WESTERN TANAGER

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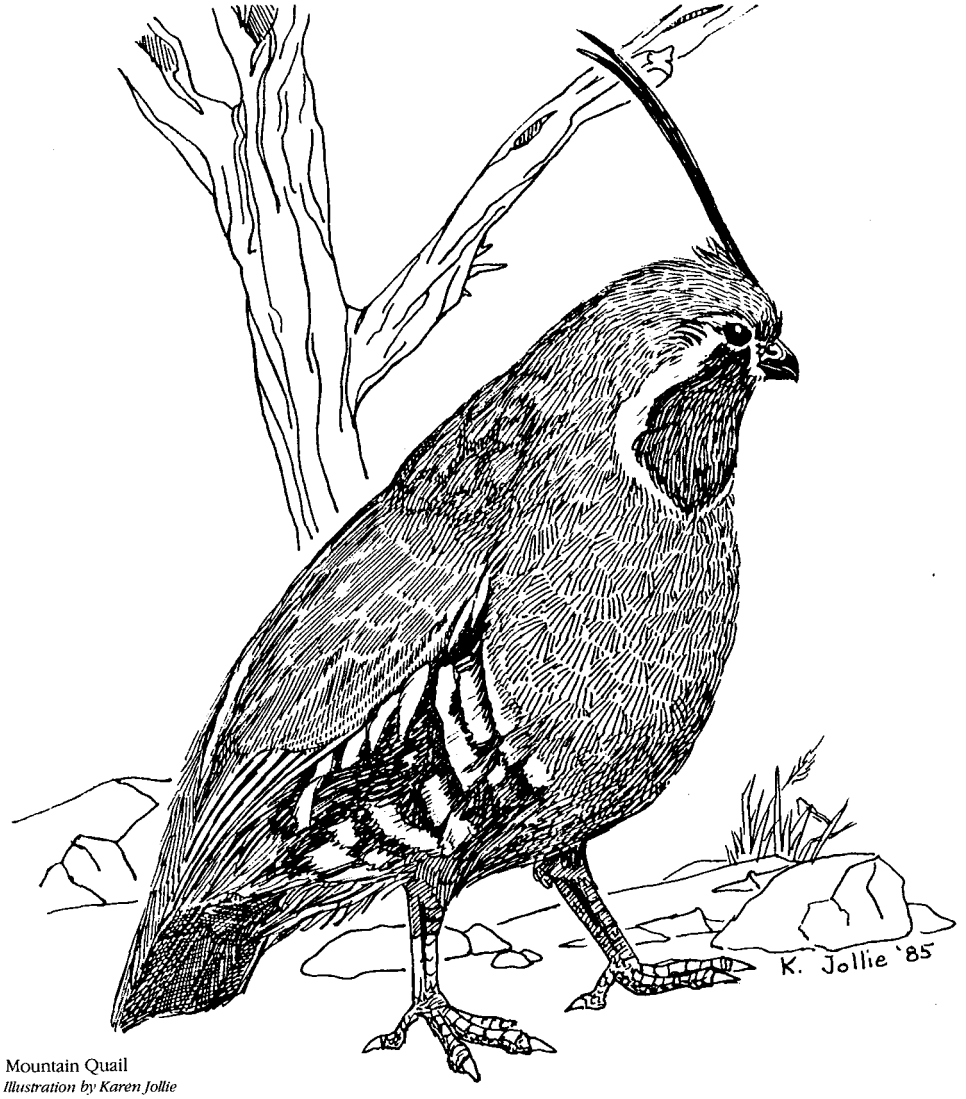
Lower Elevation Breeding in the Sierra Foothills

by George L. San Miguel

Introduction

Recently gathered information shows that it is time to adjust some commonly held notions about some of California's mountain birds. For decades naturalists have recorded their observations on the birds of the Sierra Nevada. With every passing year, new data accumulates to refine our knowledge of each species' abundance, seasonality, habitat and altitude utilization, and breeding requirements. Within the past seven years, new books written about he birds of the Sierra Nevada have provided researchers, naturalists and birders with excellent referrences for studying the ecology of each species. No matter how well researched, however, no complete account of so large an area can possibly cover each species flawlessly. Books must condense their by-species analyses and nowhere near every bit of information can be available to the compiling authors. This has led to minor deficiences in the general accounts of some species, even some which might be considered common or easily observed in the field.



Mountain Quail
Illustration by Karen Jollie

Sequoia National Park's foothill zone occurs between about 800 and 4,000 feet in the drainages of the Kaweah River's five forks. As a ranger-naturalist stationed in these foothills during the spring and early summer of 1983 and the spring through early fall of 1984, I had the unique opportunity to study this area which had never received much attention. As a result, I have discovered some interesting new details on some birds which have not ordinarily been associated with the foothill environment of hot chaparral and open oak woodlands during the breeding season and the long, hot summer which follows. The spring and summer environment of the Sierra Nevada's middle altitudes is significantly cooler and more moist. Coniferous forests dominate this zone.

My observations were made primarily during off hours in a less than systematic way. After analyzing my observations on eleven species not ordinarily identified as foothill birds, I put together this report. I hope to be able to show that the following species: Mountain Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Swift, Vaux's Swift, Calliope Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Violet-green Swallow, Steller's Jay, Western Tanager, and Chipping Sparrow are breeding in the foothills of Sequoia National Park. Unfortunately, some of the birds I discuss could not be confirmed as nesting species of the foothills, but observations I made should show that they likely are. At the very least, a summer-long presence in the foothills has been established now for each of the eleven species. For most, this is a new and significant reevaluation of the use of the lower altitude areas by these species which are normally associated with cooler, moister environments at elevations above the foothill zone.

Surveys were made freqently over large areas of the Middle and Marble Forks of the

Kaweah River drainage, with additional data collected from the East Fork. What I lost in scientific method, I made up for in thorough coverage. In 1983, my ideas for some of the eleven species were only speculative. The severe winter of 1983 could conceivably have accounted for the low altitude sightings I began recording. However, my ideas were confirmed by similar observations I made during the exceptionally hot and dry spring and summer of 1984. If extreme, yearly fluctuations in climate were going to be responsible for the unusually low altitude records I made, then my observations from 1984 would have shown a reversal of trends seen the previous year. Furthermore, the foothills of the Kaweah River drainage are pretty far south compared to most Sierra Nevada foothill areas and therefore experience a somewhat more arid climate than the same altitudes farther north. For these reasons, my observations can not be discounted as aberrations caused by climate or latitude. I believe the trends I have identified are real and will prove to be consistent. I do not think that these trends are new. More likely, the lack of thorough investigation in the foothills during past decades has left undetected the lower altitude components of some species' populations.

Are these low altitude tendencies local or general? I invite other observers to consider my ideas. There is much information which still needs to be gathered. Hopefully my conclusions will stimulate researchers and naturalists in other foothill areas of the Sierra Nevada to investigate these trends in their areas. Comparisons with other areas is essential for confirming a general reevaluation for these species throughout the Sierra Nevada.

Mountain Quail

Mountain Quail, as their name implies, are typically associated with the mountain environment. These ground birds breed and forage under montane chaparral in the Kaweah River drainage generally below 9,000 feet. Chaparral mixed with Ponderosa Pine at about 5,000 feet is considered prime habitat. It is also generally believed that Mountain Quail migrate, on foot, unslope in the spring and downslope in the fall. This certainly seems to be the case in the upper half of their range where deep snows in the winter would bury their foraging grounds for months.

In the foothill chaparral, Mountain Quail can be seen occasionally and heard calling frequently even below 2,000 feet. Mountain Quail calls can be heard from Ash Mountain at 1,700 feet into late May or even early June in some years. Simultaneously, Mountain Quail can be heard calling in chaparral all the way up to their upper altitude limits. This implies that courtship and territorial behavior are under way in all areas they inhabit and that no time is left for further upslope migration. Termination of the calling period indicates the beginning fo the quiet nesting and incubation phase of spring. Calling will continue into July at the 8,000 foot level indicating a later start to the nesting season there. This is a necessity for these higher altitudes which experience a delayed growing season and the quail must have had to migrate up from far below.

The small population of silent Mountain Quail which inhabits the foothill chaparral in the hot summer are very difficult to find. No nests were found. However, their presence in July and August implies that some have been living in the foothills all summer and they likely had attempted to breed. Fortunately a small family group was seen crossing the Mineral King Road in the middle of summer at about 4,200 feet. The chicks were noticeably larger than those seen the same day at about 8,500 feet. Later on in that summer, two adults were seen at about 2,300 feet along the same road and a well developed immature was seen alone below 4,000 feet that same morning. At the start of September, a convoy of five was seen along the Kaweah No 3 flume above Ash Mountain at about 2,200 feet in dense mixed chaparral.

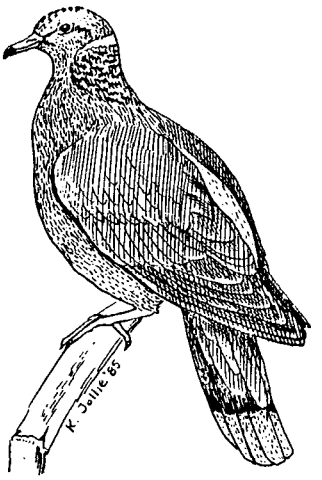
These observations indicate that at least some Mountain Quail are permanent residents, and probably nesting, down to the 2,000 foot level. They are difficult to find, so the scarcity of sightings is misleading. I would also suggest that the occurrence of foothill populations of Mountain Quail during the summer, as in other arid parts of their range, are closely tied to permanent drinking water sources. Dense, leafy chaparral may not be enough in this seasonally arid environment. Perennial streams and springs do occur in these foothills through the summer even in dry years. Leaks along the flumes also supply summer water in the chaparral. This may mean that Mountain Quail populations in the foothills are more localized during the summer.

Band-tailed Pigeon

Band-tailed Pigeons, like the Mountain Quail, are often associated with the Ponderosa Pine/Black Oak areas of the Sierra Nevada and the coniferous forests above. In summer, flocks may be seen in conifers near 10,000 feet and some are seen flying over ridges than 11,000 feet. Often associated with acorns, their favorite food, these birds are more closely linked with the oak woodlands of the lower elevations, especially in fall, winter, and early spring when large flocks are frequently seen in the foothills. However, their presence in the foothill oak woodlands are less well recognized during the breeding season.

In the late spring, the large winter flocks break up into breeding pairs, which disperse and become more secretive. Probably many more move upslope but a sizable number remain in the foothills as shown by consistent observations through the late spring and summer. Furthermore, they are usually observed in pairs.

Potwisha Campground, at 2,100 feet, was a frequent point for observation. Pigeons were often seen or heard here in the dense live oak canopy. Though never seen feeding, a large purple dropping observed at Potwisha indicates a summer use of the locally abundant crop of early ripening berries. A dead nest ling found here in the late spring of 1983 under this dense canopy of live oaks where pigeons were freqently flushed proves their use of the foothills for breeding. That summer, a live fledgeling was observed below 2,000 feet near the Mineral King Road.



Band-tailed Pigeon *Illustration by Karen Jollie*

Observations and behavior were identical for 1984 though no nests or young were seen. This was simply due to the unlikelihood of finding nests or young and does not indicate that 1983 was an exceptional year. I could not establish a likely lower limit to their breeding altitudes but it is safe to say that 2,000 feet is close to their lower limit.

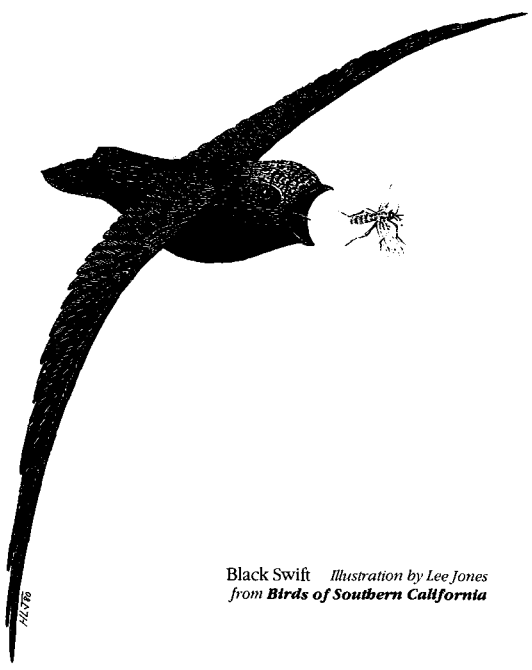
Black Swift

Arriving in the middle of May, this handsome aerialist looks for inaccessible cliffs for colonial nest building sites, often near waterfalls. Past literature on the birds of the Sierra Nevada depicts the Black Swift as using middle altitudes for cliff-nesting sites, occassionally higher altitudes. In the Mineral King area, a small colony is very likely nesting on an inaccessible cliff at over 9,000 feet. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to prove the existence of nests despite a great deal of evidence pointing to that conclusion. The nests are just too hard to find unless by accident.

Despite this problem, I believe it is possible to draw conclusions about nesting areas in another way. Black Swifts will take to the air at first sun when visibility improves, air temperatures warm a bit, and flying insects are more active and can be seen. By finding the locations where the swifts first take to the air in the morning one can postulate that a colony exists on a nearby cliff. In the same way, consistently observing Black Swifts just before dark can mean that nest sites are nearby. Should the location of first morning sites be the same as the last evening flights, so much stronger would be the case for there being a colony nearby.

Nesting begins in early summer. The entire population has usually migrated out by the middle of August. These are the critical times for observing Black Swifts.

Black Swifts could be seen at any time of the day flying in the Kaweah River canyon between Hospital Rock at 2,700 feet and the Park boundary at about 1,500 feet, a distance of about seven miles. Occasionally, very early morning observations were made. More often small feeding groups were seen flying the canyon just before dark, primarily where the East Fork and the main channel of the Kaweah River meet just outside the Park boundary. Flying a little over tree top level until dusk through July is not proof that a colony exists nearby. However, it is unlikely that these swifts would race up a canyon ten miles and gain 3,000 feet just as darkness falls especially when they likely have young to feed just before dark. Similarly, large flocks of Violet-green Swallows and Cliff Swallows are seen flying around feeding before dark in the same areas. These swallows are known to nest and roost in large numbers in these foothills. This same dusk feeding behavior by the swifts indicates that they too are summer residents of Sequoia's foothills and occupying a similar niche.



Black Swift *Illustration by Lee Jones from* ***Birds of Southern California***

This is not to say that most Black Swift colonies do not occur at middle altitudes and higher. I simply wish to point out that some are likely to be located below 4,000 feet and even as low as 1,500 feet. More searching is required.

Vaux's Swift

Perhaps I may be in error to place the Vaux's Swift in the category of a middle elevation bird of the Sierra Nevada which also nests in the foothills. As with the Black Swift, I have no nest observations. However, I do have summer observations which could indicate that a few are at least summer residents in the foothills.

Arriving in the last half of April, these little swifts are seen consistently in the foothills through the middle of June. By this time, most migrants have passed through and nesting has likely begun in the Sierra Nevada. At this time very few are seen in the foothills. They nest in hollow trees of the middle elevations. Most large Blue Oaks have hollow interiors even when alive so at least this requirement is met in the foothills.

The fact that some Vaux's Swifts were seen in the foothills all summer is not significant by itself. During the middle of the day swifts and swallows commonly range long distances to feed and then return to their roosts before dark. It is important to note that they were seen flying low over foothill woodlands and streams just as bats were emerging for their night's feeding. This shows the liklihood of their roosting nearby. In addition, these sightings were made repeatedly through the summer nesting period in the same locations. The number of Vaux's Swifts seen daily was small but dramatically increased at the start of August, about the same time that Black Swifts were starting to move out. Initial increases probably resulted from local recruitment of the year's young into the ranks of the independent flying swifts as well as from a growing number of early southward migrants. Yet, it is possible that the local swifts do not move out until later when they have clustered into larger flocks.

It is interesting to note that Vaux's Swifts are seen in the Sierra Nevada several weeks after the last Black Swifts have departed. In fact, in August and most of September they were seen in groups of up to fifty. Often these sightings came at dusk as hundreds of Violet-green Swallows came flying up canyon to their foothill roosting sites from their daytime foraging areas. Along with the swallows were smaller numbers of Vaux's Swifts often in groups or alone, flying up canyon as bats were emerging for the night. Again this suggests probable foothill roosting sites for these swifts which have not yet begun their southward migration.

Clearly the evidence points to a closer association between the Vaux's Swift and the Sierra Nevada foothills. More investigation is needed, especially regarding breeding activity.

Hairy Woodpecker

Most accounts of the Hairy Woodpecker's distribution in the Sierra Nevada associate it with conifers from the Ponderosa Pines to the subalpine forests up to 10,000 feet. The presence of Hairy Woodpeckers in the foothills during the winter or during "food shortages" has been documented in past literature. However, these sightings actually reflect the tendency of observers to avoid the foothills during summer heat as well as snow higher up in winter.

Hairy Woodpecker
Illustration by Karen Jollie

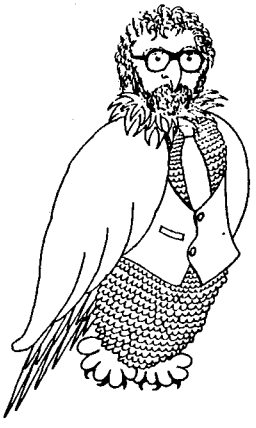
Hairy Woodpeckers are year-round residents of Sequoia's foothills. Frequent observations of Hairy Woodpeckers in the spring down to Ash Mountain at 1,700 feet alone would not be sufficient evidence of breeding activity. Even their occurrence in pairs and the observation of males frequently drumming for weeks might not prove a thing. No nests were found, but summer-long sightings did provide enough evidence to show that they are a resident nesting species. The male at Ash Mountain and a female at the Buckeye Housing Area at 1,500 feet would continue drumming into the middle of June. Through July, Hairy Woodpeckers were conspicuous around Potwisha Campground at 2,100 feet. A female, an adult male, and a hatch-year bird were seen at this time. The cohesiveness of the group indicates the strong likelihood of their being a family. In any case, the identification of the hatch-year bird in July must conclude the occurrence of a breeding pair in that area.

Consistent observations of Hairy Woodpeckers in several other locations in the foothills during the spring and summer suggest that their year-round and breeding status in the foothills is probably more extensive than the current record can prove. In fact, Hairy Woodpeckers seem to be just as common in these foothills, and perhaps even more so, than its "lower elevation" relative the Downy Woodpecker. They are not as abundant in the foothills as in the coniferous forests, but Hairy Woodpeckers should now be recognized as part of the foothill bird community of Sequoia National Park.

to be continued in the next issue

From The Editor

by Fred Heath



As I've mentioned in the last issue of the **Tanager,** articles on birding in far off lands are among my personal least favorites. The lead articles in this issue is more what I would like to fill the **Tanager** with. However my mail so far (I actually got a letter), seems to be in favor of the travel article and the suggestion that practical information such as where to stay, rental car companies and other tips would be most helpful. As I promised, I'm here to please so I hereby request such articles to fill my mailbox: Fred Heath, P.O. Box 5036, Chatsworth, CA 91311. I already have a couple of this type article in my collection and will probably dust them off and use them in the near future.

I've managed to put Kimball Garrett to start a whole new feature which will appear now and then which we've called "Field Tips" in this issue. We were looking for a sexier name. Kimball suggested "Fowl-Ups" but that just doesn't cut it. If any of my readers have an idea for a title for Kimball's new column please send it to me. Also any suggestions you might have for future Field Tips would be helpful.

Kimball came up with the idea for this initial column after I tracked him down at the museum one recent Sunday afternoon while I was still at Malibu Lagoon. I was gazing upon an odd, strongly buffy gull the likes of which I had never seen before. It looked like a somewhat young California Gull, which I had quickly eliminated because the field guides say young California Gulls have bicolored bills. I was working towards lesser Black-backed Gull (one gull I had never seen before) when Kimball brought me quickly back to reality by sharing the field tip contained in his article.

No I am not losing my mind and no, **etc. graphics,** the people that do the layout aren't standing on their heads. The last issue of the **Tanager did** have the return address and postal permit upside down, but there was method to our madness. First of all a few months ago, IAAS got into the computer age and purchased a new address labeling machine. This new machine is happiest when it can place labels near the spine of the newsletter, thus, we changed the layout of the Calendar page so the label machine could do its job with maximum efficiency. Another potential problem was solved at the same time. The mailing label area on the old **Tanager** was only an inch and a half whereas postal regulations require a minimum of three inches. I had recurring nightmares of some Postal Service employee refusing to mail an entire issue for want of the 1½ inches.

But everything was not right in the world of mailing. The labels were being put on in reverse zipcode order making it difficult to bundle as required for bulk mail regulations. Some unnamed person at Audubon House came up with the scheme of putting the label cartridge in upside down and thus the **Tanagers** would be labeled in correct zip code order and everyone could live happily ever after. However the Postal Service frowns on the label being upside down from the return address and permit number. If you haven't fallen asleep by now the bottom line is that the return address and permit number had to be put upside down on (you guessed it) the bottom line of the Calendar page. This is how it appeared in the September issue.

However the label cartridge as it turned out could be reversed so as to have the desired zip code sequence without flipping the labels. Thus the September issue is a collectors item just like those two-color air mail stamps with the upside down plane. So you'll have to find something else to line your parakeet cage with this month. Can you believe I used this much space to say "It's not my fault." My discussions on good old fashioned typographical errors were certainly less complicated and I was able to claim full credit.

Mono Basin Field Trip

By Wanda Conway

Ten people joined David Gaines for a memorable weekend in the varied habitats of the Mono Lake watershed. Where else can one bird mudflats, marshes, sagebrush desert, pine forests, aspen groves and alpine fell-fields in a single morning? And all within 25 miles?

Our bird list reflected Mono's diversity. Saturday morning, for instance, found us gawking at tens of thousands of Wilson's Phalaropes, chasing Sage Thrashers, Brewer's Sparrows and Gray Flycatchers through the scrub, and delighting in the aerial flycatching of Lewis' Woodpeckers. That same afternoon we watched American Dippers carrying food to their hungry young and Red Crossbills prying apart the cones of lodgepole pines. Our final list of 92 species included ducks, shorebirds and rails as well as such uncommon montane species as Williamson's Sapsucker and Pine Grosbeak.

Among the many high points one must single out the phalaropes wheeling about Mono Lake's strange tufa towers. They looked like clouds of gnats! Approximately 30,000 birds were concentrated along one quarter mile of lakeshore. Few sights in nature are lovelier than flocks of phalaropes darting, banking and diving by the thousands in perfect unison over Mono's still water. These birds—so dainty in appearance—fatten at the lake in preparation for a non-stop migratory flight to Bolivia and Argentina.

Surprising was a pair of Osprey nesting on one of the largest tufa towers out in the lake. What are these fish-eaters doing at a fishless lake? It appears there is a wealth of catchable trout in nearby Rush Creek, and the tufa provides a secure site for nesting. We watched one bird bring a squirming trout to its mate on the nest.

Another treat were Snowy Plovers, which nest along Mono's barren shores. Watching these dainty shorebirds pick off brine flies, we wondered how much longer this unique desert lake would furnish sustinence to millions of nesting and migratory birds.

Our campsite among Lee Vining Creek's verdant aspens proved a paradise for upland birds. Pygmy Nuthatchers, Violet-green Swallows, Red-breasted Sapsuckers and many other species were nesting or feeding fledglings almost at our fingertips. Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds were feeding at the sapsucker holes in the aspens and willows. Yes, the sap was sweet!

Our nocturnal contingent was rewarded with great views of Common Poorwill. Equally wonderful was a chorus of snipe winnowing above a wet mountain meadow. The birds produce an eerie, hollow tremolo sound with their tail feathers as they dive from hundreds of feet in the air.

Competing with birds for our attention were spectacular floral displays. The mountain flower gardens were at the peak of luxurient diversity. Over 100 different blooms were identified.

We even discovered a Rubber Boa—a wonderfully docile snake—at an elevation of 9000 feel—the highest this species has ever been recorded!

In sum, a great trip! Plan on joining us next year!! And let's SAVE MONO LAKE!!!

Those Curious Crossbills

by Dave Grindell

The spate of recent sightings of the crossbill here in the Los Angeles area has made us aware of these poorly little citizens of the conifers. These true feathered friends, amiable enough in most cases to allow the bird watcher a close enough approach to admire their remarkable rostral extremities. This has, in fact, been called "the year of the crossbill."

The words used to describe the collective movements of this tribe from one time to another are "erratic," "unpredictable," "irruptive." Therefore you are fortunate to see one — or them, for they are eminently sociable creatures. L. Nelson Nichols put it well: "No one can expect to go into any piece of cone-bearing forest and find crossbills: there may not be a crossbill within a hundred miles." The bird you see around our city will be the Red Crossbill. In Arnold Small's 1974 *The Birds of California,* the White-winged Crossbill, the only other specie in North America, could go unmentioned. Only seven years later, however, it was possible for Garrett and Dunn in *Birds of Southern California* to welcome the species into our state. But the actual sighting was in nothern California, a flock having been seen in Trinity County, west of Redding.

A broad overview of the whole genus *Loxia* is best gained from a European point of view, for the whole family of cardueline finches is said to be of old-world origin.

Parrot Crossbill *(Loxia pytyopsittacus).* The largest of them (6¾ inches); has the thickest bill. It prefers pines and hence is called by the Germans "Kiefernkreuzschnabel" Crossbill (to us in America, Red Crossbill; in both cases *L. curvirostra*). Of middling size, it has a narrower bill. Its fondness for larch and fir has caused the Germans to give it the name "Fichtenkreuzschnabel."

White-winged Crossbill *(L. leucoptera)* The smallest of all, has the most slender bill, prefers larches.

Accepted in its essentials by all authorities, and handy as a frame of reference, the schema is a little simplistic and breaks down on the American scene. We do not have the Parrot Crossbill and with us the White-winged is generally the larger bird.

And then there is the case of the Scottish Crossbill, than which, perhaps, only the Loch Ness Monster presents a more intriguing mystery among all the fauna of Old Caledonia. It may be a piece of ornithological chauvinism, but the sturdy Scots — and some other Britons — accept this bird as a full species, *Loxia scotica.* Their opponents, who would demote it to the status of a subspecies, are however in disarray, because they seem not to have decided whether it is a subspecies of *curvirostra* or of *pytyopsittacus.* The bill is intermediate in thickness between those of the two recognized species. The bird has a great fondness for the Scottish Pine and, unlike other members of its genus, is not given to wandering. Can we accept the claim, seemingly made on good ornithological authority, that this intransigeant Scot has never deigned to descend below the border into England? The best or at least the most easily accessible place to see *Loxia scotica* (?) is in the vicinity of Inverness. This is a Highlands bird, and inhabitant of remnants of the Old Caledonian Forest.

Looking at a range map of the whole northern hemisphere, one is impressed by the number of species developed by the Red Crossbill. There are no less than nineteen or twenty and, aside from northern latitutdes, where one has every right to expect them, there is a distinct race for Central America, Algeria and adjacent countries, Viet Nam, the Philippines (Luzon), and so on. California can host three subspecies: *bendirei, grinnelli* and the large Mexican variety, *stricklandi* (7 inches), which has been reported from the San Bernardino Mountains.

The White-winged Crossbill seems a quite different fowl, less common, less regular in occurrence, less inclined to flock with other species. In the Old World its range is much less extensive than that of the Red Crossbill and in Europe extends in a narrow east-west strip across northern Russia, just reaching over into Finland. In its irruptions into western Europe it is spoken of as a "Siberian bird." In the New World, on the other hand, *leucoptera* has expanded his range very considerably beyond that of *curvirostra* in Canada and Alaska. And in both these two major regions he has maintained his taxonomic integrity in a very stubborn manner. Dementyev and Gladkov do not find any separate subspecies anywhere throughout the vast spread of the Soviet Union *(Loxia leucoptera bifasciata).* The U.S. and Canada have the nominate form *(Loxia leucoptera leucoptera).*

Quite exciting was the irruption — if the word be permitted — of a third subspecies into this tidy picture in 1916. In that year was discovered and described *Loxia leucoptera megaplaga.* And — of all places — from the Dominican Republic, on the Isle of Hispaniola! This meant, quite simply, that a bird associated so closely with the taiga, sharing his forbidding boreal haunts with the Canada Lynx and Timber Wolf, the Goshawk and Great Gray Owl, had made an improbable appearance on an amiable tropical island, wafted over by balmy Caribbean breezes! Dean Amadon thinks that this is a remnant population, left over from Pleistocene times. Its survival is precarious, from the extensive felling of trees in that country. The Hispaniolan Crossbill is found among pines. If you read Spanish you will find that Senora Annabelle Stockton de Dod has left a moving account of this bird in her *Aves de la Republica Dominicana.* Among other things, this gifted writer communicates to us her rapturous joy at discovering, April 2, 1971, the first nest of this varity known to science. Her work is currently available in Los Angeles Audubon's Plummer Park Bookstore. Less disdainful than his Scottish congener about crossing national boundaries, the Hispaniolan Crossbill turned up not long ago in Haiti.

Corrigendum:

In the Turning a Bird Sighting Into a Bird Record article by Kimball Garrett in the July-August *Tanager,* the address for Mark Chichester, *American Birds* co-ordinator for Kern Co. should read Apt. #72 (not Apt. #27, as published).

RESERVATION TRIPS:

(continued from Calendar Page)

FRIDAY EVENING/SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13-14 — Gull and Tern Identification Seminar and Field Study with Arnold Small. A slide show lecture will be held in the San Fernando Valley in preparation for a day of local field study. Numerous plumages of California Gulls and Terns will be carefully studied to determine age as well as species differences. The approach will be gradual and **beginners** are encouraged to attend, but there will be much information for **intermediate** and **experienced** field birders. Gulls and Terns are notoriously confusing and this is an excellent opportunity to advance your skills with these difficult birds. Dr. Small has extensive experience and knowledge in the birding world and is widely known for his marvelous collection of "full-frame" bird slides, many of which appear in the recent "Audubon Master Guide." He is a former LAAS President, a former President of the American Birding Assoc., has authored "The Birds of California" and co-authored "Birds of the West," is a Biology Professor at L.A. Harbor College and teaches three different UCLA extension classes on California Birds per year. $26/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.

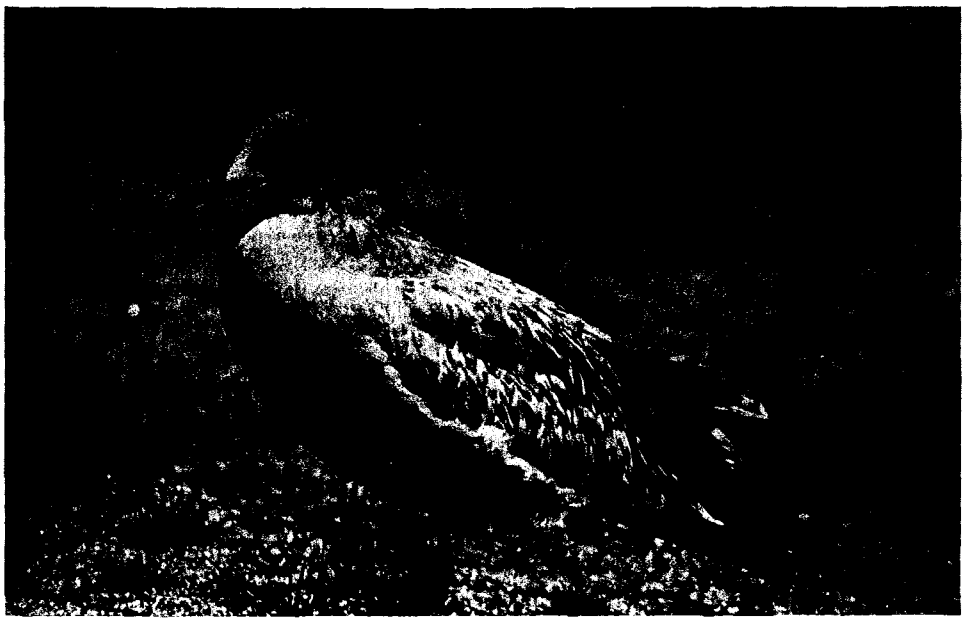
If there is insufficient response, the trip will be cancelled two weeks prior to the scheduled date (4 weeks for pelagics) and you will be so notified and your fee returned. Your cancellation during that time will bring a refund only if there is a paid replacement.

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

Field Tips: Juvenile Gulls

By Kimball L. Garrett

*(**Note:** This marks the first in an occasional series of notes about field identification problems in southern California, based on problems the author has experienced and on situations reported to him.)*



California Gull — Juvenile Yosemite Aug 23, 79

Photographs by Kimball Garrett

Field guide treatments have traditionally short-changed the gulls, a group of easily observable birds which have nevertheless confounded birders with their complex plumage sequences, within-population variation in plumage and, especially, size, and tendency to hybridize. The birder's dilemma in North America has been largely solved by the more extensive recent recent treatments of gulls in the National Geographic Society Field Guide, the Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, and Peter Harrison's "Seabirds: An identification guide". The value of Peter J. Grant's "Gulls: A guide to identification" is diminished only by its western Palearctic slant (for example, California Gull and Western Gull are not included); this guide otherwise represents the state of the art and a must for all birders.

Because of this recent upswing in laridological literature, birders are now rather familiar with the plumage sequences of the common west coast gull species. A mid-winter trip to a local coastal estuary, such as Malibu Lagoon, should provide an opportunity to compare the plumages of some eight to ten species. But there remains one plumage which is unfamiliar to many active birders, and is frequently the cause of confusion. This is the JUVENAL PLUMAGE, worn by juvenile gulls (birds of the year) until roughly late September.

In southern California we tend not to see the juvenal plumage of the northern breeding gulls which winter with us—Mew, Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, Bonaparte's, and Black-legged Kittiwake. Keep in mind, of course, that the post-juvenal molt (into first-winter plumage) is a partial one, so that the distinctive juvenal plumage we are discussing involves mainly the head, body and (some) covert feathers (but never the flight feathers). In contrast, we do see large numbers of juveniles of the more southerly breeding species—those species which are numerous in southern California during August and September. These are the Heermann's, Ring-billed, California, Western and (locally, at the Salton Sea) Laughing and Yellow-footed Gulls.

California Gull — Juvenile Bodega Bay Sept 6, 78

Juvenal plumage in our gulls tends to differ from first-winter plumage in the following respects: it is very fresh (remember it is only attained in about June); it is (usually) somewhat darker; the mantle, scapular and wing covert feathers are usually distinctly fringed with white or buff; and, bill color is generally darker (but with a distinct pinkish gape area in very young birds).

This note will concentrate on the California Gull, because of the confusion juveniles have caused along the coast from late July through September and because of the important differences between the appearance of juveniles and first-winter birds in that species. But first a brief summary of the appearances of our other juveniles.

LAUGHING GULL: Considerable brown on the head and breast; brown mantle, scapular and covert feathers boldly fringed with whitish; all black bill. [See photo in Master Guide, V.2].

HEERMANN'S GULL: Similar to first-winter birds, being deep chocolate brown throughout, but mantle, scapular and wing covert feathers all distinctly fringed with pale buff, giving a clean, patterned appearance, bill black with limited pinkish-orange at base.

RING-BILLED GULL: Well-described in P.J. Grant's gull book; similar to the first-winter bird, but head, breast and flanks

marked with dark scale-like marks; mantle and scapulars strongly mottled with brown (a few of these brown feathers may be retained well into the winter); legs pink; bill flesh-pink with black tip. I have seen birds with strong head and breast markings as late as November.

WESTERN GULL: Southern (uymani) birds in juvenal plumage resemble first-winter birds but are somewhat darker, especially on the head, neck and breast, and have pale mantle, scapular and wing-covert fringes which give a very clean, patterned look to the upperparts. The head and neck appear more slaty, less gray-brown, than on first-winter birds; legs dull pink; bill black with some pink at the gape.

YELLOW-FOOTED GULL: Juveniles are strongly and cleanly mottled above and are rather dark-breasted; however, the lower breast and belly are much paler than in the Western Gull (almost white). Legs pinkish; bill black.

Now for those confusing juvenile CALIFORNIA GULLS, which may begin to appear south and coastward of their breeding grounds as early as late July. [See accompanying photographs.] Such birds appear to be in very fresh plumage, with the buffy fringes to the mantle, scapular and wing covert feathers yielding a clean, neatly checkered appearance. The head, neck and underparts are an unmarked medium to creamy brown, often with a strong bright buff cast. Often the sides of the face are somewhat darker, contrasting with the almost buffy-white forehead and chin (beware of the superficial resemblance to juvenile Laughing Gulls caused by this pattern).

Perhaps the most confusing feature of the juvenile California Gull is the solid black bill. This black bill gradually lightens at the base through the fall, eventually becoming the black-tipped, pinkish-gray bill of the typical first-winter bird. At least in late July and August, however, most birds have solid black bills (not shown in field guides). This black bill, along with the neatly checkered upperparts, gives the juvenile California Gull a strong resemblance to a first-winter Thayer's Gull. Note, however, that Thayer's Gulls are paler winged (especially the undersides of the primaries and the upper sides of the secondaries), slightly different in bill shape, and should not arrive on the southern California coast until late October. The legs of very young juvenile California Gulls are dark pinkish-gray, becoming brighter, paler pink through the early fall (remember that California Gulls do not develop the more typical greenish-gray [non-breeding] leg color until their second year).

California Gull — First Winter Morro Bay Jan 22, 78

In closing, the identification of our gulls in juvenile plumage is rather straightforward once the problems are recognized. August and early September is an excellent period to study these plumages (typical first-winter head, body and soft-part colors have generally been attained by the end of September).

OWLS OF NORTH AMERICA

A seminar by Jon Winter sponsored by Los Angeles Audubon Society on Saturday Oct. 26, 1985. This seminar will cover several areas of owl biology with a main emphasis on vocal identification and how to find these nocturnal creatures.

Recent advances in owl behavior research will be covered as well as their unnatural history (their place in folklore and mythology).

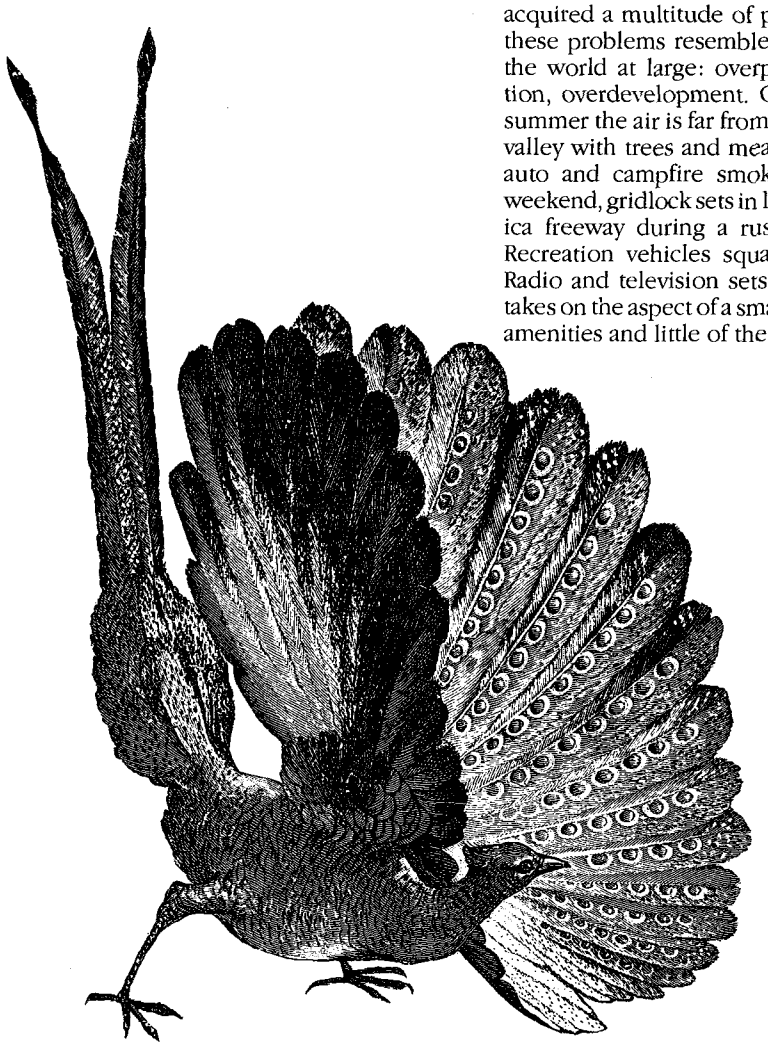
The seminar will last about 5½ hours from approximately 9:30 to 4:00 with an hour lunch break. Cost is $20 per person. Send check with self-addressed stamped envelope for confirmation and further information to LA Aububon. Attendance will be limited, so don't wait too long to make your reservation!

Conservation Conversation

by Sandy Wohlgemuth

William Penn Mott has come aboard the Reagan flagship as Director of the National Park Service. His appointment has been greeted with huzzahs and cheers by the environmental community, bloodied and bruised by four years of Watt, Gorsuch, Crowell and the rest of the pirate crew. Mott was the very model of a state parks director when he served under Governor Reagan in California. The park system grew into one of the nation's finest. The northern redwood parks flourished, expanding with judicious purchases of virgin woodland and strategic gifts of thousand-year old groves of trees by the esteemed Save-the-Redwoods League. It was during Mr. Mott's tour of duty that the three Southern California parks were created: Topanga, Malibu Creek and Pt. Mugu. Though there was considerable pressure to make recreation areas out of these splendid stretches of mountains and chaparral—including a rifle range, motorcycle camp, movie theater and a golf course—the counter-pressure for preservation triumphed. And so we have large parcels of valuable California real estate set aside forever (we hope) from unseemly development.

The 75-year old Mott is throwing himself into his new job with admirable enthusiasm. He has his work cut out for him. The national parks are beautiful and inspiring treasures, but in recent years they have acquired a multitude of problems. Most of these problems resemble the dilemmas of the world at large: overpopulation, pollution, overdevelopment. On a clear day in summer the air is far from clear in Yosemite valley with trees and meadows redolent of auto and campfire smoke. On a holiday weekend, gridlock sets in like the Santa Monica freeway during a rush hour accident. Recreation vehicles squat cheek by jowl. Radio and television sets blare. The valley takes on the aspect of a small city, with all the amenities and little of the great outdoors.



The internal pressure on our national parks is only half the story. The forces from outside their boundaries are even greater and potentially more devastating. On March 1, 1872, the United States performed a miracle. For the first time in the history of the world, a government set aside a portion of land as "a pleasuring ground" for the enjoyment of the people for all time to come. This was Yellowstone, our first national park: over 2 million acres of unsurpassed beauty. Rugged mountains clothed in conifers and aspens, meadows of wildflowers, hundreds of miles of clear streams, the falls and the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, Old Faithful and the rest of the family of hot springs, fumaroles, paint pots and mud cauldrons. And wildlife. Antelope, moose, elk, bighorn, bison, otter, beaver, grizzly bear and 250 species of birds. Yellowstone would seem to have it all.

Not quite. Yellowstone is not alone. It stands in the center of a ring of national *forests* which, together with the National Park, form the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Huge as it is, Yellowstone is dependent upon the wild lands that adjoin if for its health and integrity. If the six national forests on its perimeter are violated, Yellowstone will be mortally injured and the entire ecosystem will be mortally injured and the entire ecosystem will be in jeopardy. Wildlife knows no boundaries and moves in and out of the Park. If the national forests are degraded, loss of habitat will threaten several animals with extinction. Already, low altitude wintering grounds for elk herds outside the Park have fallen to subdivisions.

The Forest Service is proposing an incredible list of management plans that will permanently alter the Yellowstone ecosystem. An open-pit copper mine is planned in prime wildlife habitat outside the park. Oil and gas development and all the roads and pipelines and mess that go with it are in the works. Geothermal energy production nearby will not only deface the natural values of the forests but will syphon off the steam that powers Old Faithful. (When geothermal projects were constructed in New Zealand, a huge geyser system died without a whimper.) And the Forest Service is talking about 6000 miles of logging roads in these forests as it continues its unofficial function of chief purveyor of cheap lumber (at taxpayer's expense) to the timber moguls. Accompanying this economically unneeded and wasteful logging is the loss of watersheds, the acid silting of pristine streams, erosion of slopes and air pollution that will destroy the fragile wilderness. The ultimate effect on the National Park is not difficult to imagine.

Where does Mr. Mott stand? In June, at a meeting of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition (the good guys), he said, "The time has come to take positive, creative and force-

ful steps to set an example of how even with human pressures a total ecosystem can be preserved and managed. If we don't start now, it will never be done—the time is right... Yellowstone can be an ideal prototype." Heartening words, friends. A far cry from the environmental immorality of the unlamented, former Secretary of the Interior, James Watt. And you notice that Mott is talking about Yellowstone as a *prototype.* He realizes that *all* national parks are threatened with the same itch for exploitation on their borders as is Yellowstone. The question is, can Mott make a difference? In our euphoria over his appointment we must not forget that the Administration hasn't changed. We have a new Assistant Secretary of the Interior for fish, wildlife and parks, William P. Horn. Mr. Horn was Watt's deputy undersecretary at Interior and a powerful opponent of the conservation movement. He is now Mr. Mott's superior and it remains to be seen how far Mott can go in countering the Forest Service's management plans.

Recently, Mr. Mott made an unusual and startling suggestion. In exchange for incorporating the state redwood parks into Redwood National Park he recommended that the state take over the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. There have been mixed reactions to this idea. This column thinks it an unfortunate idea. We would like to see things remain as they are. The redwood parks along the coast in northern California have been around for a long time. They have mellowed with age and have become verdant gems under the tender loving care of the state park rangers. They have excellent campsites separated by adequate elbow room, an outdoor campfire circle, an information building and *nothing else.* No food stores, no coke machines, no souvenir shoppes. Nothing but streams, alders, ferns, wildflowers and miles of quiet trails under the magnificent redwoods. The parks are well-utilized and filled up most of the season. As part of the National Park they would attract more visitors and there might well be pressure to build more campsites in the wild areas and introduce the "civilized" amenities that have scarred Yosemite valley. As the current wisdom has it, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The Santa Monica Mountain Recreation Area was growing reasonably well until Mr. Watt, in his irrational dislike of urban parks, cut all acquisition money already voted by Congress. To become a viable entity, the Area has to expand before all the land within its boundaries is developed. We can hope that the funds will soon be made available. The state's resources are simply inadequate for the task. As the Los Angeles Times said in a recent editorial, "We hope that Mott will consider and quickly drop his suggestion—perhaps he was just thinking out loud ..." In all fairness, it must be said that the Times agreed that the state redwood parks should eventually be added to the Redwood National Park. Nobody's perfect.

Not even Mr. Mott. But he remains the best thing that happened to the federal environmental bureaucracy since the last great steward of America's natural bounty—Cecil Andrus, Interior Secretary. Unfortunately, Mott is not at the top of the hierarchy. We welcome him warmly. We wish him well. We will help him in every way we can.

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 sweatshirts 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

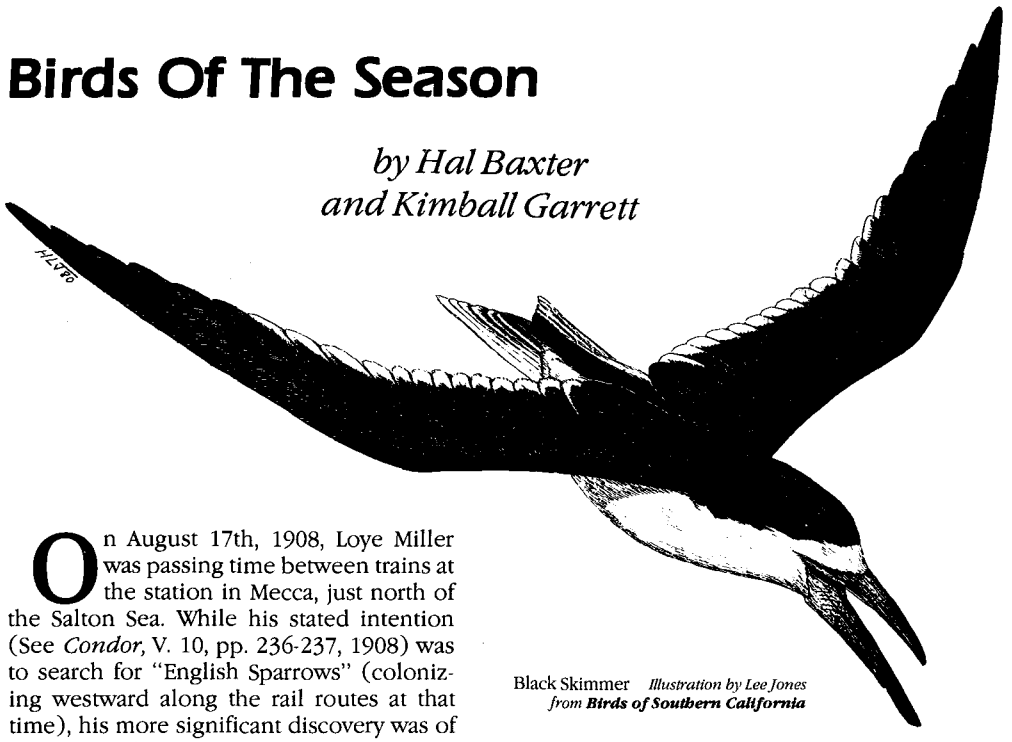
And Now the Official LA Audubon Patch

Rendered from Jonathan Alderfer's illustration.
$1.95 each or three for $5.00

Actual Size

Birds Of The Season

by Hal Baxter and Kimball Garrett



Black Skimmer *Illustration by Lee Jones from* ***Birds of Southern California***

On August 17th, 1908, Loye Miller was passing time between trains at the station in Mecca, just north of the Salton Sea. While his stated intention (See *Condor*, V. 10, pp. 236-237, 1908) was to search for "English Sparrows" (colonizing westward along the rail routes at that time), his more significant discovery was of an adult male **Louisiana Waterthrush** — the first of its species to be recorded in western North America. While there was no doubt as to the bird's identity (it now reposes in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology in Berkeley), it nevertheless became amazing as the decades rolled by that no second Louisiana Waterthrush turned up in the state. This situation of 77 years was rectified on 7 August as Jon Dunn and his tour group carefully studied one at Deep Springs College in the White Mountains. The long gap between the first and second state records only added to the disappointment felt by the two dozen birders who showed up the following morning only to find the bird gone! It should be noted that the Louisiana Waterthrush is a very early fall migrant, and the first three weeks of August certainly seems like the time to scour the ditches and watercourses of our desert oases for the species. (Who, in fact, would hesitate to believe that Jon was "thinking Louisiana" as he put Deep Springs on the trip itinerary!).

Otherwise, birding events were rather routine through the late summer/early fall period. The remnant population of the **California Condor** provided the focus for July and August birding in the area, with one to five birds seen almost daily in the vicinity of The Sign on Mil Potrero Highway. Excellent views were obtained on 3-4 August on what may be the last Condor Watch and Tequila Bust to feature both condors and tequila.

Summer observations of loons along our coast often go unreported, so Bob Neuwirth's report of three **Arctic Loons** and three alternate-plumaged **Red-throated Loons** seen from the Cabrillo Beach breakwater on 11 August is of interest. The L.A.A.S. pelagic trip out of San Pedro on 10 August was notable for its paucity of tubenoses: one **Black Storm-Petrel**, 43 **Pink-footed Shearwaters** and 11 **Sooty Shearwaters** was the total haul. Also seen were **Xantus' Murrelet** (1), **Sabine's Gull** (1), **Pomarine Jaeger** (3), **Parasitic Jaeger** (2), and a handful of **Cassin's Auklets**. Whew! Of interest on the trip, however, was the abundance of **Elegant Terns** well offshore (over 110 birds from mid-channel to beyond Santa Barbara Island); this is normally a species of estuaries and inshore coastal waters. Also of interest were several Minke Whales and Risso's Dolphins, and the usual show of **Black Oystercatchers**, **Pigeon Guillemots** and California Sea Lions around Santa Barbara Island.

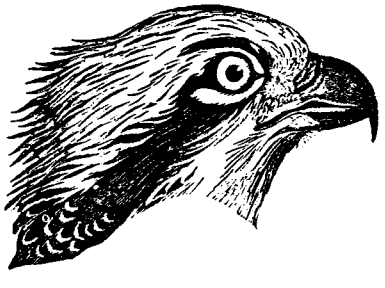
An adult **Olivaceous Cormorant** at the north end of the Salton Sea (Doug Willick, 27 July) proved very difficult to refind but was present to at least mid-August. Some 200 **Wood Storks** were at the south end of the Salton Sea on 27 July (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick). A **Tricolored Heron** stopped by Bolsa Chica on the Fourth of July (Loren Hays and Steve Ganley) but was not seen again. **White-faced Ibis** were at San Elijo Lagoon (154 on 3 August), at Piute Pond near Lancaster (8 on 3 August, Brian Keelan and John Parmeter), and near the Santa Ana River in Anaheim (one on 9 August, Doug Willick). Two **Canada Geese** were at the north end of the Salton Sea on 27 July (Jeff Boyd et al) and three were flying over Tinnemaha Reservoir in the Owens Valley on 8 August (Doug Willick). Two **Ospreys** were summering along the Santa Ana River in Anaheim (Doug Willick).

Apart from the "Spoonbill Sandpiper scare" at San Elijo Lagoon on 3 August (no confirmed Spoonbill there), wader watching was quite routine as of this writing. Brian Keelan and John Parameter scoured the Lancaster Sewage Ponds and Piute Ponds on 3 August, finding a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, three **Baird's Sandpipers**, a **Sanderling** and a **Ruddy Turnstone** (all at L.S.P.). Another Baird's was at Doheny Beach State Park on 4 August (Bob Neuwirth). Malibu Lagoon provided good shorebird habitat in early August, yielding several species which are scarce there: **American Avocet**, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Wandering Tattler**, **Long-billed Curlew** and **Short-billed Dowitcher**, for example.

The highest count of **Yellow-footed Gulls** was of 60 birds at Salton City on 27 July (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick). On the same day there was a **Franklin's Gull** at the north end (Miles Wheeler). Impressive was the concentration of some 6000 **Caspian Terns** at the north end of the Salton Sea in late July and early August. Some 70 Caspian Tens were on Lake Hemet in the San Jacinto Mountains on 27 July (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick). The impressive numbers of **Black Skimmers** on the Salton Sea may have represented a post-breeding invasion from west Mexico. All fifty-five birds counted at the north end on 4 August were adults (Kimball Garrett); up to 100 skimmers were at the south end near Red Hill (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick, 27 July).

It appears that two **Flammulated Owls** successfully fledged from the nest at Buckhorn Campground on 8 and 11 July (Brian Keelan). Two **Black Swifts** were north of Lake Fulmor in the San Jacinto Mountains on 22 July (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick). Black Swifts also nested in Big Santa Anita Canyon and in the canyons behind San Dimas (fide Charles Collins). **Chimney Swifts** remained around Exposition Park at least through the first week of August (Kimball Garrett).

Western passerine migrants of many species were reported in small numbers and at

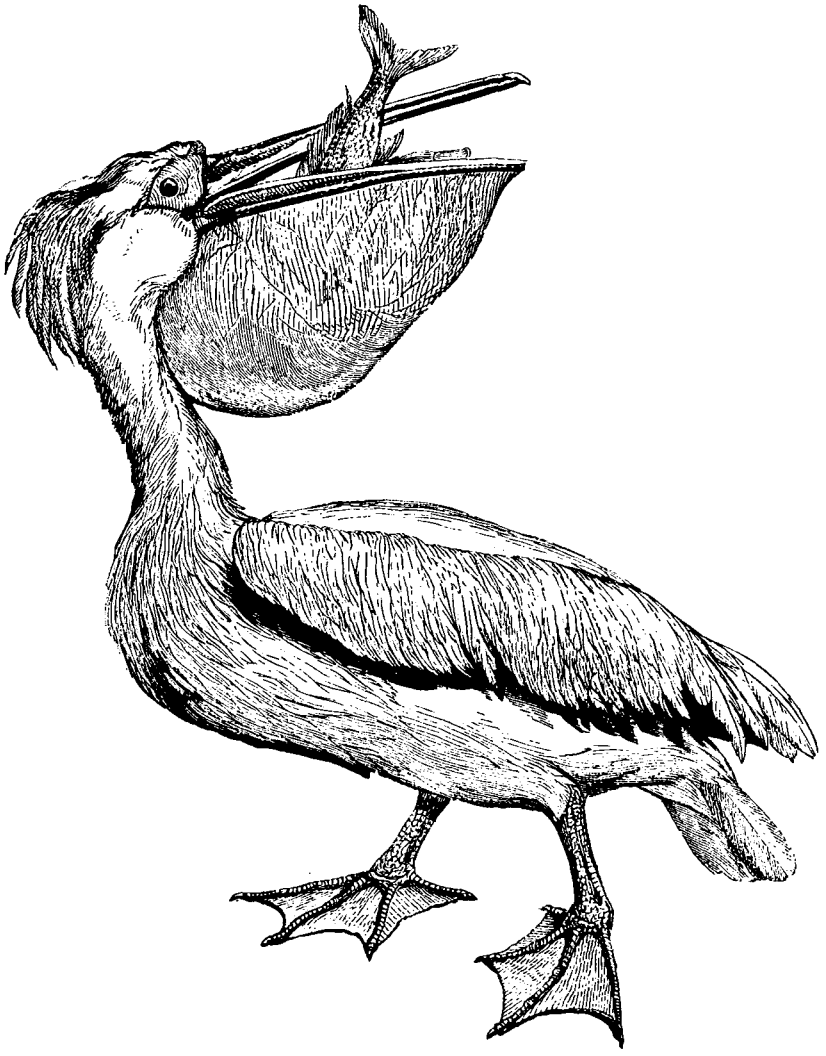


widely scattered localities by late July, as is typical. A **Willow Flycatcher** east of Lancaster on 3 August (Brian Keelan and John Parmeter) was typical (but still interesting considering that northbound Willow Flycatchers pass through our area as late as mid-June). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, casual in southern California, was at Big Pines Campground in the Owens Valley on 31 July (Marilyn Smith). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Oak Canyon Nature Center on 19 July (Doug Willick) was considered an early migrant at that locality. Two **Bank Swallows** were at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds on 3 August (Brian Keelan and John Parmeter). A **Purple Martin** was seen in the San Jacinto Mountains north of Lake Fulmor on 22 July (Brian Daniels and Doug Willick), and two were along the Angeles Crest Highway immediately north of La Canada on 3 August (Brian Keelan and John Parmeter); very small numbers were also on the north side of Arcadia, as in past years (Mike San Miguel). A vagrant **Bendire's Thrasher** was at the Turtle Rock Nature Center on 21 July (Doug Willick).

As noted so often in this column in previous years, October is THE month for rare birds in southern California. Our vagrants come from many directions: the north (boreal forest migrants), the east (eastern broadleaf and pine forest migrants), the south (Neotropical migrants and wanderers), and the northwest (Siberian vagrants). There are a lot of species to learn, and a lot of subtle field characters to keep in mind, all adding up to a challenging but potentially very rewarding time to be in the field.

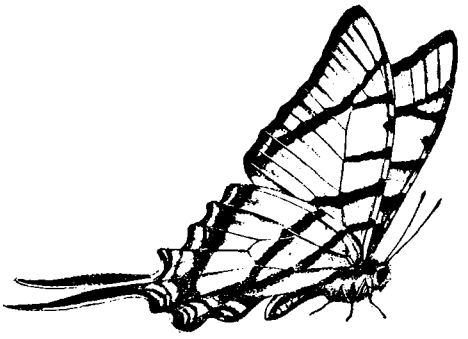
Note: The treatment of the California City Central Park area in the July-August Birds of the Season column failed to point out that the condominium area on the east side of the park is off-limits to birders, as are the golf courses. As a courtesy, please report interesting find there immediately to the Kern County birders (see July-August issue, p. 7).

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



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.



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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 occured by the Thursday before the trip.

FIELD TRIPS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7 — Join **Ed Navojosky** for his popular annual jaunt (14th) from **Malibu Lagoon to McGrath State Beach**. A large variety of species are usually seen as a diversity of habitats are birded. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the parking area behind the market, across the street from the Malibu Lagoon entrance. Bring a picnic lunch for stop at Big Sycamore.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 — Join **Bob Shanman** for a morning walk at the unique **Ballona Wetlands**. This is peak season for viewing migrating shorebirds. Also see waterbirds and residents. Take Marina Fwy. 90 west to Culver Blvd., turn left to Pacific Ave., then right to footbridge at end. Meet at **8 a.m.** $3 parking. More info: 213-545-2867 after 6 p.m.)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 — Onik Arian will lead a **Malibu to McGrath** outing in which shorebirds will be emphasized. Areas to be birded: Malibu Lagoon, Big Sycamore Canyon, Mugu Rock, McGrath Estuary and possibly the Oxnard Plains. Beginners are welcome. Bring lunch, also boots for birding mud flats. Meet at the Malibu Feed Bin at the corner of Topanga Cyn. Blvd. and Pacific Coast Highway at **7 a.m.**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 — Meet **Bob Pann** at 8 a.m. at the kiosk of **Malibu Lagoon** for a morning of birding. A variety of species of shorebirds and other waterfowl are expected at the lagoon and passerine migrants in the creek willows. If timing allows we may go on to **Tapia Park**. Beginners are welcome.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18 — Allan Keller will lead a morning walk at **Chatsworth Park South** looking for White and Golden-crowned sparrows, both phoebes, both towhees, Red-shouldered Hawk, flicker, etc. From Ventura Fwy. 101, go north about 6 miles to Devonshire Blvd. and from Simi Fwy. 118 go south about 1 mile to Devonshire; turn west to streets end into park. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Recreation Building parking lot.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 — David White will lead his monthly trip at the **Whittier Narrows Regional Park**, in search of a good variety of residents in addition to returning waterbirds and possible migrants. Meet at **8 a.m.** at the Nature Center, 1000 Durfee Ave., So. El Monte, off Fwy. 60 between Santa Anita and Peck Dr. exits, west of Fwy. 605.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20 — Meet **Dennis Morgan** at **8 a.m.** for a morning of birding at **McGrath Beach State Park**. Come search the willows for migrant passerines, the marshy area for meadowlarks and possible snipe and the estuary for shorebirds. Some wading possible. Bring windbreaker, sunhat, and scopes if available. (More info: Call 883-1413 weekends or after 6 p.m.). Go north on Ventura Fwy. 101 past Oxnard to Victoria Ave. exit. Go left under the fwy. approx. 1 mile to Olivas Park Dr. and go right to Pacific Coast Highway; turn left and shortly after crossing bridge turn right into the day parking lot. (Fee: $3). Carpooling from restaurant at Malibu exit off 101 at 7:10 a.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 — Join **Brian Daniels** for a morning at **Huntington Beach Central Park**. Come look for migrants, returning winter birds and possible vagrants. Take San Diego Fwy. 405 south to Golden West, then south to Slater Ave.; turn left to first parking lot on right. Meet at **8 a.m.** by the swings.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 — Meet **Gerry Haigh** at **8 a.m.** for a morning walk in **Topanga State Park**. Look for resident chaparral birds and possibly late migrants. From Topanga Cyn. Blvd. make a sharp east turn uphill on Entrada Drive (7 miles south Fwy. 101 and approx. 1 mile north of Topanga Village); continue bearing left at each road fork to entrance. $2 parking fee.

FORTHCOMING OUTINGS:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 — Bolsa Chica — Amigos de Bolsa Chica

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 — Ballona — Bob Shanman

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 — Newport Backbay — Friends of Newport

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 — Antelope Valley — Fred Heath

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 — El Dorado Nature Center — Marge Pamias

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 — Whittier Narrows — David White

RESERVATION TRIPS: (Limited Participation)

WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 2 & 3 — Spend a special **Morro Bay** weekend with L.A. Co. Museum Omithologist and L.A.A.S. Guru **Kimball Garrett**. View shorebirds and waterfowl, look for Peregrines, late fall and winter vagrants, then some owling Saturday night. There will be a drive up the coast, beyond Cambria, to look at coniferous forest and rocky shore species. Depending on timing, there may be some birding stops in the San Luis Obispo area enroute home. $25 person.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 — A unique opportunity to become familiar with the **Harper Dry Lake area** with Ornithologist and San Bernardino County Museum Curator **Gene Cardiff**. LAAS's first ever trip to this area will highlight **Birds of Prey** where up to 16 species are possible, including 5 species of owls. We'll also look for desert species, i.e. Sage Sparrow, LeConte's Thrasher and Shorebirds. $12.50/person.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 — Spend a delightful day with author and professional bird tour leader **Jon Dunn** in the **Santa Barbara area**. Expect to see a good variety of shorebirds, waterbirds and wintering vagrants. $12.50 person donation to new LAAS Research Award Fund.

See page 5 for further Reservation Trips and Policy and Procedure.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 — Seminar **OWLS OF NORTH AMERICA** by Jon Winter. See page 7 for details.

EVENING MEETINGS
Meet at 8:00 P.M. in Plummer Park

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8 — Terry Stephenson the resident omithologist of Lake Baringo Lodge in Kenya will give a slide illustrated talk entitled: **Bird Survey in Kenya.**

CARPOOLING: IS encouraged to reduce gas consumption and air pollution whenever possible. While the IRS allows business to reimburse car expense at the rate of 20¢ per mile, a recent study shows that the average cost *per mile* to own and operate a new subcompact car was 34.6¢ and a standard car was 55.4¢. One suggestion has been for riders to at least share the 4-5¢ per mile gasoline expense.

Los Angeles Audubon Society
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