Chaco of South America, the vast and unique birding area of Argentina and Paraguay.