



WESTERN TANAGER

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New Zealand Birdlife

by

Dr. Michael H. Rosove

Maxine D. Wolf

may my heart always be open to little
birds who are the secrets of living

e.e. cummings

New Zealand, located in the South Pacific southeast of Australia, is far away from the frenetic pace of the workaday life of Los Angeles. Only the southern tip of South America, the subantarctic islands, Antarctica lie farther south. At 45° South latitude, the December days are long and the twilight lingers. The sun sweeps across the North, Orion is upside down, and the constellations and Megellanic clouds of the Southern hemisphere glitter on clear nights.

The country is composed of two principal islands, North and South, and several smaller outlying islands, comprising a land mass about two-thirds that of California. It is a region of many habitats: oceans, coasts, wetlands, rolling farmlands, subtropical forests in the North, and dense mountain forests with breathtaking alpine scenes and glaciers in the South. Most New Zealanders live in or near several main cities, including Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, leaving large tracts of agriculturally productive, sparsely populated land, and substantial tracts of native unspoiled bush. There are 3 million people, 60 million sheep, and billions of birds.

New Zealanders are so friendly and extend themselves so naturally that the American traveler is immediately taken in by their warmth. All the more so for the visiting birder; New Zealanders have a strong consciousness of their birds, as there are no native mammals. Native birds are protected, a different species is depicted on each currency denomination, many New Zealanders know their birdlife well, and, of course, they refer to themselves affectionately as Kiwis. Environmental issues have become as important and familiar to New Zealanders as they are to us in the United States.



Fantail

Illustration by Maxine Wolf

While the main purpose of our four week vacation in New Zealand last December was to be together and "get away from it all," our binoculars were packed into our bags as surely as our clothing and toothbrushes. We returned from New Zealand refreshed and with indelible memories. The birds stole a bit of our hearts, and we would like to share some ways to enhance your birding enjoyment in this land "down under."

For starters, the essential field guide is *The New Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*, by R.A. Falla, R.B. Simpson, and E.G. Turbott (Collins, Auckland and London, 1983, 8vo, 247 pp., 48 color plates plus additional illustrations, NZ \$20). This superb and indispensable guide is sanctioned by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. It contains full descriptions of the 315 species recorded in New Zealand since the last century. It is exhaus-

tively comprehensive. For example, the Huia is given full treatment although the bird has not been recorded alive since 1907. It is cautiously "presumed extinct." (Maybe you will be its rediscoverer.) The circumpolar Emperor Penguin is similarly treated because one bird came ashore in 1967. A new comprehensive book in large format has just been released under the title of *Complete Book of New Zealand Birds* edited by C.J.R. Robertson with 77 contributors (Reader's Digest, Sidney, 1985, 319 pp, 330 color photos). This book is the very latest standard reference work and is highly recommended. We recommend two additional items to those interested in beautifully made, high quality books. One is *New Zealand Birds*, by W. Jacob, D. Braithwaite, D. Hadden, and J. Warham (Kowhai Publishing Ltd., Christchurch and Auckland, 1983, 4to, III pp., 125 color photographs, NZ \$20). This is a

collection of stunning photographs by some of New Zealand's best known bird photographers, with good habitat descriptions. The other is *Buller's Birds of New Zealand*, edited by E.G. Turbott (Whitcoulls Publishers, Christchurch, Sydney, and London, 1982, folio, 261 pp., 48 color plates, in slip case, NZ \$75). This book is a handsomely made reproduction of *A History of the Birds of New Zealand*, originally published in 1888, a collaboration between the great ornithologist Sir Walter Lawry Buller and artist E.G. Keulemans. Many of the original writings, and all of the original plates are reproduced with high quality. You may find these books at Whitcoulls, on Queens Street, in Auckland, and at many other book stores.

On the naming of birds, many native birds have retained their Maori names. In general, the accent is on the first syllable. Most Maori names are onomatopoeic for the birds' calls. We were intrigued by this cultural difference, as most English names describe how a bird looks or behaves.

Once you arrive in New Zealand, you will find myriads of flying creatures inhabiting the roadsides, especially in rural areas. The bird density is so high in some places that it is nearly impossible to avoid accidents between bird and auto. Several times our inner peace was terribly disturbed as the result of unintended collisions. Among the rural roadside and park birds, non-native species of European origin are the Mallard, Rock Dove, Starling, Song Thrush, Blackbird (a thrush), Skylark, Hedge "Sparrow", House Sparrow, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Greenfinch, and Redpoll. Other non-native birds are the Indian Myna (North Island only) and two Australian Bell-Magpies, the White-backed (widespread), and the Black-backed (locally common — look hard in the Hawkes Bay area of the North Island). Seven natives are the Grey Duck; the Weka, a flightless rail to be found near South Island forests; the Pukeko, another rail found in swampy or moister areas of both islands; the Harrier, usually seen soaring overhead or picking at carrion; the New Zealand Falcon, a hilly back country inhabitant, and quite rare; the welcome Swallow, self-introduced from Australia several decades ago; and the New Zealand Pipit, whose coloration and body habits are virtually identical to the Skylark. In fact, differentiation is often difficult and frustrating. It is easy to say a bird *is* a Skylark when the bird shows its slight crest, or flies into a wind, stationary above the ground, singing and trilling neurotically and seemingly without end. It is more difficult to say it *is* a pipit. Just hope to catch one land on the ground with its distinctive behavior, several bobs of the tail. Most will go undifferentiated — we called these "pi-larks"! The Greenfinch and Hedge "Sparrow" are uncommon. Look for both in the botanical gardens in Christchurch and for the Greenfinch in the park in Queenstown. The Redpoll is tougher still — good luck.



Photos by Dr. Michael Rosove

Australian gannets at Cape Kidnappers

Low tide exposes broad expanses of beach and mudflats often abutting on mangroves or leading to inland waters. It is not surprising that these environments host a remarkable number of bird species. The Auckland environs, Bay of Islands, and Firth of Thames are good examples in the North Island; the Otago Peninsula and Lake Ellesmere are examples on the South Island. One may expect to see several shag species, the White-faced and Reef Herons, New Zealand Scaup, Mallard and Grey duck, Variable (Black) and Southern Pied Oystercatchers, Pied Stilt, Spur-winged Plover, and New Zealand Kingfisher in many locales. Several places deserve special mention.

The Firth of Thames is an enormous sea inlet, largely surrounded by land. Be sure to visit Miranda at high tide. The area is host to common coastal species, the Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit, and numerous migrants. Many of the century's rarest sightings have been made here. To those especially interested in shore birds, this is paradise.

You must not miss the Australian Gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers (North Island, near Napier) during the breeding season which begins in October. These large, gorgeously colored birds of six-foot wingspan are perhaps the most majestic birds in the coastal waters. This is the only mainland-based colony in the world. Call ahead by telephone to obtain tide information, as the beach is impassable at high tide. From the road end, there is a beautiful and leisurely five mile (each way) beach and overland walk to the nesting grounds. You may approach the colonies

within yards and see the birds nest building, egg warming, chick rearing, searching for food, preening, and nuzzling.

The 50 square mile Otago Peninsula near Dunedin is a must. Even those uninterested in birds will be taken by the environment — bay shore on one side, open sea with beautiful beaches and steep cliffs on the other, rolling grassy hills, and forests. Visit the Royal Albatross colony at the far end of the peninsula. The colony is fenced off and protected. Ticket reservations must be obtained from the Government Tourist Bureau in Dunedin. This will probably be your only chance to view these enormous oceanic birds in New Zealand.

While driving to the colony, look for a sign for Penguin Place, turn off to the farm house, and obtain a key (for a nominal charge) to pass through the locked gate a hundred or so yards from the albatross colony.

At the far end there is a beach overlook where Yellow-eyed Pengunis may be found. While on the peninsula, take a side trip to Allen's Beach. The beach is an unspoiled beauty — a walk to the south end will bring you to another Yellow-eyed Penguin colony. We fought a fresh gale and rain storm to get there. But it was no matter to the birds. Oblivious to the weather, they rode the wave and waddled ashore to their nests in shrubbery adjacent to the beach.

New Zealand is well endowed with shags, and you may expect to see many including the Pied, Black, Little, and Little Black varieties. Two additional species may be found on the Otago Peninsula. There is a large, impossible-

to-miss Stewart Island Shag breeding colony at the albatross colony. While at Penguin Place, walk past the designated seal area and note the Spotted Shag colony on the rocky cliffs. Among the shags, the Spotted has particularly beautiful plumage.

Lake Ellesmere, about 40 miles from Christchurch, is another vast wetland environment, and common species, migrants, and accidentals may be found. At the lake edge at Green Flat Huts resides an enormous Black Swan colony. We counted about 750 birds. The night time sights of these elegant birds flying through moonlight, and of adult pairs, cygnets close by, paddling on the lake, were inspiring and serene.

The forests are quintessential New Zealand. We relished every moment spent in these unspoiled, canopied hideaways. The forests become more and more beautiful the farther south one goes, culminating in Mt. Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks. The first birds are all native, and are the New Zealanders' pride. Rightfully so! Each one is a jewel. Thirty odd species reside in forests and closely adjacent habitats. The most widespread and common are the Wood Pigeon; Kea; Morepork (an owl); Fantail, Tomtit, and Robin (flycatchers); Silvereye; Grey Warbler; and Bellbird and Tui (honeyeaters). The rest are uncommon and require special efforts... and luck.



Spotted shags on the Otago Peninsula

Without Fantails, the world would be a poorer place. These tame creatures are six inches in length, of which over half is tail. They follow you along a trail because your walking stirs up insects. One will squeak and twitter from its perch 8 to 10 feet off the ground, eying you amicably. Then it shifts side to side, tail slightly cocked and folded, it twitters some more, and then splendidly displays its twelve tail feathers in a radially striped fan. Suddenly the bird flies from its perch, engages in phenomenal aerobatics as it feeds on small flies and gnats, and just as suddenly returns to its perch. We only grew to love them more and more as we enjoyed them playing, flitting, flying, and being.

The Bellbird and Tui produce the most characteristic daytime sounds of the forest. Their voices are at one moment liquid song, then a croak, a knock at the door, a grunt, or a sniff. The precise fine tuning of bell-like



A Kea waits for an unattended, open vehicle

sounds is indescribable. Captain Cook and Buller marvelled at these birds. So did we!

The New Zealand Wood Pigeon is striking for its enormous size (20 inches in length) and brilliant, forest-tone plumage. It lumbers through tree foliage and flies with powerful wing beats audible at considerable distances. Tree branches sway upon its landing. It is the Boeing 747 of the forest.

The Kea is a drab olive-green parrot with scarlet-orange underwings and rump, and is limited to mountain areas of the South Island. You don't have to go out looking for them. *They* will find *you*. They are cheeky rascals and enjoy tearing at unguarded soft items such as shoes and automobile upholstery. Their bills are like can openers, formidable indeed. The closely related Kaka tends to limit itself to forests away from settlements. The largest psittacine is the Kakapo, the green "parrot-owl" that has lost its ability to fly against gravity (glides down, walks up). It is extremely rare, inhabiting steep canyon ravines at Milford Sound, not accessible to the public except by special arrangement. Inquire at Fiordland National Park headquarters at Te Anau in advance.

Three native parakeets are found on the main islands, but are scarce. A convenient place to find the Yellow-crowned Parakeet is in the forest across the lake from Te Anau. With some luck, binoculars peering into the upper canopy, flashes of green may be seen passing through the foliage. Lake Rotoroa is an outstanding forest and lake birding area. The other two Parakeets, the Red-crowned

and Orange-fronted, are in the vicinity. In addition, the Fernbird (a warbler) resides in the swamp adjacent to the lake on the trail to Braeburn Falls. Grey Ducks, Paradise Shelducks, Bellbirds, Tuks, Tomtits, Fantails, Grey Warblers, and Robins are here in abundance. But so are mosquitoes and sandflies. Lake Rotoroa is famous for them. Take it from us, proper clothing and insect repellent are essential!

Four more warblers are difficult to find. The Whitehead is limited to forests in the southern part of the North Island. The Brown Creeper, Yellowhead, and Chatham Island Warbler (very scarce) reside in South Island forests. Two endemic cuckoos specialize in parasitizing warblers' nests. Thus the Shining Cuckoo is found where Grey Warblers are, and the Long-tailed Cuckoo where Whiteheads, Yellowheads, and Brown Creepers are.

Three wrens comprise a family (Acanthistidae) unique to New Zealand. Only the Rifleman, New Zealand's smallest bird at three inches in length, is considered common. Nevertheless, we were giving up hope that we would glimpse this bird at all. Then some high pitched cheeps in the forest at the Gates of Haast drew our attention to a family unit actively passing through the bush, feeding on insects in bark crevices. Look for the rare Rock Wren in the subalpine scrub Fiordland. The Bush Wren is extremely rare.

Three wattle-birds comprise another family (Callaeidae) unique to New Zealand. The Huia is likely extinct, the Saddleback



Magnificent alpine scenery in Fiordland

extremely rare, and the Kokako scarce but present in numerous places on the North Island (see Falla *et al* for details). The Kokako, a classic bird with dark blue-gray plumage and blue wattles, is worth finding. The male's morning song, reminiscent of an organ, has been regarded the most rapturous sound of the forest.

The Takahe is a richly colored, flightless rail that was considered extinct until it was rediscovered in 1948. About 200 birds live in the tussock grasslands of the Murchison Mtns. in Fiordland. Access to the area is generally prohibited to protect the birds from intrusion.

Last and certainly not least, the Kiwi needs no description. Birds of three species are now fairly numerous throughout forest areas on both islands. Nevertheless, very few New Zealanders have seen Kiwi in its natural habitat, owing to the nocturnal and extremely reclusive habits of these flightless creatures. We were undaunted by the unfavorable odds, and inquired at the Waitangi Pine Forest ranger headquarters (near Paihia, Bay of Islands), a Brown Kiwi research center. Having obtained entry permission, we proceeded deep into the forest at nightfall. It was raining (the birds remain in their burrows under these circumstances). At 1:00 A.M., the rain stopped and the birds began to call, one every few minutes from many directions. If the Bellbird and Tui are the voices of the forest by day, then the Kiwi rules by night. Its call is eerie and plaintive. Dutifully, we sat on the damp forest floor for three hours, flashlight ready, waiting for a bird to walk by sniffing amongst the fallen pine needles. In the end, at least our ears were

rewarded, though not our eyes. Fortunately, we had the satisfaction of our effort, for annoying insect bites and our physical exhaustion were with us for quite a few days.

To conclude, a few odds and ends. The Eastern Rosella, an introduced Australian parakeet and certainly one of the most daz-

zingly colorful in the world, is doing well in numerous North Island locales. We found them on the outskirts of Auckland via Titirangi to Parau. Some reside along the road to the beach at Parau. The beach itself is a beautiful coastal mangrove area with numerous shore species

If you have time, arrange a trip to Kapiti Island (northwest of Wellington) through the forestry service. It is a wildlife bird reserve abundant in forest and shore species. At Okarito (near Westland National Park) are Royal Spoonbill and White Heron Colonies in a kahikatea swamp. Fiordland Crested and Little Blue Penguins may be seen in Milford Sound. Those interested in walking the four day, 33 mile Milford Track in Fiordland, dubbed "the finest walk in the world," should plan to make reservations a year in advance. Contact New Zealand consulate in Los Angeles.

Some birding purists may scorn the notion of bird exhibits. But several are noteworthy. Kiwis can be viewed at the Kiwi House in Otorohanga. While in Te Anau, visit the Wild Bird Preserve; represented are a pair of Takahes and all of the native psittacines except the Kakapo. There is the outstanding and complete preserved collection of New Zealand birds in the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch.

We hope you make it to New Zealand some day. When you do, have a great time, and say "Hi" to the Fantails for us!



From The Editor

by Fred Heath



Because this is a jam-packed 12 page issue, I don't have to spend a lot of words to fill up the empty space. I am thrilled to have an article from Dorothy Dimsdale who had been a regular contributor to the *Tanager* and was one of my personal favorite writers. I always enjoyed her poking fun at the supposedly serious expert/lister side of birding. Unfortunately the current piece is a little less humorous than her other works. I was hoping to reproduce her x-ray to go along with the article, but luckily for all of you the lack of space has stopped my lack of good taste.

Don't let this issue fool you. I am still very low on material. There is enough to complete the July-August issue, but that's it. So please send those articles, suggestions or even nasty letters to the editor, Fred Heath, P.O. Box 5036, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

PELAGIC TRIPS

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 6:00 a.m., return 6 p.m. Leaders: **Richard Webster** and **Louis Bevier**. Price: \$24 per person.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5: *Tropicbird and Storm-Petrel Trip, out to sea towards Santa Barbara Island.* Depart 6:00 a.m., return 6 p.m. Leaders: **Herb Clarke**, **Larry Norris**. Price: \$24 per person.

Expected Species on Summer-Fall Trips: Pink-footed, Sooty and Black-vented Shearwaters, Black, Ashy and Least Storm-Petrels, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Sabine's Gull, Arctic Tern, Xantus' Murrelet (Aug.), Craveri's Murrelet, Cassin's Auklet.

Other Possibilities and Rarities seen on Previous Trips: Flesh-footed and Buller's Shearwaters, Leach's and Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrels, Red-billed Tropicbird (Sept. and Oct.), Red Phalarope, Long-tailed Jaeger and South Polar Skua.

* * *

All trips are on the *Vantuna*, leaving from the USC Docks at Fish Harbor, Seaside Ave. on Terminal Island, across the Vincent Thomas Bridge from San Pedro. There are 38 spaces, plus 2 for leaders. Remember: If possible, you should get your reservations in at least 4 weeks before trip date. (See Reservation Policy on Calendar Page).

The President's Corner

Bob Shanman

Believe it or not, I'm still here, even though my monthly writings have been absent for some time. But taking care of a "bird on the nest" has proven to be more time-consuming than we ever imagined. (For those of you who have not heard, our little hatchling, Derek Jacob, increased the Chapter's membership by one on Nov. 6, 1984!) All kidding aside, this is my last column as President, and I look forward to June with mixed emotions.

The past 5 years on the Board, and the past 3 as President, have been very rewarding and educational for me. I have seen LAAS function, survive adversity (the fire), grow, support major environmental programs, and generally to serve its members and the environmental community as a leader. None of this happens as the result of any one individual. It takes a lot of work by many to keep this organization going. I heartily recommend that any of you who have some time try to get involved. The leaders of this chapter are an excellent group of people to work with and for.

Almost 3 years ago I asked the Board to support getting National Audubon involved in the Ballona Wetlands project, with the hope that National could be involved with the restoration project. At that time, I did not even dream of the final of this effort. Just before the banquet this year, John Borne-man of National informed me that two years of sometimes very difficult negotiations had been completed, and that National and Summa had signed the agreement to make National responsible for the restoration project, and ultimately to be the owner and operator of the restored wetlands. Summa will fund the project, and National will have a major sanctuary and educational facility here in Los Angeles. This is a unique opportunity for the National Audubon Society to have a very visible and positive presence in the Los Angeles Basin.

I would like to thank everyone on the Board for their support these past three years. Even more so, I would like to acknowledge the work of those silent individuals with whom I have had very little contact. A hearty thanks for a job well done to those volunteers who come in every day, week after week to keep the chapter going.

The chapter had embarked on two very exciting new projects. We have had two very successful seminars, and plan to make this a regular activity. Gerry Maisel has volunteered to take on this responsibility, and is beginning to organize the next one, to be given this fall by Jon Winters on the Great Grey Owl. Details will follow in the *Tanager*.

More recently, the Board has voted to establish the Los Angeles Audubon Society Research Awards. This program will be used to fund research by southern California birders and ornithologists. The Awards funding has been seeded with a major donation from the estate of Bob Johnson, a former member who passed away from cancer in December 1983. Proceeds from the sale of LAAS T-shirts and sweatshirts will be added to the fund. We are seeking corporate donations, and donations to this project may be made directly by interested individuals. Sharon Milder is handling this project and will be publishing more information about application and proposal requirements in future issues of the *Tanager*.

The chapter will continue to support the Mono Lake lawsuit. LAAS is a plaintiff, and was the precipitator for National's involvement in the case. As always, support for the Condor program continues to be strong. We are still helping to fund the Research Center through the annual fund raising campaign and other sources. In the last 5 years, the program has received over \$25,000 in support from LAAS through our members, grants, and chapter funding.

The LAAS "Peregrine Project" on Boney Ridge has been reasonable success, and we are currently working with the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Center on this year's program. If eggs are available, we will be supporting a release either on Boney Ridge, or one of the Channel Islands. A major corporate donation has been given to the Center and will be used to supplement our funding for the project this year.

Well, it is time to say so long, but not goodbye. The Ballona walks will continue, and I will move into the position of Executive Past President on the Board. The best of luck to our new President, Ken Kendig and his new Board. And finally, thanks to all of you out there. I don't always express it, but your efforts and support over the past three years have really been rewarding and appreciated. See you all soon.

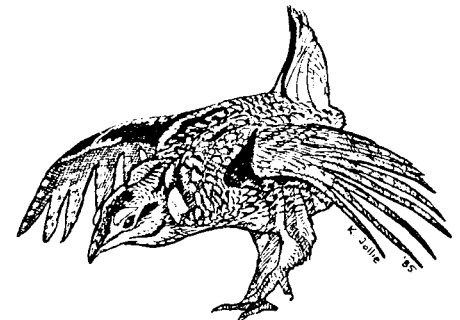


Illustration by K. Jollie

Summer Birding Doldrums?

Wanda Conway,
Field Trip Chairman

Wonder where to bird now that spring migration has passed and it's gotten hot? It's time to visit the mountains or go to sea!

While the Angeles National Forest which includes Switzer, Charlton, Chilaeo, Buckhorn, Table Mountain, Jackson Lake and Camp Sycamore are favorite localities for mountain birds, you might consider a trek to the Los Padres National Forest to see the California Condor. (For more specifics order the *Tanager* articles on the San Gabriels in the August and September 78 issues or the article on Switzer in the February 78 issue; all by Jean Brandt. Send \$1 and SASE to LAAS for each article).

The Condor is practically a sure bet if you plan a full day at the Mil Portrero sign in summer. Go north on Fwy. 5 and take the Frazier Park exit. Go west to the junction of Cuddy Valley Rd. and Mil Portrero. Follow the latter to the sign "Leaving Los Padres N.F." where you will find some friendly college students working on the Condor survey. Do take plenty of liquids, lunch, some shade and perhaps a beach chair and be prepared to wait. If you get a very early start (and are there near sunrise especially in early summer) stop at the Tecuya Mt. Speedway sign about 6½ miles in from the freeway and listen for the song of the Black-Chinned Sparrow in the mesquite on either side of the road. Also stop at the Cuddy Valley/Mil Portrero junction to search for Lazuli Bunting, Brewers, Sage and Vesper Sparrows and across the street in the tall pines look for Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Stellar Jay and White-headed Woodpecker. If you have more time, Fir Ridge Rd., Iris Meadows and Mt. Pinos are good spots to look for the following: Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Clark's Nutcracker, Mt. Bluebird, Williamson's Sapsucker, and in June, Calliope Hummingbird. For more specifics, order the *Western Tanager* June 1976 article, "Birding at Mt. Pinos" by Jean Brandt for \$1 and SASE from LAAS.

Regularly scheduled morning birdwalks through the summer are listed below, the last two are sponsored by the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force.



David White's monthly walk is through the very diversified habitats of Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Some really great birds have been found in the river channel, willows, lakes and fields. It is worth the outing on the chance of seeing the Least Bittern that breed there. Look for numerous others from Towhees and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers to Warbling Vireo, Western Flycatcher, Western Goldfinches, Herons, Kingfisher, Herons, raptors and introduced Cardinals. On rare occasions the Chat and Wood Stork have been seen. (See Calendar page for dates and directions.)

Topanga State Park is the sight of Gerry Haigh's monthly walk. Meet at 8 a.m. the first Sunday of each month. In these oak meadows, pond, and woodlands overlooking the valley and sea, look for nesting Warblers and Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, a variety of chaparral birds, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Bluebirds, Warbling Vireo, Flycatchers, Raptors and perhaps a Lazuli Bunting or even a Dusky Flycatcher. From Topanga Canyon Blvd. take a very sharp east turn uphill on Entrada Rd. (7 miles from Ventura Fwy. and 1 mile north of Topanga Village.) Keep bearing left on Entrada at various roadforks to parking lot (\$2 fee) at end.

Wayne and Judy Moore (347-0915) lead a beginner's walk through the Malibu Creek State Park the third Sunday of each month. This former movie ranch has oak woodlands, a stream and lake. Look for Goldfinches, Towhees, Western Bluebirds, Warblers, Vireos, Flycatchers, Phainopepla and a variety of raptors among others. Meet at the parking lot (\$2 fee) at 7 a.m. in summer (8 a.m. otherwise) 200 yards south of Mulholland Drive off the the Las Virgines/Malibu Canyon Rd., Malibu.

A trip to the Salton Sea can be memorable in many ways! The temptation of possibly seeing Wood Storks, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Gull-billed Terns, Stilt Sandpipers, Laughing and Yellow-footed Gulls and irregular strays of Magnificent Frigatebirds, Roseate Spoonbills and even Boobies a few years ago, is high for those able to overlook the probable temperatures of over 110° and the stench of dead fish. One Audubon group does a very long day trip annually for very hardy souls in mid-August, aptly named "The Insane Jaunt to the Salton Sea!"

My recommendation for those wishing to temper the heat a bit would be to start birding the north end after the peak of the heat (3:30ish), work your way down the various stops on the east side staying overnight in Brawley or El Centro (air-conditioned and pool of course), then start birding at the crack of dawn the following day on the west

side, allowing a drive home in your air-conditioned car during mid-day. For more detailed info, refer to Jean Brandt's "Birding at the Salton Sea" and/or "The Salton Sea — A Chronicle of the Seasons" by Jon Dunn, both from the Jan-Feb. 77 *Western Tanager*. (To order from LAAS, send SASE and \$1 per article by check).

Closer to home, The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has an extensive program to bring you closer to nature, through various walks and seminars (including Birds of the Santa Monicas by Kimball Garrett). Their brochure comes out too late to be timely for this article, but may be obtained by calling 818-888-3770 or writing SMMNRA, 22900 Ventura Blvd., Suite 140, Woodland Hills, 91364.

Several groups including SMMNRA and the Santa Monica Audubon sponsor a weekly taped message of events for the L.A. Area. One week included among other items, an Audubon outing to Butterbrecht Springs, an Entomology class, Antelope Valley wildflower information and a Bluegrass Music Festival. Phone 213-477-2153.

You want to see some seabirds and can't go on on one of L.A.A.S.'s great pelagics scheduled by Phil Sayre? One option would be to take a natural history trip sponsored by The Nature Conservancy to Santa Cruz Island whose leader is familiar with birds. The trips run 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. You should be in good physical condition — able to move from a skiff to a rocky shore and manage a fairly strenuous 1½ mile hike. Wear good hiking shoes and dress in layers as it is usually quite cold at sea. The island will be warmer and you may wish to swim during the 3½ to 4 hours ashore. In addition to bathing suit or shorts, bring suntan lotion and hat. Take your own food and water. There are no facilities on the island. Maximum 35 participants: \$28 for TNC members and \$35 for non-members. (For more information, contact Diane, The Nature Conservancy, (805-962-9111) 213 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara 93101.)

Ventura trips, on June 8, June 30, July 14 and August 10 are reserved through Island Packers 805-642-1393. Go north on Fwy. 101 beyond Oxnard. Take the Victoria Ave., exit; go left under the freeway approximately 1 mile to Olivias Park Dr. and go right; continue through intersection which becomes Spinaker Drive to 1867. (Follow signs to Channel Island National Park Headquarters. The displays there are also worth your while.)

Santa Barbara trips on June 22, July 27, August 25 are handled by Sea Landing, 805-963-3564 for reservations. Take Fwy. 101 to Castillo exit; go south to Cabrillo Blvd. and turn left to Bath St. Landing at foot of Bath.

If your schedule doesn't jibe with the pelagics listed and you're desperate to get on the water, see the next page for a list of tour or fishing boats off Southern California.

Best wishes for a great summer and great birding!

California Pelagics — Resource List

Los Angeles Audubon

— several trips each year from San Pedro
(Sat. Aug. 10, Sun. Sept. 22, Sat. Oct. 5)

Audubon House,

7377 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. 90046

Attn: Ruth Lohr Reservations

(213) 876-0202

Western Field Ornithologists —

few trips annually from San Diego

(Sat. Sept. 7)

Ginger Johnson,

4637 Del Mar Ave., San Diego 92107

(619) 223-7985

Elite Guide Tours —

some San Diego trips

Claude Edwards,

2932 Greyling Drive, San Diego 92123

(619) 279-8171

Shearwater Journeys —

numerous trips from Monterey

Debra Love Shearwater,

221 Claudius Dr., Aptos 95003

(408) 688-1990

Wings, Inc. — several a year from

Monterey Bay (8/2, 10/8)

Box 889, Northeast Harbor, Maine 04662

(207) 276-5077

Oceanic Society Expeditions —

Farallon Islands fm. S.F. & Santa Cruz

fm. Ventura Fort Mason Center, Bldg. E.

San Francisco 94123

(415) 441-1106; (415) 474-3385

Golden Gate Audubon — trips from

San Francisco

2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley 94705

(415) 843-2222

Santa Barbara Audubon —

occasional trip from Santa Barbara or Ventura,

300 N. Los Carneros Rd., Goleta 93117

(805) 964-1468

Morro Coast Audubon — occasional trip

from Morro Bay, Los Osos, 93442

(805) 528-7182; (805) 544-1777

The Nature Conservancy — several nature

trips yearly from Ventura & Santa Barbara

213 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara 93101

Attn: Diane

(805) 962-9111

Cabrillo Marine Museum Volunteers —

several nature trips a year, some to islands

3720 Stephen White Dr., San Pedro 90731

(213) 548-7562

Tips for pelagic participants:

1. Dress in several layers year around as a breeze off the water can be VERY COLD. Don't forget gloves, warm cap, non-skid footwear, visor, sun lotion and waterproof outer layer of clothing.
2. Eat a good breakfast, though not too heavy or greasy. Take lunch. Soda crackers, bagels etc. and lemon-lime type drinks are great for queasy tummies!
3. Consider taking Marazine or comparable motion-sickness medication before trip or you may wish to have your M.D. prescribe the new Transvaal-D ear patches. Many swear by them!
4. Take popcom for chum; LOTS if you're a lone birder on a tour boat.

Compiled by Wanda Conway, L.A.A.S. 4/85



Pelagic Possibilities in Southern California

The following take groups out regularly for whale-watching (Jan.-April), fishing off-coast or island tours, etc. Usually no experienced birder is available, but its water transportation if you're really anxious to find some seabirds. Do check ahead and make reservations as hours, days, charges etc. vary considerably. They may also require a minimum number of reservations before going out. You may also wish to check their destination (preferably with the Captain if a fishing boat) as to whether they will be going out to sea or just following the coast, though many a good alcid, grebe or gull has been seen around the breakwater.....

Los Angeles Area

Redondo Sport Fishing Pier,

233 No. Harbor, Redondo Beach 90277

(213) 372-2111

Capt. Frenchy's Happy Man,

Pier 52, Fiji Way, Marina Del Rey

(213) 882-3625

San Pedro:

Catalina Cruises, Catalina Terminal

(213) 514-3838

(213) 755-6111;

(714) 527-7111

Ports O' Call Sportfishing, Berth 79

(213) 547-9916

Ports O' Call Village, Berth W33

(213) 831-1073

Village Boat House, Village Skytower

(213) 831-0996

Skipper's 22nd St. Landing, 141 W. 22nd St.

(213) 832-8304

Long Beach

Belmont Pier Sportfishing,

Ocean Blvd., at Termino Ave.

(213) 434-6781

Queen's Warf Sportfishing,

Berth 55, Pico Ave.

(213) 432-8993

Orange County

Davey's Locker,

Balboa Pavilion, Newport Beach

(714) 673-1434; (714) 673-5245

Dana Point

Dana Wharf Sportfishing

(714) 496-5794

Orange County Marine Institute

(714) 831-3850; (714) 831-4646

San Diego County

Municipal Pier at Emerson & Scott St.

between Harbor & Shelter Islands

H & M Landing

(619) 222-1144

Fisherman's Landing

(619) 222-0391

Municipal Pier at Pt. Loma

H & M Landing (to Coronado Islands)

(619) 222-1144

Sportfishing's Sundown Cruises

(619) 223-1627

Seaport Cruises — Sherator Harbor I.

or Marina at Embarcadero

(619) 234-4383

Invader Cruises —

Embarcadero on Harbor Dr., Pier B.

(619) 298-8066

Mission Bay — Islandia Sportfishing,

1551 W. Mission Bay Dr.

(619) 222-1164

Mission Bay — Seaforth Sportfishing,

1717 Quivera Rd.

(619) 224-3383

Oceanside — Helgren's Sportfishing

(619) 722-2133

Oxnard — Cisco Sportfishing,

4151 S. Victoria Ave.

(800) 322-3474; (805) 985-8511

Ventura — Island Packers,

1867 Spinnaker Dr. 93001

(805) 642-1393; (805) 642-3370

Santa Barbara — Sea Landing,

Cabrillo at Bath 93101

(805) 963-3564

Compiled by Wanda Conway, L.A.A.S. 4/85

Recommended Reference: "Birds of Monterey Bay, California" by R. Stallcup. Also helpful: "Seabirds" by Harrison, "Gulls" by Grant, and "Birds of Southern California, Status & Distribution" by Garrett & Dunn. All available from LAAS Audubon House.

Mycobacterium Avium Pneumonitis

by Dorothy Dimsdale

The splendid title of this article refers to what is more commonly known as avian tuberculosis. Some time ago this disease came to public notice when a severe outbreak on the east coast of the U.S. killed thousands of chickens. Tragic though it was, it was understood that there was no danger to humans.

Simply explained, the bacteria of avian t.b. live in the feces of birds, and if inhaled, can invade the lungs where they take hold and, if left untreated, can be fatal.

The chances of humans getting this disease are almost nil. I say 'almost' because for the past eighteen months I have been battling with it. I have yet to meet or hear of anyone else who has had it, but it is possible that a person with an interest in birds could be more susceptible.

There were no symptoms — at least in my case. Just a change in my annual lung X-ray which showed a strange white lacy pattern developing. At first there's a novelty in finding that no one can diagnose one's X-ray, then one begins to feel distinctly alone. Finally, after many tests, a bronchoscopy showed positively that I had contracted avian tuberculosis.

The treatment is worse than the disease. As it is so rare, there hasn't been a great deal of research to find a simple cure, so the medicine consists of frequent large and powerful doses which can have numerous side effects, though after a time these become tolerable. It's at this point that it would be a relief to discuss symptoms and possible progress with another who has the same problem. Fortunately, it's not contagious so that last year, though pretty dreary, wasn't dreary enough to prevent me from birding at Point Pelee and also in Alaska. I'm firmly convinced that a life bird or two will cure anything!

This somewhat cheerless piece is written to issue a small warning. I had no idea of where or how I could have inhaled these bacteria — I have never, as far as I know, immersed my nose in or near bird droppings of any kind. I have never had any curiosity about bird feces in general — except to remove them from my patio.

This fall, doing my usual removal of old bird nests from the hanging baskets in the atrium and various spots round the roof of the house, I realized that they sometimes took a bit of pushing with a broom handle. Some came apart as I removed them, thereby showering dust from the nest down close to my face and hair. As I quickly moved out of the way, I realized that this was how I could have caught the disease in the first place. It's certainly possible. So to those of you who enjoy examining old nests, I urge you to take care when handling them. To those who remove bird feces from your environs, do not scrape

or brush them up, but rather use warm water and wash them away.

Avian t.b. isn't quickly diagnosed because it's one of the last things one's doctor will be looking for. They checked me for all sorts of ghastly ailments so that when I finally found that I had something for which there is a cure — however long and tedious — I was grateful.

Finally, my medication is being reduced and in time I should be back to normal. There will be a scar on the lungs, but that's all.

My advice is to have regular X-rays and avoid contact with bird droppings and bird nests, unless taking precautions not to inhale. For myself, this disease has served simply to rekindle my disinterest in feces as a whole.



April Field Trip Lime Kiln Creek Park

Caryol Smith

This seldom-used canyon park proved, again, to be an ideal outing. The morning started off with a good group of birders (28, slightly overcast skies followed by sunshine, and high expectations.

The "bird of the day" was easily the Townsend's Solitaire. It sat patiently waiting to be identified (with its Mockingbird stance) as it was scoped by several birders in the group.

The warbler population seemed to be few this day, as there were no sightings of the Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned or Wilsons that were seen earlier in the week. However, we did see several Yellowthroat and many Yellow-rumped in beautiful spring plumage.

It was a good day for Hummers in the area, as Anna's, Costa's and Black-chinned were often sighted. The Rufous seen a week earlier was no where to be found. In very plain view was a female Anna's sitting on her tiny nest. That was a special treat, and we thank David for pointing this out to us.

The water area to the south of the park has almost disappeared but did produce Least Sandpipers, Killdeer, Water Pipit and many Redwinged Blackbirds.

All these plus Northern Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwings, Lawrence, American and Lesser Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, Chipping, Golden-crowned, Lark and Lincoln Sparrows and many more gave us a total for the day of 50 species.

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

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgermuth



Are environmentalist alarmists? Do we scream too easily and too long? Do we protest too much? Do we make mountains out of molehills? Are we afflicted with environmental paranoia? Our critics nod their head vigorously. They check off "Yes" to all of the above. Why are they so enthusiastic? Because, in one way or another, we tread on powerful toes. We want to change things. We challenge the way it's always been done in these here parts, stranger. (Full speed ahead on renewable solar energy rather than nearly total reliance on oil, coal and uranium.) Contrariwise, we also want to keep things the way they are. (Clear air at Bryce Canyon rather than smoke plumes from mining operations.) We are committed to saving endangered species, which means saving wetlands and wilderness from heedless development. And development is where the big bucks are.

Yes, sometimes we go off the deep end of the emotional swimming pool and holler prematurely. Sometimes we may lose perspective and forget that there are other legitimate views beside our own, that compromise may be more productive than confrontation. Sometimes we may appear to be holier than thou. But these are the exceptions. The environmental movement is no longer in its adolescence. Its leaders are dedicated and mature professionals. They have access to scientific information and the expertise to use it appropriately. Perhaps of greatest importance is the knowledge that they are speaking for the great majority who have said in poll after poll that they want a healthy and beautiful environment and are willing to pay for it.

Rachel Carson was called an alarmist, a hysterical troublemaker when she warned of environment disaster in "Silent Spring." That was in 1951. It wasn't until 1972 that DDT was banned in the United States. Who was right, the environmentalist or the chemical companies that pooh-poohed her? The forests and the lakes in Germany, Scandinavia and the northeastern United States are dying from the effects of acid rain. Sulfur from smokestack industries in our Midwest, swept eastward by prevailing winds, has been fingered as the culprit in environmental losses in Canada as well as New England. Canada has taken steps to reduce emissions from its own industries and power plants by 50% and for years has been trying to convince the United States to do likewise. The Prime Minister and the President met a short time ago and the Canadian leader (as had his predecessor) urgently

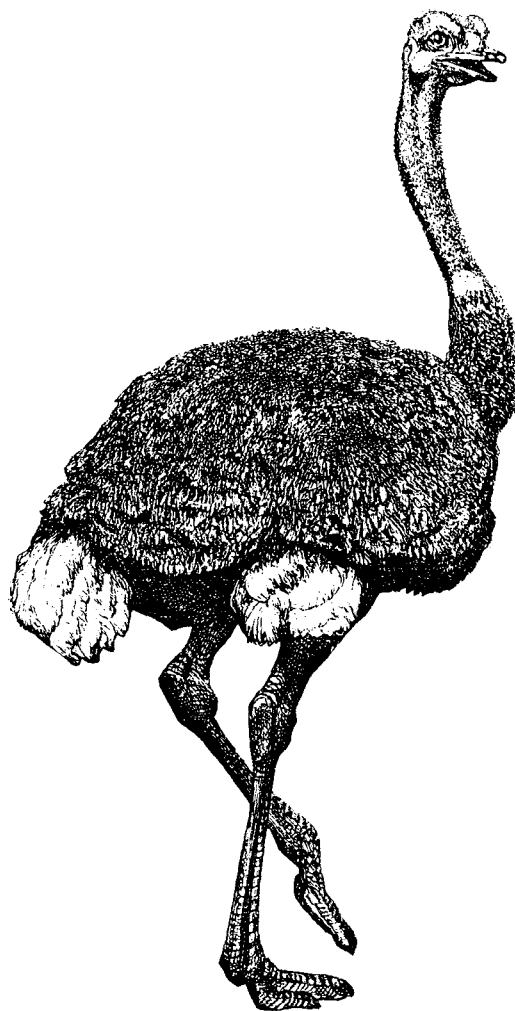
called for U.S. action. Mr. Reagan repeated the familiar American response: more research. To reduce sulfur and nitrogen emissions is an expensive proposition and certainly should not be undertaken lightly. But to do *nothing*, while more of our lakes and forests succumb is unconscionable.

For twenty years scientists have been aware of the phenomenon of acid rain. In the last ten years, conservative, unflappable bodies like the National Academy of Sciences, the National Governors Association and (the Reagan) White House Office of Science and Technology have viewed with alarm the threat of acid deposition. The National Clean Air Coalition, composed of *all* the prominent environmental organizations — plus the American Lung Association, the United Steelworkers and the League of Women Voters — has attacked the stalling tactics of the Administration and its transparent intent to gut the Clean Air Act. In 1980, Governor James Rhodes of Ohio (one of the industrial states most responsible for the creation of acid rain) was forced by public outcry to form a scientific task force to evaluate the problem. At the same time he smeared the "no-growth environmentalists" who had "latched on to acid rain as a rallying cry for a new wave of environmental hysteria." In April this year, Public Broadcasting's prestigious "Nova" television series had a vivid program on acid rain. Meticulously even-handed in its treatment, the program presented a devastating, gut-wrenching illustration of the effects of acid rain on our lakes and forests and wildlife. If he could hear Governor Rhodes' words after viewing "Nova", a fair-minded observer could readily decide who was hysterical.

In 1970, Congress authorized the construction of a breeder reactor at the Clinch River in Tennessee. This was to be the first of a new generation of nuclear power plants that would miraculously produce more fuel than it consumed. We would have an inexhaustible supply of power that would solve all our energy problems. Environmentalists were horrified. The dangers of nuclear reactors would pale beside the breeder that produced plutonium, one of the most dangerous elements in the world. The safety problems were far more complex than those of existing uranium-based plants. Only 12 lbs of plutonium are needed for a Nagasaki-size bomb. The fear of unstable nations or terrorists receiving "diverted" plutonium was so great that President Carter in 1977 postponed construction of the breeder indefinitely.

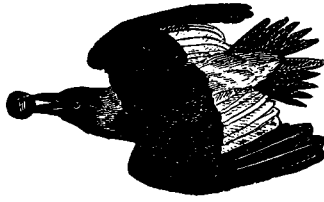
The National Resources Defense Council, a splendid organization of scientists and environmental lawyers, led the opposition to Clinch River with a lawsuit in 1971. Congress continued to vote more money for what one opponent called "a technological black hole — swallowing up huge sums, but yielding virtually nothing in return." Twelve years after authorization, ground was broken and the actual work was begun. NRDC and other environmental groups held on grimly through one close congressional vote after another. As the original \$400 million estimate was dwarfed by the project's over-runs, more allies joined the opposition. Eventually the utility industry itself began to get cold feet and the *Wall Street Journal* and even the Heritage Foundation (a conservative think-tank) came out against the breeder. Congress finally killed it in 1983. For \$8 billion the American taxpayer bought a sadly mangled bit of woodland along a Tennessee river.

And so it goes. Alarmists, emotional hysterics? As that nearly-forgotten pragmatic politician, Al Smith, was fond of saying, "Let's look at the record."



Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter
and Kimball Garrett



Three exceptional birds made bird-watching headlines in late March and April; each was accompanied by its own set of problems. The problem with the **Flame-colored Tanager** was simply that it was nearly 600 miles away, in the South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona. The bird (also known as the "Stripe-backed" or "Streak-backed" Tanager) was discovered by Bob Morse of nearby Portal, Arizona on 11 April, and seen by numerous bird listers over the next several days; it was thought to be an immature male, paler and more orange than adult males portrayed in the field guides. The species is found through most of the highlands of Middle America, north to Sonora and Chihuahua, but had not been previously reported north of the Mexican border.

The problem with the **Baikal Teal**, found at Unit One of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge on 31 March (Guy McCaskie and Jerry Oldenettel), was in its genes. All who studied the bird felt that it was "mostly" a Baikal, but details of the facial pattern, such as the position of the green stripe, were troublesome and it was widely concluded represented a cross between Baikal Teal and another species of duck. The "impurity" of this individual might also raise questions as to its origin, since innumerable bizarre pairings have been perpetrated among captive waterfowl; however, occasional hybridization, even between distantly related species, is noted in wild duck populations, and it would be premature to reject this record as pertaining to an escapee simply because it appeared to be a hybrid. There are several previous California records for Baikal Teal, all apparently of "pure" birds and most substantiated by specimens. The wild origin of these birds has been debated over the years.

The third "problem" bird was the **Common Black-Hawk** discovered at Thousand Palms Oasis in the Coachella Valley by Loren Hays and Brian Daniels on the morning of 13 April. The bird was a lot closer to home than the Flame-colored Tanager, and there should be no questions about its identification (pending acceptance of the documentation by the California Bird Records Committee) or its origin (the species has been considered long overdue, in fact, to reach California as a genuine stray). Alas, the problem with the Common Black-Hawk was that it didn't bother to stick around. It was seen

disappearing as a speck to the north a couple of hours after it was studied in the trees of the oasis. Observers looking for the bird later that day and the following day were disappointed. While this would represent a first record for California, it should be pointed out that an individual has been recorded for six consecutive springs in the Bill Williams River delta, only a few miles into Arizona from the California border.

On to more mundane (but never uninteresting!) birds... Every spring and fall a few very large flocks of **American White Pelicans** are noted migrating between wintering areas and Great Basin Breeding lakes. On 5 April Chuck Miller of the L.A. County Museum of Natural History witnessed some 1000 birds flying northward over Desert Hot Springs. Coastally, **Brant** may be seen migrating past coastal promontories from late March through mid-May, with flocks of several hundred to over a thousand often noted (these birds winter primarily in the major estuaries of Baja California). But a small proportion of Brant also migrate through the interior, as Henry Childs' sighting of nine flying west through San Geronio Pass on 28 March attests. A lingering **Oldsquaw** was at King Harbor, Redondo Beach, on 30 March (Hal Spear), and late female **Black Scoter** was at the mouth of Big Sycamore Creek near Pt. Mugu on 21 April (Kimball Garrett).

Late **Merlins** were in Arcadia on 22 March (Barbara Cohen) and at the south end of the Salton Sea on 1 April (Jon Dunn; of the race *richardsoni*).

Major movements of a number of shore-bird species took place in April, as expected. Some 100 alternate plumaged **Dunlin**, complete with reddish backs and black belly patches, were studied on Fred Heath's 14 April L.A.A.S. trip to the Piute Ponds on Edwards Air Force Base. Large flocks of **Western Sandpipers**, totalling some 1000 birds, were migrating past Pt. Dume on 20 April (Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer). A flock of 122 migrant **Surfbirds** was at the mouth of the Santa Ana River on 4 April (Loren Hays), and small flocks were noted elsewhere away from normal wintering areas (e.g. at Malibu Lagoon). Seventeen **Stilt Sandpipers** were counted at Unit One, south end of the Salton Sea, on 1 April (Bruce Broadbooks *et al*). Unusual were two **Black Oystercatchers** at Malibu Lagoon on 6 April (Lynn Seno and Judy Chovan).

Numbers of **Black Skimmers** at Bolsa Chica continued to rise, with 46 birds counted on 5 April (Loren Hays). Loren also had 22 **Elegant Terns** at the mouth of the Santa Ana River on 27 March, a time period when this species is normally not encountered north of its breeding areas in San Diego County. It would seem that well protected and managed coastal lagoons north of San Diego Bay have potential as tern and skimmer breeding sites.

Observers who spend time covering the various ranchyards in the Antelope Valley have undoubtedly noticed the fluctuations in the numbers of **Common Barn-Owls**. There seems to be a trend toward the establishment of **Great Horned Owls** at many of

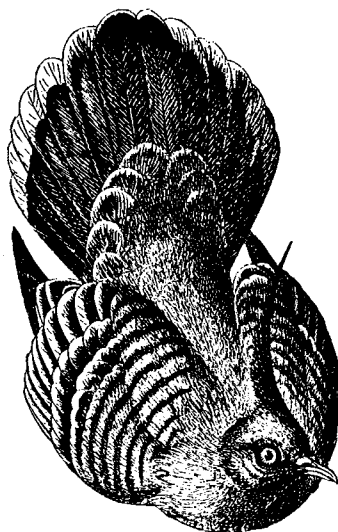


the ranchyards which formerly harbored only barn-owls; it is clear that these two species do not coexist well, and several observers have commented on the absence or scarcity of barn-owls at ranches that now have Great Horneds. Do Great Horneds prey directly on barn-owls? This is a question for birders visiting the Antelope Valley to investigate. It should also be pointed out that, whether due to changing livestock/agricultural practices or to strict economics, most of the frequently birded ranchyards in the Lancaster area are now without water. Some of the groves of trees (such as at well-worked "110th East and Avenue J") have been removed altogether. Birding itineraries in this area will certainly be changing over the next few years.

The telltale wing trilling of a male **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** at Bob's Gap, near Valyermo, revealed the first local record of this species in several years (Kimball Garrett, 14 April). The most recent report of a **Lewis' Woodpecker** was from Covington Park, Morongo Valley, on 27 March (Kent Rodecap). A female **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** of the race *varius* was present at Santiago Park 10-31 March (Doug Willick) was clearly wintering locally, and the wintering bird at the Arcadia arboretum was present to at least 7 April (Barbara Cohen). However, a single bird at Linda Mia Ranch east of Lancaster (Phil Sayre, 7 April) was a spring migrant.

A lingering **Varied Thrush** was in Wilderness Park, Arcadia, on 12 April (Virginia Escher). Wandering **Townsend's Solitaires** visited Bea Gordon's yard in Pasadena (25 March) and Barbara Elliott's yard in Malibu (30 March). A vigorously singing **Gray Vireo** was patrolling the brushy hillside at Bob's Gap, near Valyermo, on 14 April (Kimball Garrett), but the bird could not be located on subsequent visits (as of 24 April). This species has summered at this locality in recent years (the species' only station in Los Angeles County). A **Solitary Vireo** of the race *plumbeus* was in Hillcrest Park, Fullerton, on 17 March (Doug Willick). Huntington Beach Central Park's wintering **Black-and-white Warbler** was present to at least 5 April (Brian Daniels and Loren Hays), and its **Tennessee Warbler** stayed through at least 6 April.

A **White-throated Sparrow** stopped by the Shanmans' yard in Manhattan Beach on 8 April; there are very few coastal records of spring migrants of this species, though it is possible that this bird may have wintered locally, Sage Sparrows (of the coastal race *belli*), **Black-chinned Sparrows**, **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** and **Lazuli Buntings** were all singing (the last species abundantly) in burned over chaparral at Castro Crest in Malibu (at the end of Corral Canyon Road) on 20 April (Kimball Garrett and Jonathan Alderfer). **Costa's Hummingbirds** were also common in this area, forming part



of an avifauna that is distinctly different from that encountered in similar but unburned tracts of chaparral in the Santa Monica Mountains. A **Sage Sparrow** at the arboretum in Arcadia on 25 March was a migrant at an unusual locality (Barbara Cohen). Small numbers of **Red Crossbills** continued to be reported through the end of March, e.g. three at Covington Park, Morongo Valley, on 22 March (David Grindell), and five at Santiago Park, Santa Ana, on 30 March (Brian Daniels and Curtis Marantz).

June is the peak of the breeding season for our montane species, and the dedicated birders among you will be conducting U.S. Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Surveys in the mountain and foothill regions in late May and early June. These standardized surveys provide an index of bird abundance which, when repeated annually for many years, serves as a measuring stick of bird populations in a variety of habitat types. Even if you are not taking part in so rigorous a survey, you should bear in mind that many parts of our mountains still remain poorly known ornithologically. Nearly every summer breeding range extensions of montane bird species are recorded in southern California, and in any case information on population sizes and habitats of our less common montane species is always valuable. Standard montane birding trips in June might include Mt. Pinos, Buckhorn Flat (San Gabriels), the Big Bear and Baldwin Lake areas (San Bernardino), and the Idyllwild and Pine Cove areas of the San Jacinto Mountains. We encourage you, however, to also explore those less traveled mountain roads and trails, and to report, ideally to your *American Birds* regional editor or county coordinator, your results.

Send any interesting bird observations to:
Hal Baxter
 1821 Highland Oaks Drive
 Arcadia, CA 91006
 Phone # (818) 355-6300

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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 may 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

Please refer to interior article on page 6 "Summer Birding" for unlisted specifics.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2 — Topanga State Park with Gerry Haigh

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 — Santa Cruz Island

SUNDAY, JUNE 16 — Malibu Creek State Park with Wayne & Judy Moore

SATURDAY, JUNE 22 — **Whittier Narrows Regional Park** with **David White**. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So. El Monte, near crossing of freeways 60 and 605. (12 miles from downtown L.A.)

SATURDAY, JUNE 22 — Santa Cruz Island

SUNDAY, JUNE 23 — **Charlton Flat to Buckhorn**. Meet **Fred Heath** at **7:30 a.m.** at the entrance to Charlton Flat picnic area, along the Angeles Crest Hwy. above La Canada. Montane breeding birds may be seen in the San Gabriel Mtns. include Mountain Quail, White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker. Bring lunch. Those wishing to carpool may meet just north of the 210 Fwy. at the Angeles Crest exit, being prepared to leave that point at 6:45 a.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30 — Santa Cruz Island

FORTHCOMING TRIPS

SUNDAY, JULY 21 — Whittiers Narrows — David White

SUNDAY, JULY 21 — Western Screech Owl Search — Paul Fox

SUNDAY, JULY 28 — Mt. Pinos — Jean Brandt

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24 — Whittiers Narrows — David White

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25 — UCLA Botanical Gardens — Shirley Rubin

RESERVATION TRIPS

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. Local leader **Bob Barnes** has birded this area over 12 years and probably knows the regions' birdlife and their secret haunts best. \$20/person. Max. 20.

WEEKEND, JULY 13-14 — See an exciting diversity of plants, animals and birdlife 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. Local leader **David Gaines** is the original spokesman and prime mover in the extensive Mono Lake efforts in addition to authoring "Birds of the Yosemite Sierra, a Distributional Survey." \$20/person.

FRIDAY EVENING/SATURDAY, AUGUST 16-17 Shorebird Seminar and Field Study with **John Dunn**. A slide show lecture will be held in the San Fernando Valley in preparation for a day of field study, location dependant on water levels for maximum number of shorebirds. Plumage will be carefully studied to differentiate juveniles from adults and various differences in peeps and other shorebirds. The approach will be gradual and beginners are encouraged. Lots of time will be spent looking for individual birds. Expect to be quizzed. Do wear shorts and expect to get wet and muddy. The experience is meant to be fun as well as instructive. Dunn has particular expertise with shorebirds, is a professional bird tour leader, was the major consultant of the National Geographic's "Birds of North America," and co-author of both "Birds of So. Calif., Status and Distribution," and the forthcoming "Field Identification of Difficult Species." \$25/person. Max. 20.

PELAGIC TRIPS see page 5

Los Angeles Audubon Society
7377 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

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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 (usually in office on Tuesday) can provide information for you to make contact and possible arrangements.

EVENING MEETINGS

TUESDAY, JUNE 11 — 8 p.m. Plummer Park. The Range of Light. A musical interpretation of the Sierra Nevada. Slides taken over the last 20 years by **Jim Long** with musical accompaniment to portray the spirit of the range as reflected in the writings and philosophy of John Muir.

CARPPOOLING: As conservationists, let's try to reduce gas consumption and air pollution whenever possible. In sharing costs, remember that a typical car journey costs 20¢ a mile.